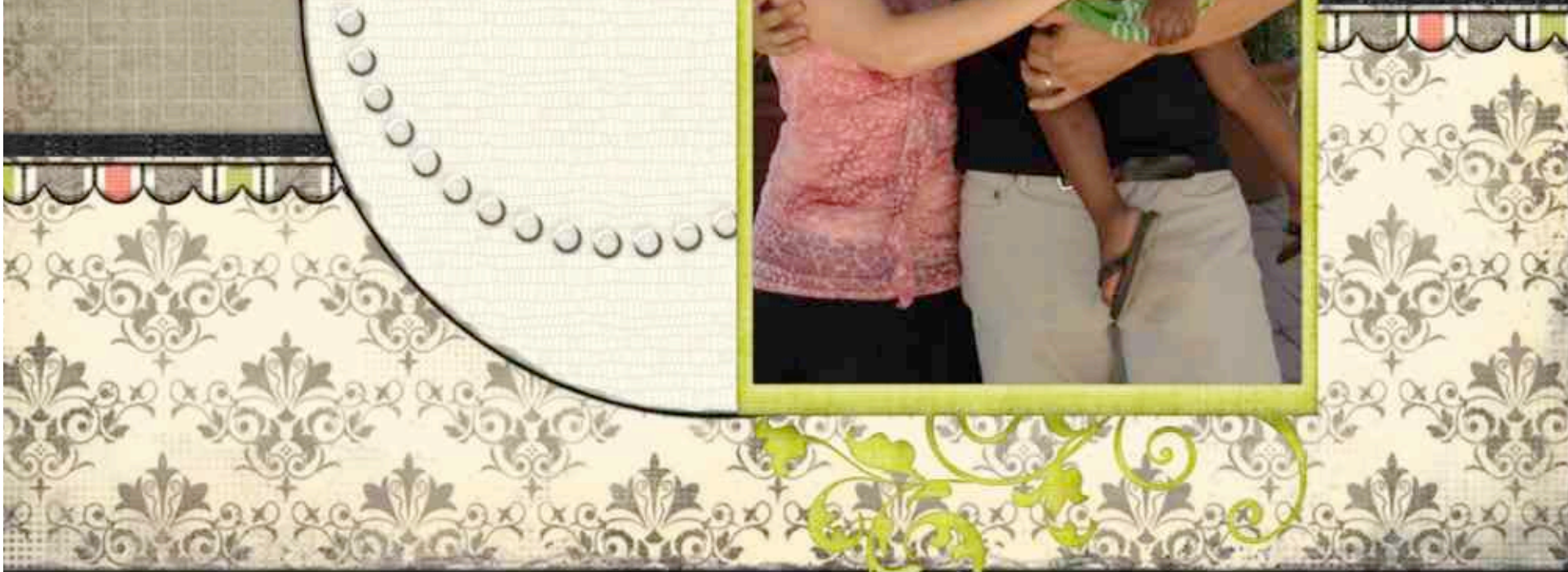
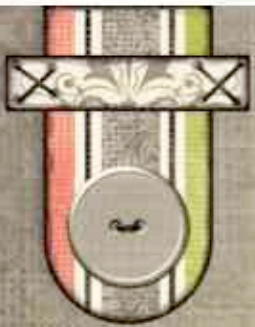
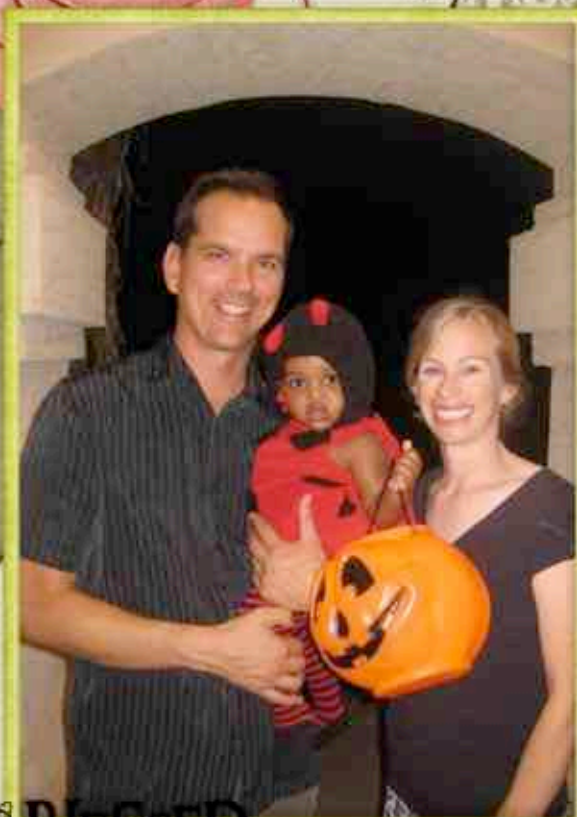


