



CARL AND CHRIS & PACO



HELLO

It is so nice to be connected with you. We have wanted to be parents our entire lives, and it means so much to have you consider us as adoptive parents to your baby. There is nothing we want more than to be loving and capable parents. This journey starts by sharing our story with you so that you are able to make the best choice possible for your baby. We hope these pages will help you to understand who we are and what your child's life would be like to grow up in our home surrounded by our families, friends, loved ones, and pets. We wish you strength in the weeks and months ahead.



ABOUT US

We come from completely different walks of life, and **learning to see life through each other's experiences has opened our minds.** Our first year as a couple, we spent a weekend at the Jersey shore so that Chris could experience boardwalk amusement parks, arcades, and pizza. Although the amount of people and activity were a bit intimidating at first, he eventually was like a kid in a candy store. He went on multiple rides, ate the biggest slice of pizza he ever saw, and played an interactive race car game for over an hour with two kids. Your child will learn that no matter what differences may exist, they will be loved and accepted fully.



We love to visit historic American towns and take in the local culture. On a visit to Lancaster, Carl was so excited to immerse himself in Amish country that the night we arrived, the waitress at the restaurant where we were dining sat down with us for over an hour to map out a complete itinerary of Amish markets and museums to see. The next day, we sampled all kinds of homemade jams and chocolates, and even toured a traditional Amish home where we got to feed the animals on the farm.

We are very passionate about the performing arts.

A major way that we like to connect and unwind is by watching movies and attending live performances. We particularly love to go to the small, independent movie houses and watch a good classic, or attend a community theater musical production. Last year, the local high schools in Carl's parents' towns were hosting free performances for their yearly musicals. Over the course of two weeks, we got to see productions of *Oklahoma*, *Mamma Mia*, and *The Lion King*.



ABOUT CARL

BY CHRIS



Carl **plays tennis** at least three times per week. He regularly plays tennis at a local club that offers summer clinics for kids, and he sometimes helps the instructor coach and hit tennis balls with them. Carl helped lead drills with a group of middle school kids last summer teaching them techniques and how not to get frustrated when they missed a shot.

On our first date, Carl wanted to go to the movies. I should have learned that this would become commonplace, as **I've never met anyone who loves movies as much as Carl**. In fact, every New Year's Eve since we met, we go out to dinner and attend a late-night showing. He even acts out songs and scenes that he loves without any embarrassment. On a recent Saturday night, Carl wanted to watch one of his favorite movies from childhood, *Grease*, and he acted out the "Summer Lovin'" song for me the way he did when he was a kid.



Carl's father is a history teacher and passed **his love of history** to Carl. He recently structured a vacation around visiting the homes of Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. On the George Washington tour, we saw his childhood home, the garden he spent time playing in as a child, and we walked through the schoolhouse that was built just for him on the property. We also learned that the famous cherry tree under which George said "I cannot tell a lie" is not located on the property. We walked the entire grounds looking for it only to have one of the volunteers tell us as we were leaving that the story is actually a myth! Your child will be encouraged to explore their own passions and interests.

ABOUT CHRIS

BY CARL

Chris is **the most selfless person I've ever met**. He moved from his home in Tennessee to be with me. When he made the difficult decision to move, promised his family that he would visit them at least every other month, and he's kept that promise fully for over three years now. Although this move was tough for him, he is always happy and positive about how his life has changed.



Chris is **drawn to philosophy and astronomy**, and he participates in a weekly philosophy club. He and the other members explore their imaginations to discuss the many unknowns about our universe and the meaning behind them. His group often gets together remotely so I get to overhear some of their conversations. One time, I heard Chris explain to the group how he thinks constellations form in the sky and what their relationship is to the planets. I was in awe of his knowledge and curiosity. The other members of his group wanted to keep hearing more.

Chris' **love for science fiction and fantasy** propels a **thrilling imagination** that comes out in the movies he likes, the books he reads, and the boardgames he plays. Chris is in the process of playing a classic game that involves building castles and fortresses to recreate an ancient French town. When he was playing the other night, he was so caught up in earning enough boulders to build the drawbridge for his castle, that he missed dinner, and I had to eat alone with Paco! Your child will get swept up in make-believe worlds with an imaginative father!



OUR JOURNEY

We met online in 2017 while both living in different states (Carl lived in Maryland and Chris lived in Tennessee). After a few months of talking on the phone and exchanging texts, we decided that we would spend a weekend together in Nashville, Tennessee to get to know each other better. That first weekend encapsulated all that we currently like to do together; We went to the movies, an Italian dinner, and spent hours listening to music and talking. We knew that our connection was real and that we wanted to spend more time together. We alternated visits to each other for one year and then ultimately settled in together where Carl lives.



It was not always practical for us to travel to each other's respective state, so **we would meet up at locations that were commonplace for one of us and new to the other.** We spent one weekend in Pigeon Forge staying in the mountains, which, for a city guy, was new to Carl. Chris picked Carl up at the airport, and then we drove to the cabin we rented for the weekend. Carl was captivated by the mountain views he saw on the drive, which led to a conversation about all the new things we would get to do in our future together.

