

Christie + Cem



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Hi! We're Christie and Cem.

Thanks for taking the time to learn a bit about who we are and our hopes for our family.



Our Relationship

We met in 2009 in Washington, DC through our friend Celia - who was Cem's colleague and Christie's triathlon buddy. We immediately fell for each other! Cem sent Christie epically long text messages and burnt CDs of songs he thought she'd like, and Christie convinced him to sign up for a triathlon on their third date.



We easily merged into each others lives, sharing friends and interests, going out to eat in DC, traveling together, becoming close with each others' families, and celebrating each other's individuality.



After getting engaged and moving in together in 2014, we got married in Fredericksburg, VA in May 2015. Our hearts are full thinking of this day! Our friends officiated and played music for the ceremony, we were surrounded by loving family, we incorporated Turkish traditions, and had an amazing dance party.



What we love about each other...



What Christie loves about Cem:

- He is the kindest, sweetest person I've ever met
- How he shows love in words and actions
- His appreciation of the little things in life - like stopping to smell flowers on walks
- His silliness and ridiculous sense of humor
- How he makes everyone he interacts with feel special and cared for
- His active and healthy lifestyle



What Cem loves about Christie

- Literally everything, she makes my world a better place
- Her kindness, empathy, integrity, and resilience
- Her curiosity, intelligence, playfulness, and beauty inside and out
- How thoughtful and supportive she is towards me, our families, and our friends
- Her expertise in creating delicious bites and finding cozy corners to snuggle with pups and our friends' kids



We've been through a lot together over the past 15 years, particularly when Christie was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2016 just before our first wedding anniversary. She calls Cem "her angel" because of how he cared for when she was sick. We are so grateful that this is in the rear view window - she's been cancer-free for 8 years and is healthier than ever!

We're a great team - we know how to show up for each other and we've proven that difficult times only make our love stronger.



Cem

Pronounced like "Gem"
"C" sounds like "J" in Turkish!

What I do for work

I work in the biopharmaceutical industry where I advocate for equitable access to care for people impacted by cancer.

What I do for fun

Golf, soccer, skiing, weightlifting
Walks/hikes/snugs with our pups
Quality time with family & friends
Listen to music/podcasts/books
Live for my next meal



About Me

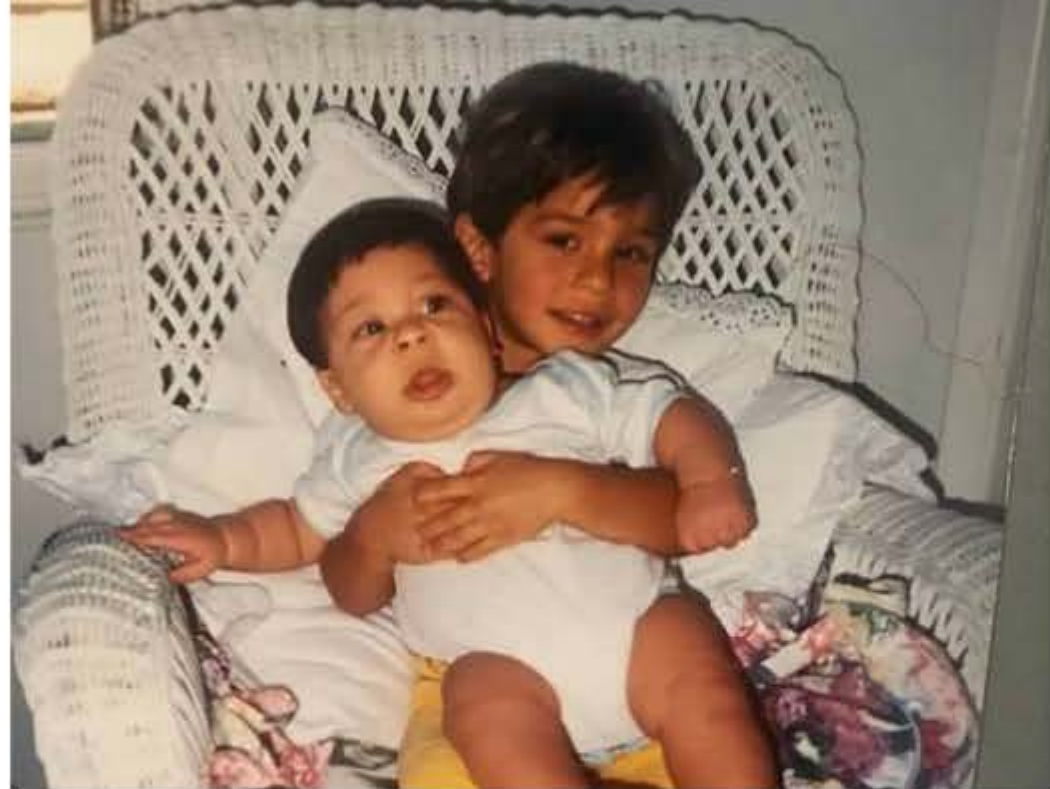
I've been described as a labrador puppy - silly, playful, curious, enthusiastic, full of love and affection, food-motivated, and thrive with a lot of physical activity.

