Dear Birthparent(s),
Thank you for reading our letter and considering us as adoptive parents for your child.

To get to know us better, we thought we would tell you about who we are, how much we love each other, what's important to us, and how all of this will influence how we will care for and love your child throughout his or her life.

We appreciate how difficult it must be for you to decide to pursue adoption and to follow through with the process of selecting possible adoptive parents. Please know that we will pray for and support you as much as possible through this process.

Before getting married, we talked about many things – our families, what we value, having children, and how we would raise them. One of the dreams we shared was to raise a family of two or three children. We talked about adoption as a way for us to build our family. Several close family members and friends have been blessed with adoption and we have experienced their joy firsthand.

After being married for a year and a half, we were blessed with our son, Evan. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have had a child so quickly. When Evan came along without much difficulty, we assumed that we would be able to have more children. However, after a miscarriage and numerous unsuccessful fertility treatments, we decided that adoption was the best path for our family. We are very excited and look forward to building our family through adoption.

How We Met and Our Love for Each Other

Our marriage is the greatest of all gifts. We met at a charity fundraising event. We immediately hit it off and stayed up talking until late into the night. When we ran into each other at church the next day, we both knew it wasn't by chance.

Our marriage success comes from sharing similar values and interests, making time for fun and laughter, doing small acts of kindness for each other daily, and supporting our family and friends.

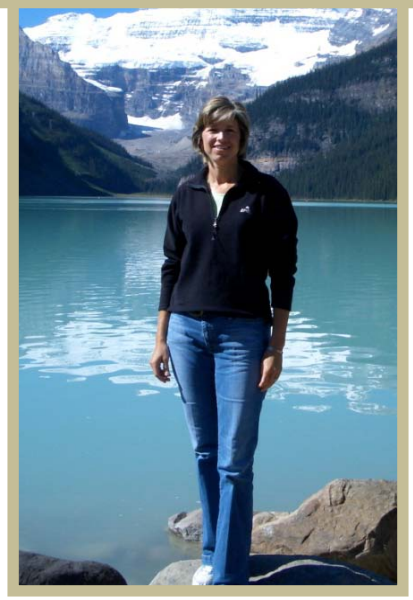
We keep our marriage strong by making an effort every day to do "a little something" for each other every day. They say it is the little things that count, and we have found that to be true in our relationship. A few of the "little things" we do for each other include a shoulder massage, sending a sweet email, doing the dreaded chore without being asked, picking up a favorite treat from the store, paying a compliment, or simply saying "Have I told you how much I love you today?" The response is usually "No, I don't think so" (even if they have told you). The answer is a line from our favorite children's story – "I love you all the way to the moon."

An important strength of our marriage is our ability to stay connected and openly communicate with each other, such as having dinner together every night as a family. At dinnertime, we not only share a healthy meal together, but we also share the highlights and lowlights of our day. We call this "roses" and "thorns". Evan is still getting the hang of it. For him the park and playing ball is usually on the list.

Our Home and Neighborhood

We live in a sunny, two-story home on a quiet, tree-lined street in the western suburbs of Chicago. We live in a wonderful neighborhood, within a short walk to the library, local school, train station, and several large parks. Our block is filled with kids who are riding bikes, playing whiffle ball, hopscotch, or meeting up for a neighborhood game of running bases.

We chose to live in our community because we wanted to be close to family, and Carla's brother and sister-in-law and their three children live there. Carla grew up a few blocks away from her aunt, uncle and six cousins and she wanted to give our children the same benefit of being near family. Our town has great schools and is only 10 minutes from Carla's office.



