

MONIKA & DEBORA

with
SAMUEL



Dear Birth Parent(s),

Thank you for taking the time to get to know us. We are Debora and Monika, a devoted, loving and fun couple who have been together for many years. We are very excited to grow our family through adoption. We would love to welcome a child of any race, background and gender into our family. As you learn about us, we hope that you will feel how much we enjoy being parents to our son Samuel and how excited we are to extend our family. We are ready to open our hearts and life to your child. We are open to providing whatever level of contact that you feel confident with.



We can only imagine how hard it must be to consider adoption for your child. We hope that the prospect of a good future for your child in a loving adoptive home can give you some comfort in this difficult time. We have the utmost respect for your decision and admire your strength.

With this book we hope to give you a glimpse into our lives and home as well as our values. We would love to also get to know you better.



at our wedding in 2012

Our **STORY**

We met at university in 2005 when we were just 18 and 20 years old. Monika was studying archeology and Debora was studying to be a molecular biologist.

Although we were very young, we knew we were meant to be together. In 2008, we moved in together and in 2012 we got married in a beautiful park close to our home. In 2014 we decided to embark on a new adventure and moved from our home country Germany to the Netherlands, where we have lived ever since.

Despite no longer living near our families and old friends, we have kept in close contact and visit whenever possible. Besides that we also met a new and diverse group of friends here in The Netherlands.

Even when we were very young we both knew we wanted to have a family and we were thrilled when in 2017 after years of trying and hoping Samuel was born to finally make our dream come true. We could not be happier being parents. We love every minute of watching Samuel grow and enjoy family life together.

Even after 15 years together we are still madly in love and committed to each other and our family. Now it is time to start our journey to adoption and to complete our family.



in 2008



in 2010



in 2013 with Monika's parents



at our wedding in 2012



in 2015



in 2017



in 2018 with friends



in 2019

About **Monika** (written by Debora)

Monika is my best friend and the love of my life. Although we were both very young when we met, we both knew from the start that we wanted to be together forever.

She is fun to be around, has a great sense of humor and always makes the best of every situation. Monika is a partner I can rely on and together we build a strong team. Monika is very open-minded and embraces diversity, she is never quick to judge but always sees the best in people. Monika gives people around her the space and support they need to grow as a person and always offers a helping hand when needed.

Monika knows exactly what she wants and does not give up easily, this was especially obvious during the long years of pursuing a PhD. Although she works hard, she is a very family-oriented person and is always open to family trips to the zoo, the swimming pool or the beach.



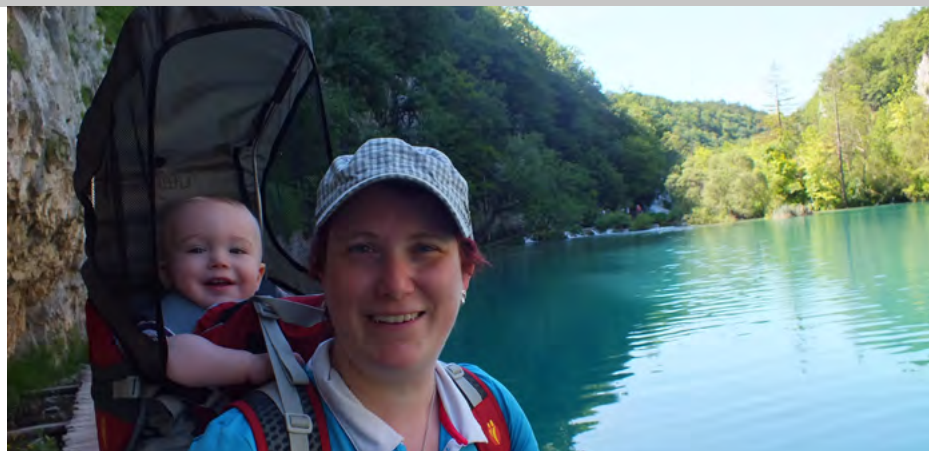
I think she is the perfect parent for any child. She is very patient and caring. When Samuel was little, Monika was the only person who could get him to go to sleep. She would sit next to him and sing songs when he had trouble settling down. She always puts our son's needs first. She spends as much time with Samuel as possible and includes him in all household activities, even if it then takes double the time.

