



ADAM  
AND  
SHAWN



# HELLO!

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR  
TAKING THE TIME TO LOOK  
THROUGH OUR PROFILE.

Throughout the next several pages, you will get a glimpse into our lives, however this book could never encapsulate everything about us. What we do hope you see on these pages is what kind of a family we are: loving. Our family is our pride and joy, and we are excited to extend our family and add another child.

*We cannot begin to imagine all of the emotions you are feeling, but we thank you for reading our profile.*

*We hope to provide the love and support you need to make this process as smooth and easy as possible for you and your baby, no matter what decision you make.*

ALL OUR LOVE,

ADAM *and* SHAWN





# our STORY

TALE AS OLD AS TIME; MAN IS BORED  
AT HOME AND SCROLLS ENDLESSLY,  
SWIPES RIGHT, "IT'S A MATCH" AND  
THE REST IS HISTORY. KIND OF!

We spent our first date making tacos together, conversing about our jobs and talking about our future hopes and aspirations. Adam quickly fell in love with Shawn's outgoing personality, love of art and ability to enjoy life. Shawn fell in love with Adam's passion for life, nurturing spirit and ability to find the positive in everything. Nine months of dating was long enough for Adam to realize it was time to propose. However, the day did not go as planned as Shawn had a heat stroke several hours before the proposal was intended to happen. Luckily, after recovering, the proposal still happened and Shawn said "yes."

***A year and a half later, we were married. We had a beautiful handfasting wedding ceremony surrounded by our closest friends and family. The day was rainy (Adam's favorite weather), and the joy and excitement was such a bright spot in our lives!***





## WHAT LED US TO *adoption?*

As our love grew, so did our desire to have children. We looked into surrogacy, but knew that our hearts were leading us to adoption. Adoption had touched both of our lives extensively: Shawn's dad and aunt are adopted and Adam's aunt was adopted. We also knew many friends who had adopted children. Our lives have been exponentially blessed through adoption.

***We adopted our oldest, Gabe, from the foster care system and are finalizing Jameson's adoption. We also adopted our youngest, Tristan, through the National Down Syndrome Adoption Network. Adoption feels like a natural way to expand our family and we are so grateful for the opportunities we have had thus far.***

***We have a semi-open adoption with both Gabe and Jameson's birth family, with frequent communication and visits. Tristan's birth family chose a closed adoption, but after his birth reached out occasionally and we were happy to have them in his life. We look forward to welcoming you and your baby into our family in whatever way you would like.***





# meet SHAWN

SHAWN IS AN INCREDIBLE PERSON, WHO LOVES EVERYONE AND IS ABLE TO MAKE FRIENDS WHEREVER HE GOES.



Shawn has a passionate heart, and that makes him incredibly strong in his profession as an Employment Specialist for students with significant disabilities. Shawn has a Bachelor of Liberal Arts Degree: Gender and Women's Studies and is in a Master's Program for Clinical and Mental Health Counseling. Shawn has been an incredible parent to the children we have had in our lives. He displays a level of patience that is admirable, shows empathy and shares his passions, specifically baking! Shawn loves teaching all of us about baking and the kids love everything about helping him! Our boys lovingly call Shawn "daddy" and he both cherishes and deserves that title!

*A few of Shawn's favorite things...*

**Football • Pasta • Art • Christmas cookie baking • Fleetwood Mac • Breakfast at Tiffany's • Europe - dream vacation! • Christmas • The Golden Girls • What I Know For Sure - favorite book!**

# *A few of Adam's favorite things...*

*Hockey • Pizza • Theater • Playing card games • Lady Gaga  
• Raise Your Voice - movie • Croatia - dream vacation! • Thanksgiving •  
The Golden Girls • Perks of Being a Wallflower - favorite book!*



## *meet* ADAM

ADAM IS AN AMAZING AND CARING PERSON  
TO EVERYONE HE MEETS.

