

# *Daryl and Melanie*



*Novie & Rosabella too!*



# Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to get to know us. We promise that if we are chosen as your child's adoptive parents, we will love them fully, whole-heartily, and without condition. We will choose every day to support their dreams and provide a safe place for them to grow. We wish you calm and peace as you sort through the profiles to make a tough decision on who is right to raise your child with such limited information. We hope that we might be that family, but more than that we hope that your child grows up in the place that is right for them.



# Who We Are

**We always work as a team** to find the best solution. On a recent trip, we found that a GPS can tell you there is a road, but it doesn't always tell you how wide the road is. As we drove up the mountain to a small village, the roads narrowed as our nervousness grew. In our final turns to our AirBnB, we found ourselves in a full parking lot with the only way out being forward down an even more narrow "alley" that looked like a sidewalk with steep building walls on each side. With no locals to ask for help, we powered forward until our little Ford Fiesta wedged between the two walls. Daryl got more embarrassed and frustrated while Melanie laughed harder and harder. Eventually, Daryl laughed, we calmed down, pulled in the side mirrors, and Melanie shimmied out of the hatchback to guide Daryl through the alley. Life always gives hiccups along the way, but you get through them and grow closer together with the right support. This has been a motto that we try to live day in and day out.



**We are adventurous.** Our typical weekend likely has us exploring free events in our local city or neighborhood. Recently, we visited a free local event at a nearby museum. We got to relax, listen to music in the park, learn about pre-WWII vehicles, and enjoy other works of art. Each car had a description about its history. We were surprised to read that there was a car factory in the county near us that built one of the models we saw. Since we watch some shows that take place pre-WWII such as *Bridgerton*, it was cool to see them up close. Your child will enjoy exploring and learning about the world around them.



**We like to have fun friendly competition** with each other. We just recently got a Nintendo Switch with *Mario Kart 8*. We bought it to be a fun distraction during the tough times of IVF. Team racing has turned into a fun daily activity each night we tend to play a series. Daryl had always been coming in first each time we played, so in her anniversary card to Daryl, Melanie predicted that in our next year of marriage, she would finally get her first-place win. Just before exchanging cards later that night, we played *Mario Kart* and Melanie finally came in first place!! Melanie was so happy and chuckled to herself as she handed Daryl her anniversary card. Daryl chuckled too when he saw the timing of it all. He vowed to make her wait another year for her next first place, but he knew first place would not always be his.



# About Melanie

**Melanie has a love of reading**, especially when she can step outside to read the latest novel on our back deck. It started at a young age when she participated in Pizza Hut's *Book It* campaign that encouraged kids to read for points that could be used toward personal pizzas. These days she reads around 2 books a month. Recently in one of her book clubs, her group went to dinner and met author Marie Benedict, who spoke on the book *The Personal Librarian*. She blends a lot of real untold stories of women with a few fictional folks to make the stories blend. She came home that evening and excitedly told Daryl about the author's talk. Your child will grow up in a family that will loves reading.



**Melanie values her daily walks.** Exercising became a part of her daily life after Melanie got her first full time job that required sitting at a desk. Then, once she started working from home, it allowed her and her mom to walk together every day around our neighborhood. They enjoy this time of quality exercise and family time. On one of their recent walks, a dog came running up to them with excitement, wanting to say hi. Melanie noticed she was not with her person. She looked for the dog's tag and called the number to let the owner know their dog was loose. The owner was relieved and happy to have their dog, Shirley, back! Later in the day, the owner even sent a follow-up text to say thank you again. Now, they enjoy when they get to see Shirley and her owner out again properly for a "hello" and pet.

**Melanie loves cooking and baking.** The creativity of learning a new recipe and then making it her own is a thrill for her. There are several recipe books that she enjoys cooking from such as: *Golden Girls* cookbook, *Friends* cookbook, and her family cookbook from Baton Rouge. Each Mother's Day, Melanie and her mom have the tradition of picking out a recipe to cook a meal together along with a dessert. Last Mother's Day, Melanie made her first cheesecake as the first one out of the *Golden Girls* recipe book. She always enjoys watching Sophia, Rose, Blanche, and Dorothy eat and share stories over cheesecake. The double chocolate cheesecake was excellent and everyone wants it again soon.



# About Daryl



At a young age, **Daryl discovered his love of science**, and he enjoys sharing his passion for science with the younger generation. Every year, Daryl volunteers for an event where butterfly researchers count how many butterflies are active in our area. The event invites local kids to run around and catch butterflies with a net. This year, Daryl was tasked to help identify what type of butterfly each child caught. The excitement on the **children's faces** was the same Daryl had when talking about the type of butterfly they had just caught. Daryl would ask for the child's thoughts on what type of butterfly they thought they had caught from photos of common butterflies. After counting and identifying, he would share how researchers use this information to identify if there are any major butterfly population changes that might need investigated.