It became clear during an early conversation that raising a child was incredibly important to both of us. We thought long and hard about what path would be right for us. **Chris' best friend is an adoptive parent** of two children, **and Carl's best friend was adopted** as a newborn. We talked with them at length about their experiences and learned that family is chosen and not dictated by blood. We would love to be your partner on this journey.



PACO



We both grew up with dogs and cats. As an adult, Chris rescued Paco from an animal shelter. When Carl met Chris and started to become a part of his life, it also meant becoming a part of Paco's life. At first, Paco was quite protective of Chris. The first time that Carl sat on Chris' couch, he made little growls and tugs at Carl's feet to move. It was so funny, and Chris immediately sat him in the middle of the couch so that he didn't feel left out. Now, Paco loves Carl too!

Paco adores his stuffed toys, and keeps one in every room of the house. We were at a boardwalk arcade one time playing skeeball and managed to accumulate quite a number of tickets. Knowing how much Paco loved these stuffed toys, **we exchanged our tickets to get him a new one**, in the shape of kiwi. When we brought it home to him, he immediately started tugging on it and flailing it around in his mouth. He now uses it as a pillow in his dog bed.



We take Paco with us whenever we travel. On a recent trip to a historic town, we stayed on the town's main street, which they closed off for walkers to visit all the stores and restaurants. A toy store that we walked past was offering dog treats, but before we would let him have one, we made Paco dance on the floor piano mat the store was displaying to see how he would react to making his own music. **He was hopping on those keys like you wouldn't believe**, and we were hysterically cheering him on the whole time!

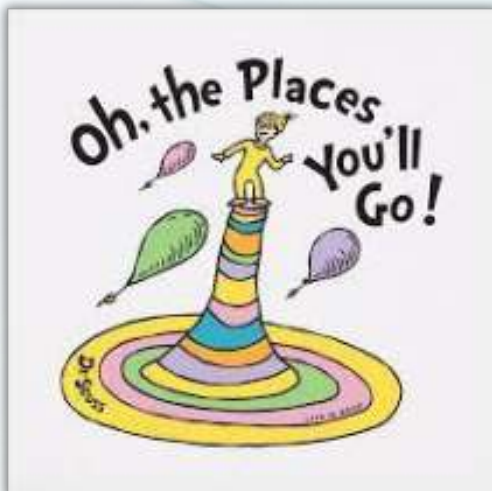
OUR FAMILY & FRIENDS

IF YOU CHOOSE US, YOUR CHILD WILL HAVE 4 GRANDPARENTS, 3 AUNTS, 2 UNCLES, AND 15 COUSINS.



Carl's **family gatherings always revolve around Italian food**. Our favorite time of year for big Sunday dinners is during football season where we will extend an invitation to any close relatives that want to come by. We'll spend the morning in the kitchen making appetizers to have during the game, and we'll time our dinner for when the game ends. One time, we did not time dinner perfectly, so the game was still going on when the food was ready. We experienced an hour of pure chaos with people running back and forth from the dining room to the television room with a full plate in hand to not miss anything. It made for quite a hectic day, but everyone got a kick out of all the excitement.

Chris' family loves to work on their **family farm**. Since his parent's home is the place where all his siblings and nephews gather for holidays, birthdays, and random weekends, they are continuously trying to find new animals to raise, and vegetables to grow. This past Spring he helped his parents raise chickens and learned the ideal way to get them to lay eggs. Together, the family cleaned the nesting boxes and built mini pens to give the chickens a more sterile environment and ample separation to lay their eggs. Your child will experience many similar visits to the family farm.



Our chosen family **visits revolve around children**. On a recent visit with Carl's high school friends, we took out our old yearbooks from high school to show their children pictures of ourselves when we were younger and got to share our high school experience with them. It was very special because it gave them an opportunity to open up with us about their school experiences. We got to talk about how things have changed and what things about school always remains the same.

MEANINGFUL TRADITIONS

Sometimes the holidays can feel quite busy and overwhelming so we purposely dedicate **a morning during Christmas week where we open presents just with Paco** and us. This past year, we made breakfast, put on Christmas music, and spent a couple hours exchanging presents, making Paco the focal point. We teased him by putting treats in each of his gift bags and would forget to take them out when we opened his gift so that he would continue to dig into the bag. It was so funny!



Carl comes from an Italian family where **Sunday pasta dinners** were a big event. We have continued a similar version of this tradition by making our own pasta sauce early in the morning, letting it simmer all day, and inviting different guests over each Sunday. On a chilly day last Fall, we made a huge tray of baked ziti and invited our neighbors and their dog over. What we thought would be a short dinner turned into four hours of conversation and eating. We look forward to learning your favorite traditions to include in our gatherings for your child.

