

# Jen & Alex



"I am going to be the best big brother ever in the whole wide world!" That is the answer - complete with the dimpled smile that shows he is sincere - my son Alex gave when I asked him what he wanted you to know. I have no doubt he will do everything he can to hold to that promise.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our family - we are honored to be considered. We'd like the chance to tell you a little about us, hoping that you will find us to be a good fit for your child.

I have a lot of respect for the courage and love it takes to give your child the gift of life and make an adoption plan. Having enough information to confidently choose the right family will hopefully make it just a little bit easier.

I know it is difficult to get to know someone well from a few pages, so if you want more information after you finish reading this, I would love to sit down with you and answer any other questions you may have.

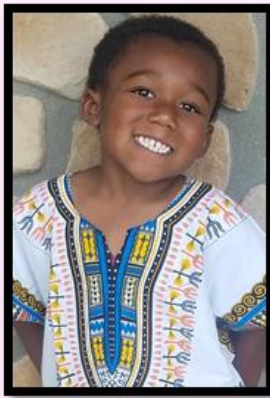
I adopted Alex at birth. I remember holding him in the NICU, promising him the world. I told him about all the places we would visit, parks, festivals, the taste of my dad's famous chocolate fudge and mama's apple crisp, the sweet smell of puppy breath, how excited his aunts were to meet him... he fell asleep somewhere around this point, but I prayed he understood how much he was loved.

All of my siblings, most of their spouses, my son, and my dad play softball. We spend a lot of evenings at the baseball diamond, cheering them on or running around the playground beside it. My camp chair has been a staple in my vehicle for years; I don't bother to put it back in the garage anymore because it is constantly needed to save me from the uncomfortable bleachers every ball diamond seems to have.

When we aren't enjoying the evening watching the game, I love to lay out on the hammock in the backyard and listen to the birds I spend a small fortune feeding. When I'm lucky, I'll even see the hummingbirds - my favorite. While I'm relaxing, Alex is usually jumping on the trampoline beside me or climbing on the playset. When it gets dark, we have a firepit that is perfect for making a quick s'mores treat before bed.

Each fall my family (parents, siblings, and their families) goes camping with the horses. We spend the day trail riding, evenings roasting hot dogs and hiking with glow sticks, and mornings watching the guys try to make bacon and eggs over the fire. {I usually bring backup donuts. Shhhhhh...} It is a great time, and the bigger our family gets, the more interesting it becomes.

I loved school, but I've learned that an education derived through experience goes further than anything you can get from a book. A child needs to see, touch, taste, and feel life to fully understand it. Giving my children opportunities to experience the world around them is an important part of my parenting style. I like to incorporate basic science lessons into simple activities like going to the pumpkin patch, decorating cookies, checking out the petting zoo, and short nature hikes.





JEN

I am an avid reader, have a degree in science, enjoy all kinds of crafts, and absolutely love being a mom. I grew up in the country just down the road from my grandparent's farm. I remember riding my bike down to grandma's house, bottle feeding the calves, helping deliver food to my uncles working in the fields, and playing with kittens in the hay loft. I love small town life, and chose to return to the area after college. I now live right down the road from my parents, affording my children similar opportunities to spend time with 'grandma and grandpa', learn how to grow a garden, and help feed the horses in the evening.

I am the second oldest of six kids and loved growing up in a big family. As an adult, I appreciate it even more. I can't remember the last time I went a day without seeing or talking to my parents or one of my siblings. They are such an important part of my life; I want my children to experience the same connection.

Two things guaranteed to put a smile on my face are chocolate and babies. I am known as the queen 'baby hog' amongst a family full of them. During gatherings, it is not unusual for an aunt to jokingly ask "isn't something missing?" when there isn't a baby in my arms ... or a sister to bring out a timer proclaiming "my turn!" when there is.

ALEX

Alex is an amazing young man, throwing himself whole-heartedly into everything he does. He loves gymnastics and swimming, enjoys little league baseball, and looks adorable in his cub scout uniform. He is crazy smart which earned him a spot in the gifted program at school (yes, I am one proud momma!). That said, like most kids his age, the second school gets out he is ready to play! He has a great imagination and loves to pretend he is an 'American Ninja Warrior'. He has a ton of stuffed animals, each one with its own name and personality. He can spend hours creating a whole world out of Legos and loves to get outside and ride his bike if the weather even hints at being nice.

Two of the traits Alex is most known for are his infectious smile and his bear hugs. He is my little cuddle-bug, and he makes sure I get a hug each day before he leaves for school and again after we say our nighttime prayers. Alex is kind and caring and takes great pride being a 'favorite cousin' to some of my toddler nieces and nephews. He has been asking for a sibling for years and would make an amazing big brother!



Home



We own a 3-bedroom ranch style house that Alex was able to watch being built from the foundation up (by my dad). It is set back from the road and has an open floor plan, a covered front porch, a large deck out back, and a private patio perfect for enjoying a nice day. We own several acres of land including a thick wooded area to the side that is a haven for an absurd number of bunnies and the occasional deer. Blackberries along the edge make a sweet summer treat—if we can get to them before the birds do. There is a large field past the back yard, and another one across the road that is owned by family. Having so much space gives kids room to run, and the big shade tree in the front yard is perfect for picnicking underneath.

