

# ERICA + CHAS





**We promise to  
love your baby  
unconditionally...**





# HELLO

*it's so nice to meet you!*

Thank you for the opportunity to learn more about us! We hope this book gives you a glimpse into who we are as individuals, who we are as a family, and helps guide our future conversations with you as we begin a new and beautiful relationship!

We married a bit later in life and started talking about adoption very early on. We had problems conceiving and it soon became clear we would not be able to have children biologically. **We've both grown up with huge hearts for children:** Chas through his work as a prosecutor in the juvenile court system and Erica from babysitting in high school. Erica also has friends and a cousin who are adopted, so it has always seemed to be a normal part of families. Growing our family through adoption just makes sense for us. Knowing the need for loving families, adoption became our path forward.

We in no way will pretend to know what you are experiencing right now. But, we want you to know you are in our prayers as you decide what is best for you and your child. **We support you in your decisions and we admire your courage and strength as you consider adoption.**

We're praying for continued blessings and peace upon you in all your upcoming decisions.



**CHAS & ERICA**



*our love* **STORY**

We met in May 2014 at work. We were awkwardly set up by a co-worker a year later, but it turned out she was right. An easy conversation at dinner sparked a relationship that snowballed into a loving union. **Chas was attracted to Erica's intelligence and determination and Erica was drawn to Chas' love of research, his kind spirit, and his love for family.** After a year of dating, Chas proposed one beautiful Saturday morning in the country.

Our wedding day was near perfect celebrating with our family and friends! We were married in the local church and had 4 priests and 1 pastor there – so we knew it was official! One of our groomsmen, Dan, actually passed out near the end of the ceremony since it was so hot! Our reception was breathtaking and in a brand-new ballroom. We had beautiful flowers, candles, chandeliers, and of course delicious cake– who doesn't like good cake?! We had a DJ play our favorite tunes and danced the night away with family and friends. When we got to our hotel that night, neither of us had our wallets as they had been taken home by family members, so we ended up having to pay for our room using the money from our dollar dance! It was a good thing we had that cash! We traveled to Ireland for our honeymoon and spent time exploring the beautiful country.

**We have been married for just over seven years. Our marriage is strong as we both genuinely support each other,** which means we do things both independently of one another and together. We also trust in each other and believe it's good that we don't always agree on everything and have different viewpoints. We understand that we have shared and varied interests, like sports officiating or quilting, and give the other space to do the things they enjoy. We also make sure to cherish the times spent together, like relaxing at home or the lake, watching baseball or attending the symphony. Conflicts, while few and far between, are resolved with open hearts and open lines of communication. **We tackle things head-on and work to be unified as a couple and support each other unconditionally.**



**Met**  
May  
2014



**Engaged**  
September  
2016



**Married**  
April  
2017



**First House**  
April  
2017



**Started our  
Adoption Journey!**  
January  
2018





# CHAS



**I work as a district court judge** who handles any kind of case that is filed in our district. The variety of cases is something that I enjoy and **knowing that I can play a small role in bettering people's lives is really fulfilling**. My favorite cases are watching families overcome struggles and be reunited. I get to set my schedule and I can also work from home which allows me to maintain work-life balance; most important when our child joins our family.

**I am a sports enthusiast at heart, and can find enjoyment in nearly any sport**, from sports like baseball, football, basketball, hockey, soccer, and auto racing, to sports like sailing, cricket, and curling. Some of my favorite teams include the Minnesota Twins, Minnesota Vikings, and Notre Dame football. In high school and college, I was the manager of the basketball program, and ended up an assistant basketball coach at my high school as I was finishing college. As part of an effort to give back to sports because of what it has given me, **I've officiated baseball, football, and basketball for the last several years**, mostly at the high school level. It has been a rewarding experience and taught me to be a better listener, humility, and courage to make the right call. I've been rewarded with the opportunity to officiate post-season games in football and baseball, including working a state title game in baseball.



"My greatest wish for our child is that I can teach him or her to do whatever they want in life, learn to serve others, and serve and love God."