His passion and determination have led him all the way up to being a Special Education Professional Learning Facilitator for one of the top school districts in the country. Adam has a Masters of Teaching: Special Education. He cares deeply about making sure everyone is getting a fair opportunity and helps everyone reach their highest potential. At home our kids call him “Ota” which means father in Croatian. His passion and care is truly remarkable for all the people who enter our lives.

Adam makes a remarkable “Ota,” because he is dedicated to the physical and mental health and well-being of our children, loves to help them have fun using their imaginations, wrestles with them, engages with them and helps them explore the world around them.



# OUR LITTLE *crew*



## **Gabe is our spunky, kind, and inquisitive son.**

He has one of the biggest hearts of any child and is incredibly kind! He loves superheroes, Bluey toys, his scooter and our dogs – Gigi and Cardamom. His imagination is strong. Gabe is an amazing big brother. When we arrived home with Tristan, Gabe bypassed us and went straight for Tristan. They had a bond that was immense and immediate! He has also been an incredible big brother to Jameson since he entered our family!

**Jameson is funny, passionate and silly.** He loves to help whenever he can. Jameson loves to play with superheroes, his food set and anything Disney related. He loves to run, jump and play outside. Jameson was welcomed into our home shortly after Tristan passed away, but we know he would have loved him immensely. He is a kind and caring soul who loves playing with his baby dolls, including feeding and bathing them. He is a great little brother to Gabe and will be an awesome big brother!



## **Tristan was the bravest, strongest and most loving baby.**

Tristan was born with a heart defect and had Down syndrome. At 5 months old, he passed away from two blood clots. Tristan had a smile that could light up any room. He loved his big brother, Gabe, and both of his dads immensely. Whenever any of us would enter a room and he heard our voices, he would immediately look at us. He loved his bedside seascape tv, being sung to, being read to, his swing, and most importantly, his stuffed squirrel.



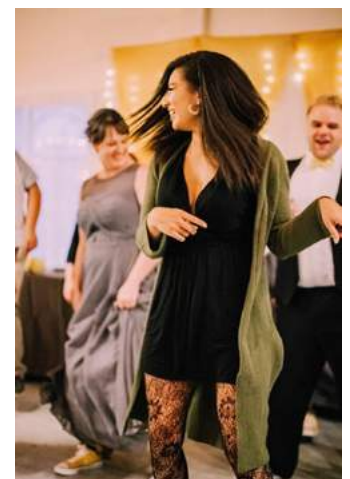
# our FRIENDS



*They say it takes a village to raise a child, and we not only have amazing families, but the best chosen family, our friends, ever.*

Our friends are funny, passionate, kind, loving and supportive. They have been with us through our whole relationship and we all get along so well. They have also been with us through our adoption journey and the passing of Tristan. These events were life changing and their love for us never waivered, in fact, we are all closer because of each of those events.

**To get to know us better from our friends and family, please watch our introduction video:**  
<https://youtu.be/iyHBvxRxfic>

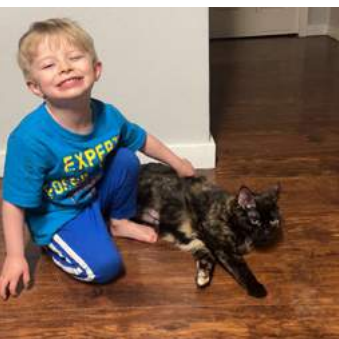




# home sweet HOME

WE HAVE A BEAUTIFUL FOUR-BEDROOM,  
RANCH-STYLE HOME IN A METROPOLITAN AREA.

We live on a quiet street in Iowa, with a park just a block away. We have wonderful neighbors, and there are always children outside, riding bikes, and playing at the local playgrounds. We are blessed to live in such a safe, friendly, diverse and loving area that has welcomed our family with open arms. We, along with our neighbors, cannot wait to add another child to our home and neighborhood and have even more joy to share with everyone.



