



**BRIAN**

+ Rachel

HEYA, IT'S US :)

WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO HAVE YOU HERE.

KNOW THIS: PRAYERS ARE SENT DAILY FOR YOU & YOUR PRECIOUS BABY.

OUR HEARTFELT HOPE IS THAT YOU FIND PEACE IN YOUR DECISION.

OUR HEARTS ARE OPEN HERE.

WELCOME TO OUR LIFE. ♥

HEYA! :) OUR HEARTS ARE OVER HERE LEAPING FOR JOY THAT YOU STOPPED BY. ♥♥

WE'RE **BRIAN & RACHEL** WITH **MAIJA!**

THANKS FOR TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO SCROLL THROUGH & MEET US. YOU'LL GATHER THAT WE ARE A PRETTY DOWN TO EARTH FAMILY.

MAYBE THERE'LL BE TIME FOR US TO VISIT MORE IN DEPTH AT SOME POINT... BUT FOR NOW- HERE'S A FEW THINGS WE'D LIKE YOU TO KNOW. I'M NOT CRAZY GOOD AT GETTING SUPER GUSHY, BUT **HERE IS THE REAL & RAW OF OUR HEARTS.**

FIRST OFF, MY STARS - WE CAN NOT EVEN SIT HERE & PRETEND WE KNOW ALL THE EMOTIONS YOU'RE FEELING RIGHT NOW. I CAN ONLY IMAGINE THE FEAR, THE INDECISION, THE NIGHTS OF WONDERING WHAT TO DO. I DO UNDERSTAND WHAT IT'S LIKE CARRYING A CHILD- AND AM IN AWE OF THE DECISIONS YOU'LL MAKE OUT OF YOUR LOVE FOR YOUR UNBORN CHILD. JUST KNOW THIS. WE'VE BEEN **PRAYING LIKE CRAZY FOR YOU** & FOR THE PRECIOUS LITTLE LIFE INSIDE OF YOU, AND LISTEN. WE HOPE LIKE CRAZY THAT YOU'VE GOT SUPPORT! IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU NEED ONE: KNOW THAT THIS IS A **BIG VIRTUAL HUG FROM US** ♥

YOU ARE BEYOND BRAVE. I JUST KEEP THINKING, THE CHILD [OR CHILDREN] WE RAISE IS GOING TO HAVE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL LOVE STORY BECAUSE OF YOUR COURAGEOUS CHOICES. DO YOU FEEL IT, TOO? WE PLAN TO INTERTWINE YOUR STORY IN WITH YOUR CHILD'S STORY FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, SO THAT THEY KNOW THAT LOVE, TOO. ♥

AS YOU'LL DEDUCT FROM OUR PROFILE, WE WERE NOT ABLE TO CONCEIVE RIGHT AWAY- BUT ONCE MAIJA CAME, WE TOTALLY THOUGHT IT'D BE A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE WE WERE LOVING ON MORE BABY BLESSINGS! WITHOUT GETTING INTO A PITY PARTY ABOUT IT, WE UNFORTUNATELY HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONCEIVE SINCE MAIJA, NEARLY 10 YEARS LATER.

A LOT OF OUR REGRET AT NOT BEING ABLE TO HAVE MORE CHILDREN WAS KNOWING THAT **KIDS BENEFIT SO MUCH FROM HAVING SIBLINGS**. WE BOTH WERE RAISED WITH SIBLINGS, SO WE KNOW THERE'S LOTS OF LOVE & LEARNING THAT COMES FROM BEING RAISED THAT WAY! LEARNING RESPONSIBILITIES, KNOWING WHERE YOU STAND IN A FAMILY STRUCTURE, SELF CONFIDENCE, AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT "MY FAMILY HAS MY BACK," - ARE ALL **HUGE BUILDING BLOCKS** FOR OUR KIDDOS!

QUITE FRANKLY, I WAS SNUGGLED UP ON THE COUCH BY THE FIRE LAST WINTER, JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS- AND AS I GAZED AT OUR STOCKINGS HUNG ON OUR BOOK SHELF, MY HEART JUST SAID, "LOOK AT THOSE PRESENTS YOU WRAPPED FOR BRIAN, AND FOR MAIJA .. AND (LOL) FOR OUR DOGS, SITKA + KODAK, WHO ACT LIKE EXCITED KIDS AT CHRISTMAS :). I COULD SEE THIS BABY SIZED HOLE IN OUR LIVES HERE, JUST WAITING FOR US TO OPEN OUR HEARTS & HOME, SO WE COULD WRAP PRESENTS FOR THEM, TOO! WE HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH MAIJA, WHO HAS BROUGHT US SO MUCH JOY. **OUR HEARTS** ARE **YEARNING** TO SHARE WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN US WITH ANOTHER CHILD!♥

MAIJA IS BEYOND ECSTATIC THAT SHE WILL SOON HAVE A SIBLING TO CUDDLE ON AND TO EXPLORE THE WORLD WITH! (WE FIND MANY BENEFITS - BOTH FUN & PERSPECTIVE CHANGING- FROM TRAVEL!) SHE IS CONSTANTLY CALLING FRIENDS TO SEE IF THEIR KIDS CAN COME OVER SO SHE CAN "BABYSIT" THEM, AND SHE DOTES ON OUR PUPS AS IF THEY ARE HER OWN CHILDREN.. I CAN'T EVEN EXPLAIN THE JOY IT BRINGS MY HEART TO KNOW THAT **OUR CHILDREN WILL HAVE EACH OTHER** GROWING UP!

