



GARRETT  
& KELLY

Thank you for taking the time to look through our story. We are incredibly excited for our journey to adoption and don't take for granted the loving decision you have made. We hope that the love we will have for your child, if blessed to us, is evident as you learn more about our family.






# OUR ADOPTION JOURNEY

Our journey to a family began in 2019. Married in 2013, we wanted to wait to try for biological children until several years into our marriage. It was important to us to build a solid marital foundation and complete our desired education. We each were able to complete our Master's degrees, Garrett's in College Student Personnel Administration and Kelly's in Physician Assistant Studies.

In 2019, we felt ready and began to try for a biological child. Simultaneously, we also pursued our foster care license. Both foster care and adoption had been in our hearts early in our relationship. Ultimately, we underwent many unnecessary fertility treatments and decided to build our family in a different way.





In 2021, only a few months after our final fertility treatment, we were blessed to have our now adopted daughter, Gianna, join our family through the foster care system. The process from placement to adoption took just shy of two years. While the experience was worth every moment growing closer to, and falling madly in love with our daughter, it was taxing mentally. There was so much fear and uncertainty that we relied heavily on our faith in Jesus to get us through.

Now, as we look to further expand our family, we want to take a different route, which leads us to you. Like our foster care experience, we imagine there is a lot of fear and uncertainty as you look for the right family for your child. We are grateful that you are taking the time to learn more about us and hope that the love we will have for your child, if chosen, shines through.



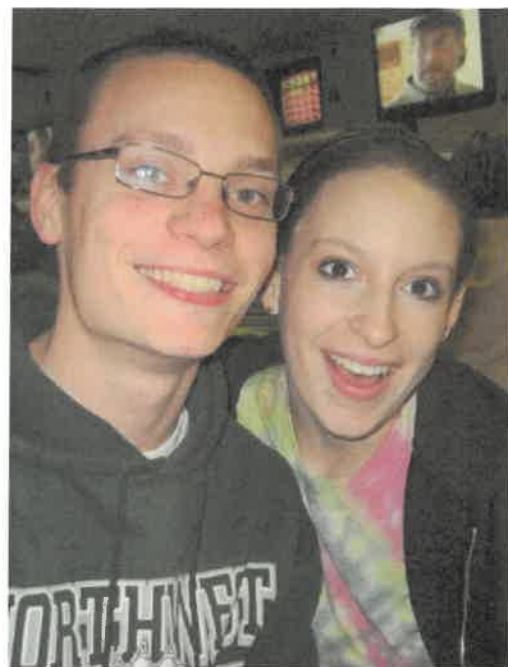


# About us GARRETT & KELLY

Our story begins on the first day of college for Kelly. We both went to Northwest Missouri State University. Garrett was the front desk supervisor of the residence hall Kelly moved into her freshman year. As she was setting up her furniture, she needed a screwdriver. So, her dad, Bryan, went to the front desk where Garrett was working. Bryan requested a screwdriver and Garrett asked for something to hold as collateral. Being the goof that he is, Bryan offered his hand to hold. This interaction won't be recounted until months later.

As school started for Kelly, she took note of Garrett early on, mostly because his appearance reminded her of Sheldon from The Big Bang Theory. As she got to know him a little better, Kelly took more interest in Garrett. She would "conveniently" wait in the hall so she could talk to him. By this point, Garrett had taken notice of her too. Our early dates consisted of doing laundry and playing cards, both things we enjoy to this day.

Eventually, we felt it was time to meet each other's families. When Garrett was introduced to Kelly's dad, Garrett instantly remembered him as the strange man who offered his hand as collateral. It was kismet.





# Engagement Story

---

It is almost a miracle that we were able to get married due to the tough time Kelly gave Garrett during his proposal. Kelly was on her way back to school, having to take back road highways due to road construction. Knowing that she would have to take a specific detour, Garrett set up signs with balloons at an intersection with a stop sign in a small town.

Unfortunately, this route was not familiar to Kelly. Therefore, she had was highly focused to ensure she didn't miss her turn. And what is the best way to focus while driving? Listening to the Lion King soundtrack loud enough that you can't hear yourself sing. Kelly got to this intersection and did not see Garrett. As she turned to find her next road, she thought she heard "Kelly!" shouted from a distance but brushed it off since no one would know her in that town.

Watching Kelly drive away from his proposal, Garrett swiftly jumped in his car to follow her. Kelly got to school. Garrett assumed she would be going to her apartment first, so he decided to set up his signs outside the door of the apartment building. However, Kelly was running late to a meeting. So, she did not stop at her apartment first. She went around the building where she saw Garrett standing outside, signs and balloons still in his arms.

