

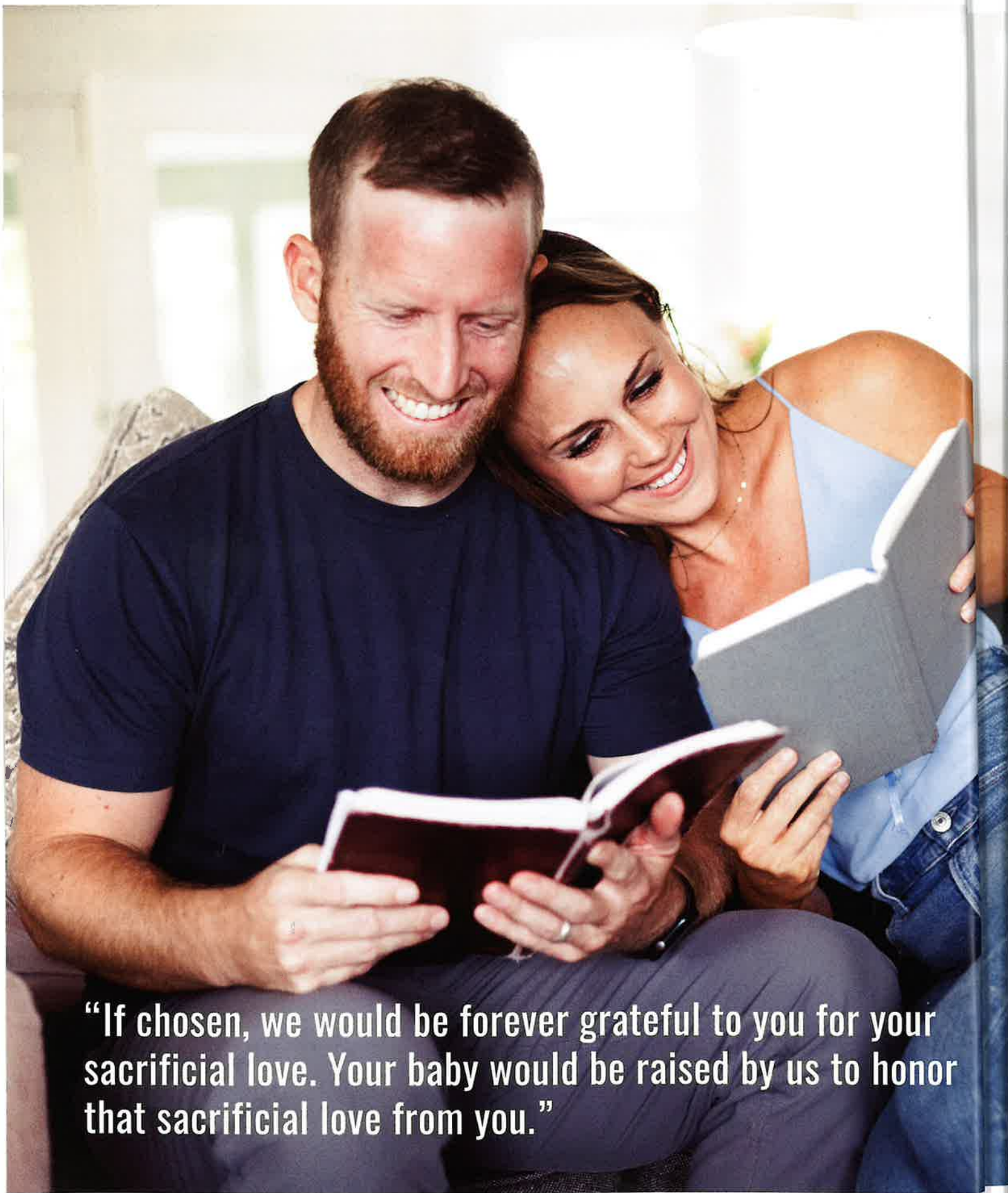
CODY *and* LAUREN





Thank you for reading

Our Story



“If chosen, we would be forever grateful to you for your sacrificial love. Your baby would be raised by us to honor that sacrificial love from you.”

Hello From Tennessee!



