

Dear Birthmother:

Our names are Nick and Michelle. Thank you so much for considering an adoption plan and for taking the time to get to know us through this letter. We are excited to tell you about ourselves and hope that you will decide that we are a good fit for your child.

### Our Life Together

Michelle grew up in Northern Indiana, while Nick grew up in Southern Indiana. We first met while we were students at Purdue University. At the time, Michelle was majoring in Political Science and History, and Nick was majoring in Industrial Management.



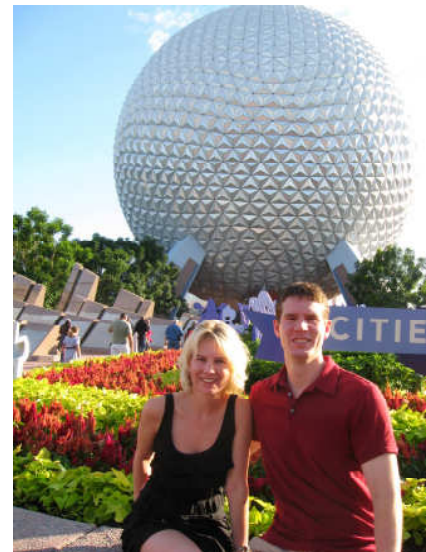
(Our wedding day, 8-14-04)

We were close friends before we started dating. In fact, Michelle even set Nick up with a couple of her friends because she thought he was such a great guy! After two years of sharing lunches and rides to college activities, we realized that we were a perfect match for each other. We dated for two years and were married on August 14, 2004.

We have been now been married five years. Nick is thirty years old, and Michelle is twenty-seven. We feel blessed to have each found the right person at such a young age and are excited to have many years of marriage and life together ahead of us.

Our favorite thing to do as a couple is traveling to different parts of the United States and the world. Many of our most special memories come from these trips. Over the past five years, we have been lucky enough to visit California, Florida, Washington, D.C., and to enjoy a Mediterranean cruise to Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Spain. We don't always go so far – Michigan and Ohio are popular weekend destinations.

While we are up for traveling just about anywhere together, we especially love to visit Walt Disney World. Michelle's family made regular trips to Orlando during her childhood, and Nick interned at Disney during college, so we both have great memories associated with these theme parks. We can't wait to create new Disney memories with our child!



(Epcot Center, October 2008)

Beyond traveling, we share many other interests as a couple. We love taking walks around our neighborhood and at the park near our home. The local YMCA provides other opportunities for staying active during our chilly Indiana winters. Because we are kids at heart, it is not uncommon to find us at our local zoo or at Chicago's Shedd Aquarium, where

we have a membership. We also love to eat good food. Michelle will drive a long way for great mashed potatoes, and Nick can't resist his mother's sugar cream pie. We are lucky to have great Chinese, Mexican, and Polish restaurants very close to our house.

We each have our own individual hobbies as well. Michelle loves to take photographs and scrapbook. She has been doing this since she was about twelve and has nearly twenty completed albums. She also loves animals of all types. We have two cats, Winston and Shakira, which we adopted from area animal shelters. Shakira came with her name and, yes, she was named after the singer. Winston and Shakira are very affectionate and are wonderful with children of all ages. For the past three years, Michelle has had a "lunch buddy" through Big Brothers Big Sisters. Michelle travels to the local elementary school once



each week to eat lunch and play games with her buddy, Cayla, who is now in fifth grade. Jewelry-making is a particular favorite activity of Cayla's, and Michelle now has an impressive collection of pink beaded bracelets as a result of her buddy time.

Nick likes watching and playing sports, especially basketball and football. Go Boilermakers! He enjoys reading, running, and lifting weights. Nick loves to read and always has a book to pick up when he has a free minute. Sometimes, he even listens to books on tape when he is driving or working out. He also plays the piano and plans to teach our child to play.

Faith is an important aspect of our lives. In fact, we originally got to know each other through a bible study at Purdue. We attend a large, non-denominational Christian church in a nearby city. The church has amazing programs and spaces for children, and we look forward to introducing our child to these. Actually, we will be rather jealous because the kids get to start their "children's church" time with a trip down a brightly-colored tube slide!

While we have so far talked mostly about the things we enjoy doing, we want to let you know that we also know how to work hard. Michelle graduated from law school in 2007. Since then, she has worked as an attorney for a medium-sized firm in northern Indiana. Michelle spends most of her time doing defense litigation. This means that when a lawsuit is brought, she is hired to represent the person who has been sued. She loves her job because although the work is tough, it is different every day and is never boring. She has flexibility in her schedule which will allow her to enjoy a nice, long maternity leave and to take off plenty of time to take care of our child.



