"Hello!" Here are some snippets to get to know me better.

"Lessons learned"

The beautiful (and sometimes frustrating) thing about being a developer is learning never ends, and we can never know it all. Over the years, I have had to adapt to changes in company acquisitions and processes, team structures, tools, and more. I have learned collaboration is better than competition. Value is better than volume. Quality is better than quantity. Asking for help and saying "I don't know" is not a sign of weakness; It is communicating honestly and being humble enough to know when to reach out. I am still learning new things, but I strive to keep these principals in mind as I continue in this career.

"Accessibility is for everyone"

If you have ever benefited from automatic doors, pushing a stroller up a ramp instead of stairs, or perhaps realized the extra privacy of a unisex bathroom, then you already know accessibility and accommodations for minorities actually benefit everyone. But more importantly, it brings comfort to those who would otherwise be uncomfortable, and it brings a path to those who would otherwise be blocked. Accessible code is just as important as physical accommodations, so that online opportunities, tools, and information are available to anyone.

"Leadership qualities"

I have been very humbled to work with amazing leaders. What I have seen in them is that they care about helping others level up their skills, they encourage sharing ideas by listening and seeking out ways to follow through on those ideas. They could easily only care about numbers and meeting goals, but they put their team first and celebrate their accomplishments. There is never a focus on competing against each other, but rather cooperating as a team with the same overall goal of creating a quality product for customers. I hope as I move into more of a leadership role, I can exemplify these values.

"Is there a faster way?"

I like to find faster ways to accomplish the boring aspects of coding if I can. I created a bash shell script to spit out blank templates for any new JavaScript component, its corresponding unit test and storybook templates, so there was less time navigating and "creating new" files over and over. I am learning about how AI can make code writing more efficient and organized, (with respect to maintaining security and following company protocols).

"AI and the future"

I do believe AI is actively changing how developers do their jobs. Technology has always evolved to make writing code easier. Even booting up a computer used to be a long, complicated process. Now a single button is all it takes to power up a computer, and we take it for granted how much work computers are doing for us already. AI is a powerful tool that (when used with caution) can make our jobs easier, and may very well someday make my job obsolete. I am optimistic that with a mindset that is willing to adapt, humans will learn to either utilize AI as a tool alongside our current jobs, or new jobs will be created that we can't even imagine yet.

"Writing code is for humans"

I think of writing code as for people, not computers. Yes, coding is a language for computers to process, but ultimately, everything we make and even the code we write is for other people to interact with, whether it is another dev looking at the code, trying to understand what it does, or a user interacting with the finished product. Code that is hard to read will cause future headaches and slow things down when inevitably the code has to be updated. If code can be written in a way that is easier to understand, then I strive to achieve that.

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"Hello, again!" On a more personal note

"Outside of work - more about me"

In the last 5 years, I have taken a liking to working out more. This includes dance fitness, weight training, barre, and bungee fitness. My favorite of them all is aerial hammock. I have performed full aerial routines and participated in a few competitions (Aerialympics and Aerial Star). Something I have learned from training physically is to celebrate the small victories and that consistency is key.

My favorite way to bond with my friends and family is game nights. Board games, primarily. My current favorite game is probably Wingspan, but I am learning new games all the time. I think the reason I like board games is the satisfaction of getting better at something in a short amount of time (even if I am not winning, I am learning each time). Games teach us to accept the hand we are dealt and make the best of what we have in the moment; to celebrate the victory of others as well as our own; to be humble enough to participate in something that you know you may be bad at.

I have not traveled outside of the U.S. as much as I'd like to, but I have been to Mexico and New Zealand (a literal paradise!) and I am planning future trips to see Spain and Ireland next. I have seen a lot of states within the U.S. (including but not limited to New York, California, Minnesota, and Florida). I value seeing and experiencing other cultures when I can, as well as taking a break from the everyday routines.

As a pet owner (3 cats and 2 guinea pigs), I have a soft spot for animals. And as a bit of a nerd, we named our pets after Harry Potter and Dragon Ball Z/Super characters.

Ren fairs have been a favorite annual activity among my friends. I aspire to learn how to sew, to make my own ren fair or aerial costumes someday. I always seem to find something new I want to learn. "Sew" far I have made pot holders.

My sense of humor is either silly puns or dry/sarcastic. I like to communicate through gifs in team chats when it is an (appropriate) option. Sometimes a gif of Homer Simpson slowly backing into bushes is called for.

It may not all seem like the most relevant info, but I know that I personally collaborate better with people after I get to know more about them, and we are all more than just our careers.

Thank you for taking the time to learn a little bit about me.