LASTLY, WE PRAY THAT YOU HAVE **PEACE IN YOUR HEART** WITH WHEREVER YOUR DECISIONS TAKE YOU. WE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE A SUPPORT SYSTEM TO GUIDE & HELP YOU THROUGH THIS TIME, AND THAT GOD WILL GIVE YOU HOPE IN THE DECISIONS YOU WILL MAKE IN THE FUTURE.

WE WOULD LOVE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOU, MORE ABOUT YOUR WISH FOR THE FUTURE, ABOUT WHAT'S ON YOUR HEART!

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE WITH US AS WE OPEN *OUR* HEARTS ♥  
OUR LOVE ~ RACHEL & BRIAN, WITH MAIJA

# WE *Value*

- FAITH & FORGIVENESS
- OUR MULTICULTURAL FAMILIES
- TRAVEL & EXPLORATION
- GETTING OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONES
- LEARNING & GROWING (IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE)
- HEALTH & WELLNESS
- PLAYING IN NATURE (ADULTS, INCLUDED!)
- CULTIVATING REAL FRIENDSHIPS FROM THE HEART



BRIAN & RACHEL WITH MAIJA [CAMPER VAN TRIP TO ALASKA]



JENNY CANYON, UTAH



OAHU, HAWAII



Technically... says Brian's dad..**we met at ages 2 & 4** :) Our  **moms were friends** back in the day, so Brian's family came to Washington to visit- neither of us remembers!

After moving closer to grandparents in **South Dakota**, Rachel's growing up years were spent with her 2 sisters and a brother, doing things like:

**Playing for hours** with kittens & animals **outside**, trying to **fly off the trampoline with bed sheets** on windy days, and **careening across a (yes, melted) pond on a snowmobile** in the cow pasture! It worked, ha! Please don't try it at home!

Our family also spent many summers traveling to visit friends across country- I credit my parents for my wanderlust :)

rachel

While Rachel was careening around South Dakota, Brian was spending his childhood with his 4 brothers- playing **GI Joe Armies**, **biking** for hours with his buddies, and **building forts** in the forests surrounding his suburban home near St. Paul, **Minnesota**.

He is the 2nd youngest of the 5 boys, and would cheerfully help his mom at home when needed.

"Brian, please put the butter on the table!" she told him one evening.. a little confused, Brian carefully took a dollop of butter, and his mom found him a few minutes later, dutifully spreading the butter across the family dinner table! :D His **willingness to help, literal processing + happy go lucky attitude are very much a part of Brian's charms** to this day :)

brian



*[fast forward - 20 years or so!]*

Brian will say it was his "cleverly [duck tape] mended" jacket that caught her eye, ;) but Rachel sticks to vowing it was his genuine personality that really stole her heart!

We met through mutual church friends, and shortly after, Brian flew down in a bush plane to take Rachel for a date in the sky... time spent together turned quickly into fast friends. We found each other caring, adventurous, & funny - and Rachel was *a tiny bit star struck* that Brian was a pilot on top of it all. :)

When conversations turned to a serious relationship, Rachel [the cautious of the two] remembers hesitating.. "...but what if it doesn't work out??"

[ever the optimist] Brian replied: "...**and WHAT If it DOES?**"

And so.. we dated 2 years, and were married on a blizzardy February day in 2013! :)

Story,

CONTINUED



LOFOTEN ISLANDS, NORWAY



BRIAN + MAIJA, MONTANA



MAIJA



ZIP LINING - JAMAICA

### FIRST 2 YEARS OF MARRIAGE

Whether we were ziplining in Jamaica, making friends on a USA coast to coast road trip, or hiking on Lofoten Islands, Norway - visiting Rachel's sister & family- the prayer was that we would be able to **raise a family** one day!

Due to ovarian issues, Rachel wondered for years if she would be able to carry children- so we weren't entirely surprised when Maija wasn't born until 2 years after we'd married.

### NEXT 10 YEARS

As she grew, Maija **prayed for a baby**; she drew pictures of herself with her future "twin siblings," which Brian would hang up near his computer, saying, "Someday!" :)

We counted our blessings; we were grateful it was easy to travel, have Maija's friends over, and enjoy the cousins. But there was still a hole in our lives.

**Coming to the reality that we likely would not be able to have more biological children**, we began to explore adoption. The support we've received is amazing! Friends that have adopted opened their hearts & proclaimed they would absolutely do it all again. Our families are completely on board. We are **so excited** to be part of this community where everyone has said, "Let us know how we can help!"

