

Rachel & Derek





**We sure had to “kiss a lot of frogs” to find each other, but after our first date, it was clear to both of us that we had a future together.**



Harrison arrived in November of 2022, and he was nothing short of a miracle baby. On his second day, it was confirmed that he had multiple congenital heart defects. After spending a full month in the hospital, we brought home a healthy boy, who is doing better than we could have imagined. During this time, we learned how strong we all were as a unit.

Hello, we are Dereck and Rachel! We are so excited to share our family's story with you as we begin this beautiful journey as prospective adoptive parents.

We sure had to “kiss a lot of frogs” to find each other, but after our first date, it was clear to both of us that we had a future together. We spent our first year having adventures ranging from trips to cities and exploring new foods, to meeting each other's closest friends and family, ultimately concluding in a surprise proposal. Rachel quickly said yes, and within another year, in 2019, we were husband and wife.

We had always spoken about starting a family after a year of marriage, but life never goes to plan. We instead began our journey three years in and experienced a miscarriage. Wanting a child more than anything, we chose to move forward and get pregnant again.

We dream of having a little sibling for Harrison to grow up with, and for that little sibling to have Harrison, too. We dream of the four of us playing board games, going on rides at Disney, swimming at the beach, and picnicking in the park. From the most simple everyday moments to life's most special moments...we are ready for it all.





# About Dereck

## by Rachel



*Dereck and Harrison*

Dereck is one of the most respectable men I know. He is so passionate and true, through and through. He is a wonderful husband, the most hands-on dad, a hard worker, and protector in our society. His resilience is beyond inspiring, and meeting him today, you would never know the challenges that he had to overcome in life.

When Dereck was young, he saw the fire service as an active department in his community. As a 14-year-old boy raised by a single mom and grandfather, he sought to find his place. He transferred the skills learned from years of being a Boy Scout, into becoming a junior firefighter. He would then become an active firefighter for more than 20 years. During his time with the fire department, he earned the certification of emergency medicine to better himself, and worked for years on an Associate's Degree in Computer Sciences to have options and security.

He has transitioned to working a stable 9-5 and continues doing fire/EMS on the side in order to remain an active, present part in our family. After our years of marriage, we both reflect often on how lucky we are to have found each other. Dereck cares so deeply and goes to great measure to be a wonderful husband, dad, son-in-law, friend, co-worker, etc.

As we've navigated our journey to having a second child, he has been his consistent self. I can count on him no matter what, and I appreciate him more than I could say. I am so honored to have this man as the father of my children.



*Pie time - a tradition in Dereck's family*



*Disney for our honeymoon*



# About Rachel

## by Derek

Rachel works as a data ingestion specialist at an insurance company. Her attention to detail, background as a teacher, and a willingness to learn has helped her excel quickly. She is regarded as one of the top contributors on her team and enjoys performing leadership tasks.

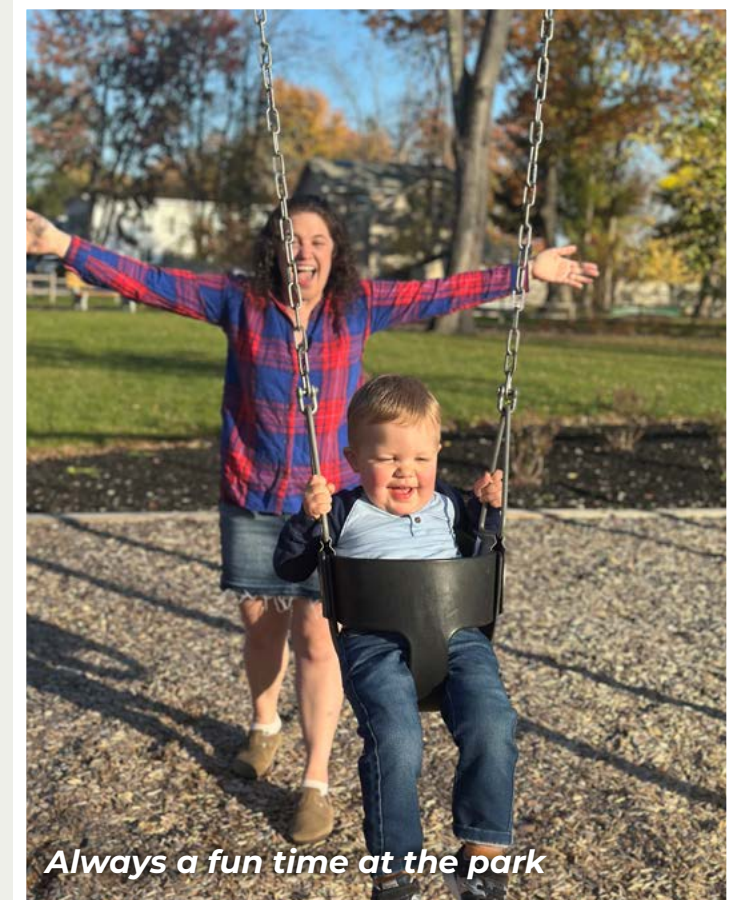
Outside of work, she regularly attends dance classes. Rachel has been tap dancing since she was five, and is praised as one of the most talented and technical performers around. Her competition trophy collection is awe-inspiring, almost as much as watching her demonstrate her craft first-hand. Speaking of craft, she has found a niche in crafting, including stuffed felt ornaments, and t-shirt designs. Again... creative only scratches the surface.



