

Dear Expectant Mother,

We're Jody and Kirk. We have recently moved to the Midwest, where Kirk works at a university, expanding a new biomedical research department. Jody is an accountant by training and a stay-at-home mom by choice! We have a daughter, Darby, who is a year old. We adopted Darby at birth. Darby confirmed our beliefs—family is built on love, not biology. We want to expand our family, bring another baby into our hearts and our home.



We live in a five-bedroom home in a brand, new subdivision in a small, Midwest town. Our community is full of children, and we live in an area with a great school system. In fact, our local elementary was rated among the top in the state and was named to a list of 300 top schools nationwide. We are just 15 minutes away from a major, urban center with all the educational, cultural and social opportunities big cities can provide.

Jody is an only child. Kirk has an older brother. We understand the importance of siblings. Jody would have loved to have had a brother or sister to play with and confide in. Kirk can't imagine life without a big brother showing him the ropes. We want to give your child a big sister, someone who will be a lifelong friend.

Jody: I grew up in Pennsylvania. My dad is a cardiologist. My mom works as a travel agent. My parents now split their time between Pennsylvania and Florida when they aren't visiting us. They may not live close by, but we talk on the phone daily, and we Skype a couple of times a week. They come to see us almost every month. There's no way they'd miss out on their grandchildren's

lives. That's the way they are with Darby. They can't wait to have a second grandbaby to ooh and aah over.

I was raised in a very comfortable home. But my parents raised me to understand the value of money. They taught me that hard work is a responsibility, and so is giving back to the community. I watched my dad leave the house at 6:30 in the morning and not return until 6:30 at night. He often worked weekends. I worked over summer breaks and continued to work part time in college. I work hard at whatever I do. I learned this from my dad.





My mom always volunteered in the community. I helped her whenever I could: it might be mailings for a charity, putting together gift baskets for a fundraising dinner or even working at the event itself. I continue to volunteer today. Darby pitches in to help. It's a family affair.

My parents have always loved to travel. That's why my mom went to work as a travel agent after I left for college. When I was a child, we went on safari in Kenya, a trek in Nepal, toured the Pyramids in Egypt, and canoed on the Amazon River. I've been to Bangkok, the Galapagos Islands, Israel and all over Europe, too. You might think I've seen enough. If so, you'd be wrong. I have the travel bug. I learned so much through my travels. I loved experiencing different cultures, languages and food. I can't wait to show the world to our children.

I spent a lot of my free time as a child playing with other kids in the neighborhood. We'd walk between houses and backyards, coming home at mealtimes. I played on the tennis team in middle school and high school. I've always loved crafts and cooking. I remember pestering my mom to let me help her cook. I can't wait until my kids are cutting out cookies on the kitchen table. I want to hang their art on the refrigerator. I can't wait to make Halloween costumes and decorate cupcakes for school parties.

I missed having a brother or sister. Sure, it was great getting my parents' attention. But I spent a lot more time than most kids acting like "a little lady," sitting with my parents and their friends at a restaurant or at our dinner table. I know that having a sister or brother means you always have someone to share secrets with, play with and even fight with. It means there's someone else to remind you of childhood memories and those horrible tricks you played on one another.

I always knew I'd go on to college. My parents impressed upon me the importance of education. It took me a little while to settle down after arriving at the university. I found the social activities way too much fun to waste my time studying. But once I decided I wanted to be at the business school, I had to crack the books in a big way. I majored in accounting. Accounting made so much sense—everything had to balance. After graduation, I worked in public accounting for three years and later in the private sector.

There's always a demand for accountants. It's also a field that's easy to work in part time. But I'm not working outside the home at all right now.

I'm at home with Darby full time, and it's the best job I've ever had. We take music and movement/fitness classes together. We go to swimming lessons, neighborhood play groups, and just hang around in yard. We pick apples, blueberries and strawberries, splash in the sprinkler and now that fall has arrived we have gone pumpkin picking. (Darby loved the hayride.) Pretty soon we'll be building snowmen. By spring, Darby and I will be planting our own veggie garden. Soon enough we'll be eating our homegrown tomatoes and carrots. I am so grateful to have this time with her but cannot wait to include our new baby in the adventures.



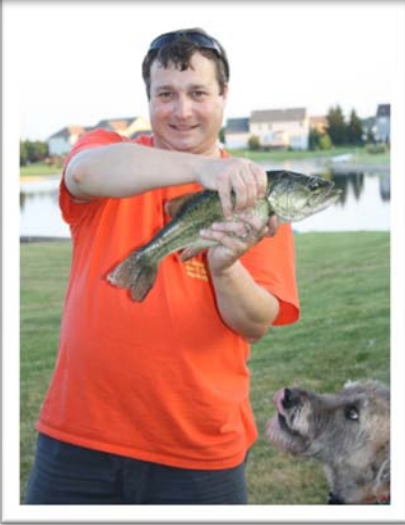
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Kirk is a wonderful husband and father. He's easy-going and has a very dry, very funny sense of humor. He's strong, and he's determined. He sets goals, and he meets them. I love to watch him with Darby. When she was learning to crawl, she'd make a beeline to Kirk and then climb his leg to stand up. We could have powered the neighborhood with the light shining in his eyes.

Most nights, Kirk puts Darby to bed. He reads books to her and then rocks her as she settles into sleep. It's their special time together. He already tells me how he plans to put both kids to bed when our new little one arrives.



We both love to hike and garden. Kirk is always working on a project at the house. I am tempted to rent him out to friends—he's not only good at putting together kids' toys, he actually likes to do it.

