



our adoption story

JEREMY & DANIEL

Sometimes the Right Path Isn't the one You Originally Plan

A family with children has always been something we have worked towards since the beginning of our relationship. For years we looked into different surrogacy and adoption service providers and ultimately wanted to be legally married before we took the next step in our journey to becoming a family. In 2016 we legally married in our state as well as choose the adoption route and started looking at options. We began researching different adoption agencies and came across LifeLong Adoptions. We loved the positive connection we felt with them and had heard some really wonderful reviews. Looking at the statistics and numbers helped us decide to commit to our adoption path with LifeLong Adoptions. When word spread of our adoption journey, we were met with an incredible amount of support and love. Knowing we had the support and love of our family, friends, and community helped relieve some of the anxiety we had as we took our first few steps on our new path.

The Beautiful Detour We Never Saw Coming

We were well into our contract with LifeLong and approaching

our one-year mark when things went in a whole different direction. We had completed all home study tasks and kept busy with traveling as we waited until we got the call that would change our lives forever. Never did we expect to end up adopting outside of LifeLong, but an opportunity presented itself, and we took it. We were blessed to welcome our first daughter into this world. We were over-the-moon happy and gladly embraced and welcomed Scarlett into our lives and home. We were so pleased to find out we could still pursue adoption with LifeLong and even had the option to put our contract on hold. Ultimately, we decided to do just that, and we took a year-and-a-half break to enjoy and savor all those newborn and infant milestones with Scarlett. The following year, we made the decision to come off hold, and we continued on our adoption journey with LifeLong.

Continuing the Journey

As we started back on our adoption journey with LifeLong, we had the opportunity to speak with a few different expectant mothers and experienced some intense periods of waiting and periods of grief and disappointment. Unfortunately, one of the expectant mothers we were working with experienced

a miscarriage, and we were left feeling heartbroken. As we approached our end date, we prepared ourselves for the fact we might not be adopting another child. We planned a family trip to Disney World in September to keep our minds busy and continue building memories. After almost a week there we received a phone call from LifeLong Adoptions that an expectant mother would like to start talking with us! A few days later we received another phone call with another expectant mother interested in meeting with the family. Never would we have imagined having two expectant mothers reaching out to us. What seemed like an impossible decision was clear after the connection we made after a Skype call. We were so excited, of course, but had little information on her due date or any other specific details. Although Daniel was very excited, Jeremy was a bit more reserved, and both of us were very protective of Scarlett as she was old enough to somewhat know what was going on. We wanted to be sensitive to her feelings as well and not get her too excited for a sibling until we knew with 100% certainty it would happen. As the proposed due date became closer we were on the edge of our seats looking at when we could go to California for the birth. We were lucky enough that we arrived 3 days beforehand and got to take Scarlett to Disneyland and visit with Dan's relative before the magical day was upon us. During that time, the expectant mother went to get an ultrasound and was told the sex of the baby; she asked us if we wanted to know. Of course we did, and we then found out she was having a baby girl! We were so excited and even more anxious to meet her. The next day we received a call at 3 a.m. when she went into labor and was headed to the hospital. We immediately packed up and drove the 1.5 hours to the hospital. When we arrived, we were met with hospital staff that were very sweet and gave us our own room. We spent the day with the expectant mother in her room as she labored. Scarlett was there with us and took on the role of playing nurse, rubbing the expectant mother's hand and showering her with love.

A Family of Four

Our second daughter's birth was an event we will never forget. All three of us, including Scarlett, was able to be in the room for her birth and hold her immediately after was one of the most surreal experiences of our lives. Daniel was able to do skin to skin with this precious baby right away, and we all sat together



as a family welcoming our new daughter, Astoria. Scarlett was so excited to be a big sister and told hospital staff her favorite princess was her new baby sister. We were so overwhelmed with happiness and joy; it felt like our family was complete, and we were blown away by the opportunities we had been blessed with.

Astoria is now three months old, and we are well into the flow of our new routines. We feel our family is complete but have a special place in our hearts that knows should another opportunity arise, we will gladly take it and grow our family further. In the meantime, we are soaking up all the joys and chaos that come with raising children and honoring the wishes of Astoria's birthmother. She originally wanted a closed adoption but later changed her mind and asked for a semi-open adoption. We gladly agreed to that and will support her remaining a part of Astoria's life if that is what she chooses. At this time, she sees pictures of Astoria through a private Facebook account and knows she can reach out to us via phone at any time. Looking back on the last few years, it's hard to believe we went from being just the two of us to now a family of four. As we reflect back on our journey, we want to share with others that even though at times it might look like things aren't working out, all is going according to plan. Don't be afraid to be authentically real; include pictures of your family that aren't "perfect and posed" because expectant mothers will connect to your vulnerability and authenticity. Don't be afraid to show the REAL you, and know it will all work out just as it should.