

Hello, we are Bethanie and Nate! We respect your courage and decision to seek an adoption plan for your child. We would like to thank you for reading our letter and considering us. We hope from this letter that you will gain an understanding that we want to offer a safe, healthy, loving, and supportive family for your child.



So here is a little about us:

We met December 2011 in Okinawa, and began our first date by revealing some of our inner most fears, regrets, and feelings. Not the traditional way that two people try to impress each other, but it worked for us; we were pretty much inseparable from that point forward. What we found in each other was the honesty and acceptance we were looking for.

Within two weeks of our meeting, I was set to return to the United States while Nate stayed behind, we began discussing the future of our relationship. I told Nate he probably needed to be aware of my age, in the event he might want to expand his family with me (I was 37 at the time). Without even waiting to hear the number, he stated there was no worry because we could adopt. Adoption has been one of our options for growing our family ever since.

Both of us have been married once before we met. While neither of those previous marriages worked out, divorce taught both of us a lot about ourselves and the type of person that would be best for us to commit to. Our first date, the sharing of our intimate feelings and heartaches, let us know that we were the right fit. I think we have stated it before in this letter, but the honesty and acceptance of that first date really resonated with us. Trust, commitment, communication, acceptance; these are the things we found that we value and that had been missing in our previous marriages but we hold as the foundation of our marriage and family.

In 2013, Nate and I finally made our relationship legally official by getting married in the backyard of our first home. It was an intimate affair with close family and friends. My sister officiated the ceremony, and Paxton, Nate's son and my step-son, stood alongside us and even signed our certificate. It was



important to us that he be involved in the occasion and viewed this as the official marking of our family union together. And as we grow our family, we want him to know that he continues to be a central part of the team. We know he will be a great big brother.



With both Paxton's future and our desire to grow our family in mind, we recently decided to sell our starter home and move into a home with more space. We found a great story-book house in a family orientated community with great amenities—including a sports park, a lake, a pool and splash park, several playgrounds—and highly rated schools. The community also includes a day care and a club house that features multiple kid focused events.

Our neighborhood, in southern California, is full of families, after school and on weekends there are usually kids playing and running between houses. In fact, within a few weeks,

Paxton made such good friends with our neighbor that he is over at their house almost as much as they are over at our house, meaning they pretty much live at each other's houses. It brings us such happiness to live in a neighborhood where the kids can be out (or in, depending on the weather) playing safely and confidently. Moving to our new neighborhood has also allowed us to discover the joy of other family activities, such as bike rides.

We try to balance outdoor activities with indoor activities and work with pleasure. In addition to family bike rides, we also enjoy playing soccer, hiking, kayaking, and recently discovered paddle boarding. We are avid gamers and enjoy all sorts of games including electronic and table top. Games offer us the opportunity for our family to work together as a team solving problems together and working on our communication.

We especially like cooperative games where we all work together to win. We recently started playing Dungeons and Dragons, which allows us, as a family, to work on our creativity, our story-telling abilities, team-building skills, problem solving, and listening abilities. Paxton gets really into it, acting out some of the storyline. We have recently included our neighbor's kid; it is so great to get to see their imaginations come to life. In addition, we enjoy reading, sports viewing, history-orientated activities, and movies.



We want to provide a safe and supportive environment for our children to explore and learn at their own pace. We want to be positive influences and act as positive models of behavior for our children. We believe in teaching by doing, not just telling. Be and act the way you want your

child to behave, meaning hard work, treating others with respect and dignity, be gracious and show gratitude, be committed to a goal, to each other, be honest, and be sure to express these to others.

We believe it's important to expose kids to a variety of different interests, be it games, music, movies, sports, etc. They need to find the one that best fits their personality, then we can help them along as they work through their own trials. We want to teach them what it means to learn from mistakes and encourage them onto success. Teach them, that hard work is what brings reward and not simply being there. It's a team effort when it comes to children and we believe we are a great team.



#### The Team:

Bethanie: I am a professor of history at a local community college. I love teaching history and bringing the subject to life for my students while they learn critical thinking and analytical skills.



I have a large amount of patience for people and enjoy helping them succeed at their education challenges. I plan to encourage our children to keep an open mind as they learn and explore new horizons. Life-long learning has always been my own passion and I want to instill that into our children. I plan to encourage them in their success and learn from their failures as I do with my students. The important thing is to keep trying and follow your dreams.

