



STEPHEN *and* BRENDA

Hello

WE ARE BRENDA *and* STEPHEN

Even though we haven't met you yet, thank you for considering us to raise your child. We know it's not an easy choice to make, and **we respect you for your courage.**

We realize you may have lots of uncertainties right now, but we know you are strong and have a loving heart. We hope by learning more about who we are, you'll feel more comfortable with making this difficult choice. **We look forward to loving and raising children with lots of opportunities and life experiences.**

Here's a little more about us...



How we became us

We met in college, both senators in the Student Government Association. Yeah, we were dorky like that. But it wasn't until we worked long hours on the student newspaper together that we really got to know each other. Stephen was the business manager (he was a business major and wanted help editing his papers, so he made friends with writers—smart guy). Brenda was the assistant editor (as a communication major, it was a natural fit). We graduated from college together.

Four years later, Stephen proposed during a picnic on the beach about a week after Independence Day with fireworks lighting the night sky. **We were married on New Years Eve, complete with a champagne toast and a countdown to midnight. We have been married 11 years.**



We live in Houston, just minutes from Stephen's work. Stephen has a great job with benefits, and Brenda runs her own business from home, but it's also important for us to balance work with life.

We like to spend time with friends on the weekends, playing board games at home or eating out at our favorite restaurants.

We have always wanted to have kids. Adoption helped us create a family, and we are grateful to the birthparents who made it possible for us to raise a child. We are looking forward to adopting again to give our son a sibling.



BRENDA & MAX

What adoption means to us

Since we got married, we looked forward to having children. Four years in, we found out there is no chance we will be able to have biological children. IVF wasn't for us. We considered what it would be like without kids, and in the end, we realized that being parents would add so much joy to our lives. **We grew hopeful about being parents through adoption, and it became our #1 way to parenthood.**

WE ADOPTED OUR SON MAX in summer 2016. Parenthood changed our lives! It's not easy by any means, but we have been blessed by all the joys of raising Max.

While we didn't have the chance to meet his birthparents, our hearts were open to it. Brenda sends letters regularly through the agency, about three times a year, because he grows so fast. **We would not be parents without his birth family, and we honor them for that role.** We wish for our children to have as much information as possible about their birth families.

We both grew up with siblings, and we want to give Max that same experience. He loves babies, and he is so affectionate. We want him to have a playmate. **We can't wait to adopt a second child!**

Love



BRENDA AND STEPHEN WITH SON, MAX



MEET BRENDA

"When I met Brenda, I saw she was full of life and such a happy person. I spent a lot of time getting to know her, and she became my best friend. As time went on, I couldn't imagine my life without her.

Brenda is creative, caring and a great writer. Children are very important to her, and she is loving, encouraging and a good teacher. Together, we'll give children lots of fun and memorable experiences."

– Stephen

A creative person, I like to express myself through hands-on projects: letterpress printing using old-school metal type, dyeing detailed Ukrainian eggs at Easter, making party decorations and turning my living room into a game show. In the picture on the left, I am showing how to print bright blue cyanotypes in the sun. I like to think I get my creativity from my mom, who was the ultimate birthday party planner.

During summers growing up, my family spent a lot of time at our beach house. We swam, caught crabs and built sandcastles. I look forward to making memories with my kids at the beach and also traveling the world together.

Before we brought home Max, I worked in university marketing, and now I have a marketing consulting business. As a writer, I like to tell people's stories—everyone has one to tell. I also like the flexibility I have to be home to take care of Max and pick him up from school.

Parenting Max has been such a joy in my life! Seeing him grow and learn, doing projects and watching him explore has been such a privilege and gift for me to experience that wouldn't have happened without adoption.



MY DAD runs a construction company. He and his wife love to cook BBQ, attend Rodeo events and enjoy the water near Galveston.



MY BROTHER and my dad enjoy boating and deep-sea fishing. They're usually not lying when they say they caught a big one!

