



our adoption story

RONNI & ELAINA

Growing Our Family

We always knew children would be part of our lives and we tried growing our family for quite a while before we began exploring other options. We spoke to friends who had worked with LifeLong Adoptions and felt a strong pull toward working with them as well. Once we made the decision to move forward with our adoption journey, all the stress and worry seemed to fall away. Instead, we found a renewed sense of hope, gratitude, and excitement. With all the changing laws in the LGBTQ community, we knew working with LifeLong made the most sense. As we began to tell our family and friends of our decision, we were blown away by the amount of love, support, and excitement.

Our Rollercoaster Ride into Parenthood

We were so surprised to receive a call from LifeLong just three short weeks after our profile went live on their website. An expectant mother was interested in speaking with us. Of course, we were overjoyed that things were falling into place so quickly. We had a really good connection with her and felt confident as we moved forward with hiring services on her behalf. It was just after Christmas last year that we learned she had changed her mind and was going to keep the baby.

Although we understood and her choice was hard, it still weighed heavily on our hearts. About a month later, LifeLong called us with the news that another expectant mother was interested in speaking with us. We talked with her, but nothing moved forward.

A few months later, we got our third call from LifeLong, informing us that another expectant mother wanted to speak with us. We called her right away and from the beginning it felt different. The immediate connection we had was amazing and so easy. We shared the same values and wanted the same things for our children. She still had about four-and-a-half months left in her pregnancy, so this gave us a great opportunity to get to know each other and build our relationship.

We spoke every single day, and eventually we had the opportunity to go visit the expectant mother in person. We were lucky enough to accompany her to an ultrasound and meet some of her extended family. We had time to discuss what type of adoption she wanted and she was so happy to learn that we were on board with an open adoption. We all agreed that this beautiful baby would know exactly where she came from and just how many people loved and cared for her.

Meeting our Baby Girl

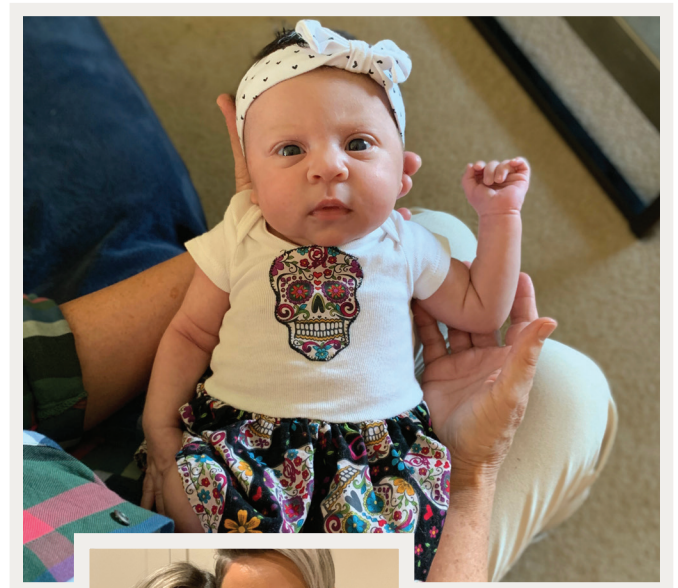
We had climbed into bed after a very long workday around 9:30pm. Within the hour, we woke up to the sound of the phone buzzing across the room. It was the expectant mother calling to let us know that she had just been admitted to the hospital and was in active labor. In a sleep-deprived blur of excitement, we found a flight that would get us there by 3:30pm the next day. We packed our things and drove three hours to the airport to catch our flight. By the time we arrived at the hospital around 4:30pm, we had not slept in over 24 hours.

Around 8:15pm, the doctors ushered everyone out of the delivery room as planned. Blake was born just three minutes later; however, we did not meet our little girl until about 10:30pm - an unplanned delay. During that time, we were extremely nervous. What if she changed her mind? The original plan was for us to do immediate skin-to-skin contact with the baby, but here it was, closing in on two hours later and we had not heard any news. Just when we thought we couldn't wait any longer, we were called back to meet our baby.

Meeting Blake was an overwhelming experience for a few different reasons. We were extremely nervous and although so excited, we were trying to be cautious and our hearts were guarded. The birth parents and their family members were all there, so we had to not only process our own emotions, but be mindful of theirs as well. It was a delicate balancing act that could be somewhat awkward and uncomfortable. The moment we were left alone with Blake, however, all the walls came crumbling down and our hearts exploded with a profound unconditional love.

Three days later, a caseworker told us that the birth parents had just signed the papers. We sobbed out of pure relief, joy, and gratitude. Knowing this beautiful baby was ours and it was official was the best feeling in the world. We left the hospital that day alongside the birth parents and their family members. We hugged and cried and made plans to meet up again while we were still in town waiting on clearance to go back home.

We have an open adoption with Blake and her birth parents. We want what is best for our child and we know that an open adoption is best for her emotional well-being. It was also important to us that Blake knows her sister, Aadhya, who is just nine months older than her. We speak often and have private social media pages where we share photos and stay connected.



After-Adoption Reflections

Looking back on our adoption journey and the path that led us to Blake, it is easy to see and understand that it was all worth it. There are so many challenges as you take this journey and the lack of control was something we had to surrender to pretty quickly. We gave all of ourselves, emotionally, financially, mentally, spiritually, you name it. Learning how to deal with the waiting was difficult, especially after experiencing a disrupted adoption with the first expectant mother. The three weeks before Blake was born seemed to crawl by and it was challenging to keep ourselves from going to a dark place mentally. Keeping ourselves distracted with vacations, work, friends, and family helped a lot.

As you start your journey or as you wait for that call, know that nothing is predictable. There is no pattern and it is a process that must evolve organically. Keeping open and honest communication and taking lots of deep breaths got us through some of the toughest times. Know and trust your instincts and when it is right you will know it and feel it. We are enjoying every moment with Blake as she rapidly changes before our eyes. We still remain in awe of this child and can't believe she is ours.