It is heart-warming to see how much fun they have together and how much they adore each other. I look forward to raising another child with her.



Fun facts about Monika:

- Monika is an excellent (vegetarian) cook and loves to merge flavours and spices from around the world
- after finishing high-school, Monika worked as girl scout camp counselor in the US
- Monika lived 1 year in Australia
- Monika loves (riding) horses
- Monika recently started learning how to play the piano
- Monika knows countless random facts
- Monika is an only child and always hoped for a sibling



About Debora (written by Monika)

When I first met Debora she was only 18 years old but even then she was the most confident, balanced and focussed person I knew.

Debora knows exactly what she wants and works hard to achieve her goals, while at the same time always being generous, caring and patient with everyone around her. I was immediately head over heels for her. 15 years later I still feel butterflies when I hear her key in the door.

Debora is a great partner and an amazing mother to Samuel. She is always there for him when he needs her. They play a lot together and Debora likes to invent fun games for them. When he is sick she will carry him and hold him all night long if necessary and then in the morning get up to work without ever complaining. She is extremely patient and will explain things over and over again if necessary.



Even though Debora is proud of her career, her family always comes first. When Samuel was born she stayed home for a couple of months to take care of him. Debora is very open and always willing to try new things. Thanks to her I got to snorkel with a whale shark, the biggest kind of fish, in Australia. I am very lucky to have found my soulmate and I am grateful for the life we have built together. It is a privilege to be able to raise a child together with Debora and I hope that soon we can welcome a second child into our family.



Fun facts about Debora:

- Debora is the youngest of three sisters
- Debora is very creative and sews beautiful (children's) clothes for Samuel and as gifts for our family and friends
- Debora tells Samuel self-invented bed-time stories
- Debora was an excellent swimmer/soccer player in her youth
- Debora spent a total of 6 months in the UK going to school and doing internships
- Debora loves cats
- Debora loves metal and hard rock music



About **SAMUEL**

Samuel is a happy, social and active child, who loves spending time outdoors. Even when he was a little baby he was always smiling and laughing.

We often go to the zoo or a local playground where he can run around and play. He also loves trains. We regularly take him to the local train station to watch the trains. When we are at home, Samuel spends hours playing with his wooden train set.

Samuel is very excited to become a big brother. He likes to spend time with other children and would love to have the whole house full of kids all the time.

Even though we live in a city we find it very important that Samuel spends time outdoors and is familiar with nature so we make sure to take him on trips and outings frequently.





Fun facts about Samuel:

- Samuel's favourite food is lentils and pasta (traditional German food) and he loves (Mango) ice-cream
- Samuel has 4 cousins and calls them once per week
- Samuel has a whole collection of stuffed elephants that all sleep in his bed
- Samuel speaks Dutch and German
- Samuel's favourite activities are jumping on grandpa's big trampoline and swimming
- Samuel does not like cold water and pizza



Family *and* Friends

Debora's
parents



We are very close to our families. Debora has two older sisters. One of them has three children, and the other one is currently expecting her second child. Everyone is very excited about our adoption plans. The whole family meets regularly at Debora's parents' house in the German countryside. Both Debora's parents are retired and love spending time with their grandkids. Monika grew up in the south of Germany as an only child. She always wished for siblings. Luckily she has a large extended family with lots of aunts and uncles and cousins her age. Two of her cousins are currently expecting babies. Monika's parents are devoted grandparents who visit often and adore Samuel. They are very much looking forward to another grandchild.

