



Rick & Melissa

It is our hope that your child will enjoy his/her childhood and have the same opportunities we had. We will encourage your child to keep trying and not to give up — all lessons we learned through the love and support of our families.



ADOPTION BY
GENTLE CARE

Serving as a partner in creating and sustaining nurturing families

370 SOUTH FIFTH STREET, SUITE 2, COLUMBUS, OH 43215-5433
TOLL-FREE: (800) 824-9633

About Rick

BIRTH YEAR: 1971

JOB DESCRIPTION:
Demand Planner

EDUCATION:
Bachelor of Arts in
International Relations

FAVORITE MEMORY WITH MELISSA:
Exploring the Caverns in West
Liberty, Ohio. We also sifted for
gems and gold. After, we went
to BW-3's for hamburgers.

FAVORITE HOBBY:
Reading books, listening to
music, and playing with our dog

FAVORITE FOOD:
Skyline Chili

FAVORITE ICE CREAM TREATS:
Buckeye Concrete - lots of
chocolate and peanut butter!

FAVORITE BOOK:
The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

FAVORITE HOLIDAY TRADITION:
Decorating the Christmas tree
with Melissa. I enjoy doing
this because she takes so much
time and care with the tree.

FAVORITE CHILDHOOD MEMORY:
I loved going to the house of a
family friend on Christmas Eve.
We would watch the movie,
A Christmas Carol and then
attend the late night church
service. Christmas Day I would
wake up early and see gifts
under the tree from Santa.

FAVORITE MOVIE:
The Godfather

About Melissa

BIRTH YEAR: 1972

JOB DESCRIPTION:
Second Grade Teacher

EDUCATION:
Bachelor of Science in
Elementary Education

FAVORITE MEMORY WITH RICK:
Going on a cruise with Rick.
It was the first time for both
of us. We both loved sitting
out on the balcony at night.

FAVORITE HOBBY:
Working on creative projects
and baking

FAVORITE FOOD:
Pasta with meatballs

FAVORITE ICE CREAM TREATS:
Turtle sundae with whipped
cream

FAVORITE BOOK:

Tacky the Penguin and
Poppleton are two of my
most favorite children's books.

FAVORITE HOLIDAY TRADITION:
Making gingerbread
houses with my nieces and
nephews. We use graham
crackers and lots of icing
and candy.

FAVORITE CHILDHOOD MEMORY:
I loved going to picnics at
my Grandparents' house.
There was always great
food, lots of family, and
games to play.

FAVORITE MOVIE:
You've Got Mail

Our Home and Community

Before we got married in 2012, we each had our own home although we lived 45 minutes apart. We both worked in towns close to where we lived, so it was good news when Melissa got a teaching job right around the corner from Rick's house. We rent out Melissa's condo and have lived in Rick's house since we got married. Our home is close to parks, shops, our church and our workplaces. Melissa has done a lot to add her touch to the house. We have done a ton of painting and remodeled the kitchen. Rick's family always comments that since Melissa came into the picture our house has really become a home! We like to plant flowers in the spring and watch the perennials come up each year. Rick has always had a green thumb like his mom and Melissa is starting to learn from both of them. We have a backyard where our little dog, Gromit, likes to run around, and she would love to share it with a young human best friend! Both of our dads have helped us with various house projects ranging from electrical to plumbing. We feel very proud knowing that we worked together to make this house our home.





Melissa's Family



Celebrating with our parents!



Our dog, Gromit!

Our Families

We each have one sister. Rick's sister, Renee, was born two years to the day after Rick. Growing up they enjoyed celebrating birthdays together. Rick's mom and dad had double duty when it came to this special day! Melissa's sister, Michelle, is the oldest by three years. Melissa and Michelle are best friends and are always there to support one another.

Melissa's parents will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in October 2016. Rick's parents divorced more than 25 years ago and are in relationships with other people. All six of our parents come together to celebrate special occasions and hang out with us. Rick's dad and stepmom recently went on a cruise with Melissa's parents.

Rick's sister lives about four hours away in Pennsylvania. She and her husband have a son who is three years old. They come to visit throughout the year for holidays and fun trips like the zoo and aquarium.

Melissa's sister and her husband have five children ages 21 to 2. They live eight hours away in the state of Delaware. We see them four to six times a year and talk and text daily. When we are together we go on sight-seeing trips, play board games (Clue is a family favorite!), have themed parties like luaus and tea parties. During the holidays, we make gingerbread houses, bake and decorate cookies. It did not take Rick long to join in and appreciate the traditions that have been celebrated together for over 21 years!

Our Pet

We share our home with our mini-schnauzer, Gromit. She is nine years old and has been with Rick since she was a puppy. Rick grew up with many different pets; including hamsters, rabbits, ferrets, turtles, birds, cats and dogs. Melissa did not grow up with pets, but she has become a dog person since knowing Gromit. Gromit enjoys lounging on her chair, playing with her toys, playing fetch, going on walks, and hanging out with us. Melissa especially enjoys spoiling Gromit with treats and pats on the head. Rick likes to play ball with Gromit and loves getting her all crazy!

