

Dear Birth Mother,

We understand that the decisions you are making about your baby are some of the most difficult that anyone ever has to make, and we know that you will make the choices that are best for your child. We do not know what your exact situation is and could not possibly fully understand the challenges you are facing at this time, but we do send you our sincerest good wishes for comfort, solace, and clarity.

We're Kurt and Stephanie, and we are thankful for the opportunity to let you know who we are and why we are hoping to open our hearts and our home to a child (or children ó twins would be great with us). We have been happily married for eight years and, in that time, have watched our close friends and family with their children and participated in the care of those children. We believe that children are wonderful gifts needing love, protection, nurturing, and the opportunity to learn and grow to achieve their full potential.

We have both been serving our country as public servants for almost twenty years now and have built careers on strong ideas about service and a willingness to learn and grow in our capabilities and understanding of the world around us. Our work has given us the opportunity to travel widely, working, living, and visiting in places as varied as China, Ecuador, Russia, Germany, and Ukraine. These have been incredible opportunities that have allowed us to learn so much and expand our horizons beyond anything we could have imagined at the start. Our careers have also given us a stable financial foundation and a home of our own. But you are probably wondering who we really are ó and why you should entrust your precious baby to us. Maybe talking a bit about why we chose to become a family will help you get a sense of us.

First, this is Stephanie, and I would like to tell you a little bit about Kurt. We met a dozen years ago in the Egypt, where we were both serving with the multi-national peacekeeping force in the Sinai desert ó a rather strange place for romance to blossom, but love found a way! We met the first night I arrived, and within days found that we shared much in common ó a love for history, literature, travel, and adventure. But what struck me most about Kurt was his decency. It sounds a bit old-fashioned and maybe even simple, but Kurt is the kind of person who demonstrates his respect for all people by listening to each person, understanding what is important to him or her, and honoring the good in everyone around him. One example soon after we met made me realize the generosity of his spirit and gave me insight into how Kurt approached life. While we were in the Sinai, he and four friends formed a team for a sports competition which was a very big deal for the military units we were stationed with, and much time and effort went into their training for the main event, an obstacle course that

Valley of the Kings in Egypt, 1996

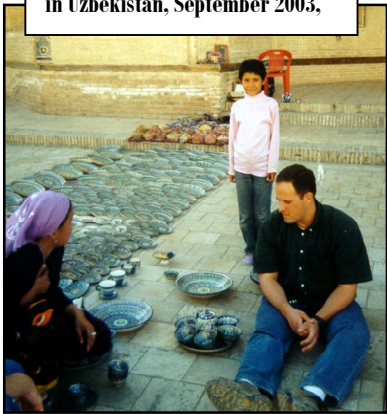


London 2006

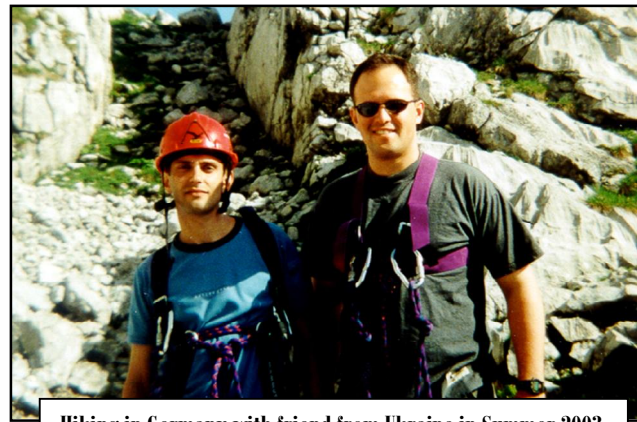


relied on teamwork. On the day of the competition, Mike, one of Kurt's team members, was not able to complete the tasks on his own, and Kurt, as the strongest and fastest person on the team had to do much of the extra physical work to make up for Mike's difficulties, including pulling Mike up over a fifteen-foot wall when Kurt was already exhausted himself from the grueling activities they had been engaged in. Needless to say, Kurt's team lost badly. But what struck me was that after the competition, while the other members of the team and their friends grumbled about Mike's inability to keep up, Kurt spent time with Mike talking about what a fun thing it was just to compete. For Kurt it was all about teamwork, and Mike was part of that team - Kurt never said a word about his own efforts, Mike's shortcomings, or his disappointment that he was not on a winning team. A small thing, I know, but really, I think that how someone behaves when met with the small inconveniences in life gives you an idea of how he or she will behave when the big tests come along, and I knew that Kurt would always do the right thing no matter what the situation.

Buying pottery from local children on the Silk Road in Uzbekistan, September 2003,



But what else should you know about Kurt? He is super smart, funny, generous, gentle, considerate, patient, intellectually curious, dedicated & he recently completed three years of night school for a graduate degree in Russian Studies at a very demanding university, while working full-time and traveling overseas frequently for his job, just because he thought the subject was interesting. He is



Hiking in Germany with friend from Ukraine in Summer 2003

interested in just about everything & current events, politics, sports, movies, theatre, etc. He is a wonderful companion, the person I feel most comfortable and confident with, who makes me strive to be a better person in everything I do. I know that he would make a wonderful father and is eager to have that opportunity.