Startled by Kelly, Garrett simply yelled, "Will you marry me, already?!" Despite his proposal plans being foiled twice, Kelly was still surprised and elated. She said yes, Garrett let out a huge sigh of relief, and we both had a good laugh as Garrett recounted the events of the day.







As mentioned previously, we were married in 2013 after 3.5 years of dating. We had the classic June wedding, choosing an outdoor venue due to our love for outdoor adventures. We wanted our wedding to be as personalized as possible from hand-making our fan-shaped program, which included several games to keep guests entertained, to personalized vows, and a time capsule that included predictions of our life from our bridal party.

The time capsule was also intended to have letters written to one another to read on our 10th anniversary. We never actually wrote the letters, so we had a good laugh at the empty envelopes when we returned to the site of our ceremony to open the capsule. Our reception included more handmade decorations and special-to-us moments, like inviting our family and father/daughter and mother/son duos to dance our first dances with us. We wanted to pour our heart and soul into our wedding to share our love with those that love us.

## WEDDING STORY



**GARRETT**



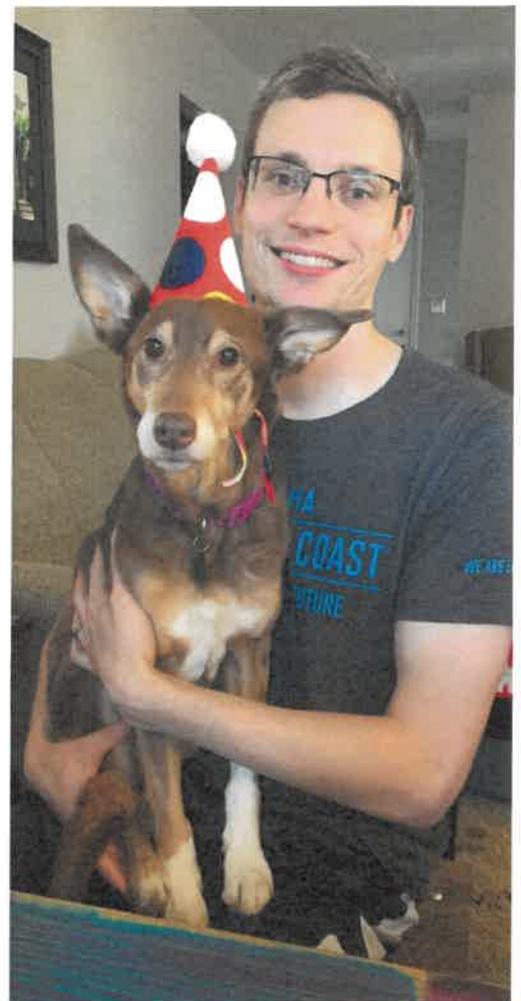
Watching Garrett become a father has been one of the biggest joys of my life. From the very beginning of our relationship, he shared how much he wanted children and has never wavered in that desire.

Prior to our infertility challenges, he encouraged that we become foster parents, wanting to pay it forward to others. His thoughtfulness for others is one of my favorite traits.

As a parent, he is fun, gentle, goofy, imaginative, and so much more. Any time Gianna engages him in imaginative play, he immediately immerses himself into her world. One of her favorite activities is playing doctor where she loves to listen to his heart and lets him know that, "it sounds great!" Watching the joy she has in her eyes when they play warms my soul. He will use his knack for play to help diffuse strong feelings as she learns how to regulate her emotions.

As an individual, Garrett is structured. He thrives on routine, sets high expectations for himself, and meets them. He embodies hard work and excels at growth and development, having worked in several leadership roles for college student and professional staff.

Any time I meet someone who has worked with Garrett, they sing his praises. I often hear that he has been the best supervisor they have worked for, and I believe that is due to his genuine care for those around him. Whenever he enters someone's life, they are better for it, but he will never acknowledge that. He does all things with humility and grace.





**KELLY**



Kelly is the most thoughtful person that I know, and I am lucky to be able to call her my wife. Kelly makes things happen. She listens to you and goes out of her way to figure out a way to make your wishes become reality. Throughout the years, I've said things like..."I want to start exercising more by riding a bike" or "I want to start baking as a hobby", and then the next thing I know, I have a bike in the garage and a pie dish in the kitchen.

Kelly makes life special, and this is the same approach that she takes as a parent. It has been amazing to see Kelly parent Gianna. Kelly wants Gianna to experience life, and values experiences over objects. In such a short life, Gianna has already gotten to experience National Parks, hiking, beaches, oceans, an airplane ride, a cruise, the zoo, road trips, and so much more. This is all because of Kelly's adventurous spirit. She really makes our family live and we don't take our blessing for granted.