*Steve and Elizabeth*



# Hello, We're Steve and Elizabeth



So BLESSED

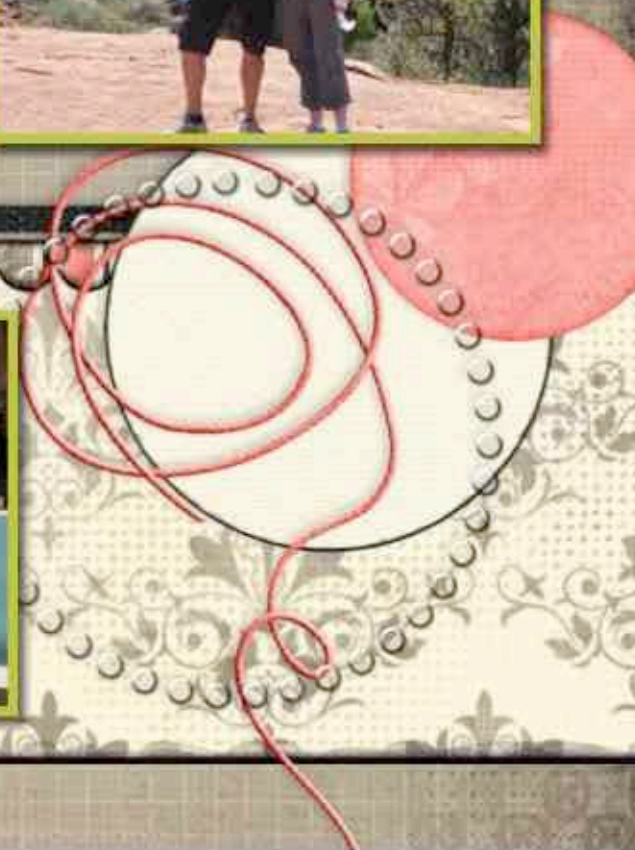
Becoming parents through adoption has been the best gift we have ever received. As we pursue our second adoption, we still marvel at this amazing gift. As you are reading these pages, we are full of gratitude that you are considering us to parent your child. The loving sacrifice that you are making to give your child the future you long for them to have shows that you must be a very strong and brave woman.

We would be honored to be chosen to parent your child, and we want you to know that we would embrace this child as our own. We would make sure this child knows the gift you have given in choosing life and a bright future for them. We will raise this child to know about you, and we would like to keep in touch with you and share the joys and milestones of this child's life. We will raise our children to be strong, healthy, educated, kind, giving, confident, and most of all individuals who feel love and share love. We can think of nothing more rewarding to us as individuals and as a family.

