Tommy and Shaon

# Hello, We're Tommy and Shawn

We would like to thank you for taking these next few moments to get to know us. We can only imagine that the decision in front of you is one of the hardest decisions you have ever faced. We are so full of gratitude that you have chosen to give your child the gift of life and are considering us to be the ones to parent your child. We have always dreamed of becoming parents and are so blessed at the opportunity to build our family through adoption.

We are a very fun-loving couple, with one daughter, and our home is filled with lots of love, laughter, and good home-cooking. It is such a blessing to have the opportunity to be considered to share our love with another child forever and to give our daughter a sibling that she can grow with.

Shawn has always known in her heart that she would one day adopt, which might have something to do with having a younger brother who is adopted, from South Korea. But after we got married, we made the decision as a couple, to grow our family through adoption, after feeling the push from God and learning that it would be very difficult to have biological children of our own. We decided at that time that this was our plan and we would put all our efforts into growing our family through adoption. We began last year, and adopted a little girl, Colette. Our lives have been so blessed and we are so excited to start this journey again, so that we can love another child and bless Colette with a sibling.

# Our Lives Together

We met in 2006 through mutual friends in a college alumni networking group. Our alumni group had organized a bachelor/bachelorette date auction, with all proceeds going to charity. We were both involved in the charity and had volunteered to be auctioned off as "dates." A few days before the big event, friends introduced us, and on the day of the auction Tommy ended up with the winning bid for a date with Shawn! We went on our first date a couple of days after the auction and have been together ever since.

Two years after we started dating, we were on a summer trip with Shawn's family at the beach. One morning, Tommy came into Shawn's room and woke her up, asking if she would walk on the beach with him. Since Shawn had not quite fully woken up yet, it took a little convincing, but we knew that the morning was our only chance to enjoy the beach, as the weather was supposed to get bad later in the day. Within 10 minutes of us walking on the beach, Tommy got down on one knee and asked for Shawn's hand in marriage. It was a wonderful moment and even more exciting to celebrate our engagement with Shawn's family the rest of the week.

Our wedding ceremony and reception were held in an old Victorian home close to where Shawn grew up in May of 2009. We had a small, intimate Southern wedding complete with a bluegrass band and an incredible buffet of Southern cuisine.The weather was horrible that day, which pushed the ceremony indoors, but that didn't stop us from having an amazing time celebrating the beginning of our lives together.

We have been happily married for almost four years now. Our favorite activities are centered around food and travel. We love trying new restaurants and socializing with friends, and live a very active lifestyle. And we always try to involve our dog- a sweet chocolate brown Labrador. We love animals and plan to always have at least one dog, but the more the merrier! We plan on traveling with our children to expose them to all different types of people, places and cultures just as our parents did for us growing up.

# My Husband Tommy

My husband loves big and plays hard. He has a great sense of humor and is everyone's best friend the minute they meet him. He is so laid back when it comes to our personal life and is very patient with my high energy personality. I'm so blessed to have him as my husband.

Tommy works as a project manager for a commercial drywall contractor. He has been there since graduating from college in 2003, and he is very committed to his job. He loves the company, and they have treated him very well over the years. We are blessed that Tommy has a job that provides well for our family's needs.

Children absolutely love Tommy because he is a jokester, and they love his playful sense of humor. No matter where we go, Tommy seems to always find himself surrounded by children. They love his jokes and talk about how funny he is, which he loves to tease me about since I am always making fun of his joke-telling abilities.

I have loved seeing Tommy grow as a person and as a father. He is the kind of man that loves with his whole heart, provides well for our family, teaches and guides them with kindness, and will always make sure that our children experience the joy and adventures that life has to offer.

# My Wife Shawn

Shawn has a wonderful sense of independence and has a high level of motivation to go with it. She can achieve any goal she sets for herself. I love her passion for life and I am so blessed to have her by my side. She is an amazing wife and friend.

Shawn works as a project manager for an online education curriculum provider. She works in the marketing department, managing the creative team's operations and projects. Shawn is planning to take three months off from work when the baby arrives. When she returns to work, we will use a day care a few days a week, and Shawn will work from home on the other days. As our family grows, it is our desire that Shawn will eventually stay at home full time with our children.

