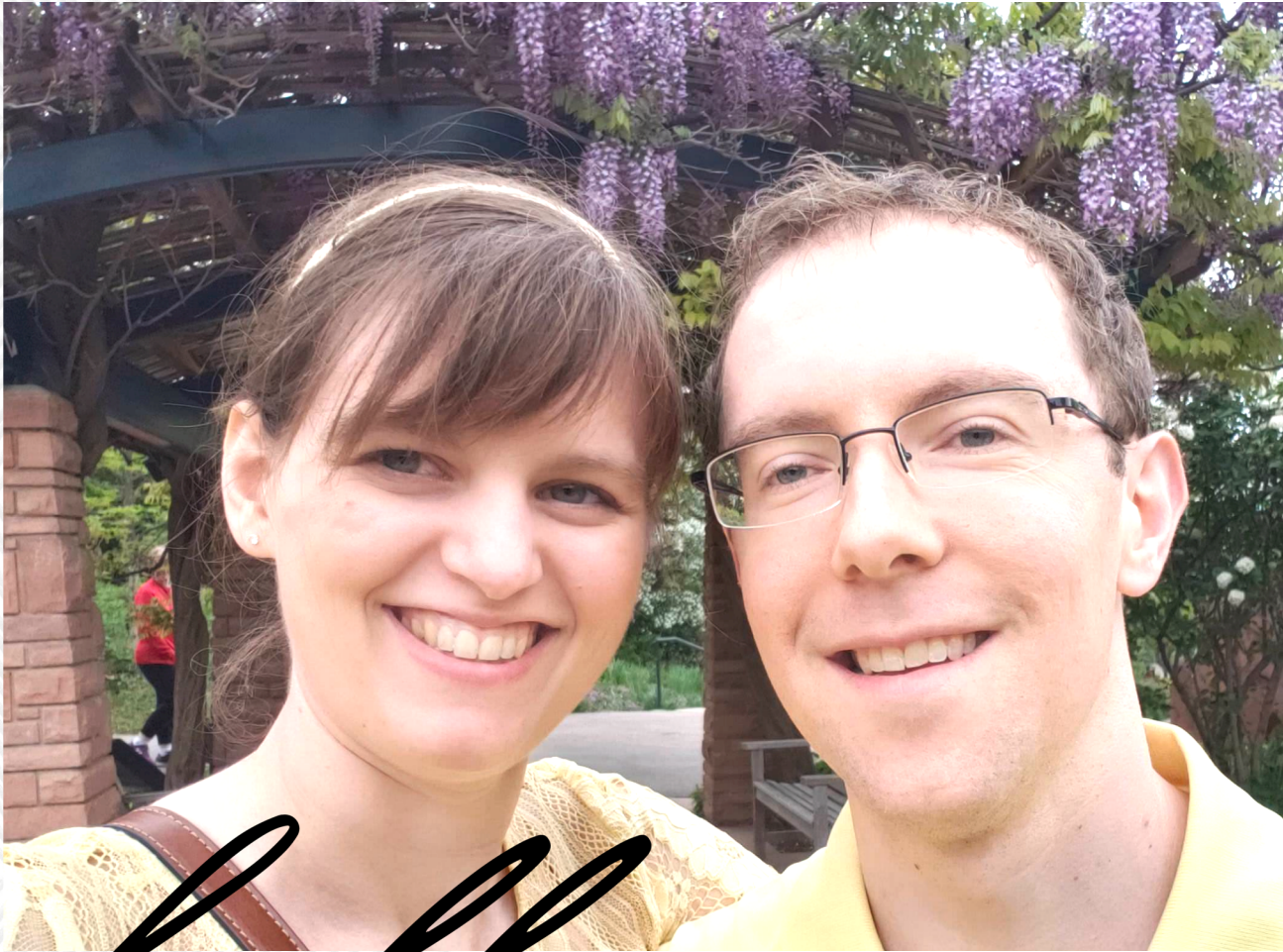




*Tara & Shaun*





*hello*

Thank you for learning about us and considering us as adoptive parents for your child. We hope our personalities and our lives shine through these pages. While this book is about us, the most important person in this journey is your child. We hope we get the opportunity to provide your child with the hopes and the dreams you have for them. We look forward to learning all those dreams and hopes for your child from you. We wish you the best in considering and choosing what is best for you and for your child.



# Who We Are

One of our **favorite activities is playing miniature golf together.** We have played all the local courses and look for new ones on trips. Shaun's love for mini-golf started on childhood vacations in which his family played as many as 12 games in one weekend. Lately, Tara has been trying to copy how pro golfers line up their shots. She looks funny placing her golf club out in front of her to line up the golf ball with the hole and staring at the club to line up the shot. While she thinks it helps, her score does not reflect any improvement!