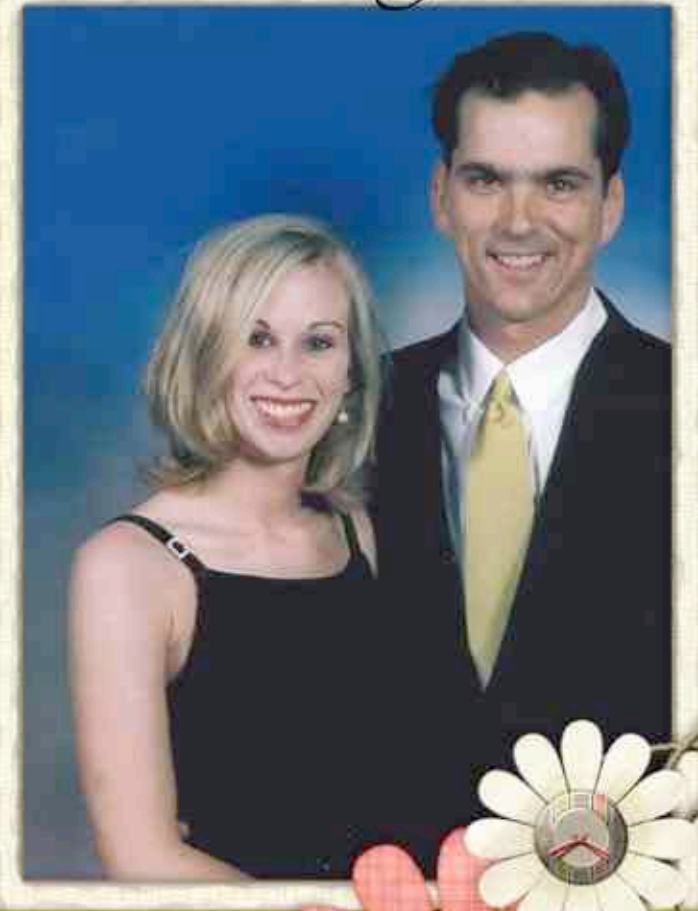
After we had been married a number of years and decided we were ready to start a family, we did not become pregnant easily. After testing, the doctors could not find a reason for our infertility issues, but our hearts had already started considering adoption. We had discussed adoption even when we were dating, so it was a natural choice for us to make. We could not imagine a better way for us to add to our family.

We have one daughter, Tessa (3 years old), who we adopted in 2010. She is the most amazing blessing in our lives and the lives of our extended family and friends. Once we knew we wanted to have children and were prepared for the responsibility, it seemed so natural to try to find a child who needed a family through adoption.

Our faith brought us through our first adoption and we hold steadfastly again to our faith as we pursue a second adoption. We trust God to bring our family together. We know that if we are the family God wants for your child, He will give you peace and confidence as you make your decision.



## *Our Lives Together*



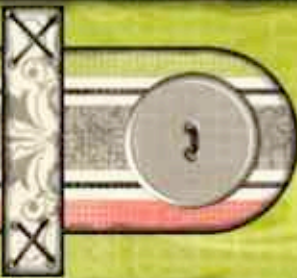
We met in high school when we were both attending a church youth group. We were on a water rafting trip when we really talked for the first time at length. It is funny to think about it now because we were so young and immature in many ways, but we have always really loved each other from that very first meeting. What struck us both was how different we really were- Steve seemed so free and relaxed and he said what he thought about things. Elizabeth was more reserved and private. In the early days, we would have described our relationship as "opposites attract," but now, after 15 years of marriage, we see that we are only really different in how we express ourselves. In fact, our basic values, beliefs, and approach to life are strikingly similar. But it is our different personalities and styles of expression that keep things fresh and interesting!

We dated on and off from high school through college. By the time we got engaged, we had been together consistently for about 2 years. Steve proposed one early evening on a hike at a beautiful historic reserve park in the mountains in California. We had been talking about the idea of marriage for a while prior to this so it should not have come as a surprise, but in the moment he asked, it was like something new and more serious than the discussions- it was real! There was no doubt in either of our minds that this was right for us. Telling all our friends and family was really fun, especially since we had been together for so long!

We were married 15 years ago, at a beautiful, historic landmark in California. Although there were about 150 people attending, the wedding felt small and intimate. The ceremony was formal, featuring classical harp music and scripture readings. It was simple and elegant. The thing we will both always remember is how focused we were on each other during the ceremony and the importance of that moment. Friends later told us that when we looked at each other, they could see in our eyes that there was no place we would rather be. We had a reception after the wedding, which was fun, but the ceremony and having all of our family and friends there to support our union was definitely the highlight.

As a couple, we like to volunteer and spend time in our community, hike, try new restaurants, go to the coffee shop and talk, go to movies, baseball games and museums. We are both runners and also enjoy running together and training together. We love to travel domestically and internationally and hope to do even more as a family when our children are a little older.