Every year one Saturday during the holiday season, we attend a **Toys for Tots** program and spend the day organizing donated toys and helping families and children shop. Two seasons ago, we were assigned a family with four children. They were all vastly different ages, which meant we had to shop for gifts in four separate parts of the room. Despite the piles of toys to choose from, Chris spent so much time with each one making sure they got to pick out exactly what they wanted, and in the end the children found their perfect gifts.



HOME & NEIGHBORHOOD



Our rowhome was built in the 1880s and **we have worked hard to preserve the old-fashioned charm** of the house. When Chris moved in, Carl wanted to build him an office so he would feel as at home as possible given the sacrifice he was making to leave his home state to move to Maryland.. The house contains old brick walls that we treated and re-pointed, had built-in bookshelves installed, exposed the ceilings to reveal the original wooden beams, and created a seating area with a couch and television breaktimes. It was an extensive renovation project, but now it feels like he works in a classic library.

Every year, our street hosts **an annual block party with food galore**, a local band, and a moon bounce for the kids. It's a no-no for Carl to run out of food, so he spent his time at last year's block party making sure that food was always on the barbeque when the food trays were running low. And Chris thought it made great sense to start jumping in the moon bounce just in case any of the kids were shy about joining in. Your child will have the fortune of participating to the fullest extent in this and other types of neighborhood events throughout the year.

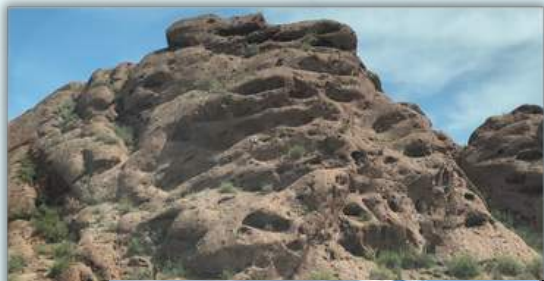


We live very close to a children's museum and aquarium. On a recent visit by our 2-year-old niece, we took her to the aquarium so that she could explore all the unique sea life. There is a room that contains a massive floor-to-ceiling fish tank. Her eyes were transfixed. In order to help her focus, **Chris imitated the movements of some of the exotic fishes**. This totally helped her focus and got her excited about everything she was seeing.

BEACH, MOUNTAINS & COUNTRYSIDE

WE COME FROM MANY DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE AND YOUR CHILD WILL EXPERIENCE THEM ALL!

Many of Carl's relatives and friends live at or near the Jersey shore, which has a ton of amusement parks. Chris loves riding the rides - Carl, not so much (mainly because he has a fear of heights). A couple summers ago, Chris encouraged Carl to ride with him on 3 roller coasters. **One of the rides was so tall and happened to stop while we were at its' peak** that Carl became panic stricken. Chris calmed him down and eased his nerves. Your child would grow up visiting amusement parks every summer.



Chris grew up surrounded by the mountains in Tennessee and Kentucky. He helped Carl to fall in love with them on a visit to the Smokey Mountains in one of our earliest getaways together. Carl had never been to the mountains before so Chris decided to take him up a very steep trail so that he could show Carl a surprise at the end. After an incredibly long walk, **Carl couldn't believe his eyes** when we reached the top of a mountain that overlooks four states. Carl was in complete awe.



Carl's parents live in a countryside town in Pennsylvania with a quaint main street that offers many activities for children. This is also where we got married so it remains a special place for us. The town hosts an annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony on Main Street. We took our niece here this past year, and although she wasn't old enough to run around the tree with the other kids, **we took turns putting her on our shoulders** so that she could get a bird's eye view of the lights and dance to the music that the deejay was playing.



WEEKDAYS



Chris is a biologist who manages clinical trials for patients in need of cancer medication. He **works from home** with a **predictable schedule**. You can find Paco throughout the day under Chris' desk and on the upstairs couch watching the neighbors and cars go by.

Carl is a public policy director for a local government. He creates programs that benefit children and families, people with disabilities, and older adults. Carl **works from home** partially, and partially in an office, approximately a 20-minute drive away. Carl has a **flexible schedule** and is often available for events and appointments that occur throughout the week.



We make dinner together every night. Sometimes we make simple dinners, but just recently, we tried making our own pizza dough. We didn't expect it to be so messy, with flour and olive oil seemingly getting on everything. After about 2 hours of cooking, **the kitchen was an absolute mess, but the pizza was delicious**, making the endeavor well worth it. Even Paco got a piece of pepperoni, which was a huge treat! Afterwards, as we do every night, we played music to make cleanup more fun. Your child will have quality time as a family every evening.

WITH GRATITUDE

Thank you for taking the time to learn about us. We are so excited to become parents, which is why we would view your selection of us as the most special gift we could ever receive. Your child will always know how their life began and the special choice you made. **We would love to maintain contact**, and for you to remain a part of your child's journey in whatever way you are comfortable. Please let us know if you have any questions or want to learn more about us while you make what you feel is the best choice for your baby and you. We wish you enduring comfort and strength during this time.

Carl & Chris



**MADE WITH LOVE BY
CARL & CHRIS**