At home, Rachel is a mom first. She has a knack for coming up with creative ways to fill the time, including exploring cooking dishes that may be out of her comfort zone. I really envy her creativity and ability to come up with activities and games that are both fun and educational.



During our journey together, Rachel has consistently been a person I have been able to simply be myself around. Her comforting, empathetic personality has allowed for me to come out of my shell and strive to be the best partner, husband, dad, and person I can be. I am thrilled to be on this journey of life with her, and she is the absolute best mom to our growing family.





# Our Home



We would describe the feeling of our home as warm and cozy. We live on a rather busy street, but once you get to the end of the block, there is a great neighborhood. We even live within walking distance of the local elementary school, high school, and downtown. We love feeling involved in our community, so we really try to embrace all that's going on here, from the different parades and festivals, to the other community events that happen frequently.

We are especially excited that a splash pad is being built in the town. Harrison has been taking swimming lessons since he was a year old, so he is very comfortable in the water. We hope a new little one will love it just as much.



*First Christmas in our home*



*First day of school! He loves going part time to see friends.*

Homes can house adventures, and those are never in short supply in our 1800s home. We have a perfect combination of living in an active area that's only a short drive to the water, the city, mountains, and farms, with many activities to choose from. We love how different one day can look from the next. We joke that we bought our house because we wanted our dog to have a backyard, but while she does love it, we do, too.

**We definitely enjoy our simpler days around our home, but we love the idea of spontaneous adventures!**



*Harrison's smash cake. He loved it!*

Aside from that, we have beautiful nature trails all around us, a community garden, delicious restaurants, and even a few amusement parks. We definitely enjoy our simpler days around our home, but we love the idea of spontaneous adventures!



# Our Family Highlights



We are both super lucky to have grown up in environments where there were multiple generations living very close by. Dereck's family all lived in the same neighborhood and Rachel's Nana lived with her from the time she was a few months old. While the size of our family gatherings differed, our families both supported and held a deep love for each other.

Rachel's extended family lives far away, but her parents live within ten minutes of our home. They are the foundational rocks of our family, and Harrison is obsessed with his CeCe and PopPop. We see them often, whether we all go out to eat together, go to a park to push Harrison on the swings, or they stop by after dinner for a quick hello. What is most wonderful, though, is our very respectful, healthy relationship. While Rachel's brother and his spouse live a decent plane ride from us, we are very close to them.



Dereck's mom lives an hour away, so we don't see her as often, but easily get together when we wish to. She loves being a Grammy with her entire being.

We have a community surrounding us that is full of aunts and uncles for Harrison. When we told various friends that we were wanting to adopt, almost every reaction was the same. They all said something along the lines of "You are the perfect family for any kiddo." When you give someone a big piece of news like that, and their immediate reaction is so positive, you know you've found your people.





# Tradition, Hobbies & Interests

Rachel has a collection of dance competition trophies and has been featured in several musicals throughout the years. She has taken up crafting and has been designing homemade felt creations. Her creativity is endless.

Dereck can be found on the road or trails running and cycling. He has enjoyed getting back into the performing arts, including performing in musicals with Rachel.

Together, we love finding new places to explore visually or as an activity. If there's a sporting event locally, we may just be found in the stands taking in the competition, and watching Harrison experience life. We firmly believe that homemade pancake breakfasts are a fun way to spend a weekend morning and we try to do that weekly.



*Pumpkins anyone?*

**Together, we love finding new places to explore visually or as an activity.**



*Exploring different cities*



*Performing together in musicals*



*Celebrating the beginning of our adventure*



# Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our family. In a very complex world we try to focus on some simple values each day with our son, especially the fact that he is a part of not just our close family, but a broader circle of friends, community, and the entire world. Each day we make a choice that we hope will be a good one for our family, and everyday is a new day where we will try again. Being a good person is important. Celebrating those “I did it” moments is important, and so is being humble.

If you chose us in this process, we promise to continue to honor this child with the same unconditional love and support our existing family has, but with even more love, as they will have an older brother to show them around. We take health, safety, education, and passion very seriously. We will show this child what the world looks like and how amazing it truly can be. We want them to fall in love with their life.

With respect to your situation, we are hopeful that some form of connection can still exist between you and your child, as you have been a very important presence in their life. We value our family history, and wish to honor this child's as well. We want them to know where they came from, and about you if you wish. We would like to share with you along the journey of this child's life the achievements and milestones as they come. We want to honor their past, as it will help identify them in their future. We are excited by the fact that this will be an open adoption, because they will be them because of you.

WITH LOVE,

**Dereck & Rachel**







### **A Full Circle Adoptions**

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