

TONY & JONNY



AND RHEA TOO

From The Bottom of Our Hearts

Thank you for taking the time to learn about us. We recognize what we feel is courage, strength and selflessness on your part in considering adoption. If you choose us, please know that we will raise your child with lots of love and strive to fulfill all of the hopes and dreams you have for them. You will always be honored and respected in our household. We look forward to learning more about you and appreciate your consideration. We wish you strength and peace in the months ahead.



About Us

Our **shared love for performance theatre** has led us to attend many musicals and plays. One of our favorites was seeing the musical *Kinky Boots* on Broadway. It is one of our favorites because of its inspiring message of friendship, pride, and acceptance. We love how the show reminded the audience how a person should be defined by their actions and love for others instead of by appearances and stereotypes. After the show we went to get Junior's Cheesecake. While we were ordering, the phone rang and Bob Saget was on the other end also getting his post-show cheesecake. We were just as awestruck as the worker on the phone. If you choose us, your child will always be encouraged to be themselves.



We love to learn from those that are different from us. One time while riding a train in Italy we shared a cabin with an older Italian couple. Between their broken English and our broken Italian we were able to connect during the train ride. They told us stories of when they were young and Italy was a fascist nation. They kept calling Tony "Tony Soprano" from *The Sopranos* and we continued to laugh through the language barriers. Before getting off of the train they gave us a restaurant recommendation. It had the best pesto we have ever had! We started the train ride off as strangers and left as friends.

We are passionate about supporting the each other in our efforts to develop the next generation. We are regular attendees of our students' events whether it be an athletic competition or arts performance. One of our favorite memories has been cheering each other on at the high school state volleyball tournament. Early in our relationship Jonny sat with the students and cheered while Tony was coaching. In 2019 Tony was able to return the favor when Jonny coached in the state volleyball tournament. Jonny was quite nervous leading up to the game but during the starting lineups he was able to find Tony in the crowd. Having Tony's support was all Jonny needed to coach the match with confidence. It was special to enjoy some time with each other after the match celebrating the accomplishment with the team, students, family and friends.



About Tony

(By Jonny)

Tony **enjoys getting the chance to teach kids new skills.** In preparation for this past year's neighborhood Super Bowl party, Tony taught some of the kids how to assemble our family's special jalapeño poppers recipe. They weren't too impressed with the stirring duties; but when it came time to scoop the filling into the jalapeños, they were all hands-on-deck. Afterwards, the kids were proud of their creations and returned multiple times requesting

Tony to teach them more recipes. The youngest chef tried a jalapeño popper. His facial reaction told us all he enjoyed making the poppers much more than how spicy they tasted!



Tony is a **playful child at heart** and looks for every opportunity to create a fun time. Last year, he sat on a roof and surprised students with buckets of water balloons on the last day of school. This year, he dressed up in an inflatable costume to deliver candy to students on Halloween week. He had to be the dinosaur because he was too tall to fit in the other inflatable costumes. When Tony comes home, he will always play with our dog the minute he gets home no matter how busy he is.

Tony cares about **creating and providing opportunities** for the youth in our community. He is a great example of **being a servant leader.** Tony is on the Parks and Rec Board as well as the Boys and Girls Club Board. Most recently, one of the employees in Tony's building was impacted by a bad wind storm leading to trees being down on her property and one falling on her house. Tony was part of a group that spent an entire Sunday cleaning up the fallen trees and brush. A clean up project that would have taken the family weeks to clean up was done swiftly by the group of volunteers Tony assisted with. She was so grateful for our help and has invited us to come back for many bonfires using the fallen timber. Your child will be taught the importance of caring for others and being a servant to those around them.



About Jonny

(By Tony)

Jonny loves going on new adventures. On one of our trips together, Jonny talked me into trying a sandwich made with meat hanging from the ceiling at the shop. I ordered a focaccia sandwich with prosciutto, salami, and a ricotta spread. Although I was a little grossed out seeing the hanging meat, it is now one of our favorite places to visit. We have returned with friends and family who also now love returning. He enjoys sharing his love of learning from others and the memory of new experiences with others from his adventures. Your child would always be encouraged to try new things.



