



*Matthew & Tess*

# about us:

We have been married sixteen years. Before that we were best friends for five years. We met in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic at the church Tess grew up in. Matthew was a Peace Corps volunteer and Tess worked at a bank. We are a bilingual household. Over the years our friendship grew, which led to us getting married in Santo Domingo on the patio of Tess's childhood home. After several moves together, we found Iowa and have settled in nicely.

We compliment each other in many positive ways. Each of us brings strengths to the relationship.

We have always wanted to have a family; however, we have not been blessed with the opportunity to have our own children. We have dedicated much of our professional lives to improving the lives of children and youth. As educators, we have been able to do so in many different ways and in different places around the world. While our work has been very fulfilling, we want to dedicate our lives to a child of our own. We want to love and be loved as parents.

We love our new home! We moved into our dream home about a year ago. We live in an A-frame, chalet-like house on the shore of a large lake. The house has 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms. The living room has a huge window that looks out onto the lake. We cherish being able to see the sunrises and sunsets on the lake every day. During the summer, we love to sit on the house's wrap-around deck. In the winter we sit indoors and watch the bald eagles perched near the shore. We love how the house has plenty of outdoor area. We feel like we live in the outdoors! We live in a tiny town in south central Iowa. The population is approximately 10,000. As many other towns in Iowa, it is an agricultural town with manufacturing. We love how peaceful it is. Having lived in large urban areas, we are drawn to being members of a community that is small and close. Our home is outside of town, where we have easy access to Des Moines, yet, get to see the vast Iowa horizon with corn, beans and bales of hay. Living in a close-knit subdivision, even though in a rural area, we are blessed with kind neighbors who value the community and the relationships we build here. As our small neighborhood is on a lake, we enjoy the peacefulness of nature.





We have two dogs and a cat. Paco, a mixed breed, is the best dog we've ever owned. He is loving, obedient and patient. He is great around children. Paco has been interacting with children all his life. His favorite activities are to run in the park, chase squirrels, and wrestle with other dogs.

Ruby, our Labrador and Great Pyrenees mix, is almost two-years old. She is loyal and very attached to Tess. She always lets us know when someone is at the door. Ruby also loves to wrestle with other dogs. However, Ruby is not as active as Paco. Her favorite activity is to sleep! We wonder if she is a cat-dog. Everyone she meets she seeks affection. Couch cuddling is her favorite past time. However, she has been great with all the children she's been around. She likes to lie down on her back and get belly rubs.

Most recently a feline showed up at the door. It was bitterly cold. Within an hour we had been adopted by Mr. Tickle. After an extensive search for his owners, it became apparent that he had been dropped off in the neighborhood. Having been declawed and given the number of predators in the area, he is now a permanent resident. Both Paco and Ruby are both perplexed and mesmerized by our newest addition.

We love the outdoors! We love it when we get the opportunity to discover a new national or state park. Nothing beats going for an early morning hike with Paco and Ruby, our pups. We are lucky to live in a state that has so much natural beauty to offer!

Our favorite outdoor pastime of all is birdwatching. We always carry our binoculars and bird guides, especially when we travel. We have had the privilege of seeing amazing wildlife in different parts of the world. We're even luckier to be able to share this pastime with some of our best friends. We love that we have friends in many parts of the world. And equally so, we love to have friends and family over to visit! We like to entertain and we do so often! We enjoy spending time with our friends and making them feel at home.

We both like to cook, too. Luckily, our friends usually enjoy what we make. Matthew's southern take on Dominican rice and beans and his pulled pork recipes are a hit, specially with our friend's 10-year old son. Tess' citrus pork ribs are a favorite, too.



# What Matthew says about Tess:



Tess is loved by all. She has a talent of engaging people in meaningful ways. In return, she is a trusted friend and colleague. I know of no one who is more loyal to family and willing to sacrifice for the ones she loves. Once Tess commits to something or someone, she is all-in. She doesn't look back. Though at first she might come across as meek and mild, underneath is an advocate and strong woman who is passionate for what she believes.

Tess's success both academically and professionally cannot be understated. She is a dedicated professor whose career blends her passion for child advocacy and dedication to her students. Tess has worked extremely hard to complete a Ph.D. and work in higher education. Her hard work and dedication to teaching is best represented in the gratitude and appreciation her students express.

