

Dean & Jessica



Our Story

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Hi, we're Dean and Jess! Thank you for taking the time to read about us. Our relationship started in what we think is the best way possible: as good friends. We met as roommates in graduate school in 2016, where we were both getting our Master's degree in Education. We had shared interests in improving access to high-quality education for all kids, and Dean even grew to love Jess's orange tabby, Willam, who was the first cat Dean had ever lived with.



We stayed in touch until we reunited in California, where Jess was getting her Ph.D., and Dean was working in education, advocating for better opportunities for all kids. We realized, after spending more time together, that our friendship was changing into something bigger, and we started dating. We had many conversations about our different backgrounds and how those experiences influenced our values. From the very start of our relationship, we both knew that adoption was our first choice for growing our family. Jess has multiple family members who were adopted and is familiar with what makes every adoption unique and special.



Sharing a few laughs during our vows



All dressed up for a friend's wedding

In 2022, we got married by a beautiful lake in Maine with our closest family and friends. We lived in North Carolina for a while, adopted a rescue dog named Cocoa, and ultimately decided to buy a home and settle down in Maine, Jess's home state. We love being on the East Coast, close to our family and friends. We know that we can give a child a not only loving and stable home full of joy, but also a loving community and network of friends. We are truly looking forward to being parents.

About Jess

Some might describe me as having “humble beginnings.” Coming from a poor family, I have accomplished a lot in my life, including being a first-generation college graduate and attaining my Ph.D. in social policy. I have spent years studying inequality in opportunity, trying to understand how to improve opportunities for children growing up like I did. I got a full scholarship to college because the right teacher encouraged me to apply to the right college at the right time, and it changed my life forever. I strongly believe that opportunities like that shouldn’t be left up to chance!

Though I never had a relationship with my biological father, and was raised by a single mom who wasn’t able to provide a supportive childhood (and with whom I do not have contact), I have an incredible “chosen family” who supports me and cheers me on every day. In college, I began spending holidays with this family, and over the years, they have become who I turn to for support, spend holidays with, and celebrate life’s joys with. They have unofficially “adopted” me into their family, gifting me with two parents, two siblings, and many nieces and nephews. They live close by, and we see them regularly.