# ERICA

**I work as an elected government official who oversees all financial aspects of our organization.** What I enjoy most about my work is that every day is different and presents new challenges. While my job can be a bit demanding, I'm able to adjust my schedule as needed and have a wonderful team working alongside me every day that can cover anything needed while I am away. Family has always been important to me and I've been able to attend most of the athletic events of my nieces and nephews. **After the baby arrives, I plan to stay home for some time. As I transition back to work, my mom is going to help out with childcare.** Eventually, our child will attend a local childcare to ensure they have those important interactions and experiences with other kids their age.

**I love to read, quilt, garden, and spend time with my family.** I learned to sew when I was just a kid from my mom. Quilting and gardening are my recharge activities. There's just something about creating or growing something with your own two hands that makes it better than buying it from the store. This past year I've made about a dozen quilts! **I also love attending extended family events. Baseball and traveling are also joys of mine** – I'm thankful Chas enjoys these too!





"My greatest wish for my child is that they will grow up to believe they can do and be anything they set their heart upon and for them to know they are loved and supported beyond their wildest dreams by their parents, no matter what."



## CHAS *in Erica's words*

Chas brings a wonderful balance to my life! **He's extremely loyal, always does what is right, goes with the flow in nearly any situation, and treats me like his queen.** He is and always has been supportive of anything I want to pursue and is there to cheer me on when I succeed or pick me up when I fail. He is also an amazing vacation planner! He researches for months where we are going to go, and I truly get to just be present and relax. **Chas is the person I turn to when I need something and he's always there** to lend an ear, offer encouragement, and love me regardless of the outcome.

As an only child, Chas didn't grow up with a lot of other kids around. When he met my family he was a bit taken aback – it can get wild and crazy sometimes! I'm not sure he knew what he was in for – one of the first family functions he went to was my nephew's 4th-grade recorder concert! A couple of weeks ago in church, our nieces and nephews joined us to celebrate our nephew who was graduating from high school. Our youngest niece sat with us and I looked over and there she was snuggled in with her "Chazzy" and holding his hand. It was a touching moment. **I know he is going to be a wonderful father – he is affectionate, always quick to say I love you, and understanding.**



# ERICA *in Chas' words*

Erica is **loving and loyal** when you have earned her trust. She belongs to numerous boards that help the local and state communities and still makes sure to place a priority on attending our nephews' and nieces' events. She is extremely **organized**, which compliments my more laid-back lifestyle. She is extremely **generous** to people in need. She and her family make sure that if someone doesn't have a place to go for the holidays, they are always welcome at their house, so much that an extra plate is always available for anyone at any gathering. She also has a sarcastic wit that can bring a smile to my face, even if I'm feeling a little down.

I've seen her with her nieces and nephews, and I can tell she adores them. I've also seen her engaging with kids of all ages at various local sporting events we attend. **She loves kids and always treats them with warmth and compassion.** She will be a great mother and a compliment to me. I know she will show the same generosity and compassion and mix of discipline and fun she shows to our extended family and to our children.





## *our life* **TOGETHER**

During the week, most evenings are spent relaxing at home or attending the events of our nephews and nieces. During the summer that means working in the yard or garden, watching baseball and softball, sitting on the porch discussing the events of the day, or catching up on some TV shows. During the fall/winter it includes **attending football and basketball games and school concerts** (We follow our nieces and nephews to almost all of their extracurricular events!). We enjoy taking **weekend trips** to another city several hours away to go to the symphony, do some shopping, go out to eat, and spend time as just our family. **We have a lake home, which is where you can find us every weekend most summers, enjoying beautiful sunsets, campfires, and time with family and friends.**

**We enjoy watching baseball, so much so that we have a goal to attend a game in each MLB stadium** – so far we've made it to three with many more to go! We have been to Target Field, Kauffman Stadium, and Oakland Coliseum. While we prefer to go when either the Twins or Royals are playing (our favorite teams), sometimes we just go because we are in a city and can cross that stadium off the list.