Jonny grew up on a farm in Wisconsin which has taught him **relentless perseverance**. There was never a day-off growing up on a farm. When the lightning storm scared the cattle through the fence, he was out in the rain repairing wire. When the temperature was below freezing, he was draining the watering hose 20 feet in the air twice a day. He even grew up competing in rodeo where he learned to pick himself up when he was down and stay committed to goals even when they seemed impossible to achieve. Once Jonny has his mind set on something, he will be sure it is accomplished. This allowed him to be the first person in his family to graduate from college.

Jonny finds purpose in life by forming and maintaining connections with people. He loves to use his passion for coaching volleyball to teach young girls to become confident, proud, and brave women. Every summer he organizes and fundraises for a team bonding trip to a large cabin hours away from school. The girls spend the trip completing team challenges, competing in all different types of games with teammates, and sharing stories around the campfire each night. The girls are always nervous to leave home for a few days, but they return each year as a newly formed family. This bond transcends the sport and is every graduate's favorite memory. Your child will grow up in the gym surrounded by people who seek opportunities to better themselves every day and to love one another deeply.



Becoming A Couple

It was an unlikely chance at fate that we first met. Jonny was coaching volleyball in Minneapolis when Tony decided to spontaneously take a longer route back to his home after attending his nephew's birthday three hours away. The longer route back home placed us inside the 100 mile radius for Tinder to suggest us to each other. We still laugh at the first thing Tony sent Jonny after matching - a gif that said "Whale Hello There." We instantly knew our youthful, adventurous hearts would be the first thing in each other we would fall in love with. With both of us in the middle of coaching volleyball, we talked online for a couple months before planning to meet in-person. Our first date was spent hiking, seeing *Hunger Games* at a movie theater, and trying sushi for the first time.



The following months led to many trips across state lines to visit each other and meet our extended families. Any long weekend or break was spent together. After six months of our long-distance relationship, plans for Jonny to move began to form. Shortly before the move, we took our first trip together exploring Minnesota's North Shore of Lake Superior over Memorial Day weekend. During this trip, **Jonny tried to show Tony his expert rock skipping skills.** The lesson abruptly ended when **one of the rocks** that left Tony's hand **smacked Jonny in the arm.** Tony spent the rest of the weekend treating Jonny to donuts from the World's Best Donuts shop to make up for the bruise! The memories and laughs from this first trip together was the start of annual Memorial Day weekend trips.

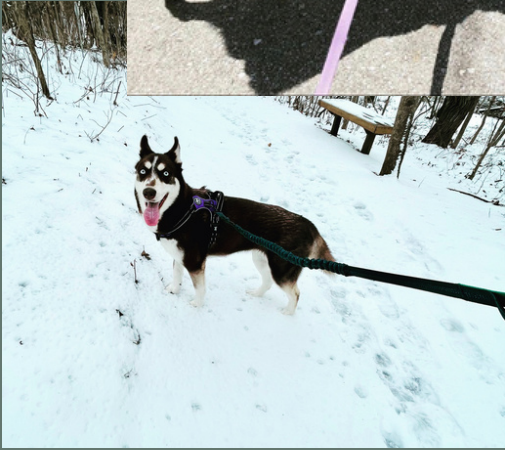
After three years of marriage, we knew we wanted to grow our family through adoption. Our wedding officiant is a friend of ours who is an adoptee. **She and her adoptive parents have shared stories** of her adoption with us. We love how our friend teaches her own child about her Korean heritage. We will value sharing the traditions and heritage as well. She was the first person we went to with all of our initial questions, and she is so excited to see us grow into fatherhood. We look forward to going on this adoption journey alongside you.



Rhea



We both grew up with dogs. Rhea is our 4 year-old copper Husky. She was given to us as a wedding gift that was not a total surprise. Tony was in on the decision and was able to turn it into a surprise for Jonny knowing that he has always wanted a husky. Rhea is adored by everyone in our neighborhood. Every walk we go on Rhea stops by others walking to get her ears scratched and is told "what a pretty girl" she is.