Tess has picked up several hobbies over the years. When we first met Tess introduced me to bird watching. Tess was very involved in the Hispaniola Ornithological Society. Over time Tess has developed interest in sewing, cooking and crime stories. If you think this is an interesting mix, I agree. But, that's Tess. She is independent, self-reliant and committed person. She does not impose on others and is able to find joy in the things that interest her.

# What Tess wants you to know about Matthew:

Matthew is funny, loving, and kind. He is the least selfish person I have ever met. He is firmly committed to helping others and fighting for those that are suffering or are victims of injustice. Matthew is resilient and does not give up easily. Matthew will keep trying to reach his goals, regardless of the setbacks he might face.

The best thing about Matthew is that he has a great sense of humor. He is quick to come up with jokes in any situation.

Matthew has had a very successful career in higher education. After teaching for several years, Matthew started to direct an office in volunteer programs and service learning. Matthew loved his job. It provided him with excellent opportunities to teach students about social justice.

Matthew's job involved creating learning and service opportunities for students where they can learn what the best ways to help others are. Currently, Matthew holds an administrative position at a college. He is the assistant dean of international education. His job involves creating learning opportunities abroad. Matthew enjoys working with students and faculty around the world to help create well-rounded, global citizens. Matthew has several hobbies. His favorites are bird watching and pottery. No matter where he might be around the world, Matthew always makes the time to watch the birds. His binoculars and bird guide are never far!

Matthew's other big hobby is pottery. He has a potter's wheel at home. Matthew is quite talented. People say he should sell his work.

Matthew is not interested, though. The best part of making the pottery, he says, is to give it away!

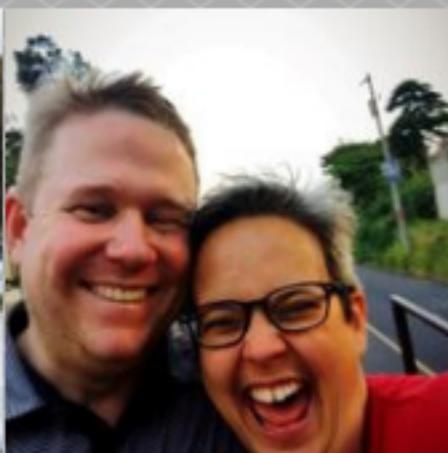
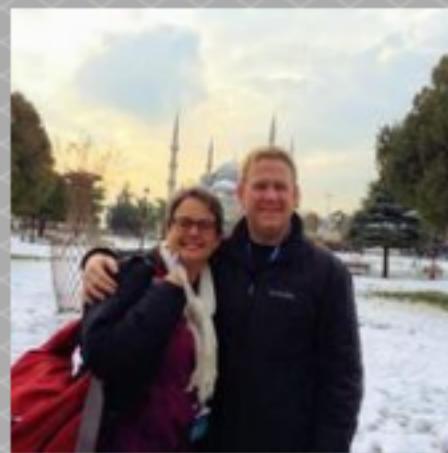
Matthew has many qualities that will make him a great parent. The most important ones are his sense of humor and positive outlook on life.

Matthew brings a smile and a chuckle to everyone he encounters, no matter how bad the day has been. Matthew has the ability to lift everyone's spirits, making any situation better. Matthew will make our home one where love, positive, and acceptance are the norm. Matthew is always thinking of fun things to do. Whether it is planning a vacation, hiking in a nearby park, or having friends over, Matthew is always thinking of things we can do together. There is always something exciting going on around Matthew! Our child will have wonderful experiences thanks to Matthew.

My favorite thing about Matthew is his sense of humor. Like I mentioned above, Matthew makes everyone laugh. He always has the funniest things to say! I love to be around him. He is so much fun!

Matthew is also understanding and supportive. I am so lucky! Not everyone has someone they can share everything with. Matthew listens and he understands me. No matter how big a problem might seem, Matthew makes it feel smaller and manageable. He never leaves you alone.





We have so much to share with an adopted child. Our love for each other, a strong belief in the importance of education, and, simply being curious about the world we live in, is what we will give a child. That, along with honesty, hard work, living a balanced, happy life, and, commitment to family, are our values. This is home we have created and will offer.