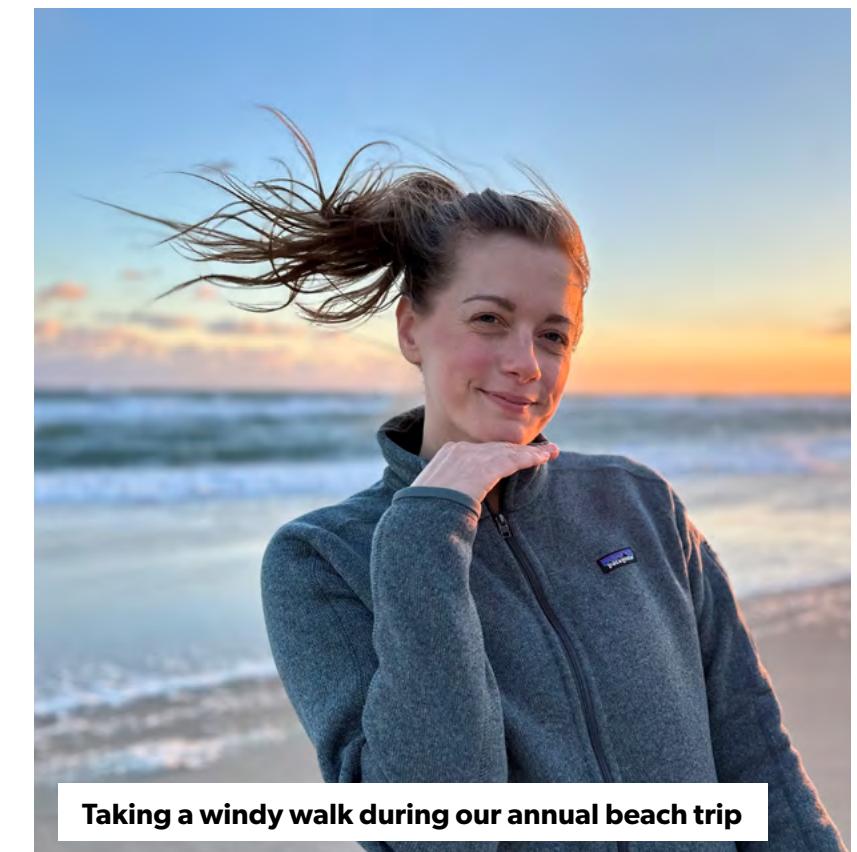


I look forward to providing a child with a strong foundation and all the support they need, from reading to them every night, to learning sports and musical instruments, to helping them with homework and navigating life's challenges with resilience.

The best chapter of my life so far is meeting, marrying, and growing my family with Dean.

From Dean:

Jess’s life experiences motivate her entire career and her desire to advocate for child wellbeing through data science, writing, and policy advocacy. Jess is the hardest-working, most determined person I know. One big thing to know about Jess is that there is no problem that she cannot solve! She brings that energy to her work, but she also brings it to everyday tasks, like repairing a squeaky door, organizing the pantry, or perfecting a new recipe. She gives everything 100% and I love that about her. She is left-handed and very proud of it. Jess is also a very honest and nonjudgmental person. She accepts people for exactly who they are. Feeling that full, unwavering acceptance was one of the things that made me fall in love with her, and I also know will make her a great parent.



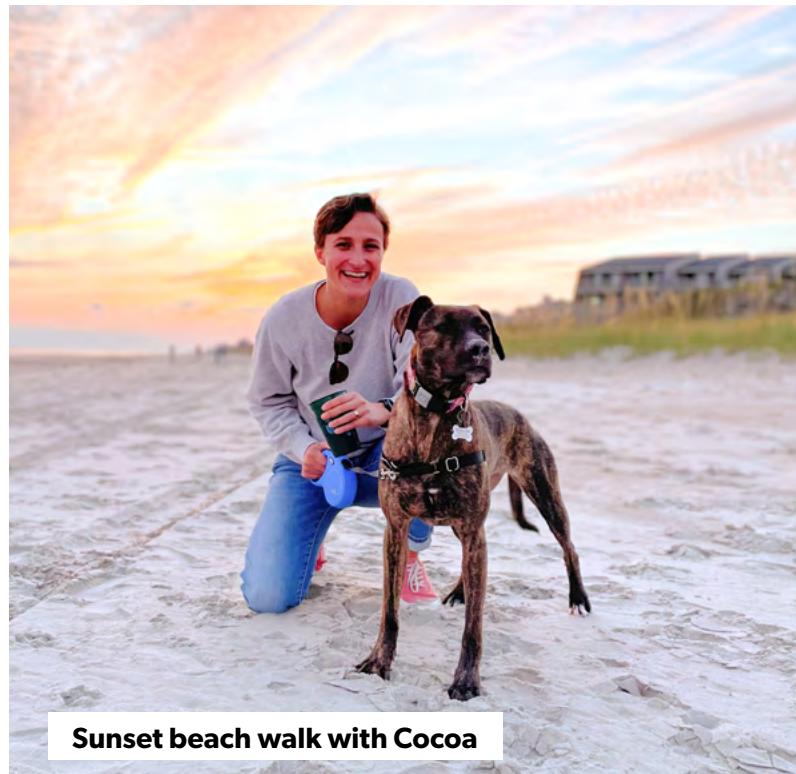
About Dean

I grew up with a loving and supportive family, with caring parents and two sweet, spunky sisters. My grandparents were very involved in my life and never missed a soccer game or a school play. (I'm named after my grandmother, Dean). I played sports, went to and worked at summer camp, and my family was active in our community. My childhood was a happy one!



Dean and her sisters at the lake

Marrying Jess—the very best person I know!—and growing our family together is simply creating more love, joy, and support that I look forward to sharing.