**Daryl has always loved running.** When he was young, he loved soccer because it was running with the purpose of scoring a goal. After college, running became the goal. A few years ago, Daryl trained and ran a full marathon. It rained during the first 2 miles, and then the sun came out which made it unbearably humid. He overheated around mile 17. It quickly became a run/walk the rest of the way, but he never gave up. It is still something that Daryl is very proud to have accomplished, but the soreness he had afterwards will make it unlikely to happen again! Your child will have an enthusiastic father that will be fully supportive in whatever passions fill their heart.



**Although some of his activities have gotten less risky over the years, Daryl does like thrill-seeking ventures** like a polar plunge in icy waters. Years ago, Daryl was the best man in his friend's wedding. He and his friend had talked about going skydiving a few times. Well before the wedding, Daryl casually asked if the groom would do go skydiving if he had the opportunity. He told Daryl that he would love to go, but he did not want to selfishly spend the money. Daryl secretly arranged for the groom, a couple of his friends, and himself to go skydiving. The dive was great fun, and since Daryl and his friend relied heavily on professionals to train and equip them, it was quite safe. The groom's fiancé was super excited that he got to enjoy this fantastic trip thanks to Daryl.

# Becoming a Couple

**We met online** where Melanie winked at a cute guy that seemed athletic and family oriented. That guy, Daryl, quickly emailed back as he was curious about her unusual username *StarsHollow*. He quickly learned it was a reference to her favorite TV series, *Gilmore Girls* where a mother and daughter have a close relationship, much like she has with her mother. We exchanged emails for a week before Daryl asked to meet Melanie in person. Our first date was traditional dinner and drinks indoors due to it still being cold outside, and Daryl chose a restaurant that was near where Melanie lived. Melanie had noticed that consideration. It made her even more excited and nervous for their date. We were both nervous meeting each other, but our nervousness somehow increased with hope and decreased with comfort as we talked enjoying our night.



We make a lot of necessary adjustment in our lives because **we are very honest with ourselves and each other**. As we started growing together, Melanie mentioned how she gets lightheaded during doctor's tests. We noticed that Melanie would do significantly better if we kept her distracted. A little later she noticed a very small mole that when tested was determined to be melanoma. Since we caught it early, it was a very minor surgery. Daryl took the day off to be with her and distracted her by playing the *Cheers* theme song during the procedure. It was tough seeing Melanie in pain, but he knew how important it was to help her stay calm. Ever since, Melanie has been meticulous about applying sunscreen and wearing fashionable hats when visiting her favorite frenemy, the Sun.

**We knew we wanted to start our family** right after getting married, and quickly learned we had infertility issues. We worked through the sadness and tough time of that. We had always thought about adoption even while dating, so we were able to quickly change gears to creating the family that is so important to us through adoption. We hope to make a connection with you, and keep you informed of your child's experiences as they grow up.



# Some Fun Times



Melanie has loved the beach since she was a young child. Now, we take day trips to the nearest beach (2 hours away) a couple times a year. It is always a good time being outside breathing the fresh beach air, getting to relax, walking along the water, and spending time together. Melanie's favorite activity at the beach is reading a book under the umbrella while Daryl always likes for Melanie play some beach sports with him. On one trip, he convinced her to join him and our friend Alan to throw a frisbee. Daryl was positioned by the water with Melanie throwing the frisbee to him. One throw she missed her mark and the frisbee went into the water. **Daryl** dove into the water to get, and then **picked Melanie up and ran back into the water with her!**

**We enjoy being able explore, experience, and taste the local cultures** wherever we are. Recently, we met friends in the Historic German portion of our city. While we were there, we got to listen to a local band, eat authentic German food such as Bratwurst, soft pretzels, German potato salad, and homemade sauerkraut at a restaurant that has been in the area for 100 years. To finish the evening, we took a walk through the streets admiring the local architecture of the houses in the European-style neighborhood. It reminded us of sharing our first trip as a couple walking streets in the French district and the happiness to be together sharing this first experience. Your child will explore many different **cultures as they grow up.**



**On a monthly basis we have a game night with friends.** It is a fun, laidback, good time night with our friends and their children. We remember when we played a bird themed strategy game, *Wingspan*. During the gaming session, we each had our different strategies. Our friend Aaron tested out a risky new strategy that could pay off big if he collected enough water birds. Our friend Gretchen said that she didn't know what was going on, but she was unintentionally working a good strategy. Daryl took the longest and tried to work up the most robust strategy, but Melanie ended up winning the game simply by choosing the prettiest color or her favorite named birds. We all had fun teasing each other, catching up, and competing in a fun and laidback way. Meanwhile, a six-year-old costumed crusader, Oliver hopped from his hiding spot to hiding spot to sneak another brownie without alerting his parents.

