Chai Wolfman and Amanda (Mandi) Hinkley both went to college at UW-Madison after growing up in different parts of Wisconsin. They met when they were sophomores, on the first day of Chai’s job at a bagel shop, and quickly became inseparable.

After college Chai and Mandi moved to Chicago, and Chai started working as a Jewish nonprofit professional. Mandi worked as a social worker and went on to get her law degree. After living in Lincoln Square and Andersonville for almost a decade they moved last year to Sauganash Park on the northwest side of Chicago. Together, they have twin daughters, Autumn and Violet, who just turned four last month.

Tell us about your PJ Library experience
PJ Library has been a great connection to the community since Violet and Autumn were born. The girls get excited every month when they see the blue and white package in the mail. As a family they save the books until bedtime and snuggle in to read the new story many nights in a row.

What have been your/your children’s favorite PJ books?
Violet and Autumn (as well as Chai and Mandi) have loved many of the PJ Library books they have received, but a few favorites are Red, Blue and Yellow Yarn by Miriam Kosman, No Rules for Michael by Sylvia A. Rouss, and Goodnight Sh’má by Jacqueline Jules.

Was Judaism a part of your and your spouse/partner’s childhoods?
Judaism had always been a part of Chai’s life - her dad was the religious director in her small community and both of her parents taught Sunday school. It worked out when Mandi was welcomed at Hillel services even though her family isn’t Jewish. Chai taught her the blessings and rituals that she had learned throughout her childhood.

What community activities (Jewish and non-Jewish) are you connected with?
Violet and Autumn are halfway through their first year of preschool at the JRC in Evanston. At the moment, the JRC is the center of their Jewish connection (and has been the source of wonderful experiences for the entire family). Chai and Mandi are figuring out how they want to create a Jewish home for their family, and have really enjoyed and benefited from various programs for families, such as JUF's Joyfully Jewish. They look forward to participating in more family volunteering projects and getting to know even more friendly people in the community.