At this time, Nick is a full-time MBA student, concentrating in consulting and finance. He will graduate

(Law School Graduation, May 2007)

in May 2010. Before beginning business school in 2008, Nick worked for four years as a development manager for a software company. He plans to work for a company where he can combine his knowledge of technology and finance. Michelle is very proud of Nick for completing this degree. We look forward to celebrating his graduation with our families this May.

### Our Home

We live in a small city in with lakes and farmland which is just a short drive from Chicago. Our city's residents are friendly, and the area is becoming increasingly diverse. There are many families that live here and the schools are very good.



We absolutely love our home and neighborhood. We own a cozy, brick, ranch house which was built in the 1950's. This makes it the "baby" on our street, which is full of Victorian homes built in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Our house was renovated shortly before we moved in, but still retains the unique character that comes with an older home. We especially love our little sun

room, back porch, and fireplace with built-in bookshelves. With three bedrooms and two bathrooms, we have plenty of room for a new baby.

We have a yard that is large enough to play in, but also live close enough to downtown that we can easily walk to our local coffee shop/ice cream parlor, several downtown restaurants, the YMCA, and our local park with its *huge* playground.

Many people in our neighborhood decorate heavily for all holidays which makes our street a fun place to be. It also guarantees that we will have lots of trick-or-treaters each year – sometimes close to a thousand! We dress up in costumes ourselves – this year Michelle was a fried egg, and Nick was bacon – and have a ball passing out buckets of candy. We look forward to having a little one to dress as a pea pod or a pumpkin!



(Us with Michelle's parents and sister)

Michelle's parents live nearby (pictured above). We are lucky enough to see them regularly. Michelle's younger sister lives in Louisville but comes home often to visit. Michelle's parents also own a house on the lake just five minutes from our house, so our family often gets together there to go boating on our pontoon and cook out while enjoying the waterfront view.

## Our Adoption Journey

Since our earliest days of dating, we have had regular and frequent discussions about adoption. Michelle has felt drawn to adoption since she was a very young child, and Nick is equally enthusiastic about building our family in this way. Adoption has *never* been a second choice for us.

As it turns out, we are unable to get pregnant, without significant medical intervention. While we are very eager to have a child in our home, we do not grieve over this infertility. Instead, the diagnosis just confirms what we have long believed – that our beautiful baby will come to us through the gift of adoption.



(Playing Bocce Ball on 4<sup>th</sup> of July)

We promise to provide a loving home for your child. As this will be our first child, we will have lots of time and attention to devote to him or her as well as plenty of space to play and grow. Education is important to us and we will ensure that your child has opportunities to reach his or her full potential. Our city has wonderful schools, including several within just a couple of miles of our home. Because we ourselves have been blessed with excellent educational and career opportunities, we will also be in a position to assist your child in attending college, if he or she desires. Of course, we also enjoy having fun. We will help your child to pursue his or her interests – whatever they are – and cheer him or her on along the way.

We realize it is very likely that our baby will look different from us. We acknowledge the importance of race and culture and will do our best to educate your child on his or her heritage. In fact, we are very excited about the idea of incorporating new customs and traditions into our own lives as well. Living near Chicago provides us with excellent access to events which focus on all different ethnicities. Additionally, we have already begun to acquire a collection of children's books celebrating adoption to share with our child.

Our families are tremendously excited about this adoption and are literally counting the days until they can celebrate a new baby. Those are Nick's parents pictured to the right, with their party hats already on! The idea of adoption is definitely not new to our families, as Michelle has been discussing her plans to adopt since childhood, and Nick's cousin has a beautiful three year-old daughter who was recently adopted from China.



(Nick's parents celebrating a birthday)

We would love to speak with you and answer any questions you may have about us. If you would like more information, please contact Steve or Joel Kirsh at 1-800-333-5736. If you call after regular hours, their answering service will page them and they will call you back as soon as they are available. Of course, calling for additional information does not obligate you to proceed with an adoption and you will not be pressured in any way. Before we close our letter, we also want you to know that we would be happy to send you letters and photographs, letting you know how your child is getting along, if you wish.

Please know that as much as we long for a child in our home, we want you to make the best possible decision for you and your baby. You are in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

*Michelle and Nick*