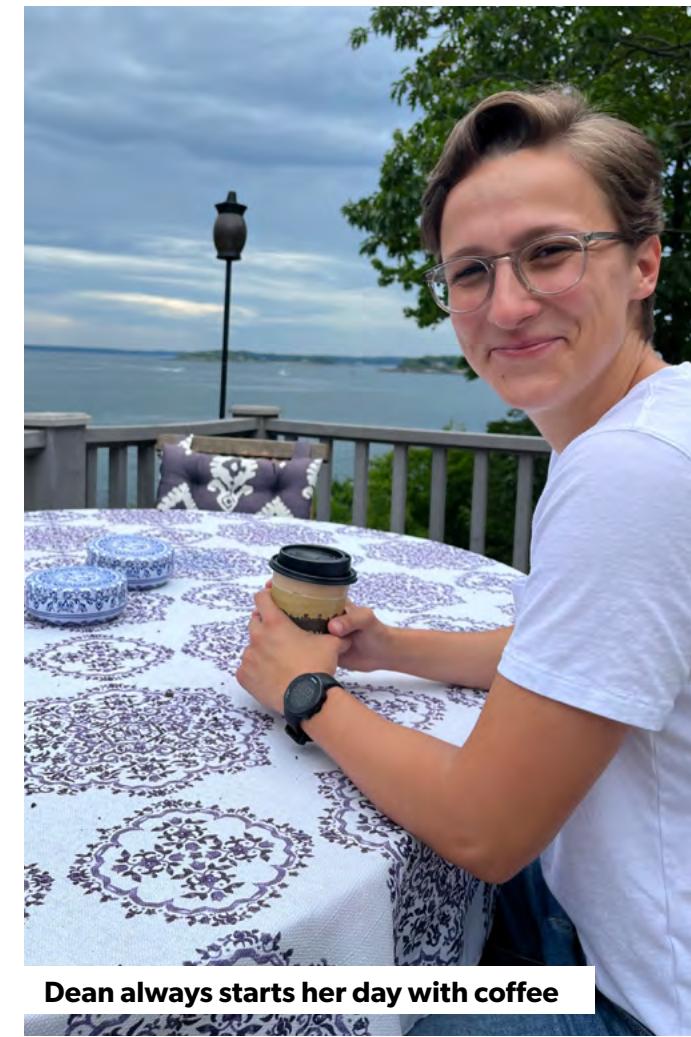
Sunset beach walk with Cocoa

My family moved a few times for my dad's job, so I was forced to learn how to make friends. While this was difficult for me at certain ages—middle school especially—it taught me important lessons. Now, it is easy for me to adapt to new environments and make friends wherever I go. Changing schools showed me how different schools have different levels of resources, which sparked my interest in the inequalities in the U.S. education system.

I went to college, and became a public school teacher in Louisiana. I loved my students and teaching, and have been committed to improving education ever since as a communications, public affairs, and public advocacy specialist, focusing on improving access to quality education for all kids. I've had a pretty wonderful life, filled with love, joy, and support. I don't take it for granted.

From Jess

What makes Dean so special is the genuine warmth and friendliness she brings to all interactions. Her sense of humor and easygoing nature make her a memorable person, and people close to her feel very lucky to benefit from the fun and laughter she brings to every social occasion. She is a people person and her incredible empathy makes her very skilled at reading and adjusting to people's emotions.