Shawn displays genuine care whenever she is with children. She makes every child feel that they are special when she is with them. She is completely devoted and caring. Spending time with the children in our lives brings her so much joy.

I promise you that any child who is blessed to call Shawn, "Mommy," will be surrounded by love, kindness, and complete devotion. It has been amazing to see her grow as a mother, after Colette was born. She is a natural and I could not be more blessed to have her as my wife and mother of my children.

# Our Daughter, Colette

Colette was born in July of 2012, and joined our family through the miracle of adoption. We were blessed to have been able to be at the hospital when she was born and have cherished seeing her grow these past 8 months. She is a happy baby and enjoys being loved on continuously.

Although she is only 8 months old, we can already see hints of her personality coming out. She is highly active, loves adventure and has a contagious smile.

Tommy and I would love to bless Colette with a sibling, and we know she will be a wonderful big sister someday. We think it would be great if our children were close enough in age to share similar interests and activities.

# Our Family

Shawn's parents are married and currently still live in the community where Shawn grew up, along with her two brothers, Chris and Stephen. Stephen is 36 and married with three children (newborn, two and five). Chris, who is adopted from South Korea, is 28. Shawn has four aunts and uncles and eleven cousins. Shawn's mother's parents passed away over ten years ago, but her father's parents are still living and in their early 90's!

Because we live farther away now, we do not see as much of them as we would like, but our family is very close. Shawn is especially close with her parents, grandparents and brothers, who we see every couple of months.

Tommy's parents are married and have two other sons, Mike and Joe. Joe is 37 and is married with two children (a four-year old daughter, son who is one). Mike is 35, is married and has a four-year old son and newborn daughter. Tommy's mom has a huge family on her side, as she was one of 7 children. Tommy has nine aunts and uncles and seventeen cousins.

We love celebrating the holidays with our family and alternate each year between our two families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. For Christmas, we usually start the day with a large breakfast before attending a church service, and then the day is spent celebrating with the immediate family, exchanging gifts, as well as eating lots of food! For Thanksgiving, the day usually centers around food, football, and family bonding.

Our family is so excited about our second adoption plans and can hardly wait to welcome our new little one into the family. We are looking forward to celebrating the holidays to come with the children that God will give us, creating our own family traditions and watching our child experience the wonder and delight of these family celebrations.

When our new baby arrives, we are sure to be "invaded" by both sets of grandparents who will come to meet our little one and help us get settled in as a family of four! We have very strong relationships with our parents and our siblings and are excited knowing that our child will have wonderful relationships with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. We are especially excited for Colette as we know what a joy siblings can be for each other.