"AFTER 12 YEARS OF MARRIAGE, PLUS 10 YEARS OF STRUGGLING WITH INFERTILITY, WE ARE **SO EXCITED** TO BE ADDING TO OUR FAMILY! WE ALL CAN HARDLY WAIT TO SHARE OUR LIVES WITH A SWEET BABY!"



# RACHEL *by Brian*

We've been married nearly 12 years... and I've found Rachel is the kind of girl you think you finally know everything about- until one day you find her doing something super random- like building an intricate tiny-coop with a ramp, playground & garden patio she'd planned out for her little chickens! Or the time she pretended to hitch hike, so I'd pick her up for a date. ;)

Rachel is a caregiver with a creative soul, randomly whipping up sewing projects (think: costumes for Maija's stuffed animals), finding off-the-beaten-path places to explore, & helping me create a visual when we work together remodeling homes for rent or Airbnb!

She is kind & loyal, and **protective Mama Bear** of Maija. Rachel thrives organizing our life- which makes it a breeze to drop everything and adventure! Her drive to explore has opened many experiences for us, including **making friends worldwide**.

One of our favorite qualities is her **carefree spirit** & her **ability to find something hilarious** about most any situation! [She has a quirky sense of humor & loves to "talk" for our dogs - then finds them *hysterical* in things they "tell" her ;)]

Rachel holds fast to what she believes; she walks in faith in all areas of life, including **staying home to raise our children**. She loves Maija deeply, & **will love the child we adopt as fiercely as her own.**♥

I've learned to value Rachel's input on life; her ability to see many points of view often provokes a **wise & thoughtful** response to an issue I'm pondering. She is our sense of reason & the reason we survive! [*& I am the reason we thrive* 😊 - Brian]

*oh, & p.s. You will not beat her water slide speed. She is simply **the fastest there is** ;)*

GENUINE  
CREATIVE  
ADVENTUROUS  
WISE  
GOOFY



SURPRISE- SMILE! HA ;)



"SAND BOARDING" IN NC

"I REALLY ADMIRE THAT RACHEL LISTENS TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE.. ADULTS & CHILDREN ALIKE."

## FAVORITES

**place:** Ko'olina, Oahu & Natural Hot Springs  
(anywhere, any time!)

**books:** Self help, Parenting, Health,  
Children's Classics, everything!

**ice cream:** Haagen Daz Coffee (or Matsumoto Shave Ice!)

**food:** Thai food or tomato soup

**shows love:** Gifts, Quality time, Listening

**random:** Loves to Sing & has taught the  
whole family to Yodel :)

### Fun:

- Travel/ explore anywhere!
- Organizing & decluttering (seriously :D)
- Walks, Hikes, Bike Rides
- Wildlife
- Creative Sewing  
(Who knew a stuffed mouse would need snow pants & a shark costume?)
- Building with Wood (Maija's "House" Bed, etc.)
- Swimming/ Hot tubbing/ Sun!



MAMA & MAIJA SNUGGLES!



LOOKING FOR SEA OTTERS ON KENAI FJORDS FERRY, ALASKA

Rachel



PADDLE BOARDING IN KO'OLINA, HAWAII



WE LOVE READING, EVEN ON VACATION! (HAWAII)



NEAR SEWARD, ALASKA



MAIJA & ELIN'S KIND OF SANDBOARDING :D NORTH CAROLINA



YOU DID IT, MAMA!



INDEPENDENCE ROCK, WYOMING



RACHEL & MAIJA FEELING THE "TINY NIBBLING FISH"  
HOT SPRINGS, UTAH



SILLY MAMA BEAR ;)



NORTH CAROLINA



WATERSLIDES ARE THE BEST!

# BRIAN

by Rachel

FUN-LOVING

ENERGETIC

FUNNY

ENTHUSIASTIC

OPTIMISTIC

“Figuring out life, one day at a time!” is Brian’s motto. :D Brian is very adept at learning on his feet and flexing with the day! He is quick to jump on opportunities, disregard things that do not matter, & he works like crazy to accomplish his goals! Instead of giving up, he is often heard saying, “HOW CAN I...?”

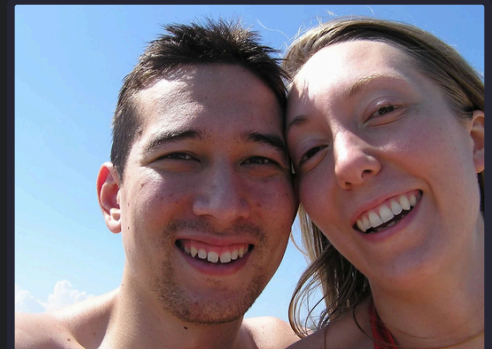
Being the owner of his own business [leasing homes to renters], Brian has a unique work-from-home opportunity. We recently took advantage of it to road trip to Alaska in our camper van, and he was able to work on the road! **It has been a blessing that he is around when we need him** and he will continue to be as our family grows! Brian is also an aircraft mechanic & pilot, so he enjoys searching for a small family plane in his free time!