Rhea happily accepts all forms of attention, but she really loves getting belly scratches. She loves them so much that **anytime she is lying down and someone walks by she lifts her leg up to show her belly for some scratches.** Every morning when we walk out of our bedroom ready for the day she is waiting on the couch for her morning belly rubs.



Rhea also loves making new human friends of all ages and **especially loves kids.** When out for a walk one day some of the neighborhood kids were having a water fight. As we passed the yard that was their battlefield they rushed over to see Rhea. She was happy to say hi to them all and play with the kids for a bit. She even got to join the water fight for a bit. The kids had fun squirting their water guns in the air for Rhea to try and catch the water.

Outdoor Fun



We both love to go for a hike. When we were able to have our wedding at our favorite hiking destination the North Shore of Lake Superior, **we invited our wedding party to join us for a hike** the morning after our wedding. The hike was along a cascading river, and we could hear the waterfalls the entire hike. While on the hike, one of the members of our wedding party tripped on a tree root and twisted her ankle. She couldn't walk without an arm over both of our shoulders. We were in the middle of the trail with an equal distance from our starting point and to our destination. What could have turned into a miserable, drawn out experience due to injury turned into a **memorable hike filled with laughter** and appreciation for each waterfall as we stopped to rest more often. Your child will be surrounded with loving people who enjoy the little things.

We love camping. Our first summer together we purchased a tent knowing that it would provide more opportunities for us to travel. We wanted to have one large enough for our family to eventually grow and until then, be able to invite friends along with us. On one of the recent trips, we travelled up to the boundary waters along the Minnesota and Canadian border. We spent the trip with friends canoeing **hours to an open campsite** where we could enjoy **having the lake all to ourselves**. On this trip, we had to filter our water from the lake, use an outdoor latrine, and gather wood to cook with. This trip was one of the most physically demanding things we've ever done, but it was fun, challenging, memorable.



When warmer weather rolls around, **we look forward to the first opportunity to get on the water**. We have made it an annual tradition to take weekend trips to visit Jonny's family in May so we can canoe down a nearby river. Our family has enough canoes and kayaks that allow us to spend time on the water with family and friends. This past year we invited a friend along that had never been in a canoe before. She was a bit nervous at first. The group had a couple run ins with sand bars where we all had to get out and drag the canoes through the shallow water, but it was fun seeing her learn to navigate the water with confidence by the end of the trip. Every year's paddling trip brings forth new memories and new laughs.

Fun Times



It was no coincidence that our first date was spent at the movies as it is something we still enjoy doing together. The smell of fresh popcorn, the previews of films to come, and our personal reviews we share after the movie are some of our favorite parts of the experience. Most recently we were planning to see *The King's Man* that ended up also being available to stream on Hulu. We ran to the store to get our favorite movie candies – Buncha Crunch, Hot Tamales and Junior Mints. **We popped some popcorn and had a theater experience at home.** It was great time recreating one of our favorite things in the comfort of our own home. Your child will be raised in a family that makes time to be together, whether it is being active or just sitting down with a movie.

We enjoy riding our bikes. We have recently upgraded our bikes in hopes of participating in RAGBRAI, an **8-day celebration of biking across the state** of Iowa. Neither of us have participated in the full ride as bikers, but our town was a host town to the great ride a few years ago. It was incredible to see the thousands of cyclists roll through town. This annual statewide event brings out the "Iowa Nice" hospitality in everyone.



We love cooking and preparing meals. Through our travels we have learned about the foods of different cultures and enjoy **reliving those memories through cooking.** The food we had in Italy has impacted our kitchen the most. Jonny enjoys taking time to create homemade pasta and homemade focaccia. Tony has become a master at building the best charcuterie boards. Jonny's mom is especially fond of our cooking. One time she demanded that Jonny teach her how to make focaccia because she wanted to begin making it on her own. Her dough started out a bit gummy, but she was able to follow Jonny's lead and remedy the situation to make delicious bread.