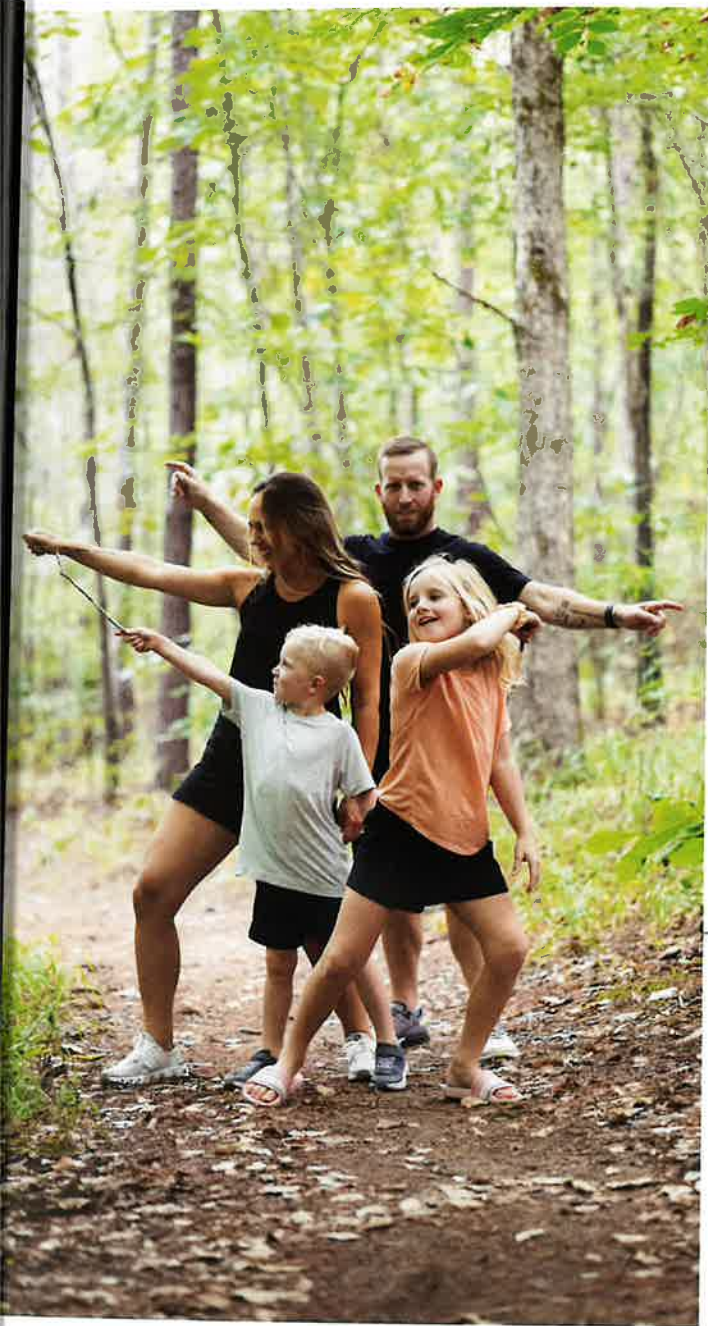
We are a fun-loving family that enjoys the outdoors and adventure. Our faith in Jesus is very important to us, along with laughter, adventure, kindness, and dance parties in the kitchen. We are humbled that you are looking to know more about us, and oh, how we would love to know more about you, too!

We have struggled to find the right words to express our adoration, fondness, and recognition towards you for your selfless decision. We commend you and respect you and your decision to consider making an adoption plan for your child. If chosen, we would be forever grateful to you for your sacrificial love. Your baby would be raised by us to honor that sacrificial love from you. **In our home, your baby would be loved unconditionally, feel safe, have stability, and their needs would be met. Your child would be encouraged and set up to succeed in life to the best of our ability.** Our hope and prayer is that you can see an unguarded and honest glimpse into our lives through this book and what that would look like.

Cody and Lauren

Our *Hearts* for Adoption





After having two children biologically, we believed our family was complete in 2018 so Cody had a vasectomy. In 2020, Lauren surprisingly became pregnant. We began to adjust our hopes and dreams toward adding another child until Lauren miscarried. We began to pray about the confusing heartbreak, feeling a loss for something we never thought would happen or planned for. During this time, some of our closest friends adopted their third child. We began to feel a stirring in our hearts that this was supposed to be the plan all along: adding another child into our family through adoption! Although we felt grief for the loss, we feel an immense gratitude the heartache led us to adoption.

