

Dear Birth Mother,

Our names are Keith and Roxanne. We live in a small town near a major metropolitan area in the Midwest. Both of our families live nearby. Keith is a pharmacist and



Roxanne, a former teacher, stays at home full time with our son, Jacob, who is six years old.

We are eager to expand our family. We struggled for years with fertility treatments, miscarriages, and a life-threatening tubal pregnancy. We adopted Jacob after deciding that our desire to nurture and raise a child was far more important than our desire to deliver a baby. Our lives have been transformed by the opportunity to be parents, and we long to bring another baby into our lives.

We want you to know that we would consider your child the most precious gift we could receive. Your child would be raised to know that he or she is a blend of two loving families: You will have given the gift of life, and we will give our guidance and support.

**Keith:** I grew up as the youngest of seven children. My father was a carpenter and worked in a nearby factory. My mom was a homemaker, although she worked part time in the factory as I got older. My mom says that when my brother, Devon, who is closest to me in age, started school, I was distraught. I would stand outside the playground fence, sadly watching the children playing. After trying to console me, reason with me, and distract me, she finally won me over with a shiny new red wagon from the local hardware store.



**Jacob can't wait to welcome a brother or sister.**

Mom was always the one to initiate family adventures, while Dad was the quiet provider. My parents taught me the importance of reaching out to others, being financially responsible, and having faith in God. Christmas, in particular, was a time that our extended family gathered, to share food, stories, and enjoy each other's company. Family remains the center of my life. Every summer, we go camping with my immediate family, and about 50 of us get together for nights around the fire with lots of laughter, and lots of fun.

When I was growing up, I always loved sports. In high school, I played soccer, volleyball, softball, and I was on the rowing team in college. I would much rather participate in a game than watch one. Since Jacob came along, I have helped coach his T-Ball and soccer teams. I enjoy teaching Jacob and his buddies the importance of teamwork and the appreciation of sports, win or lose.

Roxanne's grandparents live just four blocks from us. We like to think that we watch over them - but it's probably more accurate to say that they take care of us. I enjoy spending time with Roxanne's grandfather, tinkering with antique gasoline engines. We like to fix them up and then take the engines to shows. Often this turns into a family



**Keith is teaching Jacob about our hit and miss antique engines. Jacob loves to work with daddy on them and then help start up the engines.**

outing, with grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. We usually camp at the show ground and make a weekend of it.

I have known Roxanne since high school. She was the quiet, pretty girl across the room from me in class. She played in the school band, and I always knew I could find her at a football game on Friday nights. We

seemed to run into each other often outside of school. (I didn't realize that she had pieced together my schedule from friends, and just "happened" to show up at places I frequented.) We started dating in our junior year, and even though we went to different colleges, our relationship lasted through the times away from each other.

I am constantly amazed by Roxanne's ability to keep our love fresh. Just when I think I know everything about her, I find something new to love. She surprises me with cards left in my car, or by baking my favorite cookies. I admire her loyalty, creativity, resourcefulness, and energy. She staunchly defends the ones she loves. She genuinely cares for others. We both enjoy the simple things in life. I love to watch her with our son, Jacob. She gets such pleasure out of everyday activities with him: going for a walk, cooking together, reading a book. I love to see her eyes light up when she smiles at him. I know that she longs for another baby to comfort and hold. There is no question that we both have more than enough love to share with another child. We can't wait for the opportunity.

**Roxanne:** It took me awhile to get used to Keith's large family. There are a lot of them, and it gets pretty noisy when they're all together. I was an only child and always wished I had a brother or sister, but I couldn't imagine growing up with so many siblings. However, I was always surrounded by family. My grandparents and great grandparents lived on a farm, and we spent many of my childhood weekends there. I remember coloring for hours at my great-grandmother's kitchen table, sledding down the hills at the farm, and riding on the tractors with my grandfather. I remember feeding the runt calves with a baby bottle, and throwing the fallen apples to the cows. My grandparents, parents, and I used to fly kites on a fishing pole; it sure made it easier to bring the kite in. I used to climb into the hay loft to see the new-born kittens. It was a time of exploration and adventure, with my family always nearby.



**Jacob and Roxanne are on their way to the Corn Maze at a local pumpkin patch. Even though we grow pumpkins, it's always fun to go to a pumpkin patch and enjoy the activities.**

My father was an electrical engineer, and once my dad completed his degree, my mom quit her job and stayed at home. She was always there when I came home from school. And she spent a lot of time volunteering at my school, too. We had family dinners together, and played board games as a family. As I look back on those meals and evenings together, I understand the

importance of family time. It doesn't matter what's discussed, or what's done. What matters is taking the time to be together. My parents came to my sports events and band performances. I remember helping my mom pack my dad's lunches, going to the museum together, and swimming in our pool. I had a happy childhood; I knew I was loved and I felt safe and secure.

I learned a lot from my parents, and I learned it by their example. They taught me to be loyal, kind, hard working, and honest. I was always encouraged to do my best, and I was encouraged to take pride in my accomplishments. I want to share these values with my children. I want to model for them the kindness, commitment, and devotion to family that I learned from my mom and dad.

After college, I taught until we adopted Jacob. And then, like my mother, I became a full-time mom. I can't think of a job I would like better. Jacob loves the outdoors, just like Keith and I do. We spend a lot of time playing in the park, writing with chalk on the sidewalks, playing in the sprinkler, and working together in our garden. It's amazing to watch him soak up the world around him, learning something new every day, becoming more sure of himself with each new activity.

