



Dear Birth Mother,

Hello, we are Ashley and Paul. Thank you for taking the time to read our letter. We are honored that you are considering us as prospective adoptive parents of your baby. We cannot begin to imagine

what this must be like for you, but we realize it is likely one of the biggest decisions you will ever make. If you choose to pursue an adoption plan, you would be giving the most amazing gift to a family who is eagerly awaiting the joy a baby will bring.

I, like so many girls, grew up knowing I would be a mother. My friends and family knew I would be a mother. Many people have commented about how naturally I engage with children. As time went by, I kept thinking the perfect time would come. For several reasons, adoption has always been a choice I've considered. Then, when I discovered I have a genetic condition that runs in my family, and that can be passed on to my children, I realized that giving birth to a child would not be the healthiest choice. (By the way, my condition does not have any impact on the length or quality of my life, and God willing, I will live to a ripe old age.) That I could not give birth to a child was a sad realization and required time to accept. Paul and I talked about adoption as the best choice for us since the beginning of our relationship. It is always how we assumed we would have a family.

We have also had the benefit of experiencing many successful adoptions among our family and friends. Our friends and family come from a diverse set of racial, ethnic and social backgrounds. We view this diversity as a strength in our own lives, and know that it will provide a strong foundation and support network for any child.

Paul and I met at our church in the early part of 2005. We have a tradition at our church where we greet our neighbor and exchange “Hellos”. It was literally at that first “Hello” that I was attracted to him. From the time of our first date, we were nearly inseparable. We dated for eighteen months and then married. We believe that God brought us together at the perfect time, and we know divine timing will bring the child we are intended to raise to us when the time is right. It takes faith to trust, but we see how it has worked for us in many areas of our lives.

I (Paul) was immediately drawn to Ashley and knew that she was very special. She is warm, intelligent, interesting and courageous, and is very loyal and supportive toward her friends and family. I have always been impressed with her obvious and natural connection with children –



**Niece Maya and Ashley**

she always seems to draw a crowd of our friends' and families' children whenever we are out. She has the ability to charm, inspire and comfort kids of all ages, and also leads them to good decisions by communicating calmly and in their terms. I have seen such joy in her eyes when she holds a newborn, or when she is in a fun game of Cranium with her niece and nephew. Being around Ashley has always made me want to be my very best, and she draws that out of others – children and adults – as well.

Both of us take our marriage commitment very seriously. Though we have good days and not-so-good days just like anyone, we both know that we are truly devoted to one another. Others seem to marvel at how well we get along, and how loving we are toward each other. It seems easy to us – in addition to being in love, we just genuinely like each other! When we wrote our wedding vows, we

made certain that in addition to including promises of loyalty and commitment, we also included a pledge to keep our marriage fun. We feel this is important to continue with our growing family as well – raising a family can, of course, have its challenging times, but we feel there is always a reason to smile and share our love with others.

Staying together is also important to us because of the experiences we had as we were growing up. Both of our sets of parents went through divorces. That led both of us to be content waiting until the right partner came along, and allowed us to mature and get to

know ourselves better. When God finally brought us together, it was obvious that it was worth the wait – we feel our relationship and our bond to one another is much stronger as a result. Additionally, our parents themselves found better relationships, and all are more settled and happy. This also doubles the number of grandparents waiting to love a new child in our home!



Our home...we live in a bright, cheery, yellow

farmhouse in Indianapolis. We live in a quiet and diverse community with many friendly neighbors. There is a variety of children of different ages. We have a four bedroom home with plenty of space for a child. We already have a “kid’s room”, as Ashley’s niece and nephew have always been a big part of our lives. They visit regularly and have their own



rooms. They are excited about giving up a room for the thought of a new cousin!

Paul works in marketing and business consulting, primarily assisting local nonprofits to become more successful in their operations and fundraising activities. He works a short distance from our home, and walks to work many days.

I (Ashley) am a social worker with a specialty in children and families. I currently work part-time, and enjoy the flexibility my job offers. I also teach a graduate-level social work class at a local university. After spending so much time caring for and helping other people's children, I am looking forward to the opportunity of being a parent myself. My love for children has always been present, and I've been fortunate to have a great career where I truly feel I am giving back to others. Now, I am ready to give back on a deeper level, by raising a child.

Ashley plans to reduce her hours even further when we adopt. We've discussed opportunities where Paul is also able to work from home, and spend more time with our child. We feel fortunate that we are able to adapt to the needs of our child and family, and eagerly await the possibilities that will unfold.