Our Traditions

In the almost four years since we've been married, most of our traditions have revolved around our families. We feel very fortunate that our two families get along, and that we've been able to combine traditions with both of our parents and siblings.

Our families celebrate Christmas, Thanksgiving, and summer holidays together which has made the dilemma of which family do we see during the holiday a non-issue. Melissa has had the chance to share her tradition of making gingerbread houses with Rick's sister's son and is so happy that her older nieces (ages 21, 16, 14) still look forward to traveling to Ohio from Delaware for Christmas where they bake cookies and decorate gingerbread houses every year.

We also enjoy summer picnics at Rick's dad's house, holiday dinners at Melissa's mom's house, and monthly dinners with Rick's mom and her boyfriend, Don. We hope to carry on these traditions with a child and to create others as we grow as a family. We love doing seasonal activities, hanging out at home playing board games, going on walks in the park with our dog, Gromit, or working on creative projects — all experiences we would love to share with a child for years to come.

Our Religious Beliefs

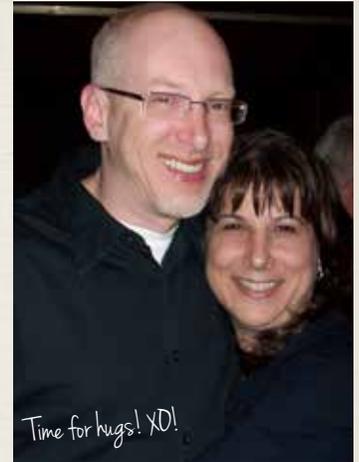
Our faith is an important part of our lives. Melissa has been Catholic since birth. She went to public school, but was active in her parish, went to religion classes, and participated in the youth group as a young teen. Melissa's mom and grandfather helped to form her faith. Although neither her mom nor grandfather spoke much about religion, she could see that they drew strength from their belief in God.

Rick grew up as a Lutheran. He went to church weekly and attended a Lutheran school. Later in life, Rick felt that something was missing and was drawn to the Catholic faith after witnessing the ways his good friend, Scott, and his stepmom, Fran, lived their faith. In 2006, Rick converted to Catholicism. He still enjoys reading and learning more about the Catholic faith.

As a married couple, we are active in our church and volunteer at the annual parish carnival and the food pantry. Rick is an active member of the church men's group and Melissa enjoys volunteering with the Ladies Guild. We have many friends in our parish and like being active members of our faith community.

How We will Talk about Adoption

Becoming a family through adoption takes hearts full of love, courage, and God placing just the right people together. We plan to be very open and honest with a child about how we found each other and became a family. There are so many wonderful children's books that are written about adoption and at an early age, we would read these special books with the child. These books would be a part of our collection, and reading them often would become our tradition. We both know friends who adopted, and we have heard their stories. We know how comfortable they are with talking to us and others about their adoption journey. We feel it is important to encourage a child to ask questions about his or her birthparents and for the birthparents' stories to be shared and treasured.



What it Means to Become Parents & Our Strengths

We have always wanted to be parents and have tried to conceive since we got married.

Melissa started to babysit when she was in fifth grade and knew from a young age that she wanted to continue to work with children and to be an elementary teacher. When she was young, Melissa got all of the neighborhood kids to come to her garage where she had a school set up with desks, a chalkboard, and worksheets. Since then, it was always Melissa's dream to be a teacher.

Melissa's first niece was born in 1995 and she has spent at least a week or two every summer, Thanksgiving, and Christmas with her nieces and nephew since that time. Melissa, affectionately called Aunt Mis, loves to come up with creative craft projects and educational games for these visits. She has organized bins of a wide range of craft supplies in the basement. Rick always jokingly says you never know when you might need a pipe cleaner, googly eyes, or piece of colored foam! And Rick is so right! Not only do these supplies come in handy for craft projects, one day we used a pipe cleaner to help with a plumbing problem!

Family has always been important to both Melissa and Rick. Rick has fond memories of spending time with his family. He remembers his mom reading to him, and the fun activities he did with his sister. As a young boy, Rick enjoyed walking and riding his bike to the library, movie theater, and comic book store with his mom and sister. Rick always pictured himself as a dad. Both of his parents were active and supportive of him in school, church, and scouting. He remembers swimming at the pool and playing at the park with his friends. He would like to be just as supportive as his parents were and provide a child with lots of opportunities.