I truly admire Brian’s ability to talk to anyone, adults and kids alike. He can make most anyone comfortable when they realize he doesn’t take himself too seriously. Kids love him, because he’ll follow them out to play or take time to be silly with them!

As a dad, he often comes up with creative ways to learn (he taught Maija her ABC’s by stringing letters across the trampoline & hollering them out as they jumped!) & has listened to hours of parenting advice from Kirk Martin [author of Celebrate Calm] & other parenting advisors. I truly appreciate his out-of-the-box approach!

Brian loves to get out of his comfort zone (whether trying a new food, attempting something he’s not sure he can do, or meeting new friends), and encourages those around him to follow suit! He enjoys a good challenge & an opportunity to learn!

Most importantly, Brian is my closest confidante in our faith in Christianity. He’s quick to forgive me & is a solid voice of wisdom when I have questions. He is also adamant on “placing the best construction on all things” (or assuming the best about a situation/ person), and very often encourages Maija & I to do the same. God definitely knew we would compliment each other perfectly! ♥



“Papa Bear? Papa Bean, Papa Bird is **Fun!** He’s adventurous, loving, & crazy – because **he loves to do things that he doesn’t know if he can do!!!**”

-Maija-

## FAVORITES

**place:** Jamaica/ Utah

**books:** Self help, Business, Science Fiction/  
imagination provoking story lines, the Holy Bible

**ice cream:** Vanilla with anything crunchy, like butterfinger or  
heath candy :)

**food:** Sushi Rolls, Thai food, Hamburgers!

**shows love:** Hugs, Quality Time

**random:** “**He is really great at asking questions of people & retaining the wisdom that they share with him.**”

### Fun:

- Aviation/ Flying
- “Daddy Dates” with Maija
- Jujitsu, Rock Climbing, Hiking
- Train horses/ mules & dogs
- New friends
- Financial freedom/ teaching Maija about passive income
- Learning new skills: language, harmonica, games, pushing himself physically, money, jujitsu techniques... everything!



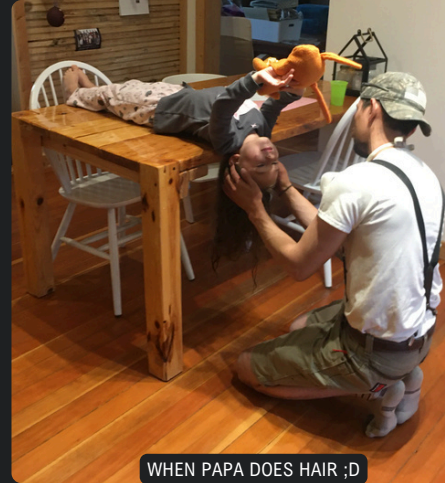
Brian



ACROSS PRAIRIE BY MULE



FLORIDA



WHEN PAPA DOES HAIR ;D



OAHU, HAWAII



BOMBER MOUNTAIN, WYOMING



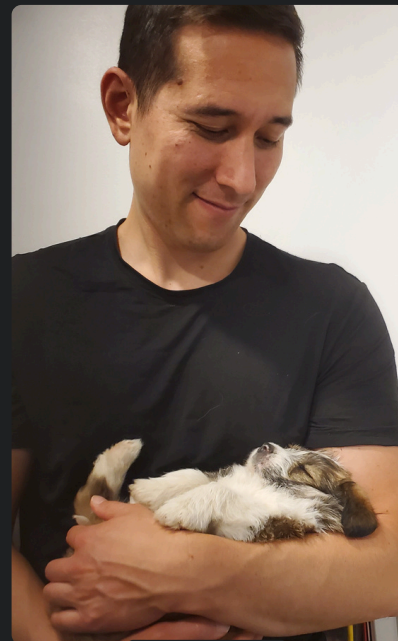
CHECKERS/ 'CRACKER BARREL' ON THE ROAD



WATERSLIDES!



DOWN HILL SKIING!



BABY PUPPIES ♡



MAIJA & BRIAN RIDING HORSEBACK



BACK IN THE SKY

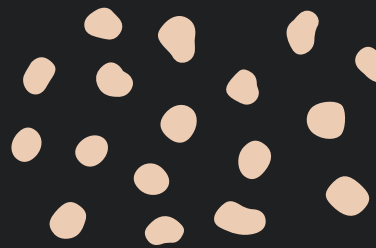


SITKA LIVES FOR FRISBEE!



THE COUSINS HAVE THE BEST SWING SET!