Traditional Christmas brunch with Monika's
extended family



Roadtrip with
cousins



Samuel and grandpa
playing at the beach



Vacation with
Debora's family



Samuel and his
cousins snuggling on
the couch



Trip to
Rome, Italy,
with
Monika's
mum



Trip to
London, UK,
with friends



Fun with
friends



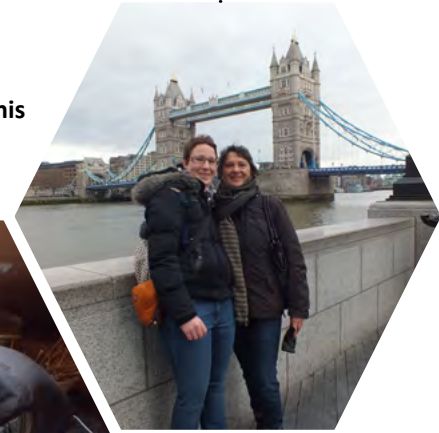
Samuel playing hockey with his friends at a local playground



Debora, her sisters and grandpa at our wedding



Debora and her mum in London, UK



Samuel and his cousin on grandpa's trampoline



Samuel painting with his grandma



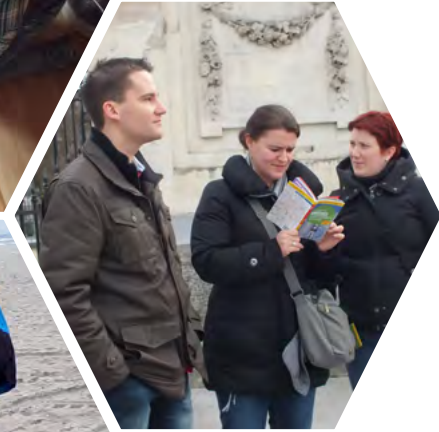
Monika with her parents and Samuel



With friends at the local petting zoo



City trip to Brussels, Belgium, with friends



Debora with her mum and brother-in-law



Samuel with his grandparents



Samuel and his grandpa at the beach



Fun on grandpa's trampoline



Stonehenge with Monika's parents



Our Home

We live in a quiet residential area of a medium-sized, diverse city. Our home is a traditional Dutch town house from the 1930s, which was completely modernized a couple of years ago.

Schools, day care and several playgrounds are all within walking distance of our house. There are a lot of young families in the area and several of our neighbours have young children.

It is a friendly, safe neighbourhood and we enjoy living there. The city centre with shops, museums and restaurants is only a short bike ride away.



The nursery



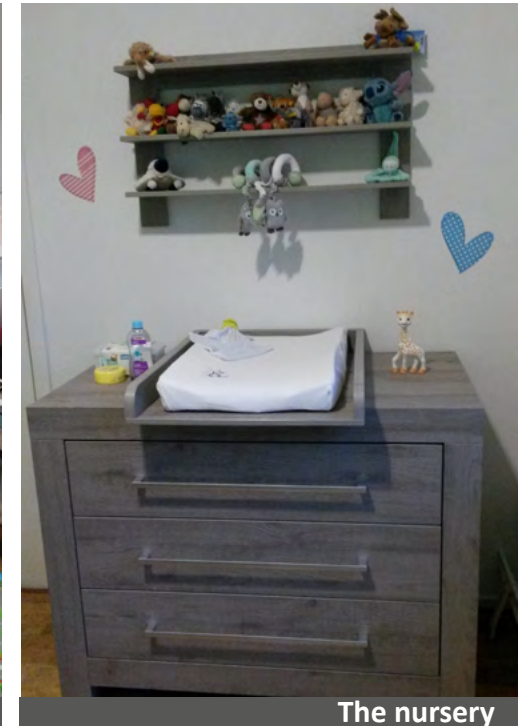
Our street



Our neighbourhood



Living room with playcorner for kids



The nursery

The Netherlands

The Netherlands is a small country in Western Europe. We moved here from Germany in 2014. The Netherlands is a great place to live. The people are friendly, open and health conscious. Everyone owns a bike and we like to cycle almost everywhere.

It is a safe country with a high standard of living. Your child will grow up in a diverse country with universal health care, affordable education and a good social system.



Traditional Dutch windmills

Our work

Monika used to work as an archeologist which required a lot of travel and we had to spend quite some time apart. Debora worked long hours in the lab doing cancer research. When we decided to start a family, we both switched to more family friendly careers while staying true to our passion.