## *My Husband Steve*

I love that Steve is honest and steadfast in his love and commitment to his family and close friends. With Steve, you will always know what he thinks about something and how he feels since he is very open and it is important to him to just be himself. He likes to talk about ideas and create new approaches to things in life, which is always fresh and exciting.

I love that he has always talked most about and spent his time and resources on the things that are most important- family, children, relationships, and ideas. Steve is also very intelligent and creative, and is always seeking ways to learn and grow- I absolutely love this about him.

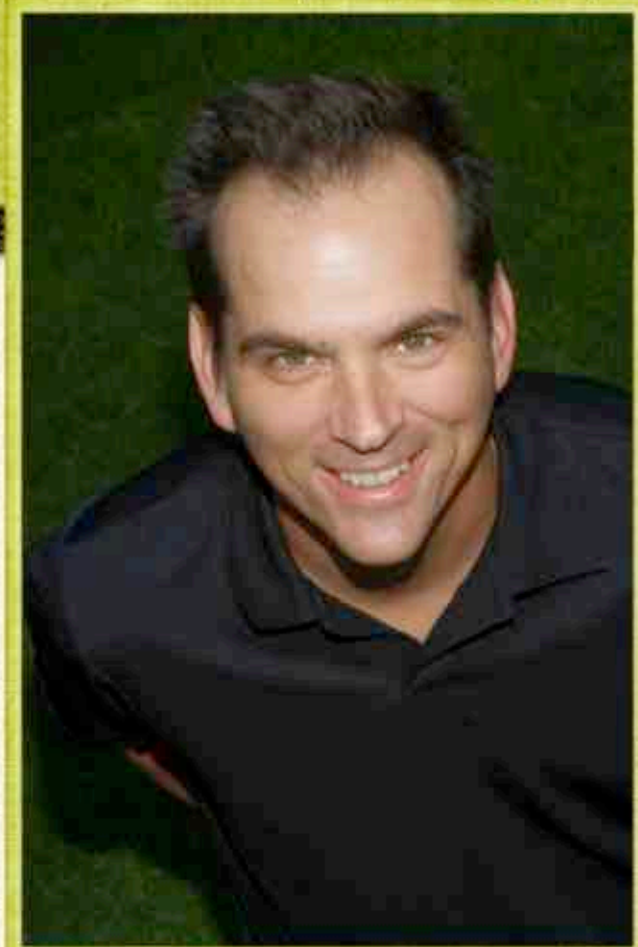
His kindness and warmth attracted me to him from the very beginning, and they still do! He is a generous and kind person who values his relationships with others.

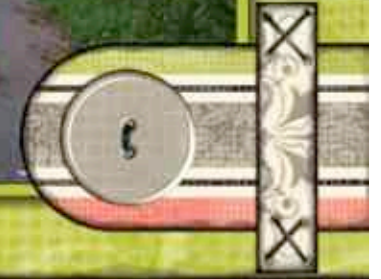
Steve recently completed his Master's degree in Education and his teaching credential to teach high school English. He previously was a manager and administrator of human services programs that support adults with developmental disabilities.

Steve is wonderful with our daughter and other children who are a part of our lives. He is patient, a good teacher, engaged and interested, and very loving. He likes to be silly and goofy, which of course all the little ones especially love. Steve and Tessa have a game where they are "stuck together," and I have to try to pry them apart. Tessa absolutely roars with laughter every time and the prying apart tends to get more and more dramatic.

Steve also has deep and meaningful conversations with our older nieces and nephews. We are particularly close to my sister, Colleen, who is a single parent and her daughter, Taylor who is now 13. When Taylor was younger, we helped raise her when we all lived in the same community. Steve and Taylor are particularly close; he watched her on his days off when she was young and coached her soccer teams. We are still very close and see each other several times a year, but it is harder now that we live in another state. Taylor typically comes to stay with us by herself for a week or two on her summer break and sometimes also on her fall break.

One thing I can promise you, is this. Steve is a loving and faithful husband and father. The child that joins our family next will be loved unconditionally and will be blessed to have Steve as a father.