# MAIJA



THOUGHTFUL  
HAPPY GO LUCKY  
FUNNY  
STRONG WILLED  
IMAGINATIVE

Our daughter that God allowed us to carry. ♥

Maija, 9, is strong-willed, thoughtful & funny, & is forever coming up with new ideas & plans! I learned very early on to stop telling her that an idea would not work- she would find a way that hadn't even crossed my mind yet! :D

We went to an aquarium in Florida when Maija was 7; she promptly decided she was going to find a way to adopt sea lions into rural South Dakota! :D Since we **love to encourage open thinking**, Rachel helped her count her money (*she was going to have to raise more* 😊) & Brian brought her down to city hall, where they were **more than helpful** to give her the guidelines & laws about building an "animal habitat" in town. We have **so much gratitude** for the ladies at city hall who went along with Maija's idea, gifting her the **opportunity to learn!** (Our community is so kind!)

We found out later that not only had she visited & gotten the "ok" from our neighbors to build a habitat, she'd also gotten her friends' dad's "word" that he would build it, pool & all, for her. (For an insanely cheap price- haha!!) 😊 As it went, the town added the plan to their meeting agenda, and decided a sea lion habitat would not be in the town's best interest. Maija was unperturbed; "That's ok!" she said, "We can get a pet monkey instead." ;D

Maija loves to hang out with her cousins and friends- or anybody she can find that needs a baby-sitter 😊 Especially since she's an only child right now, we feel that it's very important to open our home to other children & families, and often have a friend bopping along with us wherever we are headed!



MAIJA BABYSITTING ♥

## FAVORITES

**place:** Hawaii or Alaska... or the Airplane 😊

**books:** Magic Tree House, Boxcar Children, Graphic Novels

**ice cream:** Bubble Gum Flavor + Gummy Bears

**food:** Pizza, French Fries

**shows love:** Hugs, Playing, Acts of Service

**random:** Maija is fantastic at **following through with what she decides to do!** [At age 3, she set up an apple stand from apples of our tree & earned enough money to **buy her stuffed animals a camper** for their travels ;)]

### Fun:

- Dogs- building them cardboard box apartments; giving them rides in her wagon/ bike trailer
- Ride Horse, Swim, Jump on Trampoline
- Friends
- Stuffed Animals [who all have hearts & life stories 😊]
- Gymnastics, Aerial Silks
- Board Games
- Tesla video games
- Paying for other people's ice cream before they check out 😊 [Maija is quick to say: "Mama, should we pay for the person behind us?"] ♥



Maija



DECORATING HER BIRTHDAY CAKE!



FEEDING REINDEER [NORTH POLE, AK]



BABY SITTING ♥



WATCHING FOR ORCA WHALES [AK]



THE STUFFIES ON ADVENTURE



<< PAPA (BRIAN)  
BROUGHT  
MAIJA'S  
BIRTHDAY  
PRESENT-  
A REAL LIVE  
PONY- CLIP  
CLOPPING RIGHT  
INTO THE HOUSE!  
:D



BESTIES



BEACH DAY WITH FRIENDS



WILL WORK FOR JAWBREAKERS! 😊



MAIJA WITH FRIENDS

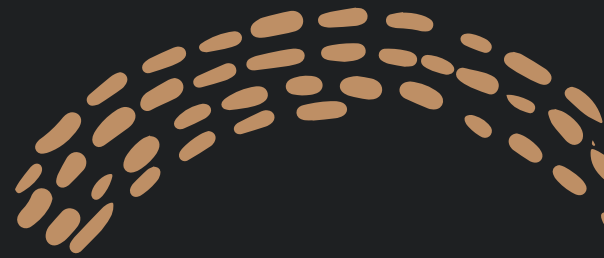


HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MAIJA!



HAWAIIAN DAY- DOGS INCLUDED

# SITKA



## + KODAK pups



SITKA

MINI GERMAN SHEPHERD BLEND ♥

THRIVES LEARNING TRICKS

[GIVES HUGS, FALLS OVER "DEAD", FINDS/ LOOKS AFTER

KODAK, & SHUTS DOORS FOR US!]

LOVSSSS FRISBEE. & SQUIRRELS

ADORES OPENING CHRISTMAS PRESENTS WITH US :)

GOOFY & SWEET HAVANESE.

HYPOALLERGENIC & SUPER SOFT

SLEEPS WITH LEGS STRAIGHT UP IN THE AIR :D

SPIES ON THE NEIGHBORS (TALK ABOUT NOSEY!),

BUNNY-HOPS AROUND IN THE SNOW, & CUDDLES

ANYONE WHO GIVES HIM THE "OK" TO SNUGGLE ♥

MAIJA + THE DOGS:

"PLAY SCHOOL",

JUMP ON THE TRAMPOLINE, PUT ON SHOWS,

& TRY CLIMB TREES. [HAHA]

MAIJA **INSISTS** ON HAULING A BIKE TRAILER BEHIND HER BIKE FOR PRINCE KODAK WHEN HE GETS TIRED ON WALKS...

[AHEM. SHE MIGHT ALSO INSIST ON HAULING BIG OL' SITKA. AND SITKA **LOVES** IT.] THEY AREN'T AN OUNCE SPOILED. :)

KODAK



KELLY SPRINGS, FLORIDA

LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS  
JESUS LOVES YOU... 🎵  
TRY TO SHOW KINDNESS IN  
ALL THAT YOU DO.  
BE GENTLE AND LOVING IN  
DEED AND IN THOUGHT,  
FOR THESE ARE THE  
THINGS JESUS TAUGHT.