Monika now works for a research funding organization coordinating research programs related to food security in Africa and Asia. As a public servant, she has excellent holiday and paid parental and sick leave arrangements. Her working hours are flexible and she can also work from home.

Debora now works for an NGO that supports African researchers in developing treatments for children in Africa suffering from infectious diseases such as HIV. Debora also has a flexible work schedule and the option to work from home or take extra days off as needed.

It is very important for us to do meaningful work and help people. At the same time we value a good work-life balance. We both work four days a week and spend one day during the week at home with Samuel. After adopting, Monika will stay home for several months to help your child settle in.



The canals in our hometown

Our Cats



Marco



We have two cats, Marco and Polo, who are very friendly and love to play and cuddle. They are 4 year old brothers. Their favourite activities are sleeping and eating. They also like to play with Samuel.



Polo



Our Traditions

As a German family living in the Netherlands we have embraced traditions from both countries, which we also want to share with our kids. When we adopt a child from the US we also plan to celebrate American holidays like Thanksgiving. The US expat community in the Netherlands hosts special celebrations for Independence Day which we also look forward to. We also have some traditions that we created as a family.

Our top 6 traditions:

- German Christmas: Christmas is the biggest family tradition of the year for many German families. We visit both sets of grandparents each year. In the weeks before Christmas we decorate the house and bake traditional cookies.
- King's Day: a traditional Dutch holiday in April celebrating the King's birthday with parades, music and flea markets
- Sunday family breakfast with either pancakes or waffles: we do that every Sunday before going on a fun day trip with the family
- Summer road trip/camping: each summer we go on a different road trip, usually camping along the way.
- Family time: each year we go away for a long weekend with Debora's and/or Monika's family
- Bedtime traditions: we have a dedicated bedtime ritual with Samuel. We read stories and sing traditional German lullabies



Debora and Samuel baking Christmas cookies



King's Day



Pancake breakfast on Sundays

A week with us





Samuel playing with his friends at daycare



swimming at the local pool



cooking time at the daycare



at the local zoo



Samuel likes to help taking care of our house



Debora preparing Sunday breakfast



day trip to a local farm

We love travelling

Terschelling,
one of the
Dutch islands



We are adventurous people and like to travel. Our favourite are road trips. We always take our tent and hiking boots and go camping whenever possible. That way we have seen most of Europe, the US, Canada, Australia and Vietnam. Last year we took Samuel to Iceland. We find it very important that kids get to know different countries and cultures. For our work we both travel to Africa about once or twice a year for a couple of days. When our kids are old enough we also want to take them to experience that continent.

Hiking in Austria



Halong Bay,
Vietnam



Berlin, Germany



Glacier in Iceland



Niagara Falls, US



Summer
vacation
in Sweden

Barcelona,
Spain



Trip to the
UK with
Monika's
parents

Boat trip in Sicily, Italy



Grand Canyon, US



City trip to Dublin, Ireland



City trip to Rome, Italy



Brittany, France



Orkney Islands, Schottland



Zakynthos, Greece



Hiking in Croatia



Camping at Lake Huron, Canada



Horseback riding, Dominican Republic



San Francisco, US



Australian Outback



Bavaria, Germany





Our promise

We promise to raise your child in a loving and safe home. We are open to any form of contact between your child and you and promise to keep you involved in their life if you wish. In any case your child will know about their story and your great love for them. We will cherish their heritage and teach them to be proud of where they are from. Your child will grow up having access to the best education and health care. We promise to support your child in finding their own way in life and happiness. We will share our values and teach your child the importance of empathy, tolerance and integrity. We will support your child to become the person they are meant to be.

Thank you

Thank you for reading our story and for considering us as parents for your child. We hope that you have gotten a view into our family life and the possibilities we can offer your child. If you would like to know more about us please contact our adoption agency. We are happy to answer any questions you might have.

You can call our adoption agency Forever Families Through Adoption at their Toll-Free Number: 1-866-922-3678 or directly at 1-914-939-1180.

With love and respect,

Debra & Monika