# My Wife Elizabeth



I have known Elizabeth well for more than twenty years and absolutely admire the fact that when she commits to something, there is nothing that can get in her way of accomplishing that task with love, hard work, and success. She has this brilliant way of balancing life with seriousness and light-hearted realness. Quite possibly her most attractive attribute is that she wants to live life to the fullest and contribute to the world around her.

Elizabeth is a very compassionate and empathetic soul and is very sensitive to the needs of others. Elizabeth is well educated, with three graduate degrees (including a PhD), and her intelligence, along with great humility, is very evident in all of the areas of her life.

Elizabeth is a professor of social work at a university. She teaches clinical classes for students preparing to work with children and adolescents in a variety of settings such as schools and behavioral health clinics. She plans to slow down when our next child arrives and stay home.

My wife is very adventurous and willing to try new things. She is always looking to expand her experience. I really, really adore this about her. For years she was adamant that she hated running, but one day she decided she would give it another try. About six months later, she ran her first half-marathon! Watching her achieve personal goals is utterly inspiring.

As a wife and mother, Elizabeth loves Tessa and me with absolute affection, commitment, and care. She is steadfast in her love for me. She supports my dreams and desires in life with absolute confidence, love, and practicality.

Elizabeth has always valued children in a very dedicated and tender fashion. She sees children as individuals, and when she meets them, she takes the time and energy to really get to know them personally and build a relationship. She is very careful and aware of the need to be a positive and encouraging force in the life of our daughter, as well as other children who are part of our lives.

In the past 17 years, I have marveled at my wife in so many different ways, however, in the past two years, I have seen my amazing wife as a mother, and I cannot begin to express how well she has taken to the role. She has an undeniable, unshakeable love and commitment to our daughter. Straight from the beginning, she bonded with Tessa in a very real and tight way. Elizabeth is a natural at mothering, while also very careful and deliberate in how she approaches parenting. Selfless and proactive are words that come to mind when I think of how Elizabeth approaches raising our daughter. With nurturing care, she is always reflecting and planning in regards to what is best for Tessa.

I can assure you, with no doubt in my mind, that Elizabeth will pour that same level of compassion, nurture and love into the child that joins our family.





## *Our Daughter Tessa*

We have one daughter, Tessa, who is 3 years old. Tessa was born in Ethiopia and united with us when she was ten months old.

Tessa is very active, self-confident, outgoing, loving and empathic. She is very interested in her environment and what is going on around her and always wants to be involved in the "action." She is an absolutely wonderful child.

Tessa loves to play with her friends or with us, read books, ride her bike, make crafts or other art projects, and be outside enjoying the outdoor environment. She likes to have responsibilities and jobs or projects to do (if one of us is cooking, she wants to help cut up food or stir; if we are washing the car, she wants to do it too).

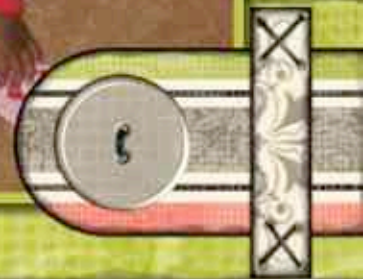
She loves people and shows genuine interest in whomever she meets. Multiple extended family members/friends have commented about her positive communication skills and ability to console peers when they are upset.

We like being really active together as a family. We love outdoor activities like swimming, walking/running, and hiking. We like to have a mixture of activities and rest on the weekends since our weeks are often busy. We often enjoy a fun family activity such as going to the Children's Museum downtown or an event at a park or around town on the weekends.

We also like to spend time with friends in the evenings and on the weekend. And we travel quite a bit to see family and friends in Colorado, Utah and California. We love to travel and go to new places whenever we have the time. Most of all, we just like all being together as a family. We like to think we can have fun wherever we are, as long as we are together.

We are very excited to see Tessa experience the blessing of a sibling, and we know that she will make a fantastic big sister!





# FAMILY



We have a large and loving extended family. Steve's parents are happily married and are an active part of our lives. He has a brother who is married and has two children. His half-sister is also married and has two grown children.

Elizabeth's mother and her 4 siblings are also a big part of our lives. Her older sister and her husband have three children who are all adopted. All three of the children were adopted from the foster care system, and have the same biological mother. Elizabeth has another sister who has one daughter. Her youngest sister is married, and her youngest brother is married and has one young child.