“Although we feel grief for the loss, we feel an immense gratitude the heartache led us to adoption ”



- The Story Of Us -

"We are each other's absolute best friend and work hard to keep our friendship and passion alive."



How it all began

"On our first date, we talked and laughed the entire time. We knew immediately that we wanted to get to know one another better."

We are committed to each other and the family we have built together. We strive to accept the things we cannot change and compromise where we can. Neither of us is perfect, but we trust in a God who is perfect and aim to forgive one another daily.

Cody and I met through mutual friends. Our friends set us up on a date because they thought we would be a good match for one another. I am so glad they did! On our first date, we talked and laughed the entire time. We knew immediately that we wanted to get to know one another better. We decided to build a friendship and see where it went from there. We hung out for months by going on walks, attending each other's games (I played college soccer, and he played college football), and hanging out with friends. I met my best friend, and he shared the same feeling. Ultimately, we decided we wanted to be more than friends and began to date exclusively! We fell in love based on a sweet friendship we had developed.

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The Proposal

Our entire family was watching from behind the bushes and from an office in the building next door. After she said yes, they all ran out and celebrated with us!

It was the homecoming game of my senior year at East Texas Baptist University (ETBU). All the family was there to celebrate homecoming, but earlier that day, I met with Lauren's parents about proposing that night after the game. After the game, I drove Lauren to our favorite place on campus. The first place we met was a gazebo in the middle of the campus. Some friends had set up a chair with flowers. I washed her feet as a Biblical reference to Jesus washing his disciples' feet. I did this as a symbol, showing her my commitment to loving and serving her for the rest of my life. Side note: her feet were extra dirty because she had been running around with some of my family during the football game. Ha! I shared how much I loved her and asked her to marry me. She was totally blown away and said, "YES!"

The Best Day

"We have been married for 13 years! What makes our marriage unique is that we are partners in every area."

We had our wedding in the summer in Houston, TX – it was hot! We were surrounded by our friends and family. We were both young but so excited to join our lives together. My mom was battling cancer, but she was able to come to the wedding. The reception was packed full of people. Lauren and I left the party late that night, with everyone making a tunnel to send us off.

We have been married for 13 years! What makes our marriage unique is that we are partners in every area. We both parent, tend to the home, work in flexible jobs, and see life as something we do together. We are each other's absolute best friend, and we work hard to keep our friendship and passion alive. We are constantly learning about how to love each other well.



Meet Cody

My greatest prayer for my children is that they truly believe that no matter what life might bring, they can handle any storm and will never fall out of my love for them. They were made with a special purpose that can only be fulfilled by their special life.

I consider myself a life-long learner of each person in our home. I absolutely love learning how to care for and encourage each of my kids to explore their interests and talents. Parenting has taught me a great deal about myself and how I need to continue learning/growing in my grace and compassion. It would be a great honor for me to help another little one learn about the joys/pains of this world and walk with them through every stage.



Authority and respect were two staples of my home growing up. Those are two great pillars of my life, but they were also crushing me into someone who wasn't able to explore who I was created to be. Authority and respect are still important in my life, but equally, understanding the role of creativity and adventure in the life of a child is something I have learned a great deal about in the last ten years.

For most of my life, I was on an adventure, searching for who I was meant to be. Over years of trying to be who everyone else wanted me to be, I think my greatest accomplishment is fully living true to myself.

I am

Intentional

Caring

Loyal

Forgiving



I enjoy

Family time

Forest walks

Reading

Health/Wellness

If my kids could describe me, they would say that I am funny, kind, I keep my word, and I always try to make them smile. I am embarrassing sometimes, loud, full of energy, but they know I love them deeply and will always be there for them whenever they need me.



- my - CAREER

I work for a missions organization. It is a remote job with flexibility. I travel, speaking to people about how much God cares for them. I help shape teams traveling to Europe that desire to seek truth and share life with others. I lead a team of about 20 people that help pour into young adults and provide opportunities for them to impact the world with hope and healing.