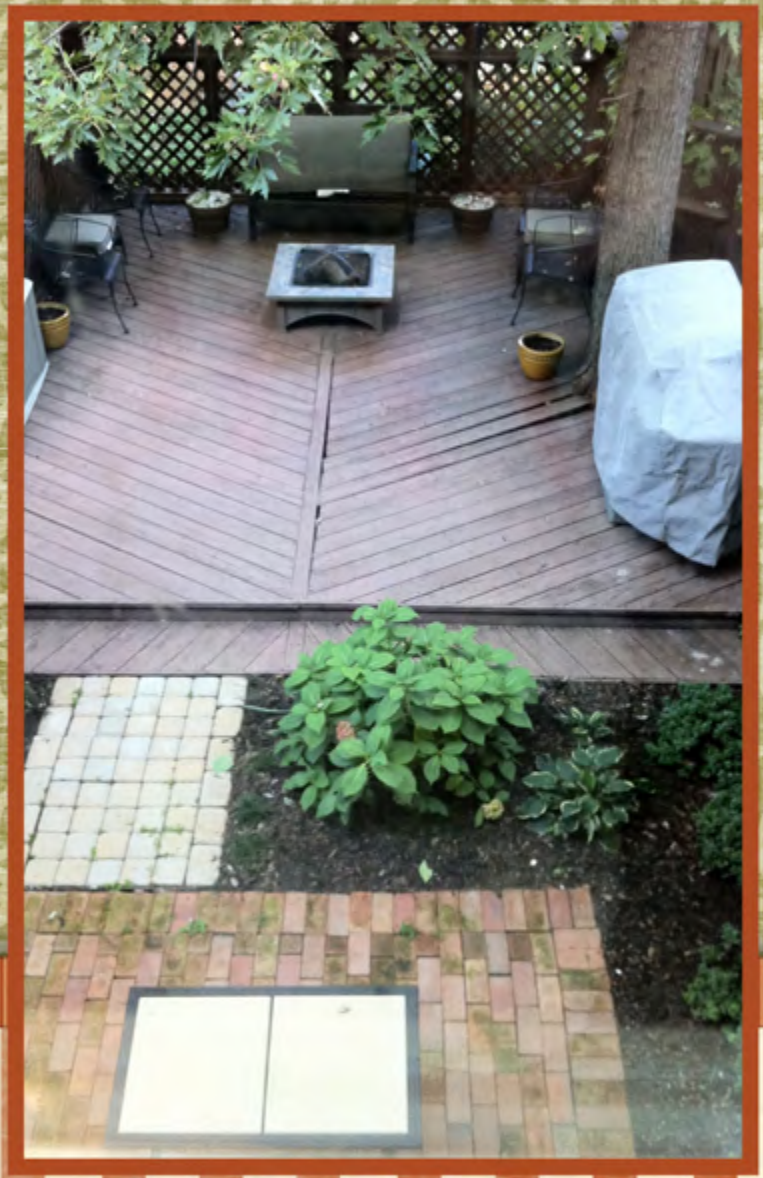
# Our Home

We live in a cozy two bedroom, three-story townhouse. It has the option of converting the larger bedroom into two rooms (for 3 bedrooms total), and we are currently working on this as we prepare for our new arrival! We have two bathrooms and a basement family room where we spend much of our time hanging out. There is a small backyard, but we typically go to nearby parks to run or play with our dog.

Our neighborhood is very culturally diverse. Since we live near a large city, space comes at a premium, but it is a strong community with lots of young families and children.

Because our neighborhood is full of young families, there are a lot of playgrounds and things to do with the family. "Main Street" is very popular as it is lined with restaurants and has a very family friendly feel. It gives our urban neighborhood a small-town feel. We always joke that to live in our neighborhood, there seems to be a requirement that you have a dog or a child!

The school district is above average, but not as great as the surrounding counties. Most likely if we were to stay in the area, we would choose to send our children to a private school after elementary school.



# *Our Future*

As we look to the future, our deepest desire is to see our family grow. We long to be parents and can hardly wait to see this dream fulfilled. The thought of sharing our lives with the children that we know God will give us, fills our hearts with so much joy and excitement.

It is our dream one day to move closer to our families so that we are not traveling so much to see them. As our family grows, we also see ourselves in a bigger house with a nice, large backyard where our children and their pets can run and play. Tommy loves his company, so ideally he would like to transfer somewhere where his company has an office, so our move is really dependent on that being an option. If it is not, we would stay in the area where we are now and just find a larger house sometime in the next two years.

We were both raised in Christian homes and our faith in God is at the center of our lives. While we both grew up in very different faiths (Catholic and Protestant), we have found a church home that is a good fit for us as a married couple. Raising our own children to know the strength and love that comes through a relationship with God is our number one priority. We know God has a plan for us and for the children we will one day have, and we trust Him to lead and direct our lives.

We will make decisions about our children's education based on where we are living at the time they become school aged, as well as what is best for their needs as individuals. We would consider private or public school. If we stayed where we are now, we would send them to a private school, but there are some really great public schools in areas we are looking to move (closer to family). A faith-based education will also be something that will play a big part in our decision when the time comes. As our children grow older, we will definitely encourage them to go to college, and we will ensure that they have the financial support to do so.

We look forward to the amazing changes that will come to our lives as we welcome more children into our home. One of the things we look forward to the most is traveling with our children so that they can experience the world first-hand. We have been blessed to travel to some amazing places during our own childhoods and in the past few years as a married couple, and we can't wait to share those experiences with our children.

We are so honored that you have taken this time to get to know us. We want you to know that we have been praying for you and for the child that you are carrying. We have been asking God to give you peace and wisdom, and we know that if we are the ones who are to be the family for your child, you will know it.

As we think about sharing our children's adoption stories with them one day, we are amazed that we will be able to share with them about the loving decision that you have made. You will always be spoken of with the deepest respect, and we will pray for you as long as we live.

God Bless You,

*Tommy and Shawn*