About Carla

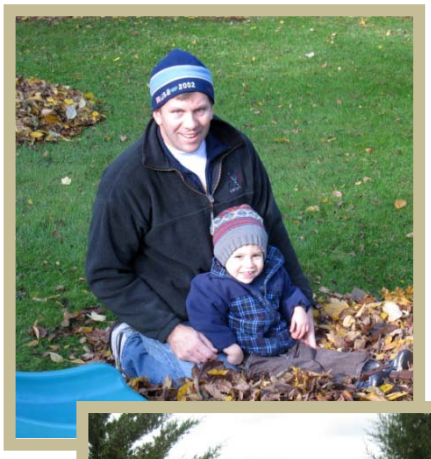
I was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio. I grew up in a large Catholic family and have five older brothers. You would think that the youngest and only girl in a family of five boys would get doted on and spoiled rotten. Not with my brothers – they weren't the doting type. They made sure that I didn't get any special treatment just for being "a girl". Growing up with five big brothers was kind of like having six fathers - they all knew what was best for me, told you me what to do, didn't take "No" for an answer, and made me do chores (usually theirs).

While I didn't appreciate it at the time, growing up in a large family with older siblings was a blessing. My brothers set a good example to follow, taught me to aim high, believe in myself, and were always there for backup. Older siblings are a wonderful gift, and I was fortunate to have so many in my life. Should you decide to entrust your child to us through adoption, he or she will enjoy the benefits of having a caring and loving older brother. We know that Evan will make a great big brother to his future sibling. He is already practicing on the neighborhood kids!

Education was very important in my family. My father grew up in a poor, coal-mining town in West Virginia. By getting a college education, he was able to start a new life and become a successful businessman. My parents were hardworking people and made many sacrifices so that we could get a good education. They encouraged us to work hard and do our best in school, at home, and in our after school activities or jobs. They taught us the importance of faith, to love and support our family and friends, and to give back to our community and those in need. It is these same values that we try to instill in our own family.

I graduated from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and received a graduate degree from the University of Michigan. I work for a company that educates accounting and finance professionals and helps

them pass difficult licensing exams like the Certified Public Accountants (CPA) exam. I love working in education and find it rewarding helping people advance in their careers. What makes it even sweeter is that we live only ten minutes from my office, and I have the flexibility to work from home regularly.



I enjoy the outdoors, nature, and almost all sports – from bicycle riding and golfing to volleyball and water-skiing. I get a kick out of visiting new places and have traveled to over 30 countries and all the continents except Antarctica. My dream trip was going on safari in Africa and seeing lions and cheetahs in the wild. I absolutely loved Africa and plan to take our children there when they are old enough.

Now that we have a young family, we go on mini adventures and excursions like trips to the forest preserve, Lake Michigan, the aquarium, or museums. I also enjoy volunteering with our church and getting together with family and friends. But most of all, I love being a mom. I have always wanted to be a mom, and it is better than I ever could have imagined. It is joyful and rewarding, and at times challenging. I have had more fun and laughed more often than I thought was possible. I can't wait to become a mother again and to share my love with another son or daughter.

Lee's Perspective:
When I first met Carla, I was attracted to her outgoing personality, great smile and sense of adventure. I admired her brown eyes and that she was tall and very friendly. Carla is an energetic person, always wanting to try new things and explore new places. She is a warm and loving person and likes to have lots of family around. Her family is very close and get together for family vacations every year. Last summer, we spent a week on a remote lake in Canada with 26 members of Carla's extended family. That may sound like a recipe for disaster, but it turned out to be a really fun vacation.

Carla has a lust for life. This dynamic characteristic is very visible in all that she does, including motherhood. Her enthusiasm for being a mom is her greatest asset. Carla lights up a room when she is around children, and her warmth and sincerity show. She always wants to be out exploring new places together as a family.

About Lee
I am from the northern suburbs of Chicago and also grew up in a large Catholic family with two brothers and one sister. My relationship with my brothers and sister was very strong growing up and is still that way today. I am the youngest child in the family and was always called the "caboose".