We also attend at least two **symphony** performances each year in a nearby city and enjoy spending that time together. Chas wasn't a regular symphony-goer when we met, but music and art are very important to me and now we don't miss a year! Our favorite symphonies each year are the holiday special and tributes to the movies.





## *our extended* **FAMILY**

We each lost our dad a couple of years ago, but we are thankful we have our mothers, Karen and Ann, living within our community. Chas is an only child and Erica has two brothers. Erica's older brother, Justin, and his high school sweetheart and wife Nikki, also live in our community. They have two children, Gracie, who we sadly lost at the age of 20 in a car accident, and Judd, who is just about to head off to college. Her younger brother, Bret, is married to Lacey and they live just 2 hours away from us – close enough that we see them often. They have three children - Carter (13), Courtney (10 going on 33), and Callie (7). They are all active in sports so we look forward to many more years of following their passions on and off the field.



We are thankful our family is nearby and we share a very close relationship with Erica's family. Time together can be a bit loud and messy, but we wouldn't trade it for anything! We love to make memories and laugh together. Holidays are always a favorite time for our family. We get together with our extended family as often as possible for celebrations or just because. We play a variety of games, put together puzzles, eat way too much, and enjoy doing those special things to celebrate one another. We never pass up an opportunity to dress in costume or play games as a family. We work hard and play hard all year round. We are always up for some good old-fashioned memory-making!

**We are all very excited to add children to our family through adoption. The kids are looking forward to a new cousin to play with at family events and to teach them to drive the golf cart, explore the hills, go snow sledding, and tubing at the lake.**



# OUR HOME

*and community*

We live in a 100-year-old farmhouse Erica's dad grew up in, on the 1,000+ acre ranch her dad's family owns. Erica's mom lives around the corner in the house Erica and her brothers grew up in. Our home has five bedrooms and two bathrooms. We have family heirlooms in various places of the house and many items made by Erica's dad. We have exercise equipment in the basement and a foosball table. **Our house sits on the banks of a creek and near a national park with rolling landscapes and lots of room to explore.** Erica and her mother plant a large garden every spring for canning in the fall.

We spend much of our time in our living room or on our porch, watching TV, talking about the day, and relaxing. We also have a variety of wildlife that keeps us entertained with their visits. Deer, pheasants and other birds, rabbits, cows, horses, and the occasional coyote have all been seen in or around our yard.





**We love our community!** We recently had a local economic boom, which has brought more diversity and opportunity to our community. We are fortunate to be able to have all the things we need right here - excellent schools, excellent healthcare, diverse cultures, grocery stores, and many small locally owned restaurants and businesses. We are just a few minutes from the city center, but far enough in the country to see the stars and enjoy the quiet. **We do have some neighbors, all family, who live close by, but you can't see another house from our home which makes it extra peaceful,** but close enough that we can always borrow a cup of sugar if we run out! We have a cabin near the lake thirty minutes north of town which allows for relaxation during all seasons.

We truly experience all four seasons here, although some would say one of those seasons is road construction, which never seems to end! From wintry nights to spring blooms to summer starry nights to fall golden beauty, we have it all. This past year we even enjoyed the Northern Lights quite often - always a breathtaking experience.