Meet Lauren

I hope for my children to know, above all, that they are cherished and loved no matter what choices they make in life. I pray that they will be ready for every good work and always be kind. I hope they feel confident in doing what they enjoy with people they love.

I am looking forward to adding to our family through adoption! I'm excited to see my kids with another sibling and to love another baby well. I enjoy my children, being with them and having fun with them – so much so that I really wanted to add another to our family! I love to teach and raise our children and look forward to continuing it with another child. I enjoy learning about each unique child in our family and would love to get to know another. After continuing education in my degree, I have learned more about raising children well and am excited to continue that journey with another child.



My parents valued respect, hard work, and togetherness above all else. I value connection with our family now as well and being there for one another. Although I value honoring each other, I prioritize connection with my children first, then respect and honor. I believe it is through our relationship that they learn to honor others.

One of the greatest gifts in my life has been having an education that benefits my family in strengthening our marriage and raising children we love being around. I am proud of the togetherness in our home, how we raise our kids to know they are loved by God and us, and of completing a degree that helps not only patients but my family.

I am

Patient

Empathetic

Peacemaker

Adventurous



I enjoy

Reading

Health/Wellness

Learning

Outdoor activities

My daughter has told me that I bring calm and peace into our home. My kids would also say I am a teacher and a good listener. They describe me as kind, creative, and fun. They'd also say I'm consistent with rules but also create an environment where they will always be heard and cared for.



- my - CAREER

I am a Marriage and Family Therapist specializing in trauma, grief, and marriage. I own a private practice and have the ability to make my schedule as it suits our family. It is very family-friendly and flexible! I can take time off as I want and plan to take time off for the adoption. Our children are currently in school, and we plan to continue at the same school for our future child, which has an option for younger kids as well.



About Cody

Written by Lauren

Cody is a uniquely gifted individual. I admire and adore so many qualities about him. **Above all, Cody joyfully serves.** He sees areas that need tending to and immediately jumps in to help. He is a student of our children and I, constantly learning and adjusting on how to love us well. He is decisive and confident yet sensitive. These qualities make him an extraordinary leader as **he can confidently make decisions yet also be sensitive to the input of others.** He is honorable, loyal, hardworking, optimistic, and playful. He has the ability to connect with anyone. He is one of the most honorable men I know. Cody is a fantastic father in so many ways! **He is exceptional at connecting with**

our kids through laughter and play. He has the unique ability to create an environment for our home that is full of fun, creativity, individuality, and connection with each other. He is present with our children! **He encourages the uniqueness of our children and values their differences.** While he treasures their unique traits, he also puts an emphasis on connecting with each other and having a strong family bond. Cody is looking forward to bringing another child into our home because he adores children. Our children reference how **Cody always keeps his word** and I love how our children can see this trait in him so that they can become like him when they are older.



About Lauren

Written by Cody

As the guardian of grit and grace, Lauren is unmatched in her unwavering love for people in our lives, especially our family. Her compassion, resilience, and devotion can be shown in all the small ways **she brings peace to our family** and the people in her life. She is exceptionally brilliant. **Lauren creates an atmosphere in our home where adventure and patience guide her care for our kids.** Lauren is a beacon that shines beams of compassion, wisdom, guidance, determination, joy, and strength as she lives every day. **She is a steady foundation that anchors our family.** She embodies a life of joyful cultivation, from intentionally shaping the hearts of our

kids to creating memorable moments we have come to cherish as a family. **Lauren has the unique ability to radiate a steadfast, nurturing spirit** with mercy at any moment. **She loves with her whole life.** Lauren's patience makes her a world-class, exceptional mother. The intentional way she creates peace and stability in our home allows our children to explore who they are and the special gifts they were created to use in the world. Lauren has a dynamic ability to hear things that aren't spoken, see things that others miss, and connect seemingly simple moments to create lasting moments for learning and thriving. Lauren is beyond excited about adding more another child to our family!



Meet Our Kids

Both of our kids are extraordinary. They are unique and have similarities to each of us parents. Both are excited to bring another sibling into the family through adoption!

Leighton would want you to know that she is nice, kind, reads a lot of good books, and is humble.

Leighton (8) is brilliant, inquisitive, intentional, clever, kind, daring, friendly, helpful, and independent.