We **enjoy playing board games.** This past Christmas, Tara bought Shaun a new strategy game called On Mars without knowing it was rated 4.6 out of 5 on a difficulty scale! It took three days to figure out all the rules to be able to fully play the game. It was so hard to grasp how and when the astronaut would move from the colony to orbit and back to the colony. Shaun was able to figure out a strategy more quickly than Tara so he won the first time we played. We had a huge sense of accomplishment in finishing the game.



One of our favorite pastimes is **exploring new areas and foods.** On a trip to Maine, Shaun just had to stop at a local roadside stand to eat fresh lobster, which he loves. He really wanted Tara to try a piece of lobster even though she is not a fan of seafood. Tara was willing to try a piece of lobster and made a face of disgust, saying "It tastes like the harbor!". However, Shaun thought it was delicious and one of his best memories from the trip. Your child will be encouraged to try new things and explore their surroundings.





# The Story of Us



We met online and noticed we had a lot of similar interests and values. On our first date, Shaun invited Tara to Panera and offered to buy her a beverage. When Tara requested a strawberry smoothie in the middle of winter, Shaun was quite surprised. It was going well so he invited Tara to go bowling afterward which is an activity she has enjoyed since childhood. At the end of the evening, he was smitten with her after our conversations flowed easily. **We felt like we had been friends for a long time.**

On an early date, Tara took Shaun snow tubing at a large local hill. This was right after Shaun told her he was moving to a different part of the country for a new job. Shaun was sad throughout the evening, as he thought it was the last time he was going to see Tara. Little did Shaun know, Tara was willing to try a long-distance relationship after a few months of dating. We **dated long-distance for 1.5 years** before getting engaged and being able to move to the same local area. This experience of a long-distance relationship has given us a greater appreciation and ability for communication between each other.



Early on in our marriage, we learned our path to becoming parents would be different than we had envisioned. We struggled through fertility treatments and surgeries, but ultimately **decided adoption was the path we were meant to take.** We look forward to walking through the journey of adoption with you.



# Meet Tara

(Written by Shaun)



I like that **Tara is adventurous**. She was nervous to visit this cavern on our recent trip to West Virginia because of all the small spaces, but quickly began to enjoy the natural wonder of the cave with all its beautiful formations. Her favorite formations were the ginormous white stalagmites because of the size and height they provide to the cave. Your child will be gently encouraged to overcome their fears and explore new adventures.

Tara has a **calming presence** that puts people at ease. However, she also can be quite **lighthearted and playful**. One activity that always fills Tara with excitement is visiting a waterfall. On our last vacation, we had to navigate various paths through a large park full of greenery to locate this waterfall. When we finally found it, Tara was jumping up and down!



Tara is **creative with talents in various arts and crafts** and enjoys making thoughtful homemade gifts for friends and family. On one of our first dates she gave me a small watercolor painting of a landscape that she had made just for me. When I moved for my job, I was not able to take many things with me, but I made sure to bring the painting since it reminded me of Tara's kindness and of our times together.

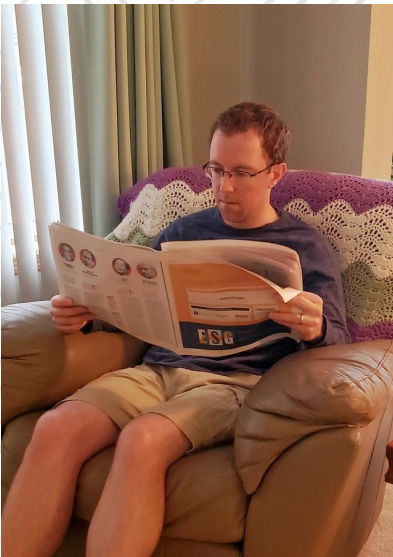




# Meet Shaun

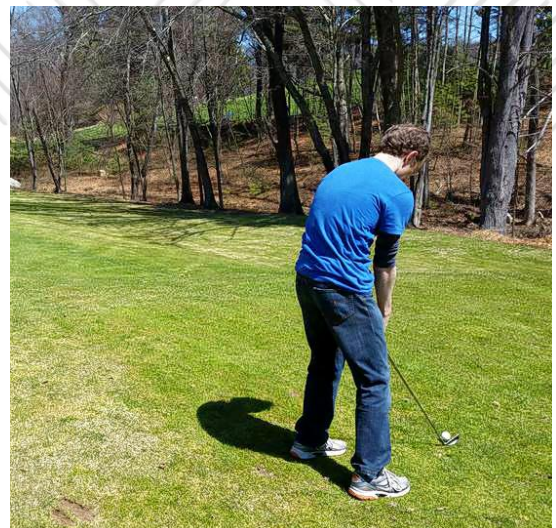
(Written by Tara)

While Shaun can present himself as more **logical and professional**, I know him as **caring and goofy**. He will do anything to cheer me up and put the smile back on my face. On a trip to Georgia, we stopped for lunch at a restaurant near water. There were some baby alligators out front of the restaurant and a larger fake alligator. Shaun decided it would be funny to pretend he was being chased by the fake alligator. I laughed so hard, it took a couple of minutes before we could be seated. Your child will be encouraged to be themselves and embrace being silly.