Our Family

If you choose us, your child will be joining a loving and supportive family of four grandparents, two aunts, three uncles, and **six cousins** under the age of ten.



Our family is so close, we even travel together. Every summer our family takes a weeklong vacation together. Recently, everyone got to travel to South Dakota and visit different national parks and monuments. On the drive home we made a group pitstop at Wall Drug. Our nieces are typically more adventurous and risk takers, and there is a robotic t-rex we figured they would enjoy. The moment the dinosaur began its mechanical routine **the girls ran out of the building**. It took all of lunch to convince them to explore other displays, and they eventually realized they were going to be okay. Our nieces learned that things in life can be scary, but they have a family that will be by their side through all the scary parts.

There are three generations of teachers including more than seven retired or current teachers in our family. Our family values supporting one another, serving others, and we have a **passion for helping children** grow up to be confident, caring, and successful. Tony remembers his mom saying "Do all the good you can, for all the people you can, in all the ways you can." His mom learned this from his grandma who lived this montra when she taught children on a military base in Oregon during WWII. Last summer during a family cookout Tony's aunt brought out the original victory newspaper edition of *The Oregonian* newspaper. The adults took the opportunity to dig through this 1945 newspaper and teach the kids all about WWII and stories about Grandma teaching on the military base.



Coming together as a family during the holidays is also important to us. Since many in our family work in education, we get **extended breaks** around the holidays to be able **to spend time together**. It is a priority for our families to visit each other and create fun memories. During Thanksgiving with Jonny's family, we visited a large Christmas light display with over 3,000,000 Christmas lights along the Mississippi River. Between drinking hot chocolate and visiting the heated igloo to warm up, we had some fun with face-in-the-hole photo booths.

Traditions

We always keep our Wednesdays open to enjoy our weekly tradition of **White Rice Wednesday**. On White Rice Wednesdays, we either make Chinese food at home or pick up take-out chinese food to enjoy while watching the newest episode of *Survivor*, our favorite show. Over time we began including our close family friends in the tradition. It's now guaranteed time for us all to be together that we always look forward to. One Wednesday the kids thought it would be fun if Jonny read them their bedtime books, but they demanded that he use different voices for each character. He put together a full performance and now he is in charge of the bedtime reading on Wednesdays.



Tony's family grew up playing many different board games. His family had a Christmas tradition where Santa brought the family a new board game every year.

We have continued this tradition allowing us to accumulate a closet full of all different types of board games. This year Santa brought us a game that we have been wanting to purchase for years. We first played *End of the Line* with friends a long time ago, and Tony loved it. While we were Black Friday shopping last fall we not only found the game, but it was also on sale! We immediately looked at each other and knew it needed to be this year's **board game from Santa**. It has been fun sharing the game with friends and neighbors. We look forward to learning about your favorite traditions to incorporate into our gatherings with your child.

Every year our neighborhood is visited on Halloween by at least 500 trick-or-treaters. Some of our neighbors will convert their garage into a haunted house, and others will decorate their yard. **We always dress up together as a duo.** One year we dressed up as Wayne and Garth from *Wayne's World*. It was an absolute hit with the parents but rather confusing to most of the children out. Tony was Wayne with the signature *Wayne's World* ball cap, Mike Myers black mullet, black crew neck t-shirt, and distressed jeans. Jonny was Garth with Dana Carvey's blonde mullet and unbuttoned flannel over his Aerosmith t-shirt. Jonny also has his volleyball team dress up for a Halloween practice each year. The coaching staff has to coordinate, and most recently they did *Napoleon Dynamite*.



Neighborhood and Home



Our home is in a small town that has a population just under 7,000 people. Our favorite part of our home is how easy it is for us to **host friends and family**. We have a large living area on the main floor and in the basement that allows us to host game nights, Super Bowl watch parties, middle school staff meals, and more. Our favorite event to host is Jonny's volleyball team's annual Christmas Cookie bake night. Alumni and current players come together for a long evening of baking, frosting and decorating cookies while reliving old memories. The cookies are made upstairs but the trays are assembled downstairs. All of the goodies are taken to the staff lounge of each building in the school district.