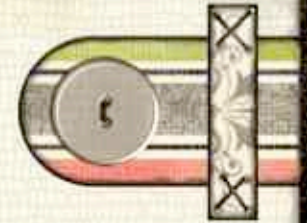
Our family is very important to us and we love to be together and spend time relaxing, talking, and sharing as a family. We celebrate the major American holidays and also the Ethiopian holidays. It is important to us as a family to embrace as our own the cultural traditions of any children who enter our family. We love this about our family! We celebrate with food, music, and cultural expressions. We also celebrate the day our daughter was adopted in addition to her birthday.







## *Our Home*



We live in a relatively new 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom family home in a very safe and quiet neighborhood. The house has a large great room that connects the living room to the dining room. We also have a family room and breakfast nook next to the kitchen. We have a great yard with plenty of space for games and activities.

We live in the suburbs in a very nice neighborhood near a large mountain reserve. While we are in the suburbs, we are only about 10 miles away from the downtown area and easily access cultural, educational, and sporting events/opportunities.

Our neighborhood is economically stable and ethnically and culturally diverse. Our neighborhood boasts some of the best schools in the entire metropolitan area and is a desirable location for families. We are members of the community center that has a swimming pool, tennis courts, and dance and gymnastics classes. We live within walking distance of two very nice parks with large play areas for young children. It is a great place to raise children, which is why we moved here.





*Our Future*





We plan to stay where we are, particularly while our children are young. We are happy here and have a nice life and network of friends and supports. Steve is transitioning to a new career as a high school English teacher so we plan to focus on helping him get established. Elizabeth is in a good point in her career to slow down and take time off so she plans to stay at home with our next child.

We were both raised in Christian households. We believe in the basic values and way of living from the Bible and our faith. We attend an African Methodist Episcopal church (AME), a congregation and community of wonderful, social justice and service-minded people. This congregation is almost entirely African American and, while it was a little uncomfortable at first for us to be one of the (if not the) only white people attending, we feel like it is so good for our biracial family and really a good experience for us to see what it might feel like for Tessa in situations in life when she is the only black person. We try to minimize these occurrences by living and engaging in a diverse community, but it still happens. Our family has been embraced and welcomed at our church, and we are so grateful for such a warm and loving church community.

We want to raise our children to be critical thinkers and to examine faith in her/his own way, not from a rigid set of guidelines.

We plan to send our children to the best schools we can find for their specific needs and strengths. In the case of our daughter, she attends a Montessori school and will stay there until we believe a change is needed. Fortunately, we have access to good schools in our neighborhood and other charter and private school options nearby should our children have specialized interests. There are some excellent preparatory schools and art, science, and technology magnet schools downtown.

We plan to strongly encourage a college education and will financially support our children to attend college. We are both educators, and we see the value in higher education and even graduate training. However, we also know that there are other viable paths to a successful career in the arts or other professions. If our child is undecided about her/his path, we would encourage a good liberal arts education either way since it provides character growth and personal development in addition to vocational opportunities. With Elizabeth as a professor, our children can receive free tuition to attend the university where she teaches or either of the other 2 public universities in the state. But we would also support a different university or vocational choice if that was the best thing for our child and well-planned.

We are very excited about our plans to expand our family once again through adoption. We have chosen to pursue the adoption of an African American child partially because of our daughter's Ethiopian heritage. We feel like all that we have learned as we have worked diligently to honor and embrace our daughter's heritage as part of our family's heritage and our way of life, has made us well equipped to raise an African American child. We want you to know that we are dedicated to making sure that our children live and engage in an ethnically diverse community, and that we as a biracial family celebrate each child's heritage.

If you should chose us to parent your child, we want you to know that you will be honored in our family. We would love to hear about your hopes and dreams for this child. We would love to hear about any traditions and cultural issues that are important to you, things you want your child to experience and learn one day. Who you are will be reflected in your child, and that is incredibly important to us.

We are praying for you and trusting God to speak to your heart in a real way about your child's future.

God Bless You,

*Steve and Elizabeth*