She is a born leader. She can be both introverted and extroverted, valuing time with people and apart from them. When she is with people, she can easily hold a conversation, asking intentional questions and leading. When she is by herself, she is typically reading or making crafts.

Emerson would want you to know that he loves to play outside and board games.

Emerson (6) is very fun, imaginative, athletic, sensitive, kind, empathetic, extroverted, playful, and helpful.

People tend to be drawn to Emerson, and he easily makes friends with anyone. He is easygoing and tends to go with the flow. He has a servant's heart and is always asking how he can help. He enjoys playing anything sports-related and has a lot of energy.





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“We believe that our relationship with our children is most important and that regulating our own emotions sets the stage for successful parenting.”

Our Parenting Philosophy

We want our children to feel cherished, adored, and safe in our home. We always try to connect with our child before correcting them. We strive to parent our kids according to their individuality. We believe in solving problems with our children while setting clear expectations. We have continuous open communication with our kids. We also believe in natural consequences when they make mistakes and comforting them when that arises. We love parenting and have yielded to the adventures of it!

What Makes Us *Tick*



TIME TOGETHER

We don't have to rush through life always looking forward to the next thing while missing what is going on right in front of us with the people we have around us. We desire to be together, no matter what we are doing, our value is "it is better together." That is true in the small things like snuggling on the couch early in the morning to celebrating big moments of victory on a sports field or in school. Sharing life with another is probably one of the greatest ways to spend it.

KINDNESS

A kind word or smile goes a long way in life. Kindness might look like picking up trash on the sidewalk or calling someone by name at the grocery store. It could be saying "thank you for sharing" when someone tells their life story. We often talk about having "thick skin and a soft heart" because the world can be mean sometimes; thick skin to take whatever life throws your way with a soft heart to continue being kind no matter the circumstance or situation.





CONTENTMENT

We care deeply to appreciate what we have. This is something we are constantly being reminded of in our daily lives, but we are striving towards being content in whatever situation we find ourselves in. We want to be thankful for what we have, not always wishing for something more and create within our own hearts a satisfied soul.

FAITH

Faith is the biggest factor in our lives. The daily decisions, dreams, and goals we have for our family and children are centered on our faith in God. We value how our faith teaches us to serve others and not consider ourselves better than anyone else. This shapes how we view others, interact with anyone we encounter, and spend our time.



ADVENTURE

We love giving our kids opportunities for adventure! Whether it's in our own backyard playing pirate ship, or on a hike in the mountains, adventure is a big part of our family life. We are all born with a natural desire to learn, explore, and wonder at the world around us, and we want to foster that desire in fun ways for our children.





Our Lives Together

Our house is 4 bedrooms and 2.5 baths. The backyard has trees where we build fairy gardens, a playset that we swing in and imagine it as a pirate's ship, and an area where we play sports in. Our favorite area is our kitchen where we cook together and have dance parties. It is a newer home that we were able to customize. Our home is where our children receive their base for how they love themselves, love others, love God, resolve conflicts, move through hard times, and care for the world and others around them. **We strive to make our home environment one where our kids feel safe and that they can explore the world from safely.** We show each other love by honoring each other, making it right with each other when we make mistakes that do not honor each other, laughing, playing games, being silly, reading, and relaxing together.



We live in the Southeastern area of the country with lots of outdoor opportunities. **Our family is often doing activities in the trees and mountains!** Our school districts are known for their good quality, and there are multiple playgrounds in the city. We go to the local farmers market on a weekly basis to support local farmers and get healthy options for our family. **We enjoy traveling, and there are multiple fun travel spots (even the beach) within just a few hours!**

Our family enjoys hiking, being outdoors, cooking together, building forts, playing board games, and reading. We tend to participate in practicing sports together; our current favorite is soccer! We frequently enjoy homemade sourdough pizza and movie nights. Throughout the week we eat meals together and discuss our roses and thorns of the day (best and worst moments of the day).

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Meet Meeko



Meeko is our 11 year old golden doodle! He is a registered therapy dog. He occasionally comes to work with Lauren but mostly enjoys his days at home with the kids. He is a gentle and very loving dog!