Shaun is **constantly learning** new ideas and skills to improve himself and help his family and friends. I find him either reading or listening to podcasts to learn new information. One of his favorite podcasts is on health and wellness. One fall, I was getting itchy rashes down my legs and Shaun was able to take the information he learned on the podcast to help figure out what was causing the rashes. Thankfully, we figured out the rashes were from some food I had been eating and were only temporary! Your child will be encouraged to learn about whatever they are passionate about.

Shaun loves playing a round of golf with his dad on a pleasant spring or fall afternoon. One of their favorite courses has a green with water surrounding it on all sides. The last time Shaun played this course, he came home and was excited that **he finally got the ball to stay on the island green!** Shaun has lost many golf balls in the water when playing that hole. One time, the ball landed in the middle of the green but kept rolling and rolling until it fell into the pond!





# Our Family & Traditions

If you choose us, your child would grow up with 1 great-grandfather, 4 grandparents, 8 aunts and uncles, and 6 cousins.



**Our family loves to help each other out**, whether that is to help with moving into a new home or helping to plant new trees in the yard. After our nephew was born, we took our niece to the local zoo to help the new parents with the stress of having two little ones in the house. At that time, there was an outdoor dinosaur exhibit. Our niece loves dinosaurs, so when she saw the signs for the exhibit, she got really excited! We all pretended to be dinosaurs and stomped and roared our way to the exhibit in the zoo.

It has become a tradition for Shaun, his dad, and his uncle to attend a large **auto show**. They spend the day excitedly looking at and climbing into all the new cars. They really enjoy looking at the rare sports cars on display. One year the show featured a car that costs \$3 million to buy. After getting over his disbelief that such a car existed, Shaun made sure to tell all his friends and family about the price of the car and how fast it could go. Your child will be encouraged to explore their passions.



As our family grows, the holiday and graduation gatherings keep **getting louder**. Last Christmas Eve, Shaun's cousin started a **dance party** with the whole family. She started singing and dancing to a pop song being blasted throughout the house, and it kept on going with Shaun's aunt and uncles taking over the song choices from their teenage/young adult years. In the end, 20 of us were singing and dancing!





Baking cookies and desserts were always a part of Tara's childhood with her mom and sister. It has become a big tradition to make 10 or more **batches of Christmas cookies**, particularly our grandmother's secret recipe for ginger snap cookies. This past Christmas, our niece was able to join in the fun. She was so excited to make cookies, she ran right into the kitchen and pulled up a chair to the counter so she could reach. She loved scooping out the flour and dumping it into the mixing bowl, although half the flour made it onto the front of everyone's shirt and on the floor!

Many families celebrate with cake, but **we celebrate with pie!** Shaun made Tara an apple pie for our first Valentine's Day. Of course, Tara could not give back an empty pie plate, so she made him a French Silk pie in return. Ever since, every celebration, including our wedding, has been marked with pie! At one 4th of July gathering, Tara kept getting asked if she brought her homemade pies. Fortunately she had brought her strawberry pie with shortcake crust, as well as, her blueberry & peach pie.



Every Christmas since Tara was little, her aunt and uncle would come over for **Christmas morning** to celebrate. Tara's uncle makes the most **amazing fluffy omelets** with whatever ingredients we want. At Shaun's first Christmas, he didn't realize our uncle adds an extra egg to the number we say we want. Shaun's eyes got so big when he saw the omelet he was given and exclaimed "I don't think I can eat all this" but he did! To this day, the tradition continues with the whole family anxiously awaiting their turn to get their omelet. We look forward to learning about your traditions and including them into our gatherings for your child.



# Our Home...



Our **comfortable home** is located in a small town. We love how the living room and kitchen are **flooded with sunlight** all day long giving our house a bright, cheery feel inside. It is nice to feel the warmth of the sun on the colder days! This past winter, Tara liked to set up all the board games in the living room, so she could sit in front of the window to feel the sun while playing.

We planted a tree outside our living room window and put up a bright yellow birdfeeder. We love to see the various birds the feeder attracts. Last year, robins nested right next to our deck! We could **see the birds hatch**, be fed by the mama bird **and learn to fly!** We were so excited and proud to see the little birds be able to leave the nest to fly! Your child will see and learn about wildlife right in our backyard.