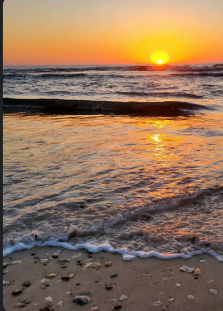
WYOMING FRIENDS!



CANADA

# OUR FAMILY VIBE

**PRIORITIES:**  
**Responsibility:** Age appropriate tasks help children to learn **they matter to the well being of their family!**  
**Open communication:** Life flows much smoother with communication between the family members! Sometimes it's hard, but still important.  
**Family Time:** We **purposely spend time** exploring, going out, reading, playing board games, & eating supper together.



OUTER BANKS, NC

SPEAK to your CHILDREN as if they are the WISEST, KINDEST, MOST BEAUTIFUL and MAGICAL HUMANS on earth, for what they BELIEVE is what they BECOME ♡

-POSTED TO OUR REFRIGERATOR



VALDEZ, ALASKA

"WE FEEL BLESSED TO HAVE SUCH A JOB, SCHEDULE, + A CAN-DO ATTITUDE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN! TRAVELING IS A LITERAL BREATH OF FRESH AIR & FREEDOM!"

We are happiest exploring & adventuring!  
We find beauty around us, anywhere we are...  
● Our "Own Backyard": state parks/land, storybook land, lakes, pools, children museums, & other local gems!  
● "Airplane Flight": to a destination  
● "Camper Van": Drive to explore the 49 states [& Canada] that we can reach by land! 😊



WE CAN DO HARD THINGS!



HAWAII



MAIJA, COUSIN ELIN + BRIAN. OUR HIKE TO HOT SPRINGS IN IDAHO

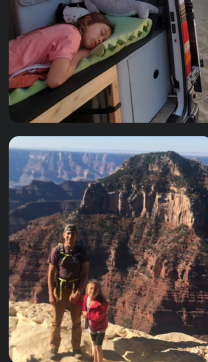


US, IN CANADA ♡

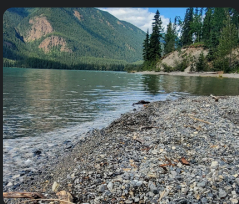
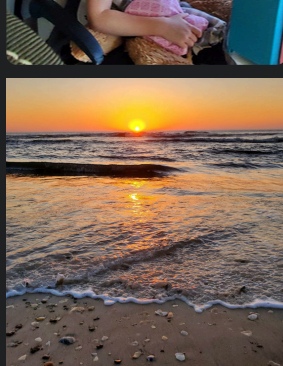
# ADVENTURES *from around the World*



TWIRLING in the soft sand under the glow of the moon. Waking up to CRASHING WAVES. Rolling out of bed onto horseback. Halting the van to let MAMA GRIZZLY with her babies lumber down the mountain in search of salmon. Snorkeling through the HAWAIIAN seas to watch lazy turtles paddle by. Smelling the stinky sea lions as they BARK for fishing rights. Yodeling off the MOUNTAIN tops.



The experience of travel is exotic. It's always humbling. It's awe inspiring. Yet, locals in every single location live their day to day lives there!



Isn't it amazing we all live on this world, yet we have such different ways of life? Despite all of the amazing adventures we take & the sights we see- we have found it's the PEOPLE that are THE MOST INSPIRING, & the reason we return home fulfilled & content. We will continue to travel, learn & seek understandings from those around us. It is amazing what God has done on the earth; but we find the most peace in **connecting with the people** that God places in our path to **help us on our life journey.** ♥



FAMILY TRAVEL TO OUTER BANKS, NC

## BRIAN'S FAMILY

Grandma & Grandpa, plus 3 of Brian's brothers/families, **live close- a few hours away in Minnesota!** We make many weekend trips to their homes. One brother, James, lives near us- Maija doesn't miss a chance to tease him, play with his dogs, or go ride horses together!

Brian's family is **always ready for fun:** a zoo trip, walk to the park, board games- and Gramps & Grandma recently showed us some of their [20 mile, gracious!] bike rides! **Maija ADORES** spending time with **her cousins;** Elin, Maija's age, comes to stay for a week or 2 during the summer- or joins us on some of our camper van travels! 😊

We always look forward to a **special Christmas** with Brian's family; a full day, or often a weekend, is set aside to cook special meals (always Chinese fried rice!), tell stories, sing songs, & take turns opening gifts - always thoughtful, & often hilarious! The rest of the weekend often involves board games, playing, sledding & visiting. We are so thankful our children will have cousins on both sides of the family for these events.

Rachel feels she completely lucked out with her inlaws! We can always count on a listening ear or wise word if we need advice, and they are just the most welcoming family to everyone who knows them.