I encourage not only my students to be successful in their educational and career pursuits, but I bring that same encouragement into our home, both with Paxton and now as Nate pursues his own Master's degree and in the future with our other children.

Nate: I have been a United States Marine for the last 12 years. It has led me to many interesting places and allowed me to interact with many cultures. While the job does occasionally take me away from my family, it makes me cherish them even more. My father was in the United States Navy for nearly my entire life, so I understand the hardships that being in a military family brings. However, I believe that I am who I am because of those hardships that we endured as a family.

Bethanie about Nate:

Nate has a quick wit and a great sense of humor, he loves telling “Dad jokes” and getting us all to laugh or roll our eyes. He is really a great dad, it is one of the main reasons I want to expand



our family; he is so natural with children, welcoming, patient, and loving. What I love best about Nate though is his honesty and respect. It takes great courage to be honest in one’s feelings and thoughts and it is also so very fundamental to our relationship. I have great respect and admiration for him. We are both strong communicators. The key to good communication, I believe is linked to our core values of honesty, respect, and acceptance. When you know someone is truly listening to your thoughts and ideas, it makes it easier to open up and be honest. We know that a good team needs to communicate to win the game, and we are in it to win it!

Nate about Bethanie:

Bethanie is the type of person who volunteers her time even when she is very busy. She wants to help and she’s willing to sacrifice to make sure that others have more. She’s also passionate. She’s passionate about teaching and listening to her talk about her day in class or seeing the smile on her face when she reads student feedback is amazing. She’s smart, caring, and patient. She also has a great sense of humor, which is important when it comes to putting up with me (see the “dad jokes” she mentions above). She’s a great mom to Paxton, that combined with her passion and kindness, makes me want to expand our family together and start our next chapter.

Paxton: I am 9 years old and going into the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I like Legos and enjoy hanging out with my family and playing video games. Dad and Bethanie are good parents because they take care of me and are loving. I have a bunk bed with a desk and a lot of Legos. We also have a dog and cat, Emmy and Chado-San. The dog likes to chase the cat around the house and gets very excited when we go on walks. The cat is calm and kind of scared. My favorite subjects in school are math and science. I like reading and have read the entire Harry Potter series already. During the summer, I like to boogie board and do a variety of camps. This summer I am taking swim lessons, archery lessons, soccer camp, and going to a STEM camp.





Being a military family can be a challenge but I (*Bethanie*) enjoy volunteering with the family readiness aspects of the military community. While the military may take us far from our immediate family members, the military also represents our extended family. Through my volunteer opportunities I have established strong support networks within the military community, which helps us get through the good and bad times together, as a family.

All the units that we have been a part of have gone out of their way to make sure that the Marines and their families are taken care of. From helping with meals, providing child care, or even locating needed resources, Marines take care of each of other and all the families play a large role in that. They say it takes a village to raise a child, and because of the Marine Corps, we have 'villagers' willing to help all over the country and even overseas!

While military families have unique challenges, they are also known for their resiliency and strong commitments to family. When you consider family is more than blood, we consider ourselves rich in this area. Our military family is excited and supportive of our desire to grow the Jaenichen family.

In addition, having family (immediate, extended, and military) living all over the country, means we also have great opportunities to visit places far and wide. I (*Bethanie*) have a large extended family living throughout the state of California and we take trips to the Bay Area often to visit her favorite uncle, who sometimes takes us for flights in his plane. Recently Nate was working for a few weeks on assignment in the DC metro area, so Paxton and I flew out to see him and while touring the great sites of our nation's capital also got to visit more of Bethanie's extended family, including her cousin and her two adopted sons.



While we do not belong to any organized religion, we both believe strong morals and values are built within the home. Nate and I both believe we have these— including kindness, respect, commitment. We also believe strongly in modeling this type of behavior for our children. We want our children to feel as open and confident about communicating with us as we do with each other. We want to model our commitment to each other and our family as strong values for our children to follow. We want our children to see and follow our example of respect for others and acceptance of differences. We want our children to be honest with us and others and we hope that by modeling and promoting these values as a foundation to a strong humanity, they will carry these values throughout their lives and especially through their interactions with others.

Thanks so much for taking the time to read about us and consider us as you're making your adoption plan for your baby.