As a parent, Kelly is very consistent and never takes the easy way out, and Gianna is better because of it. Gianna is becoming more independent and loves to test boundaries. Kelly is patient, corrects Gianna, but also shows her the appropriate way to respond in the situation. This helps Gianna know how to react in situations for the next time. Kelly enriches Gianna's life daily by building a special bond. On any given day, you can find Kelly taking Gianna to the pool, gymnastics, painting her toenails, doing her hair, or teaching her something new. My favorite part of my day is getting to overhear Kelly putting Gianna to bed and hearing the prayers they say together and singing the song Jesus Loves Me.



# Gianna

As mentioned, Gianna came into our family through foster care. From the moment she was placed in our arms at 3 weeks old, she captured our hearts and hasn't let go. We've heard from so many biological parents about this invisible, yet tangible, bond that exists between them and their children with a magnitude they can't quite describe. The lack of biological relation has not stopped us from experiencing that feeling and we are eternally grateful.

We love to have Gianna give herself positive affirmations. I am smart. I am strong. I am kind. I am brave. I am beautiful. She is all of those things and more. Every day we continue to be blown away by how quickly she learns and how much of her personality has blossomed over her three years of life.

She loves to make friends, sing songs, read books, and be creative. She loves animals and will point out every bird and "squir-rula" she sees. She loves to pick out her clothes, do her hair, and play in the dirt. She will be an amazing big sister and we can't wait to see her fulfill that role. Words fall short for how wonderful she is.

In the words of Kelly's late grandma, Erma, "I love you with all my heart and all my liver. If I had you in my mouth, I'd spit ya in he river." While none of us really know why she said that, we knew it meant she loved us tremendously. Kelly and Gianna now continue the tradition in Erma's honor.





# OUR PETS

We currently have two pets. Papi, an 11-year-old Cairn Terrier/Schnauzer mix, and Kitty, a 10-year-old tortoise shell Domestic Shorthair. We love our animals dearly. Each came to us as rescues, and we cannot imagine our lives without them.

They have done very well around Gianna and our young nephews and niece. Papi appears to have paternal instincts because when one of them cries, he runs right to them to make sure everything is okay. Kitty is a "social-from-a-distance cat". She is very affectionate but only when she wants it. Otherwise, you can find her sleeping on our bed or curled up on a chair.

Animals have been a big part of each of our childhoods. Garrett grew up with cats, a dog, hamsters, and a snail. Kelly grew up with dogs and a guinea pig. We've also fostered kittens through our local humane society. We imagine having pets throughout our entire lives. While we've primarily had cats and dogs, we would love to branch out to other smaller pets if our children have that desire.





## TIME TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

We value creating lasting memories and put our focus on experiences rather than material goods.

Traveling has been a huge component to this. As a Valentine's Day gift, Garrett made Kelly a corkboard map of the United States with pins to mark the locations we have traveled. It has been such a joy to add a third set of pins as Gianna has joined us on our trips. Some of our favorite places to visit have mountains as we love to hike. We are fortunate to have close friends who live in the Black Hills who we visit several times a year. This summer was the first time all of us, four adults and two toddlers, went camping together. We had a blast and Gianna continues to talk about it.

Recently, we went on a cruise with Kelly's parents. Gianna was so excited to "go on a boat and an airplane" that was all she could talk about the week leading up. It was amazing to see this new experience through her eyes. She played on the beach and went with us on a semi-sub reef tour.

Although, she only lasted about 10 minutes before falling asleep.

When we aren't traveling, we enjoy spending time together at home, playing games, watching TV, or working on projects. We also like to take advantage of some local attractions like pumpkin patches in the fall (one of Kelly's favorites) and the zoo. Every Friday night is eat out night where we will either stop and get some fast food or venture out to a sit-down restaurant.





# OUR FAMILY VALUES

**Faith.** Guiding by our Christian faith, we work to build our values around unconditional love and gratitude. We are grateful for all the blessings that God has provided for our family and honor by praying together. We also enjoy Christian music playing in the background at our house and while driving in the car. Currently, we are looking to plug into a new home church. Our previous church moved locations, farther than feasible for us. The churches we have attended since have not demonstrated the kind of diversity we desire. Our goal is to find a congregation that will not only help us continue to grow our faith but also help us further serve our community.