A random note on Grandma: she *insists* on making sausage & eggs for the "grand-dogs", who (of course!) adore her! :D Grandpa, a retired doc, is handy to have on call if we need help regarding medical questions. We also REALLY enjoy traveling with Brian's family, which we've done multiple times: island/ lake camping in MN & visiting Hawaii & beaches of Outer Banks, NC.



THE UNCLES MADE A HUGE IGLOO ONE WINTER! [GRAMPS & GRANDMA W/ SITKA (DOG) & MAIJA]



SWEETIE COUSINS

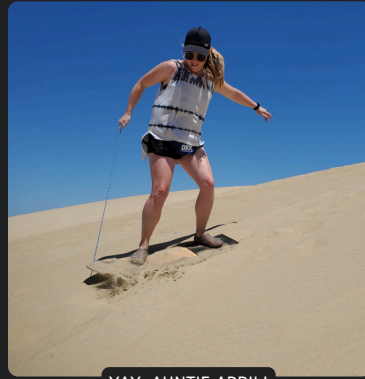
BRIAN'S FAMILY



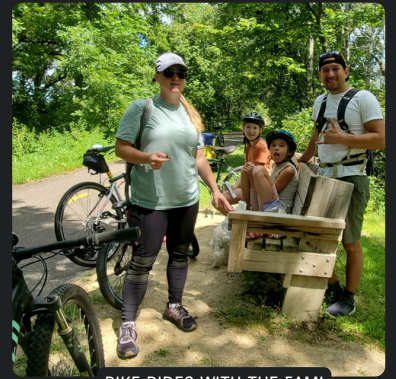
FUNNY UNCLE JAMES



COUSIN ROBI



YAY, AUNTIE APRIL!



BIKE RIDES WITH THE FAM!



ELIN & MAIJA-CAMPER VAN FUN



GRANDPA LOVES TO BE ACTIVE!



AUNTIE LAURA W/ NEW COUSIN CLARA



GAME TIME WITH THE UNCLES



UNCLE DAN & AUNTIE LAURA'S WEDDING



GIRL COUSINS TRIP WITH BRIAN & RACHEL!



RACHEL PLAYING CHARADES @ APRIL & MARCUS



DIM SUM!



TEA PARTY AT AUNTIE LAURA'S HOUSE



UNCLE MARCUS & AUNTIE APRIL FUNNY GAG GIFTS!



CHRISTMAS FUN



GIRL CLAN



FAMILY TRIP- OUTER BANKS, NC



WHEEEE GRANDMA!





FAMILY ADVENTURE TO OMAHA ZOO, NEBRASKA

# RACHEL'S FAMILY

We are close to both extended families! While some weekends & holidays are spent with Brian's family, the remainder of weekends, holidays and birthdays are spent with Rachel's, who all live near us!

Both are uplifting & caring, and they do anything they can to help raise their extended family.

We **ABSOLUTELY LOVE** our **MULTI-CULTURAL VIBE** in our families! Different traditions, foods, customs and languages are **SO** fun to learn about! Between Brian & Rachel, our extended familial heritages include:

**Finnish, Lappish/ Indigenous Northern Scandinavian, Norwegian, Asian, Hispanic, & African American!**

We think it's such a fun mix! ;)

We especially respect the parenting styles within Rachel's extended families; a relaxed parenting style- with loving boundaries, makes for happy, well-adjusted kiddos! We have done a few **weekend trips** with them- Mt. Rushmore + western South Dakota & Omaha Zoo. They are a super fun clan to visit with! And one thing about Grandma: you will **ALWAYS leave with more than you came with!** Whether it's **her birthday** or yours, you'll come home with food, toys, comics-whatever she finds that you might need! ;)



OMAHA ZOO!



MT. RUSHMORE, SOUTH DAKOTA



COUSINS MARIELL + KJELL



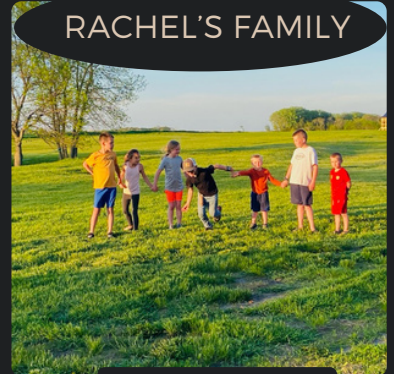
MAIJA W/ ROLAND & NELLIE!!



MAIJA & GOD CHILD KJELL



SWEET COUSINS



RACHEL'S FAMILY

ALWAYS PLAYING OUTSIDE!



COUSIN CLAN



UNCLE MICHAEL & THE COUSIN TRAIN!



AUNTIE MARY & UNCLE ANDREAS  
W/ FAMILY



MAIJA & MARIELL



SO MANY FUN COUSINS



GO, AUNTIE MICHELLE & ROLAND!



BRIAN WITH NIECE MARIELL ;)



LITTLE MAIJA, GRANDMA & GRANDPA



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MAIJA!