I love connecting with people and building bridges between people. It's literally who I am - my name, Cem (pronounced like "Gem" or "Jem") means "uniter" in Turkish.

I speak three languages fluently - English, Turkish, and Spanish.

I love caring for my people and making them laugh - it's a small triumph for me any time I can get Christie to lovingly roll her eyes at my dad jokes or the ridiculous songs I make up about our pups.

My parents emigrated from Turkey to California in the 70s. I grew up in Santa Monica, CA.



My earliest memory was the gift of my brother Emre being born. We grew up as best friends playing together all of the time. I have wonderful memories playing competitive soccer and baseball, going to the beach with friends, and going on summer trips to visit family in Turkey, annual ski trips to Utah, road trips to national parks, days at the beach, and watching Santa Monica sunsets together.



My immediate family lives in Southern California and Reno, NV. The rest of my family lives in Turkey. Family is so special to me and despite living in different places, we make it a point to get our hugs in as often as possible and have video calls to stay connected in between. My younger brother is the greatest gift my parents could have given me, and they have always referred to Christie and our sister-in-law Kathleen as their daughters. My mom and dad are such loving and supportive influences in our lives. They were married for 50 years until my mom died in 2021 from blood cancer, and her memory is such an inspiration for all of us. My dad has continued spreading that love and support, living in Reno part-time and delighting being a "Dede" (grandpa in Turkish) since our nephew Kai was born in 2022. It's been such a joy to witness and we're all so excited for our child to experience that same love and support from our whole family.



As you can see we are a very affectionate family!



Christie

What I do for work

I am a public health consultant - I work with non-profits to improve health care for people with cancer.

What I do for fun

- Snuggling our pups
- Reading books
- Going for walks and hikes
- Cooking/baking
- Puzzles
- Home design/organization
- Watching reality dating shows
- Volunteering
- Eating ice cream



About Me

I love people very easily and treasure both my biological family and my "found" family.

I moved to Washington DC for college and loved it so much I stayed for 17 years.

I'm an entrepreneur and have my own consulting business.

I love snacking and am sometimes prone to "snaccidents." Cem also calls me a "bite consultant" because I love crafting the perfect bite!

I love to read and have 3 or 4 books going at any given time. I am excited for all of the kids books in our future!

I feel most at peace and connected with the world when I'm outside in nature.



I grew up in the Philly suburbs in Bucks County, PA in a very close and loving Irish and Italian Catholic family.



My favorite memories growing up include playing outside with my friends and my older sister Lisa, big Italian dinners and summer barbecues, and being active in dance, swimming, and soccer.



Most of my family lives in Pennsylvania - but even though we live thousands of miles apart they are very present in my heart every day. My values and best qualities come from them. I love having an older sister and we talk every week. My mom and dad have been married for 45 years and have been such a wonderful model of a healthy marriage and parenting. They are planning their retirement years in Florida, and are so excited for our path of adoption and becoming grandparents. I am also close with my grandparents and love flying home for hugs! I also love how much every one of my family members adores Cem (they might even like him better than me, haha!).



As you can see we are also a very affectionate family!



Jack

aka Jackie, Wubba
14 years old

We adopted Jack in 2010 when he was six months old. He's the "gateway dog" for so many of our friends and family and beloved by everyone - even people who aren't "dog people." He's become a sassy old man in his elder years (he'll never let you go 2 minutes past a meal time) but loves to snuggle even more. If you don't watch out, he'll convince you to give him your whole meal.

Jack loves kids - and not just for the potential of dropped snacks (though that's a big plus). We call him and his brother Tux "nana pups" because whenever they hear a baby cry they want to go check on them.



Tux

aka Tuxpup, Tuxie
9 years old

We adopted Tux in 2017 after Christie finished cancer treatment - he is their "gift pup." He was 2 years old at the time and had suffered a lot of abuse, resulting in him being very anxious and shy. He is thriving now that he's in a stable, safe, loving home and is free to be the sweet, silly, happy, and playful pup that he is. We call him Ferdinand the Bull - he's strong and powerful but just wants to lay in the sun and sniff the flowers.

He is still a little shy and likes to hide behind his mama, but very snuggly once you earn his trust (usually with snacks). Everyone loves him and wants to earn the great honor of his trust. Kids are his favorite kind of human, though - he warms up to them immediately!