When I was younger, I looked up to and followed my siblings around constantly. They were very involved with all aspects of my life. Despite the age difference, they always took me to activities and events outside the house. We would often make trips downtown for ballgames and

shows, go apple picking, or swim at the beach or pool for hours of fun. Often, our family vacations were planned to a city where one of my siblings was living at the time. As a result, I had the opportunity to travel a lot and visit many states. I really enjoyed traveling and exploring new places and still enjoy it today. As a family, we will continue to give our children the opportunity to travel and experience the world. When Evan was 8 months old, we took him to Hawaii to visit my brother and his family who live on the island of Oahu.

My parents were always supportive and encouraged me to achieve and do my very best. This sense of hard work proved positive at a young age. As a teenager, I started my own lawn service business and saved money for college. Our family values are based on faith in God. Growing up, I learned the importance of trust, hard work, education, community, and responsibility. These are the building blocks for family life. I was raised by strong and faithful parents, who provided a caring home with lots of love. I will do the same as a parent for our children.

As a child, I played many sports, but swimming is in our family genes. All of my siblings swam competitively and were lifeguards. They taught me to swim at a young age and I spent as much time in the water as possible. Ever since I was very young, I wanted to go to the Olympics and win a gold medal. This dream motivated me to always do my best, stay focused and motivated. With a lot of hard work and training, I went on to be a very good swimmer in high school. I received a swimming scholarship to Southern Illinois University, where my Olympic dream inspired me to continue swimming and train for the Olympics. I was a two-time All American swimmer in college and qualified for the Olympic trials in the breaststroke.

I am a stay-at-home Dad now and absolutely love it! Before staying at home, I worked as a corporate event planner, coordinating large events such as golf tournaments, conventions, and non-profit fundraisers. While I didn't quite realize my Olympic dream as an athlete, I was able to be involved with the Olympics by working both the Atlanta and the Salt Lake City Olympic games.

I am an avid White Sox fan and like working in the yard and fixing things around the house. I enjoy many outdoor activities including biking, gardening, landscaping and cooking. What I enjoy most is being a stay-at-home dad. It is amazing to watch our son grow and learn new things every day. I have found that the joy of being a parent is in watching a child discover the world a little bit at a time. The rewards of parenthood are numerous and I look forward to sharing a lifetime of discovery with our new baby.

Carla's Perspective

When I we first met Lee, I was struck by his twinkling blue eyes and that he was actually taller than me (I am 5'10"). But it was his warmth, easygoing nature, and fun-loving spirit that drew me in. Being with Lee is comfortable and almost effortless. It is like putting on your favorite pair of comfy slippers.

Lee is warm and caring and always willing to lend a hand. He is a loyal friend, and his friends know that they can count on him no matter what they need. Lee is a very positive and cheerful person, which is one of the reasons he is such a great dad. Even on the gloomiest of winter days, he brings sunshine and laughter. Lee goes out of his way to make every experience fun for the whole family. He brings a happy and positive attitude to everything he does, including managing the daily activities.

About Evan

Evan is an energetic three year-old with a pleasant disposition and a contagious laugh. He enjoys playing ball (all kinds), jumping in puddles, pushing his toy lawnmower around the block, and roughhousing with his cousins. He loves being outside, and we enjoy helping him discover cool new things on our walks in the neighborhood. His collection of colorful leaves, various pinecones, buckeyes and acorns has taken over our house.

Our Family Life

Lee is a stay-at-home dad and will stay at home full-time until our children are in school all day. We are active, involved parents and like to keep busy with a variety of activities. Our daily routine includes playing outside, a planned activity such as pre-school or music class, reading stories, and doing art projects like finger painting or Play-Doh. A typical week involves several trips to three or four nearby parks, play dates with friends or cousins, a park district open gym, trips to the library, visits with grandma, and of course, errands. Lee's training as a corporate event planner comes through, and their days are action packed. By the end of each day, both father and son are tired out.

We think it is important for children to learn and grow by exploring and discovering the world around them. We are an energetic, fun-loving family and believe that family time is the best time of all. On weekends we go on "mini" adventures and day trips. Some of our favorite activities include picnicking at the dunes, picking apples at a local orchard, biking on the Illinois prairie path, visiting the zoo, arboretum, or botanic gardens.