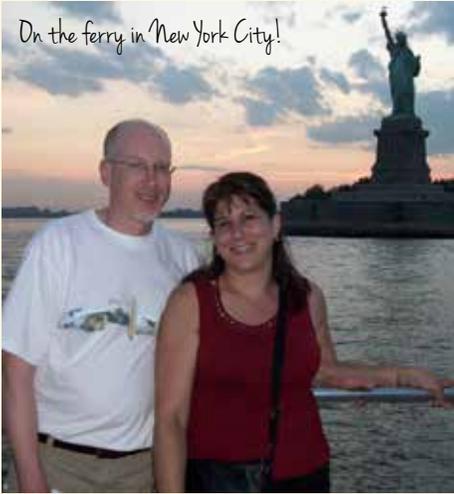
It was hard news for us to learn that our chances to successfully conceive were very small. We very much want to share our life with a child and to be a family. We are so grateful to have such loving, caring, and supportive parents and would love the opportunity to be parents ourselves and share what our parents have modeled for us throughout the years. We feel our strengths as parents would be that we are patient, kind, attentive and hard-working. We love one another and would share this love with a child.



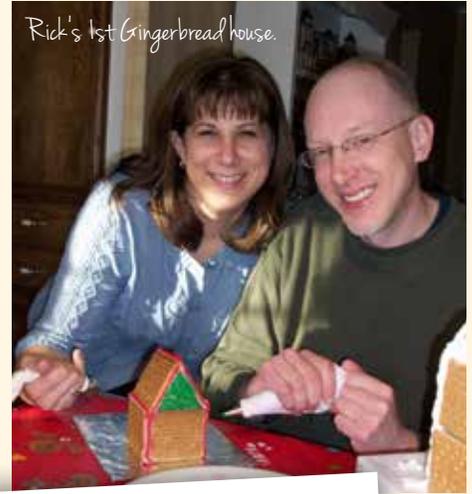
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Our wedding day!



On the ferry in New York City!



Rick's 1st Gingerbread house.



Carving pumpkins with Gromit!



Walking along the beach!



Being silly turkeys at Thanksgiving!



Beach fun with Melissa's family!

Dear Birth Parent(s),

It is an honor to write to you. Thank you for having the courage to read our letter and consider adoption for your child. We have longed to have a child and envisioned we would have a family before we even met one another.

We started dating in 2010 after meeting on eHarmony, a dating website. Melissa's sister, Michelle, helped her to write her profile. Rick's stepmom, Fran, took photos of Rick for his profile. Both of our families encouraged us to sign up for online dating. Upon seeing Rick's profile, Melissa thought Rick seemed like a nice guy, and she liked their shared values of family and hard work. Initially, Rick thought that Melissa might be out of his league, but he noticed that she had checked out his profile, so he decided to see if she would like to meet for coffee. The date was set almost immediately at a Starbuck's halfway between where we both lived. We had a lot to talk about right from the start!

Rick truly was the nice guy that Melissa thought he seemed like in his profile. The first date at Starbuck's on March 31st, happened to be the same day as Rick's dad's birthday and Melissa's recently deceased grandfather. Both of these special men in our lives were part of our conversation that evening. Melissa noticed immediately that Rick had the same sweetness and gentleness as her grandpa. Rick saw Melissa as beautiful and kind to others. The importance of family to each of us was visible right from the beginning of our relationship.

Both of us happily began putting more miles on our cars as we continued to hang out, meet each other's families, and spend more time together. We were engaged in December of 2011 and we got married on October 26, 2012. We feel very fortunate to have found one another and are thankful that we have so much in common. We realized from the start of our relationship that one of the main things we had in common was that we both wanted to have a family.

We had hoped to be able to get pregnant soon after our wedding. After we were unsuccessful for several years, we decided to seek the advice of a fertility doctor. After fertility treatments and surgeries, we began to look for other ways to build the family that we dreamed of having. Melissa felt like she was in the right place at the right time when she met up with a friend she had not seen for years. Her friend began telling the story of how she and her husband had recently adopted their son after many of the same struggles we had faced. She enthusiastically told of their journey with adoption. Both the friend and her husband shared lots of information with us, and we began seeing so much hope in the possibility of being matched with birthparents and a child.

To be the best parents we can be, we will take our strengths and use them to nurture and guide a child. Through our example as parents, we will show a child how to try new things and to value the things that we have; how to be responsible, make good decisions and learn from decisions that could have had better outcomes. We will also show him/her how to be an honest, caring, and loving individual; the importance of standing up for yourself and being a good friend. We will always be at your child's side to offer guidance, protection, support and encouragement. It is our hope that your child will enjoy his/her childhood and have the same opportunities we had. We will encourage your child to keep trying and not to give up ~ all lessons we learned through the love and support of our families.

We know that you face a difficult decision and we want you to know that we will honor and celebrate you and the special place you have in your child's life and in our life. Please know that you will be a valued part of our family and that we will share pictures, letters, and emails with and from you.

We thank you from our hearts for taking the time to read our profile and we appreciate you considering us.

Sincerely,

Rick & Melissa