MY BROTHER has a blended family with five kids. The youngest are five-year-old twins, and Max loves playing with them when we get together for family events.



MY MOM is the one who inspired my love of DIY and entertaining, through all the great parties she planned for us as kids.

She ran a fitness franchise for a few years, and now she does in-house catering for a company.



I LOVE THEMED PARTIES!

Max is obsessed with garbage trucks, so for his 3rd birthday, we held a Trash Bash! I decorated our living room with recyclables, kids donned reflective vests, and Max wore a shirt that said "I love Mondays" (our trash day). He loved it!



MY SISTER is a graphic designer, and recently earned her master's in counseling.

She and her husband had their first child last year. We're thrilled that Max and any future siblings have another cousin.

MEET STEPHEN

"When I met Stephen in college, we got to know each other first as friends. He was so kind—he often treated people to food from his restaurant job. I didn't think we would date, but he's a persistent guy! He won me over by taking me out to fancy plays.

He's encouraging, supportive and a good provider. I often count my blessings for the great catch I have in him. He's a fantastic dad to Max, and he sets an example for how a gentleman should treat a lady."

– *Brenda*

Growing up, my elementary school valued liberal arts, which is why I have a variety of interests. This education had a great influence on my life, as I love both technology and beautiful things like graphic design and music. Today, I manage digital marketing for an electricity company, and I play cello for fun.

I love food and cooking, especially cooking up pizzas in our 900-degree backyard oven, as well as spending time with friends.

I am African-American, and my background also includes ancestors who are French, Native American and—as the story goes—relatives of Thomas Jefferson.

As a kid, I remember my Mom taking me to play around Houston, including Hermann Park to feed the ducks and ride the train, the Houston Zoo, and the Museum of Natural Science. It's been great to recreate some of these memories with our son.

We get to travel often, and I enjoy the beach and the water. One day, I would like to own my own business (so I can retire in Hawaii).





I COME FROM a large extended family. My dad had five siblings and my mom had seven siblings.

Education is an important tradition in my family, with most people attending college.



MY MOM taught home economics for most of my childhood, helping people get better jobs and make better lives for themselves.

She is retired now and enjoys gardening, traveling and playing Bridge with her friends—and doting on her grandchildren.

I PLAY CELLO. I grew up playing instruments like piano and clarinet. But I've always wanted to play cello. So one Christmas, Brenda rented a cello and put it under the tree! I've been taking lessons ever since.



We will teach our kids to play an instrument too.



MY DAD worked as an economist for an energy company. He spent extra time doing homework with me, and we took piano lessons together—both of us.

My dad passed from brain cancer when I was in college. I make sure to keep an eye on my mom now, since she is on her own.



MY BROTHER is nine years older than me. He has degrees in accounting and law, and he works in real estate.

He married one of our friends from the college newspaper. They met at our wedding!



I have a new **NEPHEW**. My brother's baby makes two tiny cousins for our future child to play with.

Max's Uncle and Tita (aunt in Filipino) love visiting Max, and they ask to see him every weekend. We look forward to raising the cousins close together.



Max

Max is a high-energy, rambunctious, affectionate almost-four year old.

His best day would be waking up, watching the garbage trucks pick up the trash, going for a playdate with friends at the park, running around with sticks and digging in the dirt, stopping by JuiceLand for a smoothie before going home to blow bubbles in the backyard, playing trucks, heading back out to an indoor playground to jump, seeing his Uncle and Tita for a visit, then reading a bunch of books about dinosaurs and diggers, before going to bed and asking Daddy to come back in one more time. Whew!

He is smart and enjoys puzzles, counting and learning letters. He throws a ball like a major-leaguer, and we think he'll be left-handed. He is super affectionate and gives the best let-me-squeeze-my-face-into-yours hugs. He is gentle with babies, and he makes ooey-goey noises at the mention of one.