**Togetherness.** We love spending quality time together as a family. As much as we like to explore the world, we are just as happy snuggled up on the couch watching a TV show or an occasional movie, because we are together. In the mornings, when we are saying our goodbyes, we often do a “family hug”, where the three of us squeeze each other tight and say I love you and to have a good day at work and daycare. This is one of the special moments that show how strong we are as a family unit.

**Hard Work.** We have both worked very hard to earn our family, education, and careers and we want to pass down this sense of working hard for the things that you want from life. We also want our children to be thankful and content with the things that they have. We are big into making sure Gianna uses her manners and recognizes when someone has gone out of their way to be kind. We also want our children to be confident in their decision making and not feel pressure to follow a certain path.

**Love.** To us, loving unconditionally means unconditionally. We vow to provide our children with a solid foundation from which they can flourish into the individuals that they are unabashedly.



# OUR EXTEND FAMILY

We are blessed with a large extended family, including both families we were born into and families we have chosen. Kelly's parents, Bryan and Laura, are both retired and live approximately 10 minutes away. They love to frequently visit and spend time with their grandkids. They also love to travel, especially via cruise ship. Since they've retired, they completed a transatlantic and Panama Canal cruise. In a couple of years, they plan to do a two-month cruise visiting several Pacific island countries and Australia. When they aren't traveling or spending time with family, you can find Laura in her studio with a cup of coffee, painting. Bryan can be found in his workshop or in the garage working on a project. He thrives in the world of DIY and loves to share his knowledge.

Kelly has one sister, Madison. She and her husband, Brock, have three kids, Macklin (5), Bronson (3), and Baker (1). They live approximately 15 minutes from us. Madison loves to host get-togethers and throw themed parties while Brock never misses an opportunity to grill for the family. Additionally, we are blessed to still have Kelly's maternal grandparents in our lives along with aunts, uncles, and cousins, with whom we spend each holiday.

Garrett has one brother, Brett. He and his wife, Kristi, do not have children at this time, but have the desire to expand their family. They live approximately 15 minutes away as well. Brett is a talented craftsman and Kristi owns a salon. Garrett's mother is deceased but his step-father, Joel, is still living. Joel recently moved into an apartment after retiring and loves to have us over for pool parties.

We also have several close friends that are like family. Caysee has been our friend since college and acts like an aunt to Gianna. Caysee is fun-loving and down for any adventure. We eat dinner together at least once weekly and look forward to each new season of Survivor, one of our favorite shows. We are also blessed with Tess, Patrick, Freddie, and Gilbert, as well as their families. Tess and Kelly have been friends since high school and have enjoyed watching each other's family grow. They live in the Black Hills which allow us to have convenient trips for camping, hiking, and trying new restaurants.





# OUR HOME AND COMMUNITY

We love older neighborhoods with large mature trees, and we believe we found our perfect spot. We moved into our house in June 2021. It was built in 1966 and is three bedrooms. It has a large, mature Gingko tree in the front yard that we adore. A special feature of our house is what we call the "beam room" (because it has wooden beams lining the peak of the ceiling). It is truly the heart of our home. We have a large comfy couch, and this is where most of Gianna's toys are located. After a long day at work, we can always count on the beam room to help us unwind.

Our street is quiet and safe. It is a dead end, so there is no through traffic to worry about. Because of this, on any given day, you can find the neighborhood kids riding their bikes and running from house to house having a great time. In addition, kids will sled down the street in the winter, because it has a nice incline.

Our neighborhood comes together every summer on the fourth of July for a parade and block party at the city pool that is within walking distance from our house. The parade starts at the end of our street, and you will see old classic cars, decorated golf carts, kids on bikes, and the many neighbors walking together. At the pool, there are carnival games, snacks, bubbles, live entertainment, and other activities. You can really feel the sense of community in our neighborhood.

Our city is a great place to raise a family. Despite being relatively large, our joke is that you can get anywhere in 20 minutes, which is very convenient when you think of taking kids to activities, going to work or daycare, and visiting family and friends.





# The Future

We are so excited for the future. We have pictured our family as a family of four and do not have plans to add any other children after the adoption of our second child. We have decided to forego foster care in order to pour our focus into our adopted blessings. While we both work, both children will attend daycare until they are school aged. At that point, we intend to send them to public school. After high school graduation, we want to support their pursuit of their personal interests whether that is college, trade school, etc. Our goal for our children is to be productive members of society and will guide them to achieve this. We also desire for them fully embrace their identity and will seek opportunities to do so, especially if their cultural or racial identity does not match our own.

We welcome an open relationship between our family and yours to provide our child as much love and support as possible. We remain grateful and humble that you have taken the time to consider our family for your child and look forward to the next step in this journey.

♥ *Garrett, Kelly, and Gianna* ♥