Our Families



Each of us love our "bonus family" - the family we married into - so much. We miss Cem's mom every day, but also feel so lucky to now have Kathleen, Emre's wife and our new sister, and our nephew Kai. We are excited for him to meet his new cousin someday!

Christie's entire family has embraced Cem and his entire family and are always so incredibly supportive. We treasure when both of our families can get together! They've bonded over their shared love of us, and they are excited for us to expand our family.



Our "Framily"



One of the most beautiful parts of our life together is the incredible chosen family we've created over the years. We call our close friends our "framily" (friends+family) because we love them just as much as our biological families. They are just as much our sisters and brothers as the siblings we grew up with.

This is a group of people we've been friends with for 10-20 years, and it's truly so special how deep and meaningful our friendships are. We know how to show up for each other through the ups and downs in life - new babies, deaths of loved ones, job uncertainties, big moves, and everything in between.

This group of amazing people mobilized so quickly to support us emotionally and logistically while Christie was in cancer treatment. They also produced a mini-podcast with funny and heartfelt stories over the years for us to listen to when we drove across the country to move to California!

We absolutely **ADORE** their children and it's such an honor to be auntie and uncle!!



We love exploring the world together...



South Africa, 2014



Muir Woods National Park, 2023



Haleakala National Park, Maui, 2023



Arches National Park, 2020



Turkey, 2012

...just as much as we love our neighborhood!



Our close friends moved to our neighborhood, and we love having family dinners, game nights, and hikes with them! We spend a lot of time with them and their daughter, Daphne!



We live in the beautiful hillsides of Marin County, CA - close to San Francisco, the ocean, the bay, and the mountains. There are trails at the top of our neighborhood where we regularly go for hikes and watch sunsets.



Our Home

We live in on a quiet street in a cul-de-sac with wonderful neighbors all around us. We are just a 5 minute walk to our local public elementary school and 20 minute walk into a cute town full of small businesses and parks. We love seeing the hills and trees from our windows, and hearing and seeing wildlife.



We love our house and plan to stay here for a long time! We are looking forward to making many more memories here of impromptu dance parties, game nights, homemade dinners, and couch snuggles.

Our Traditions

We've enjoyed building on our families' traditions to create new traditions. We cherish visits with our brother Emre, sister Kathleen, and nephew Kai. Since we moved to CA, we now host Thanksgiving with Cem's family and several friends from CA and DC. We have Sunday evening pasta dinners with our friends and our "guide-daughter," rotating between our houses and using my grandparents' sauce recipe. We also enjoy marking the new year and changes in seasons with a hike.



Family Holiday and Food Traditions

Many of our family's traditions are centered around sharing meals and quality time together. Christie's family is proud of the recipes that have been passed down over generations - like the ravioli they make for Christmas every year. We love keeping these traditions and recipes alive, and made a cookbook to capture family recipes. Cem's family has also joined Christie's family for Thanksgiving and we made a blend of American, Italian, and Turkish dishes!



Family Trips to Turkey



Nearly every year we travel to Turkey to visit Cem's extended family for 1-2 weeks. Cem's extended family on both sides are all very close with each other, and have always treated Cem & Emre as their own children. During our trips, we get to immerse ourselves in the rich culture and history, eat amazing Turkish food, revisit our favorite places, explore new ones, and create many new beautiful memories.



Open Adoption

Open adoption is important to us because we intend to raise our child with an understanding of where they come from, and to ideally have contact with and build a meaningful relationship with their birth family. We love that open adoption recognizes the important role that our child's biology and birth family has in their sense of self.

Family is everything for us and we know the value of both biological and found family. We look forward to building a meaningful relationship with our child's birth family founded on mutual kindness, respect, and appreciation. Our hope is that this relationship will provide a sense of love, safety, and wholeness for our child, their birth family, and us. We would love to travel for in-person visits so that our child has quality time with their birth family, and we look forward to making new traditions and memories together.

A special thank you to our dear friend Will Van Eaton for taking beautiful photos of us and allowing us to use this photo of the sunrise over Mt. Tamalpais.

Dreams for our Child

We plan to raise our child with values of love & self-love, kindness, gratitude, respect, play, curiosity, life-long learning, and growth.

Our dream is to:
Integrate their biological heritage and culture in addition to ours

Be active together and cultivate health, mindfulness, positive self-image, and emotional intelligence

Demonstrate love through words, actions, and touch (lots of snuggles!)

Experience and appreciate nature and animals

Snuggle up to read books together

Encourage imaginative play and silliness

Walk or bike to daycare or school together

Regularly travel to spend time with loved ones, including birth family

Have them witness us work through challenges as a team, compromise, and have each others backs