This is Kurt, and I would like to describe Stephanie. As soon as I met Stephanie, I was immediately captivated by her intelligence, friendliness, and outgoing nature. As I got to know her better, I came to see and understand her intense caring for others. I have never met anyone else that has as much love for everyone she meets and behaves accordingly. To this day, I am often astonished at her ability to instantly empathize with others and seek to care for them and help them in any way she can. She is just so intently focused on the needs of those around her, even when she does not know them personally.



Riding in Turkmenistan on border of Iran, 2008,



Iguazu Falls, border Brazil /Argentina, 2005,



Baltimore Half-Marathon, 2007

An incident I remember from early in our relationship really shows so many of the things that make Stephanie so special. We had a group of friends that we spent a lot of time with, and one day Stephanie remarked that she sensed something was bothering our friend Mike (a different Mike, by the way). We had eaten dinner with him and a few of our other friends, but none of the rest of us thought there was anything wrong. Later, Stephanie insisted that she really thought he seemed troubled by something and wanted to ask him if she could help. When she spoke to Mike, he revealed to her that he had received the news that his divorce had become final and he was very deeply depressed. He was surprised that she could tell he felt so badly, as he had made a major effort to keep this news and his feelings to himself. He was very glad that she spoke to him about it, though, and it helped him to deal with the situation because of the kind words she had for him.

That story is just one of many that get at what Stephanie is all about. She is closely attuned to the people around her and cares very much for them. If something is wrong, she can sense it and wants very much to help. She has a wonderful way of speaking to people that is considerate of how they are feeling but also helps them to see a way out of their problems and feel better about themselves.

She is also enormously talented, intelligent, and able to quickly assess and understand things. I am constantly amazed with how quickly she picks up on very complex things and is able to instantly see solutions to things it takes me (and others) much longer to figure out. She is very outgoing and draws energy from being around others. She is great at keeping in touch with friends from high school, college, graduate school, Peace Corps, and previous assignments in the State Department. She is always bringing people together and is the catalyst for those activities that allow people to enjoy each other's company and remember the "good times".

So that is a bit about the two of us. We both enjoy spending time with our family (Kurt's parents and aunt and uncle, Stephanie's mother, two older sisters, one younger brother and his wife and two young boys, and her sister-in-law's parents ó Stephanie's father passed away last year) and friends, and are fortunate to have a circle of people we care for and who care for us that make our lives much richer and happier. We have been enormously blessed and want very much to share these blessings with a child. We believe that children need love, stability, and support as they learn and find their way in the world. We want very much to introduce the wide world we have had the opportunity to see to the new, fresh eyes of a child.

As you can see we have seen the world and had our adventures. We are ready to devote the same time,

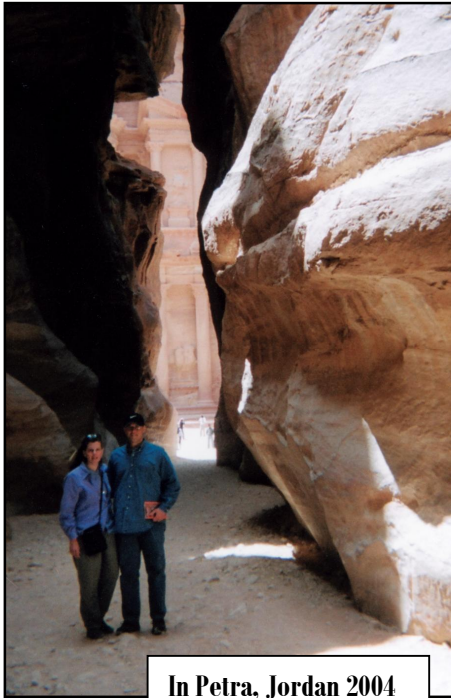


Hosting a reunion weekend of Stephanie's college friends, 2008 (Lots of ice cream was eaten!).



Thanksgiving with Kurt's Parents

energy, and enthusiasm to being parents. Don't get us wrong, we are still adventurous, but now as parents rather than as part of a multi-national peacekeeping force. We look forward to dirty diapers, midnight feedings, helping with homework, sitting around the dinner table planning the weekend or our next great adventure. With us as parents, we promise that your child will always be taught to look for the bright side of people and things. Most importantly, your child will always know of your love and how you placed your child's needs above your own.



In Petra, Jordan 2004

Thank you for considering us as you make the difficult decisions ahead of you. If given the opportunity, we would be forever grateful for this gift of love, and regard this responsibility as the most important one in our lives, and would be happy to send you letters and photographs, letting you know how your child is getting along, if you wish.

If you would like to know more about us, talk with us by telephone, or even meet us in person, please let Steve or Joel Kirsh know. They will be happy to make the arrangements. If you choose to contact us, we promise we will not try to pressure you in any way. We will simply answer your questions, as best we can.

We hope to hear from you.