We live on a cul de sac where there are more than 15 other children that are younger than 13 and always playing in each other's yards. In our town, children have all types of options for fun. Our favorite is the aquatic center which has multiple slides and offers swim lessons all summer. Usually we go with teacher friends and their kids. When family was in town, we went as a big group. Our nieces and nephews went **down the slides more times than any of us could count**. It was a wonderful day spent in the sun together with our family.



Your child will attend a high-quality school system. The elementary school has been a National Showcase School four years in a row and recently awarded the state's Elementary Principal of the Year. When one of the students in our district was faced with removal from the home, **eight administrators spent their weekend cleaning and repairing the student's house which allowed them to return home again**. The staff in the schools go beyond their job duties to make sure kids feel loved and supported.

Our Community

Iowa State University is only 11-miles away which allows us to attend collegiate sporting events all year long. We are season ticket holders and **love going to cheer on Cyclone football!** Last November, our family attended the high school football game on Friday night. We headed to campus early the next morning for a breakfast tailgate. Tony's dad brought a flat iron grill to make his special chocolate chip pancakes and cheesy scrambled eggs for everyone while we played cornhole and spikeball. It was a big game against Texas and the Cyclones pulled off a dominant win. Each touchdown our family cheered louder and louder along with the other Cyclone fans in our section.



We are lucky to not only have **bike trails** in our town but also have trails branching out to neighboring towns and counties creating a larger network of trails. One of our favorites is the High Trestle Trail. We spent the 4th of July on the trail two years ago with our neighbors. That day Jonny made it his mission to try the **cheese balls** from every restaurant including a new favorite find with pepperjack cheese. Between stops for cheeseballs, we saw another rider walking alongside their bike. When we peddled closer, we noticed they had a flat tire. We stopped and helped repair their tire with one of our spare tubes.

There are a number of **state parks and wilderness** areas **near our home**. We like enjoying these parks with Rhea, friends, and their children during all four seasons. Every year on New Year's Day the state park system of Iowa does a special drawing for anyone that checks in to hike at a state park. Last year on New Year's Day, we took the day to go hiking with friends and their kids. There was a large snowfall the day before making for a beautiful day on the fresh powder. Your child would be raised to appreciate each season and try new things with friends.



Weekdays



We are fortunate to live so close to our jobs. We both work for the public school district in our town. The school is only **2-miles from our home**. We also both work in the same building making our schedules consistent and very similar. Tony works as the middle school principal and Jonny is the 5th-12th grade talented and gifted teacher and high school head volleyball coach.

Most of our colleagues are parents and enjoy the **flexibility** that working in education offers. **Having breaks the same as their children** over holidays and summers provide great opportunity to spend **quality time together**. Your child would attend the school district we work at, and they would grow up with many of our colleagues' children. This past fall we had a three day weekend and spent it at a cabin with friends from work and their three kids. We had fun hiking in the fall colors and tossing piles and piles of leaves all together.



Every morning **we take the time sharing a pot of coffee and breakfast together**. The day's schedule dictates the breakfast choice, but one of our favorite breakfast treats is from the bakery in town. We like to scan the whole display case, but we usually stick to our favorites – a maple cake donut for Jonny and an apple fritter for Tony. That changed a couple weeks ago when it was blueberry week at the bakery. The blueberry cake donut with lemon frosting is now a new favorite. Our mornings are a special time we cherish being together. Your child will spend quality time gathered around the table for breakfast with us each morning except on those days we make a quick trip to the bakery instead.

Thank You

Thank you so much for allowing us to share our lives with you through these pages. We hope that this has given you a greater insight into our lives, family and community. We cannot thank you enough for considering us as potential adoptive parents for your child. We have so much love that we are excited to share. Please know that if you select us, we will be open with your child and always talk about you with respect and love for the selfless decision you are considering now. **We would be happy to maintain a level of openness that is based upon your preference and comfort.**



We cannot wait to bring home the child that will make us dads. Thank you again for considering us.

We wish you comfort, strength, and love during this time and always.

Tony & Jonny