Our Family

Our families are very supportive of this adoption and are looking forward to welcoming another child into their hearts and lives.





My side of the family includes my dad and stepmom (aka Pops and SherBear). My mom (Momma Dana) died of pancreatic cancer in 2011. I have two younger twin brothers (Luke and Wes). Both are married with multiple children. Luke and his wife Erin have four kids (Harper, Eli, Ruby, Asher) and Wes and his wife Haley have three (Smith, Wesley Anne and an upcoming baby soon). The cousins range from newborn to 9 years old! We have a strong bond with my family. They all live in Texas, so we visit whenever we can. We FaceTime weekly to give the cousins an opportunity to see each other. We have a great supporting relationship with my stepfamily side as well - including many step-cousins!

A unique aspect of our lives is we have friends that function like family! We see them weekly and share life with one another – they are even known to our kids as Uncle Curt and Aunt Caroline! They have four kids, one they adopted with special needs from India. Our children consider them cousins and family.

My side of the family includes my mom and dad (aka honey and papa-T), my brothers, Reese and Rhett, and my sister, Lexis. I am the oldest child in my family and the only one that is married with kids. We are close with my extended family! We live in different states, however, we communicate weekly via Facetime. We see my mom and dad multiple times a year and my brother, Rhett, comes to see us often. My family would do anything for us. We are all together for family events. We enjoy doing something active (like pickleball) or relaxing and eating meals together. They are awaiting the arrival of our new addition and will come to visit multiple times to help.



Our Hopes & Dreams

Our greatest dream is to simply enjoy our family and raise our children to the best of our ability.

Our family enjoys adventuring together, exploring new places, and meeting new people. We plan to visit new places and continue enjoying the rich moments experienced in the Smokey Mountains. We hope to continue spending a great deal of time together playing games, making forts, and watching the Olympics. We value spending time with the people we love so we plan to keep making that a priority.

We believe only God knows the plans that He has for our family! **With Cody's job, we travel across the country and to Europe. Our hope is to let our children experience different cultures while feeling safe with us in our home base in Tennessee.**

We plan to continue raising our children with Christ Jesus being the center of our home. **Our Christian faith shapes how we communicate, serve, and care for one another.** We are quick to ask for forgiveness from and listen to the needs of each other. Our church community also plays a key piece in the lives of our family. We have people speaking truth and life into the lives of our kids on a weekly basis. Doing life together in a community has been one of the most impactful things shaping our lives as parents.



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Education Plans

Our children attend a nature-based school! We value an education where our children experience the outdoors, gain emotional intelligence, and can be creative. We want our kids to experience play-based learning in the natural world with various teaching philosophies. This type of school experience **encourages exploration, creativity, adventure, engagement, curiosity, resilience, and compassion.** It also enables them to travel with us abroad during the school year!



Their Dreams

We are committed to empowering our children to chase their dreams. **We are not sure what the future will hold for them, but we DO know that we will support their hopes and dreams to pursue a life of meaning and purpose.** One of our kids has already created a small business that made a good deal of money. She desires (at the moment) to be an entrepreneur. Our son is an incredible athlete who wants (right now) to play on the Olympic Beach Volleyball team and represent the USA team. So, we are working to make our backyard a sporting complex to allow him the opportunity to work that out. College may or may not be a part of the great plan for their lives; we will help guide them toward the best decision possible.





Some final thoughts...



We are grateful that you chose to get to know us better through reading this. We hope you feel like you have a peek into our lives and home. No matter what family or route you choose, we desire to honor you in the act of love you are making in this decision. If chosen, we will be forever grateful to you and hope to honor you in the way we raise your precious child. **Our desire is to raise your baby to have the freedom to discover and appreciate who they are in every way, through their origin and family!** You will be a part of our family story and be prayed over consistently. We will honor you in our home and celebrate the role you play in your baby's life. **Our commitment to you is that we will love your child unwaveringly and provide your child with a life filled with fun, grace, nurturing, laughter, stability, sibling love, adventure, dance parties, fort-building, kindness, safety, and empowerment.** We want you to know that we're committed to maintaining a connection with you through updates, sharing pictures and letters as your child grows, and having an occasional phone call. We are prayerful for the journey you are on, and thank you for considering us.

Cody and Lauren

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