

## The Boatright Family

When asked what professional accomplishment has brought them the most pride or held the most meaning, Jessica and Eric Boatright don't hesitate. The values this engaging couple holds close to their hearts speak of human dignity and the economic equality so desperately needed, locally and universally, in the world of affordable housing access. Notably, Jessie's and Eric's affordable housing values are something they share as a couple. "We are working with some of the same people, only in different rooms."

Eric has worked as an architect since 2002 and is presently employed at utile, an architecture and urban design firm in Chinatown. While he has designed buildings ranging from university structures to multi-family housing, the project that holds the greatest intrinsic meaning for him was his role as lead architect for construction of affordable housing units in Chelsea. "This project taught me that having a roof over your head should not be taken for granted. It was the first project to put me in touch with the deep social value of architecture."

Jessie has been working in affordable housing since she finished her Masters degree in City Planning and earned her Certificate in Urban Design from MIT in 2007. She is presently the Associate Director of Real Estate at Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation in Upham's Corner. She is especially proud of her contribution managing the Commonwealth's \$18.4M federal stimulus homelessness program and the Moving to Economic Opportunity state voucher pilot program in 2009, when she worked for Mass. Dept. of Housing and Community Development in the Division of Public Housing and Rental Assistance. Compared to other states, the Massachusetts program was "innovative and visionary."

Eric and Jessie met while both were residing in Los Angeles. They and their two daughters, Nora, 7, and Heron, 3, have lived in Roslindale for the past 8 years. Their present home abuts the Roslindale Urban Wilds. The family, which includes their beloved hound, Maisy, loves the experience of living simultaneously in the city and in the wild. The family tries to spend time "just being together and connecting with one another and family and friends."

Nora attends public school at the Conservatory Lab School in Dorchester. She is learning to play the viola and her current interests run the gamut from presidential history to joke telling. Heron is a student at the bilingual Pine Village Preschool and delights in answering questions in Spanish or Spanglish.

The Boatrights first came to HBT in 2011 to participate in the "Parenting through a Jewish Lens" class and joined the temple in 2015. Nora, who is very engaged in and enthusiastic about school, is in the Gan/Aleph class. Perhaps picking up on the values she has learned from her parents about caring about others, she takes her role as big sister very seriously. Heron, described as adventurous and the comedian of the family, joined the Parparim class this Fall. Jessie and Eric are very excited

about the girls' progress there. "It is a gift to have a place where our children are so at ease and feel their own sense of ownership." Jessie and Eric emphasize how important it is to them to be part of HBT, "such a warm and welcoming community," and for them to be able to merge together their religious and geographic communities. They enormously value the peer group connections that HBT's school community gifts them and their daughters. Heron and Nora "love Sundays" because of the Chaverim School.

The Boatrights are a family that is very conscientious about clearly defining themselves as Jewish. When he was a freshman in high school in Colorado, Eric and his family began a journey toward involvement in the Episcopal Church. Jessie was raised in a "religiously thoughtful and tradition oriented" Jewish family in Newton. The two have joined together in an intentional exploration of Judaism. They decided, as a couple, that trying to observe two different religious traditions at the same time would only be confusing to their children. "We are unambiguous about our family's Jewishness."

Jessie, who is a parenting blogger for [InterfaithFamily.org](http://InterfaithFamily.org), explains that she also "tries to stay engaged in local social activism." She is also looking for someone to teach her to be a terrarium hobbyist. Eric is a dedicated bike commuter and a fledgling gardener. In addition he is engaged in redesigning their house.

The HBT community welcomes this lovely family with joy and excitement.