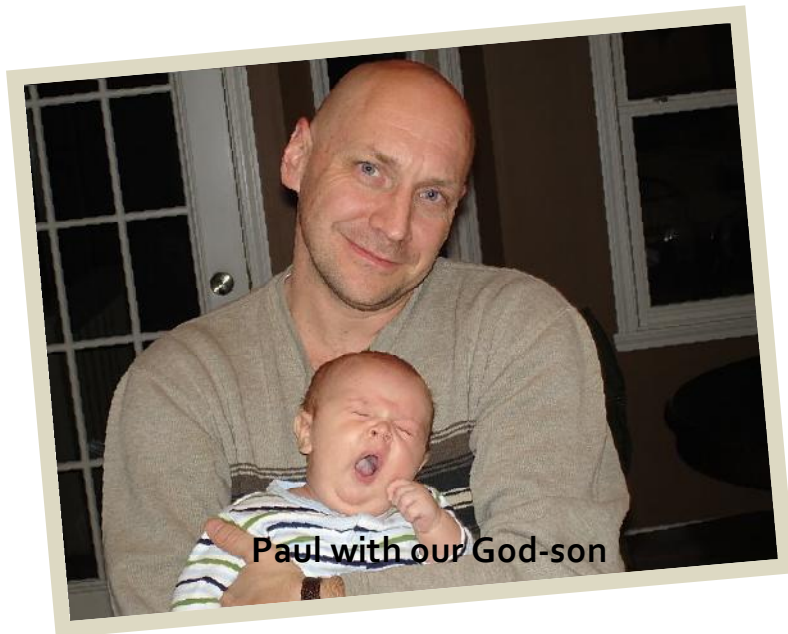


Besides the two of us, our family currently includes two dogs (Lucy and Dottie) and one cat (Sidney). They are all healthy, gentle and get along well with each other. Dottie was a surprise blessing to our family. We adopted Lucy about two years ago from a local shelter, where she had been brought in as a stray. What nobody discovered, until after we had welcomed her into our home, was that she was also pregnant! Three weeks after bringing her home, we had six new puppies. We were able to

find loving homes for five of them, and kept Dottie to stay with us and give Lucy a playmate. None of this possibly could have been planned, but we couldn't be happier with how things turned out.

I knew Paul would be an excellent father when I first observed him with his nieces (he has 7 total). He is especially good and natural caring for babies, and frankly I found that a bit unusual for a guy. I witnessed how quickly little ones

gravitate to Paul. For example, shortly after the first time he met Kaleb, my best friend Meg's son - Meg called me and said they were watching *Deal or No Deal* and Kaleb said, "There's Paul." I'm sure you can tell from the picture why Kaleb may have confused Paul with Howie Mandel. ☺



Paul's gentle and kind manner comes across to children and adults. They naturally feel safe and comfortable with him. He has a calm at the center and, rarely have I seen Paul get upset about a situation. Paul's a natural leader, in a warm way. And, what makes him the most fun is his witty sense of humor. He keeps children and adults laughing. It runs in his family, and his family's meals are spent with one funny response after another.

I, Ashley, have been comfortable and familiar with the idea of adoption since I was a young child. My dearest friend, Meg, was adopted, and we talked about it as far back as I can recall. When considering adoption, Meg was the first person I talked with. I asked her what she felt like growing up knowing she was adopted. I teared up when she answered, "Ashley, I always thought I was loved more than other kids because I knew how hard it was for my adoptive parents to

get me, and I knew how much my birth mother must have loved me to make such a difficult decision.” We love the idea of a child knowing they are the most special gift we could receive.

You can tell how much we enjoy spending time with our family and friends. While we have a wonderful and full life, we are not too busy to take time for simple things like walks with our dogs. We do this together in the evenings. It’s an excellent time for us to talk about our dreams,



goals and celebrate our accomplishments for the day. We can imagine pushing our baby in a stroller as we walk through the neighborhood, and including our child in the daily sharing as she or he grows up.

We live close to a walking trail where we frequently jog, walk the dogs or ride our tandem bicycle. Most people are surprised at how much we like riding together on the tandem. It’s another great way for us to spend time together, talking or enjoying nature. It’s also reflective of what a great team we are—as it takes working together to manage riding one bike!

Ashley loves to garden and has a huge vegetable garden that feeds us and many of our neighbors and friends throughout the summer. Paul is the chef in the family and manages to come up with some interesting recipes to get through all of the veggies.

Paul enjoys running and has run two marathons. It takes a huge commitment to train for such an event. Several years ago, he ran a marathon in Rome when we were traveling. Traveling is one of our favorite things to do together—taking trips to places we’ve never been. We attempt to view life as an opportunity to

learn, and we love to explore. We look forward to having a third companion along on our adventures.

We know this letter cannot possibly capture everything you may want to know about us. But we hope it gives you a glimpse of the type of family we have and the people we are.

The thought of a baby soon entering our hearts and home is so exciting! We realize for us to gain such a miraculous gift you must be willing to give up so much. If you decide we are the best parents for your baby, we would be happy to send you letters and photographs, letting you know how he or she is getting along.

We thank you for giving the most precious gift possible to whomever you choose. If you think we may be the parents you would like to raise your child, would like to know more about us, or talk with us by telephone, please contact Steve Kirsh at 800-333-5736.



All the best,

*Paul and Ashley*