# Our Family

If you choose us, your child will have 2 great grandparents, 4 active grandparents, 5 Aunts and Uncles and **33 cousins**



During any family gathering, **card games become a fun, friendly competition** between all of us. At one of our family gatherings, we played *Pass the Ace*. During the game, our nephew Gavin was so proud as he had given Daryl an Ace, causing him to lose that round. In the next round, Daryl played his King which then prevented our nephew from passing the lowest playing card to Daryl. Gavin stood up out of his seat and shouted, "Uncle Daryl!". Everyone playing laughed and got rowdy over those two plays!

Our family is **close by** and are all available anytime our assistance or quality time is needed. Melanie's brother recently bought a house within 2 miles of us and has been working on hanging the canvas photos we got him for his birthday. One afternoon he sent a text asking for Melanie's decorating opinion and Daryl's assistance to hang the photos. We drove over that moment to help. It felt good to see his satisfaction when the photos were hung! Your child will always have family close by to help and create memories with.



Our family is active. Recently, we celebrated Daryl's grandmother's birthday. We always feel so loved as we gather for a group prayer, shared meal, and to watch whoever join in on the afternoon games. At one recent gathering, the kids gathered to play kickball. **The older kids helped teach the younger ones the rules.** We also chipped in with coaching the younger ones on how to run the bases. It was heart-warming to see the next generation form the bonds that your child's aunts and uncles share with their cousins.

# Our Traditions



We have an **Annual Cousin's Ski Trip**, where Daryl's cousins and siblings and their 12 children gather to go skiing. In the rented townhouse, we shared with two of our cousins and their children, we set up our Nintendo Switch *Mario Kart*. Our place happened to be where the family gathered to eat most of our meals. Soon into the first meal, two of the younger cousins came up to ask us if they could play *Mario Kart*. Since the TV was being used for watching playoff football, the kids started gathering around the 8 inch screen to play. They argued over whose turn it was and which car/player was the best. At one point, one cousin, Gavin, claimed he was the best, but he was beaten handedly by Caden shortly after. It was fun seeing the cousins of all ages playing on our lunch or dinner breaks before hitting the slopes together, much like Daryl and his cousins played video games back when they saw each other every Thanksgiving when he was a kid.

We are always wanting to capture the big and small events in our lives, **so we create an annual photo album**. We put together our first photo album together as a couple in our first year of dating. When Melanie was a child, she saw her parent's keeping envelopes of pictures that captured that year. She enjoyed looking through them, so Melanie decided to start organizing photos into photo albums for each year. Just before the pandemic, we celebrated Melanie's grandfather's 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. He passed away a month after his birthday. The photos taken and organized in the album from that time are cherished as we enjoy looking back on that special day, remembering Melanie's grandfather.



On a road trip in 2016 to the lake for a summer beach day Melanie came across a brochure for a local yearly event called **AppleFest**. Melanie became intrigued and it **has been a tradition for us every fall since**. One item Melanie always purchases there are jams from a favorite vendor. One year the vendor was not at their regular location so Melanie, our family, and friends all went on a walk through the festival looking for the vendor. It turns out they were not there that year, but it gave us the opportunity to try a new jam vendor that now Melanie also looks for. We look forward to learning about your favorite traditions, so we can include them in your child's life.

# Welcome to the Neighborhood

We live in a cozy townhouse in Pennsylvania that offers plenty of space for your child. We have a large backyard and take advantage of nice evenings to play some **badminton in our backyard**. One night this summer Daryl kept hitting the birdie too high for Melanie with them landing in the neighbors' trees. Melanie had to buy birdies in bulk after that so we could continue to play! Your child will have a great space to ride their bike, throw a ball around, go sledding in winter, and witness nature through the 4 seasons.



We like to do projects inside and outside of our home. Recently, we built a small deck to the back of our house. We wanted to be able to enjoy the shaded back yard without the soggy damp ground. We looked into having professionals do it, but it was going to take too long and would be too expensive. Daryl was very nervous about designing and planning the deck build, but Melanie coordinated her brother Chris, her dad, and herself to help. It got so hot during the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of construction, we had to take many breaks to eat Isee pops, hydrate, and move the canopy to shade the active work area. At one point, as Daryl was cutting the boards, Melanie was predrilling the holes, her dad was setting up screws, and her brother was screwing in the deck screws. **It was fantastic to see everyone work together to build something that we will enjoy for years to come.** We finished building on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day and we relaxed that night watching the lightning bugs dance in the backyard during the summer night.