We would love for him to have a sibling to join him in playing super heroes, running circles around the living room and making family memories.



A man and a woman are standing on a sidewalk in front of a two-story townhouse. The man is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and grey trousers. The woman is wearing a blue patterned top and blue jeans. The townhouse has white siding and brick accents. The image is part of a real estate listing, with a white text box on the left containing the title 'Our home' and several paragraphs of text about the property.

Our home

Welcome! We own a great townhouse in Houston that we've lived in for 10 years.

Our house features:

- **3 bedrooms**
- **1,900 square feet**
- **A backyard**
- **Diverse neighborhood**
- **Close to work**
- **Great neighbors**

We like living in the city.
With a short commute, we have more time for family.

We chose this house because it has a yard, so our kids will have room to play. It's also close to parks, museums and great private schools. Plus our church is down the road.



ENTERTAINING



KITCHEN



NEARBY PLAYGROUND



BACKYARD



OUR HAWAIIAN-THEMED NURSERY



SAND & WATER TABLE

TRADITIONS *& Faith*

Many of our traditions revolve around our Catholic faith, like celebrating sacraments and holidays. We attend church each Sunday, and we look forward to raising a child in the Catholic faith.

- At Easter we have a kids' Easter egg hunt on a few acres at Brenda's mom's house (and an adult one, too, for better prizes). Then there's dinner at Stephen's brother's house.
- In the Spring we dress in our Western gear for the Houston Rodeo
- Come Summertime, we splash at the beach and do a kids bike parade on 4th of July—we've won awards for decorated wagons two years running.
- In the fall, we carve pumpkins, dress up for Halloween and cook a feast for friends called "Friendsgiving."
- At Christmas, we attend Christmas festivals, decorate cookies for cookie exchanges and open presents on Christmas morning.

It has been a joy to celebrate these traditions and make new memories with a child, and we can't wait to include a second child in our family activities!





Heritage & COMMUNITY

As an interracial couple, we can bring a unique heritage to a child. Having to overcome people's perceptions is one of the reasons education is so important to Stephen's family. We believe the color of your skin shouldn't make a difference in living your best life, and we want to give a child as many opportunities as possible. We will raise kids with the heritage of family members who are black and white, as well as Hispanic and Asian.

We live in a diverse and eclectic community in Houston. We have great neighbors, from a variety of backgrounds and countries, and we regularly get together for potluck dinners in the driveway we all share. In addition to raising a child in a multicultural neighborhood, we can provide him or her with a strong education and access to activities like music or sports.

Travel & ADVENTURE

We have been lucky to travel and have many different experiences in other places. Whether on study abroad to Italy, vacation in Paris, visiting friends and family in New England, exploring the Texas Hill Country, or celebrating anniversaries in Hawaii—we believe that travel is a great way to relax and learn about the world.

Travel has changed a bit with a little one in tow, and we tend to choose Texas spots over foreign ones now. But we look forward to the day when we can take our kids to even more exciting places to experience different cultures.