Dean always starts her day with coffee

Our Home

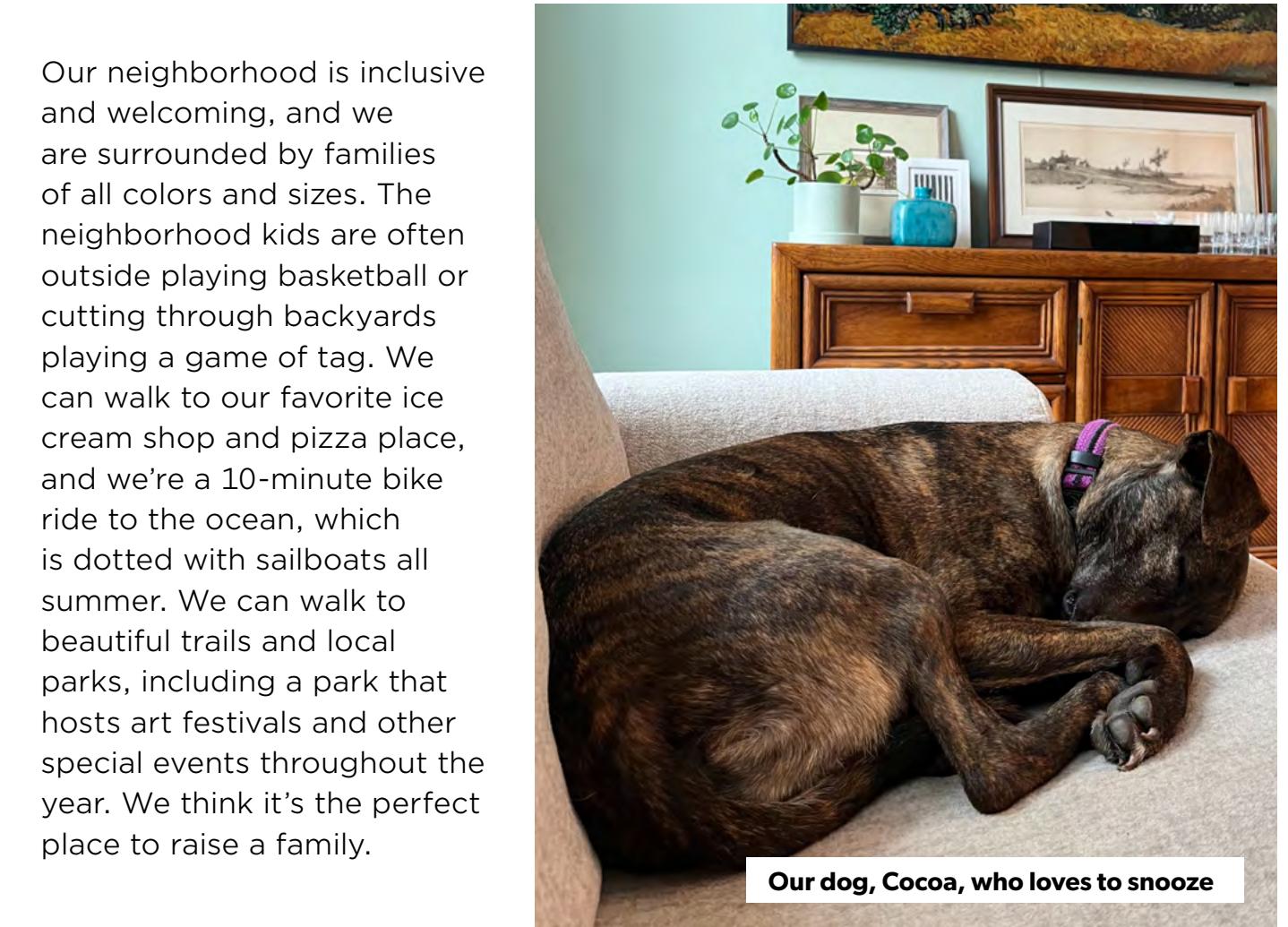


Our four-bedroom home sits on a small dead-end street where we know all our neighbors, including a pediatrician, a nurse, and a history teacher. We have large windows that let in lots of light and make our home feel warm and cozy. Our home has a full guest suite that we expect to be fully booked with grandparents once the little one arrives! Our cat is often curled up in one of the windowsills, with our dog snoozing close by. We also have an awesome fenced-in backyard and have already picked out a spot to put a swing set. We love spending time in our yard, which is shaded by big maple trees and is the perfect size for playing in a sprinkler or a game of catch.