AUNTIE MICHELLE & UNCLE MICHAEL  
W/ FAMILY



AUNTIE SACHA & UNCLE IVAN + KIDDOS!



BEST BUDDIES



HOME & *Community*  
SOUTH DAKOTA SUMMER  
DAYS



COUSIN ELIN



FRIENDS ~ SLEEPOVERS ~ HORSE RIDES ~ POOLS ~ BABY HORSES & KITTENS ~ BIKING ~ LAKES  
PLAY GROUNDS ~ WATERSLIDES ~ HISTORICAL FESTIVALS ~ ROASTING MARSHMALLOWS ~ BONFIRES



# HOME & Community

## WINTER DAYS



EVERY CHRISTMAS MORNING,  
children in town wait eagerly for local firefighters to deliver  
a bag of treats to their doors! ♥



We like to say **there's no such thing as bad weather- only poor clothing!**

During the snowy season, it's fun to **ski, snow shoe, ice skate, sled** (our dog, Sitka, pulls sled!), & explore the **frozen lakes!** We love to attend the **small town winter parades**- especially the ones that encourage kids to join in. :) When it's truly too chilly to be outside- there's indoor pools & rock climbing.. or our favorite: **cozying up by the fire** with a good book & some hot chocolate!



MAIJA'S PONY, PIXIE DUST

# HOME & *Community*



**OUR SMALL TOWN LIFE & COMMUNITY**  
INCLUDES NEIGHBORS WHO STOP TO SAY HELLO, LEND A HAND SNOW BLOWING OR PICK UP A KID FROM SCHOOL! THERE ARE FAMILIES WITH KIDS WHO PLAY BETWEEN OUR HOMES ALL SUMMER & IN THE EVENINGS. NEARBY WE HAVE AN ICE CREAM SHOP, 4 FUN PARKS, AN INDOOR WALKING TRACK, A LAKE, & AN INDOOR + OUTDOOR SWIMMING POOL!

# SCHOOL *Days*

## We have a brand new elementary school!

Our staff are dedicated & class sizes are perfect for the epic “small school feel!”

The teachers let our dogs come visit for show & tell, and I know that’s not the extent of it!

We have seen both horses & baby calves in the parking lot! :)

We also **adore** our fantastic principal, who is understanding & **quick to listen** to her students and parents.

Maija agreed to attending preschool on one term: that she would get to participate in “graduating” at the end of 2020! Unfortunately, when school shut down due to the covid epidemic, she was unable to walk for “graduation.”

Knowing how much this meant to her, **Rachel set up a little graduation “stage”** for her, **complete with pomp & circumstance, and Grandma, aunts & cousins cheered and clapped for her “at safe distance”** from their van! :)





# HOME *Sweet* HOME

WE KEEP OUR HOME MINIMAL, MODERN, CLEAN [GOTTA MAKE A BIG MESS EVERY SO OFTEN, THOUGH ;)] & COZY! IT MAKES IT A BREEZE TO HAVE FRIENDS OVER, AND GO ON ADVENTURES.. OR JUST RELAX. :)

FAVORITE YARD FEATURES: SAFE FENCED IN BACKYARD, HOT TUB, GARDEN & TRAMPOLINE.

WE ARE ALSO LOOKING FOR LAND TO BUILD A NEW HOME IN THE COUNTRY! :)



We knew we'd have children in time- we did not know it would come about through adoption! We are **so excited** to step into this plan!

Our hearts are open & waiting.

We feel in our hearts that we already love this child as deeply as our own!

We have visited with friends who have adopted & there is so much **positivity + support** in our relationships with them! We will continue to seek out people who have been affected by adoption, so as to put together an understanding from all sides.

We have a **strong support system**: grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, a church with many resources, and therapists; there is **much experience + expertise** within our support system & we are **thankful daily for all that is available to us**.

We have tried to portray our life as we know it with open hearts.

Any child that we adopt will be treated & loved as our own, + will experience this life as we have endeavored to share with you in this book. ♥

## THOUGHTS *on Adoption*



## WE HOPE TO OFFER *Your Child*



♥ SO MUCH Love

♥ A Nurturing, Supportive Home

♥ Life surrounded by Extended **Family, Cousins + Friends**

♥ Christian Faith

♥ Strong **Morals + Values**:

Self Esteem, Respect, Honesty, Wisdom, + Kindness

♥ A "How Can I?" Attitude towards Life :)

♥ A Unique View & New Friends via World **Travel**

♥ **Financial Support** & Education

♥ **Your Story**

Our wish is to **share your story** with them from the very first day, **weaving in the love you have for them**. We feel it is very important for them to know!

## WE'D LIKE TO SHARE *with you*

- **Reassurance** of your child's well being
- **Pictures** of your baby's milestones
- **Love & Understanding**



We are open to visiting about how much involvement you'd like to have with us. We look forward to meeting & getting to know you!



**THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE WITH US AS WE OPEN OUR HEARTS & HOME** ♥





RIAN + RACHEL

with Maija