Misha & Luna



Misha is an adorable seal point cat who enjoys spending most of the day lazing about in the sun. She tends to hide from strangers, but she adores Alex and loves to cuddle up to him when he is watching TV.



Luna is a small white/cream Pomeranian with an insane amount of energy. She loves everyone she meets, hates thunderstorms, and is happiest when she is receiving attention.



# FAMILY



My family is an integral part of our lives - and will be a significant part of your baby's life if you choose us. My parents have been married for over 40 years and still have an amazing relationship. My family is very close, providing me with an incredible support system. Alex loves having so many aunts, uncles, and cousins! I have 11 nieces and nephews (with two more on the way!). Half my family lives within a 5-minute drive, and the rest aren't much further. Weekends are spent together, often just grilling out or enjoying each others company. Zoo trips, swimming, horseback riding, and hiking are common activities too. Every couple of years my family rents a huge cabin around Gatlinburg for a big family vacation. Alex loves to bring it up, fantasizing about how cool it would be if we all lived in the same house year-round. While that sounds chaotic to me, having someone around to play with all the time is his version of Heaven.



*Alex & Grandpa*

Every birthday I ask Alex questions about his 'favorites', and most things change from year to year. One answer that has stayed the same since he was two is 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' Every single time I ask, the answer is 'a builder, like Grandpa'. Alex is a total Grandpa's boy, which works out great because my dad is the best role model I could ask for.

## My Goddaughters



*The Princess & The Angel*

## FAITH

I am a cradle Catholic, and Sundays mean morning mass, family, and going out to eat. I believe there are a lot of benefits to the ceremony of mass, but I always feel closest to God surrounded by the beauty of what he created. Cliché, but true.

Just the thought of a 20-mile power hike exhausts me, but a leisurely stroll through the woods and down by the river along the 1-mile loop at our nearby preserve calms my mind in a way nothing else can. While I don't get to the ocean nearly as often as I'd like, my favorite part of going to the beach is walking down to the water at sunrise before the crowds are out and just absorbing its strength. A morning rainbow can make my entire day feel blessed. Rocking one of my little nieces or nephews to sleep makes the stress of the world fade, and making my son smile? That's the closest to God I've ever been.

While organized religion can give a good base and is an important part of our lives, I want my children to learn that God is all around them. No matter what is going on in their lives, knowing that God is just a prayer away can help them through any situation.



## Vacation

I love to travel - everything from the Carolina beaches to Colorado's mountains have been destinations of mine. St. Lucia was one of my favorites, but Bolivia was the trip that changed my world view.

I haven't given up travelling since becoming a mom, but I have chosen more local destinations for now. The Smokey Mountains and Lake Michigan are two fun family areas that don't require too much time spent in a vehicle, but Disney and beach vacations are definitely in our future!

Skydiving

Lake Michigan

Trail Riding

Camping

Gatlinburg

St. Lucia

Bolivian  
Orphanage

Cabin

Garden of  
the Gods

## Transracial Adoption

I hadn't put much thought in to

transracial adoption before Alex came in to my life, but once he was born I wanted to make sure I was prepared to answer any questions he may have as he grew up.

I took classes and made sure to incorporate toys, books, and videos that showed multiple cultures. One of my friends from work helped me with hair care tips and gave me a couple products to try.

When Alex was five he saw a child from Nigeria on TV and pointed out how much he looked like him. We decided to do an Ancestry DNA test, and surprisingly enough, the results came back with the highest percentage being Nigerian. He now has a poster of the country on his wall.

We have friends that have adopted transracially and have kids around his age. It helps him see that there are a lot of other 'conspicuous' families out there and gives him kids to talk to that are in a similar situation.

There is an annual AA Culture fest near our area, and I have recently joined a couple transracial adoption groups.

While the day-to-day activities are much the same, by being aware of potential differences I do my best to make sure he never has to question who he is or where he belongs...right here with me.

I want to instill in my children the certainty that I will **always** be there for them, no matter what. Knowing that my parents were there to back me up in everything I did has always given me the confidence to jump in with both feet.

Adoption has made a huge impact in my life, not just through my son, but with family and friends as well. One of my best friends from high school placed her daughter for adoption senior year, and my college roommate (who herself was adopted) placed her son at birth. I have a nephew and six cousins that were added to our family through adoption, and a couple of my friends grew their family that way as well. One thing they all have in common is the feeling that it was 'meant to be'. I pray that you find that same peace, and trust that God will guide you in finding the perfect family for your child.

If Alex and I are that family, know that your baby will have the opportunity to learn and explore in a safe environment, and will never lack for love. I will give her or him the best home I can, and always strive to be the kind of parent my own mom and dad are.

**Thank you for taking the time to learn about our family. Please feel free to ask if you have any questions. We would love to hear from you!**

Thank You!

Jennifer  
&  
Alex