My parents love Kirk. That might seem like no big deal, but they love the man who married their only child. That's saying something.

Kirk: I was raised in upstate New York, with an older brother, Kip. My dad is a doctor, too. He's a radiologist. My mom taught English-as-a-Second-Language after I started school. It is great having an English teacher for a mom. Kind of like having an accountant for a mom to help with math homework!

My parents were great parents. They gave me a lot of leeway to explore my world. Whether it was playing in the mud, building with my erector set, or concocting potions with my chemistry set—they gave me the room to investigate and invent. I set some things on fire with my magnifying glass, but I didn't burn anything down. I took all kinds of things apart, mostly old electronics and even some dead animals. I didn't think they knew what I was up to, but when I bring it up to my mom now, she chuckles and says, "Thank God you didn't kill yourself." They weren't inattentive. They watched in the background, making sure things stayed under control, while I developed my curiosity and creativity. While my dad taught me to explore, my mom taught me to be levelheaded.

I want to be a parent like that. I want to encourage my children to venture into the world with confidence, try new things, experiment and find a passion.

Kip and I spent a lot of time together as kids. We would camp, hike, sail, and canoe. We both played in the school band. I remember going out for ice cream after every performance. It was pretty cool having an older brother. (He might have been less thrilled to



have a pesky, younger brother.) We loved Halloween. We'd decorate the house with the scariest stuff we could assemble. (None of those sweet ghosts or smiling witches for our house.)

Kip and I are still close. He lives in another state, but we stay in close touch. We often laugh about some of our childhood antics—the things we snuck past our parents (or thought we had) and the memories of family vacations. That's one of the reasons I want another child. There's nothing that replaces a sibling, that friend who has always known you and will always be there.

I love being a biomedical engineer. I like to invent things, solve problems, tinker. I work at a university where I head a new initiative that is developing research projects between the university and private corporations large and small. It's an entrepreneurial role that I really enjoy. But I also like mentoring new scientists on the faculty and writing grant proposals. It's a demanding new opportunity, and I love the challenge. It might sound a little nerdy, but I can't wait to explain how things work to my kids. You know, answer those questions like "why is the sky blue?" and "how does a plane fly?" I enjoy taking complicated subjects and making them understandable.

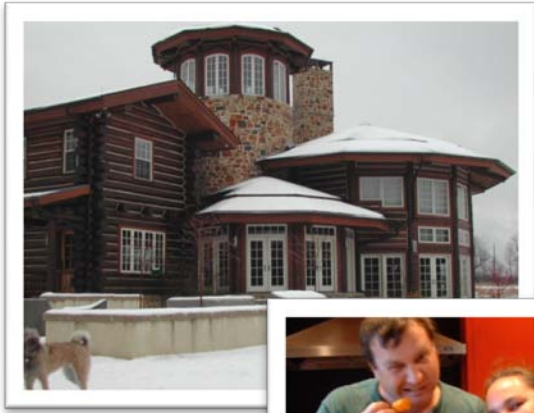
I can't believe how Darby has changed our lives. I love watching her grow and figure things out. It's the little stuff, like when I hide something behind my back, and she looks around me, side after side. I can just imagine those brain cells firing, the work she's doing to understand where the toy has disappeared. She imitates the sounds I make. She smiles and my heart melts. I imagine another child in our home, and can almost hear the giggling from the bedroom, the footfalls as they chase around the house. I can't wait to play catch in the yard and romp in the fall leaves.



I first saw Jody at a friend's party. We had met online and agreed to meet up at a party. She came in the door, went looking for me and ended up talking to someone else for about 30 minutes before she remembered why she'd come in the first place. One of our first dates was a hike. We both love the outdoors. I know she likes rocks, so when we walk, I'm always looking for the perfect rock for her collection. (I'm pretty lucky. Some girls love diamonds. She's not so into that kind of rock, fortunately for me!)

Jody is outgoing, warm, generous, and an incredible parent. She always thinks of others, and Darby is the most important "other" in her life. She delights in showing her new things, going for walks in the neighborhood, taking her to classes, getting involved in a craft project at home. She's very generous with her affection—Darby and I get a lot of hugs and kisses. She's independent and hardworking. I'm pretty lucky that a lot of that energy goes into cooking wonderful meals for Darby, me, visiting family and our many friends. Jody and Darby are always baking for some charity or another. It's great to come home to the smell of fresh cookies, even if I'm only allowed the broken or burnt ones.





Jody is a gift giver. She loves to surprise people with a gift, and everyone loves being surprised. It's just her nature—she is a nurturer.

Jody and Kirk: We live on a one-acre lot on a lake in a wonderful, child-friendly subdivision that we share with about 30 other homes. The lake is more than scenic; it provides fishing, paddle boating, swimming and ice skating. Each Friday during the summer, one of the homeowners hosts a get-together for the Brownie troop when everyone goes swimming and boating. On Halloween, we hold a big parade led by the truck from the local fire department.



We have an adorable Labradoodle, named Kodi. He loves to be around all of us. He's very affectionate and patient with Darby. We think he'll be a great playmate for our kids through the years.

Our weekends are filled with day hikes (daddy is the Sherpa as Darby rides in the backpack), apple picking and visits to the zoo, festivals and craft shows. We are both certified in scuba and can't wait for the day when Darby and her sister or brother can go on undersea adventures with us.

We hope you'll choose us to adopt your child. We promise to give your child a lifetime of opportunity, encouragement and

love. We will speak of you with gratitude and respect, raising our child to understand your love and unselfish decision. We will share regular updates through the years, if you choose.

If you have any questions, please contact Steve or Joel Kirsh at 800-333-5736.