Each year, we plant a small **vegetable garden** in the yard. Last year, a **bunny** would sneak around the fence and eat all the lettuce! Every time the bunny got into the garden, we had to use a broom, a spray of water, or loud noises to try to get it to hop away. We never got to eat any lettuce from our garden last year, but Shaun thought the bunny was cute when it would eat the weeds in the lawn every morning.



# ...and Neighborhood



There are tennis courts nearby where we like to practice together. Shaun has been playing many years longer than Tara, and the mismatch of skills on the court can lead to funny situations. One time, Tara was trying to hit an overhead shot back to Shaun, but the **ball got stuck in her racket!** Tara ducked and covered her head since she did not know where the ball went. Shaun was laughing until Tara finally figured out where the tennis ball went! Your child will be encouraged to be active and learn to enjoy the activity instead of being worried about winning the game.

In the middle of our town is **the local library** that Tara frequently visits. Last fall, while Tara was browsing the shelves for a new historical fiction book to read, she heard some laughter at the next aisle over. After pulling a few new books to read, Tara looked at the next aisle and saw two young girls reading a book falling over laughing at it. The scene made Tara chuckle.



Right outside of our town, there is an apple farm where we go to **pick apples every fall**. The farm has so many different apple varieties to try, but we always forget to write down what we pick! We never know what type of apple we are eating! This last fall, the apples were all picked from the low branches, so Tara had to reach up so high on the tree to get the apples. It was worth the extra effort because the apples tasted so much more fresh and crisp than the ones from the store.



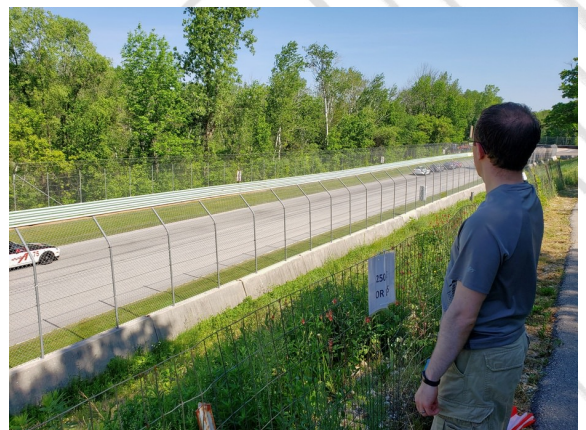
# Our Community

The quaint little vacation town next to ours is filled with adorable shops and restaurants, but is really known for its lake. There is a **26-mile walking path around the lake!** Recently, when we began to walk around the lake, we lost track of time. When we looked back to see how far we were from the town, we had walked almost one-quarter of the way around the lake! We turned right around to get back home before it got dark out.



We have multiple areas in our part of the state where we can go hiking. One beautiful Saturday after a rainy week, we decided to get out of the house and **go hiking at one of the nearby trails.** We were so excited to get out into the sun that we forgot to bring our bug spray. We spent half the time swatting away mosquitoes from each other on our hike. Imagine all the other hikers having a chuckle at how we looked, waving our arms all around. While it wasn't fun being bit by mosquitoes, we endured long enough to get some exercise in. Your child will learn how to make the best of every situation.

A few hours from our home is a world-renowned road course for auto racing that attracts many different series from Indy Car to NASCAR to motorcycle racing. This past summer, we visited the track for a regional auto race. It was so much fun to be able to walk around the wooded park-like areas to watch the race at all the different spots. Our favorite area is the fastest part of the track where we can stand right next to the fence. **We could feel the vibrations the cars made when they roared past!**





# Our Weekdays



Tara works as a physical therapist at a local clinic. She works with patients as young as 3 years to as old as 100 years. Once while working with a little one who liked to walk on her toes, the child told Tara "I never want to leave" since she had so much fun playing in physical therapy. Tara has a **predictable work schedule** and will always be home for family dinners and after-school activities.



Shaun works for an insurance company where he applies math skills to solve complex problems. He is fortunate to have been able to **work from home** for the last several years and has a predictable work schedule. He will have the **flexibility** to attend your child's activities and help make delicious home-cooked meals.



Every day, we eat dinner together and **enjoy a walk around our neighborhood** after dinner. Just the other week, it was so nice out all day, but looked like it was going to start raining as we were about to leave the house.

We still took our walk and carried our umbrellas with us so we could get outdoors and share the events of our day. The rain held off until we almost got back to our house and then it started to downpour, leaving our hair dripping wet.







# thank you

From the bottom of our hearts, we appreciate you considering us as adoptive parents for your child. We would be blessed and extremely grateful if you choose us. You will always be a part of your child's story and they will always know their story within our home. We look forward to learning about you and **maintaining contact with you throughout the years.** We are grateful to you for considering us.

## Tara & Shaun