Our neighborhood is a great place to have fun for a child. With a playground a one minute walk away from our home. There are almost always kids and families at the playground having fun. Novie has even had fun on the playground. Recently, we had **Novie** with us on a walk at the playground. **He started running up the slide** to come back down and was **running across the balance beam**. It was so funny and cute watching him!



# Our Community



Every summer our township offers **movies in the park** that show family friendly movies. Every time we go, we feel a sense of community which we appreciate. Recently we watched *Inside Out* and it **brought out many emotions in us** as the movie was about the many emotions we all experience. At the end of the movie, we had a good laugh as it showed a cat going through the different emotions which we related to our two cats, Novie and RosaBella. Your child will enjoy summer nights outside amongst neighbors.

We like to walk in a nearby park to see the gardens and enjoy some of the wooded trails. **Daryl took Melanie on her first hiking experience** at this park when we first started dating. Daryl gave Melanie tips for how to walk trail paths and Melanie remembers getting excited about successfully completing it since she was unsure, she would be able to do it. Daryl knew all along that Melanie would be good at hiking though! After that first experience, we've enjoyed hiking at other destinations.



Our house is a quick 10-minute drive to our township's community park that offers many fun activities. Just recently we visited the park to watch our nephew play in a baseball tournament. While we were there our other two nieces were running through the splash pad. Our youngest niece, Paige, grabbed Melanie's arm to get her to play in the splash pad with her. Unfortunately, Melanie was wearing cloths instead of a bathing suit, but Daryl remembers **seeing Melanie smile and laugh while being pulled through the water getting her cloths soaking wet!** On the walk to the car Melanie and Paige discussed little secrets and Melanie enjoyed the bonding time they had together that day.

# Our Best Friends

**Novie is Melanie's first pet**, but as a child she always wanted a cat. **Daryl grew up with a variety of pets** as a child and could not wait to get settled enough to have a pet again. We rescued Novie from a local shelter. We initially went to see another cat, but we fell in love with him. When we got to spend time with him, he was shy, curious, and quickly gave kisses. Our hearts quickly melted and are pleased that he still gives kisses every day. RosaBella (Little Miss) came into our lives very recently as our niece rescued her mother from a mission's trip she was on. Our family thought of us when the kittens were born. After a visit to their home, we fell in love with RosaBella and knew we wanted to have her as part of our family. She loves to cuddle.



Novie loves the outdoors and loves to be with us anytime we are outside. He talks up a storm when he's smelling the outdoors to convince us to take him outside. Melanie's dad even takes him outside for walks daily. Just recently as Melanie and her mom were walking by the house, Novie jumped up into one of the trees in the backyard and started climbing it. **Melanie's dad had to get the ladder to get Novie out of the tree.** Let's just say his grandpa does not let him walk near the trees when they are outside anymore. With all the fun he has outside, he is the talk of the neighborhood.



**Our cats love small humans.** Once you are in Novie's pride (family) he loves to cuddle with you or get a massage from you. When one of our friends and her son came to visit, Novie was excited to see them and walked right up to her son. Novie let him pet him and then wanted to play. Her son was loving the time together as he has always wanted a cat, but his dad is allergic.



# Our Weekday Life



Melanie works as a senior claim's analyst with a health insurance company. She enjoys the perks and **flexible** schedule of **working from home**, especially with Novie and Rosabella cuddling by her side. Her job allows her the opportunity to go to your child's future appointments, school events, and activities.



Daryl works a **flexible** schedule as a research chemist. In the morning when he leaves, he gives Melanie a kiss, and when he comes home, she gives him a kiss back. Work is just a short drive away, so he can be home quickly if needed. Daryl works a predictable schedule, and when the need arises, Daryl can work from home. Rosabella tries to help as much as she can!

In the evenings, **we like to cuddle together on the couch and watch *Wheel of Fortune***. It is nice to reconnect after a day at work with a lighthearted game where each contestant wins money and the puzzles all get solved. Recently when we were watching, the contestant won a trip to Hawaii. We smiled as we recounted the time we had first landed in Hawaii and were fortunate enough to sit at the same location they were sending the contestant. It was so great to sit and relax with our feet in the sand after the long flight in economy. Your child will have quality time daily.





# Our Promise

Thank you for considering us to be a part of this journey with you. We can't pretend to know all the feelings you must be feeling, but we can promise that you will always have a big place in our hearts. We will always think of you with respect and admiration as we believe you are showing great bravery and courage in considering adoption for your child. The opportunity to be part of your child's family is the greatest gift we could ever receive. **We look forward to maintaining contact with you**, so you can see your baby's growth over the years. We hope that you get a small glimpse of who we are in this booklet and thank you again for considering us.



*Melanie & Daryl*