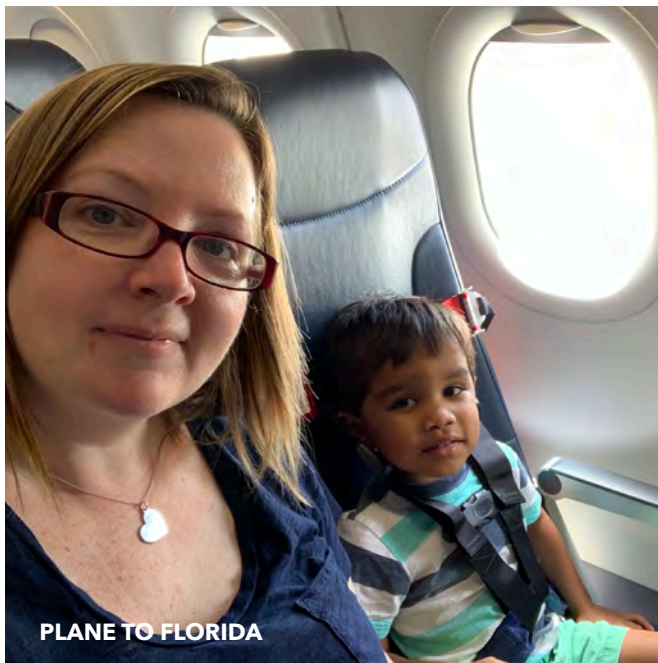
HAWAII



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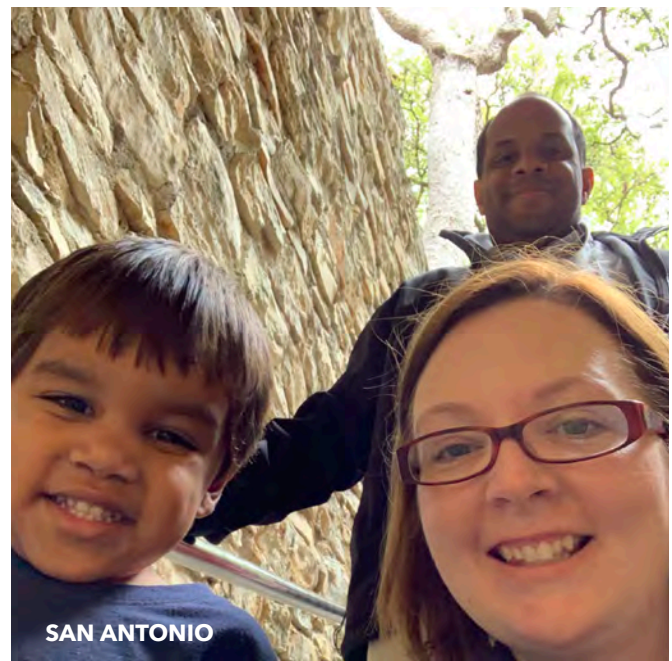
PLANE TO FLORIDA



PARIS



NEW HAMPSHIRE



SAN ANTONIO

Birthparents

We seek an open adoption, based on your level of comfort.

We believe we will be part of an extended family—you and us—whether we spend time together or not. You give your child the gift of life, with eye color, hair type and physical expressions, and we can give experiences of birthday parties, school, family vacations and traditions.

We know all parents want the best for their children, and **we have immense respect for parents who love their children so much they want to give them the life they couldn't give, through adoption.**

If chosen, we will tell the child about you, and provide information about about where he or she came from, including your family, health and interests (Hopefully you can help us with that). We believe in open adoption, in the interest of the child.

We will often talk about how much you love him or her, and we hope he or she will know you, too. The blending of unique contributions from your family and ours will help this child grow.

Raising Baby

Ideally, Brenda will stay home to care for the little one until preschool by working part-time from home.

We are keeping our options open for public or private school, balancing diverse classmates or a dual-language program, with the desire for the best academics. While we live in our neighborhood in the city, the child will likely attend a private school nearby.



Our Promise as Parents

1. PROVIDE A LOVING HOME

with encouragement, fun games as a family and lots of hugs

2. GIVE CHILD A STRONG EDUCATION

at a private school if possible, with plenty of homework help

3. SHARE DIVERSE CULTURES

including friends of many backgrounds and travel to new places

4. BE OPEN ABOUT BIRTH PARENTS

always reminding how much you love him or her

5. BUILD TRADITIONS TOGETHER

like Christmas cookies, summer sandcastles and awesome birthday parties

6. SUPPORT CHILD IN GOALS & DREAMS

so college is a reality and passions can lead to happiness



Thank You

We can only imagine how hard this choice may be for you, but is a beautiful one. We are grateful you are considering us. We hope to meet you, so we can all learn more about each other, and so we can learn about your hopes for baby.

Thank you,

Brenda & Stephen