Our cat, Willam

Our neighborhood is inclusive and welcoming, and we are surrounded by families of all colors and sizes. The neighborhood kids are often outside playing basketball or cutting through backyards playing a game of tag. We can walk to our favorite ice cream shop and pizza place, and we're a 10-minute bike ride to the ocean, which is dotted with sailboats all summer. We can walk to beautiful trails and local parks, including a park that hosts art festivals and other special events throughout the year. We think it's the perfect place to raise a family.



Our dog, Cocoa, who loves to snooze



Piled on our couch after moving into our new home

Our city is beautiful, diverse, and safe. Our local high school is one of the most diverse high schools in Maine. There is plenty to do all around us, including a nearby children's museum and some fun minor-league sports teams (Dean, especially, is a big sports fan).

Our Support System



Jess's chosen family

Our support system is a mix of family, chosen family, and close friends. We come from different walks of life. Dean's family is very close—they talk and text all the time and visit each other regularly. She considers her sisters to be two of her best friends and talks to them constantly.



With Dean's family on a sunset hike in the mountains

Our home is one in which children will see that family isn't just about who you're related to, and it's not just about who you live with—it's also about the people who love and support you, near and far.



Holiday lunch with our niece

Our close friends are a diverse group of people from all walks of life, representing a wide variety of cultures, skin tones, class backgrounds, and professions. We consider ourselves lucky to be surrounded and supported by such big-hearted people, all of whom support our decision to adopt. We have already started receiving gifts of baby clothes and toys!



Celebrating graduation with friends

Jess has two biological half-brothers whom she talks to regularly—one lives on the coast with a four-year-old daughter who we love to spend time with, and one is attending college with his GI benefits. Jess maintains close familial ties with the Passamaquoddy Tribe in Maine, and our home will be one that values the rich Indigenous history of our state and region.

Traditions, Hobbies & Interests

Every 4th of July, we spend time with Jess's chosen family at a beautiful lake house in Maine—the very same house where we got married! We watch the fireworks over the lake and spend several days swimming, boating, and playing yard games in the sun. We visit the lake house several times throughout the summer and fall until our final visit every year for Thanksgiving, when we all come together one last time to share our gratitude and, most importantly, eat lots of food.



At the lake for the 4th of July



Christmas parties with our dear friends

Christmas is a particularly special time when all of Dean's family members come together in one house in North Carolina. We watch football, play board games, and cook together. It's full of love (and more desserts than anyone could ever eat, though Jess tries). After Christmas, we head to the North Carolina coast, where Dean's family has a beach house. We spend several weeks walking the beach and watching the sunset, enjoying the (relatively warm) North Carolina winter before we journey back to Maine. We're so excited to have a child join us in enjoying this annual retreat!



Hiking with friends in the desert



Sunset walks on the beach in N.C.

We are both big readers: growing up, Jess would get lost in a book at the school library. Dean was raised in a house full of books and her parents would read to her and her sisters every night. We are excited to pass along our love of reading. In the warmer months, we love to ride bikes and be outside. We have many friends who love to ski, snowboard, and ice skate, and we're excited to learn how to do some of these activities and create a winter family hobby.

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about us, our lives, and our community. Please know that we admire and respect your courage and the profound act of love that you are considering.

We can't wait to share our lives with a baby, and will do all we can to ensure a child in our home grows up unconditionally loved, supported, protected, and cared for. We will provide everything a child needs to thrive: patience and love from both of us, strong core values, a commitment to education, and tons of adoring family and friends. We want nothing more than for a child in our home to feel as though they can become whoever they want to be. We truly believe it is our job to guide them, help them explore the world around them, and ultimately support them in becoming the best version of themselves they can be.

It's our plan to be honest about adoption from the very start, gently helping the child understand that the decisions about their adoption were rooted in love and strength. We are committed to whatever level of openness makes you most comfortable. It is important to us that they know where they came from and all parts of their identity. Regardless of the level of openness that you prefer, we will always remind the child of the loving choice that their birth mother made for them so that they could have a life with our family.

We are so looking forward to becoming parents. We wish you all our best as you decide what's right for you and the child. Thank you for taking the time to consider us.

Warmly,

Dean & Jess





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