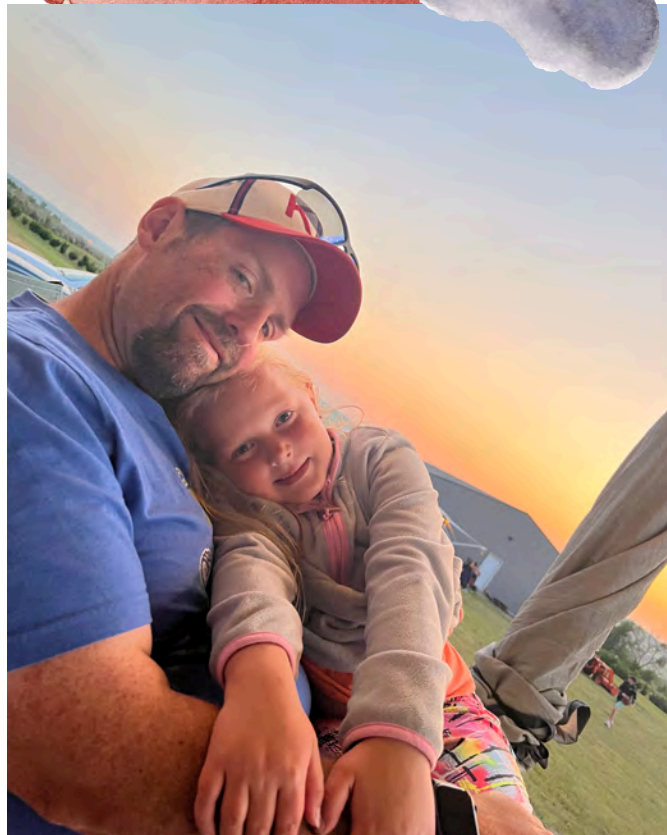
**We live in the country just outside of a small city in the Midwest - it's the perfect place to raise a family!**

*our*

# FUTURE

Our greatest dream for the future includes our child and sharing in all of those new experiences. We plan on continuing to put roots down in this community with our family and friends. Eventually, we will move around the corner to where Erica grew up: our farm holds great meaning and connection. No matter what our future holds, family will always play an important role, and we will always make the time for memories and connections with our family. We are open to adopting again in the future: we certainly have enough love and room in our hearts for many!





# FAITH

Our Christian faith is important to both of us. Chas goes to Catholic mass every weekend and is connected with his church and Erica attends a weekly bible study and fills her faith cup in ways other than the traditional church service. Our children will be raised in the Christian faith, and exposed to both Catholicism and Lutheranism. Ultimately, we know faith is a deeply personal decision that any of our children will need to make their own, but we want to teach them to have the characteristics of deep trust in God, generosity, servant hearts, and to be good and kind humans.

# EDUCATION

We plan to have our children attend the local public schools. We know many of the teachers and are confident that our children will receive a top-notch education. We have an excellent school system and also have a local skills center where high school students can get exposure to various careers and even earn college credit or other types of certifications. While we think college is important, we also realize the great importance of trade schools and going straight to the workforce. We plan to set aside funds if our child wishes to attend college or trade school, but will also be open to other pursuits of their dreams. We know education comes in many forms, as does success, and we want to support our children unconditionally.

# OUR FAMILY



## *curiosity*

We never want to stop with what we think we know, but always explore and broaden our horizons. Great things have been invented or created because someone somewhere was curious – we always want to push our limits and grow beyond what we think we can do!

## *humility*

We want to work to understand that everyone's situations are different. It's important we keep those differences in mind, respect them and remember the world doesn't revolve around us. We always want to be humble and kind to those around us.

# VALUES



## *citizenship*

We also have a love of engaged citizenship and are active in understanding what's going on in our local community and national community. We always want to work at figuring things out, learning and understanding new topics, and using intelligence for good.

## *humor*

At the end of the day, one must have joy and humor. Love works best, especially between us, if we enjoy each other and can make each other laugh. Sometimes we need to be able to laugh at ourselves!





# THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about us. We have so much love to offer and would be blessed to be entrusted with the opportunity to parent your child. **We promise to raise your child to know you and your incredible love for them. Their life story will always include you and you will be welcomed if that is what you desire too.** We will always have a plate ready for you at our table – we value you as a person and look forward to accepting you into our family, just as you are. We can promise your child will be raised to be hard-working, fun-loving, and kind to others in a loving, stable, and supportive home.

We are excited to grow our family through an open adoption. We desire a level of openness that meets the needs of you and your child, and understand that might look different through different seasons of life. We have so much to give and look forward to talking more with you. **It would be the greatest honor of our lives to care for your child!**

We look forward to meeting you!

*Chas & Erica*





*We're so excited to meet you...*