Lee is a good cook and actually enjoys making dinner. He takes pride in cooking healthy meals for our family and enjoys going to the farmer's market and local fruit market to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. Carla, on the other hand, really enjoys the eating part of dinnertime. She has a sweet tooth and likes to bake various treats. Her homemade crumble-top apple pie is a family favorite.

Religion continues to be an important part of our life together. We go to church every Sunday and are very involved in our church. Our faith has taught us that it is important to give back to our community and help others. We find the greatest joy in the simple pleasures of family life: reading bedtime stories, snuggling together after a bath, taking long walks in the neighborhood, laughing at an inside joke, or having a

"family dance party". We can't wait to experience similar pleasures with our new son or daughter and discover what he or she loves to do.

What We Can Offer Your Child

We believe it is a gift to be able to share our love and blessings with children. If you decide to place your child with us, we will treasure your child and provide the love, support, and openness needed for your child to grow into a happy, healthy child and adult. We have a strong marriage that is firmly rooted in love and faith in God. Our relationship continues to grow deeper every day as we experience new things together and overcome challenges.

Education is an important priority in our family. One of the reasons we moved to our community was because it has some of the best schools in the state. We also believe it is important to provide an opportunity to receive a good college education. In addition to providing a kind and loving home for your child, we can also offer financial stability and a quality education. To make it possible, we have already made significant investments in a college fund for our future child.

Being a new parent isn't easy. Babies don't come with instruction manuals, and we made a few mistakes along the way. We learned a lot, laughed a lot, and enjoyed discovering it all together. As experienced parents, we know what to focus on, what not to worry about, and how to provide the most nurturing and loving environment possible for your child.

How Important Your Child Will Be To Us

Before starting down the road to adoption, we asked ourselves a tough question. Could we love an adopted child as much as we love Evan? The answer is absolutely YES! We have no doubt that we will love and honor your child with our whole heart and our whole soul. You don't have to be related in order to deeply love another person. Our marriage is a perfect example of this. We have prayed long and hard for a child through adoption, and we know that your child will live in our heart and be a part of us. If we answered this question with any less conviction, we would not have pursued adoption.

You might be wondering if we will have enough time to devote to the care of a new baby. Again, we have considered this, and the answer is also YES. Lee is a stay-at-home dad and does an amazing job. His easygoing style and knack for planning and organization keeps our home life running smoothly. In addition, Evan is older now and has started to assert his independence. He spends more time entertaining himself and going to preschool, which gives Lee some free time. By the time your child becomes a toddler, Evan will be in school all day, allowing Lee to devote all of his attention during the day to your child.

Adoption and Parenting

When we think about our son and our future child, we see them as fun, educated and active people who care about others and know the importance of a strong family. We will encourage them to learn about and experience new things throughout their lives. Our home life is guided by the belief that children need to feel

safe and loved and that their needs are being met on a daily basis. It is in this kind of environment that children can be themselves, have a happy childhood, and grow into strong, loving adults themselves.

We will encourage open communication with our children. Being able to clearly express feelings is a strength for children and adults as they grow throughout life. By providing a warm, loving home we know we can raise children who are confident, know they are loved, and have the talents needed to lead successful lives.

Our Relationship With You

After talking with various family members and friends who have adopted, we have decided that open adoption is the best way to balance the needs and desires of the child, the birthparents and the adoptive parents. We envision a relationship that includes pictures, letters and occasional visits, if you wish.

Thank you for your consideration and initial interest in our family. As you continue considering adoption for your child, we wish you peace in your heart. We look forward to getting to know you. If you would like to know more about us, talk with us by telephone, or meet us in person, please let Steve or Joel Kirsh know. They will be happy to make the arrangements. You can reach them any time at 800-333-5736. We hope to hear from you.

Carla, Evan, and Lee