Jacob reminds me often that he wants a brother or sister. Actually, he says he wants a brother *and* a sister — and if it happened yesterday, it would not be soon enough for him. He is even sending up a prayer to help make that happen. He has eighteen cousins under age ten, but there's no substitute for a sibling. I want another child to

cherish and nurture. I want to rock a baby to

sleep, watch him or her discover the world, and encourage him or her to chase his or her dreams. I waited a long time to be called Mamma, and it was well worth the wait. I hope to hear that name from another child's lips.



**For Keith's annual family campout we drove the kids down to the beach. And no...this isn't even all of the cousins.**

I knew Keith was a keeper when he let me order an anchovy pizza on one of our first dates. Other boys I had dated were never that kind. Keith lives every day to its fullest. He is gentle, loving, and a thoughtful best friend and husband. He is spontaneous and fun-loving. He is honest, hard-working, and responsible. I can count on him to be there for me and our children, celebrating good times and weathering tough times. He enjoys his work as a pharmacist, particularly when that work means helping with a health care emergency. People trust him, professionally and personally, and seek out his help. For the last twelve years, he has been working nights. His schedule gives him a lot of time with family: he works seven straight nights and then he's off work for the next seven nights.

When I have free time, I like to read, do needle work, sew, quilt, and garden. As a family we like to get together with friends and family, go snowmobiling, camping, and hiking. We recently bought a cabin in the middle of the woods. You can hear the wind in the trees, the stream flowing behind the cabin, and the songs of the birds. It is in the middle

of a snow pocket, so even if there isn't much snow elsewhere, we have plenty for sledding, making snow angels, and having a snowball fight. We love taking Jacob out to go "Hffelumpö hunting (he's a big Winnie-the-Pooh fan) and to collect nature's treasures. We imagine watching Jacob and our second child spending weekends and long, lazy summers there.

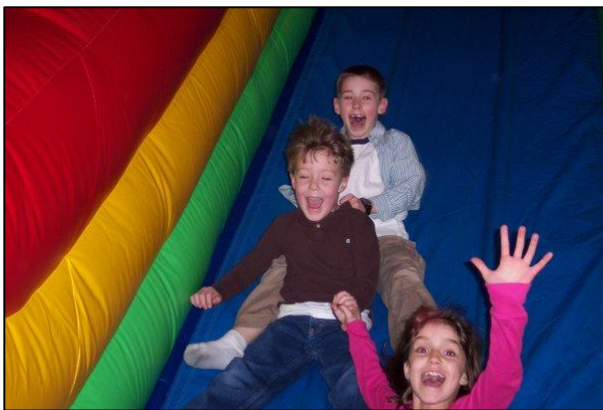
Jacob went skiing for the first time this winter, both downhill and cross country. There is a very nice ski resort about 30 minutes from our cabin.

**Keith and Roxanne:**

We live in a warm, welcoming four-bedroom home. Every room is meant to be lived in and

enjoyed. We spend most of our time in the family room, which is really a children's playland. We think every child needs the space to be a kid and this is our romper room. We hang holiday decorations from the ceiling and it's filled with toys and books. When we have another child, I imagine the toys will multiple along with the smiles and laughter. Keith has coined a phrase for the appearance of the room in mid-play. He calls it "joyful chaos." Can you think of a better phrase?

We have a wonderful front and back yard. Roxanne is an enthusiastic gardener, and everything is planted as soon as the weather begins to warm. For much of the year, our house is filled with fresh cut flowers. We have a big vegetable garden with tomatoes,



Jacob had a blast at his sixth birthday party. We love to celebrate with family and friends.



We live in a wonderful community with friendly neighbors and lots of kids.

peppers, corn, melons, cucumbers, and this year pumpkins. Jacob loves to help in the garden, and checks on the veggies nearly every day.

We live in a small town where we know our neighbors and everyone watches out for everyone else. There is a grade school, junior high, and high school just blocks from our house. Most of the kids walk to school. The school system is excellent, and has invested heavily in technology, as well as sports programs. Volunteers from throughout our

community recently built a beautiful children's playground in a new park. We feel safe in our town. With easy access to the nearby city, we feel we have the perfect combination of small town friendliness and urban cultural opportunities.

Sundays are family day. We go to the same church as Roxanne's parents, and afterwards we all go out to brunch. Jacob and ðBearö (Roxanne's dad) always share a piece of pumpkin pie, although Jacob seems to eat more than his share. We often have our families over to our home. It seems to be the family gathering spot. Since we love to entertain, that's just great with us. Roxanne always has lots of games and activities for the kids, and there's always an abundance of food. Both of our families are eager to welcome another child. We have lots of volunteer babysitters lined up waiting for a chance to care for ðtheirö new baby.



We can't wait to add to our family. We will raise your child in a loving, supportive home where he or she is encouraged to try new things, build his or her self-confidence, and enjoy life. We will tell him or her about his or her birth mother, and how your choice of adoption took love, strength, and faith. We will happily keep in touch with you, sending you pictures and updates on your child's growth, if you wish.

If you have any questions about us, please feel free to call Steve and Joel Kirsh at 1-800-333-5736. If they are not available, they will be paged and will return your call promptly.

God bless,