## OUR PETS

*We have a loving Moyen Standard Poodle, Gigi, and a wonderful Cavapoo, Cardamon (who are both excited to share their love!) and a beautiful Tabby cat, Estelle, who is excited to have another person to cuddle with!*





## OUR COMMUNITY

We have an incredibly supportive community. We are blessed to be a part of Gigi's Playhouse, an organization that provides amazing support for the Down syndrome community. We have pediatricians, cardiologists and specialists who have extensive experience with children who have Down syndrome.

The school district your child would attend is strong in all areas, including both general and special education. They are extremely inclusive of students with special needs and of different cultures, which is a big reason we moved to be within the boundary of this district.



*in this family we...*

READ BOOKS BEFORE BED

ALWAYS SAY "I LOVE YOU"

DANCE MERRILY AND SING LOUDLY



COUNT OUR BLESSINGS

WATCH BLUEY

LAUGH AND PLAY!

LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY





# fun FACTS



1. Shawn and Adam are both the oldest siblings.

2. We love going out to "chips" (our favorite Mexican restaurants)!

3. We love Bluey, Paw Patrol and Firebuds!

4. We have pizza parties as a family every Friday night!

5. We watch cartoons and eat pancakes or waffles every Saturday morning!



6. We not only work on our physical health, but also our mental health.

7. Our friends and family are the most important people in our lives.

8. We love a good themed social gathering.

9. We collect Fiestaware.

10. Our house is filled with beautiful plants.





We were blessed to be chosen to be Tristan's parents and more blessed to be able to be in the delivery room when he was born. Adam even got to cut the cord with permission from Tristan's birth parents. Due to a heart defect, he had open heart surgery at only nine days old. Tristan was a fighter and we were released to go home a little over a week later! In January of 2022, we took him to the hospital for respiratory distress and unfortunately, he only continued to get worse. Ultimately, due to complications from blood clots, Tristan passed away at just 5 months old.

*The single greatest experience with Down syndrome that we have is with our son, Tristan.* We learned hands-on about heart defects, open heart surgery, feeding tubes, breathing tubes, oxygen monitoring, Early Access, all the therapies cardiology, hospital visits, check-ups, inclusion and more.

We wish, more than anything, that he was still here with us. We are so grateful to have experienced Tristan's never-ending love and joy. He taught us patience, bravery, strength, and most importantly, love. Tristan was not with us on Earth for very long, but he made a big, life-changing impact and will live on in our hearts and watch over us as our angel forever.



because TRISTAN

# extended FAMILY



*Adam's family lives up north,* where his dad is a Methodist pastor and his mom is a regional director of a nursing home. Adam's brother and sister-in-law have a five year old son, whom we love very much. Every Thanksgiving we spend time with family celebrating and making sure to find amazing Black Friday deals! We also enjoy time with them around Christmas, in the summer and any time we can take a weekend vacation.





*Shawn's family lives close to us, where both of his parents are retired. Shawn's sister and brother-in-law reside near us, as well. We enjoy our tradition of Sunday dinner with Shawn's family as well as making memories around Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and any other holiday we can celebrate. Both families love and spoil Gabe and Jameson and loved spoiling Tristan.*





# we love adventuring

## OUR FAVORITE PLACE THAT WE'VE EVER TRAVELED TOGETHER TO IS SEATTLE.

We went to Seattle on our honeymoon and it was one of the most glorious times of our lives. We joke that we likely would not have come back, if it had not been for Gabe, as he had started transitioning to us shortly before. Seattle brought so much joy to our lives, in the sense of being near, or on, the water, the outdoor adventures, the scenery, the food and the people we met.

We also take trips closer to home, such as Milwaukee, Omaha, Minneapolis and Kansas City. We love taking weekend trips to these areas and spending a few days away from home and making new memories. ***Our travels have not been extensive this past couple of years due to COVID, but we look forward to being able to travel again soon! We keep promising Gabe and Jameson we will take them on their first plane ride to Seattle, so we need to keep that promise!***





# OUR promises

THANK YOU FOR TAKING YOUR TIME TO READ OUR BOOK. WE HOPE IT GIVES YOU A LOOK INTO OUR LIVES AS A COUPLE AND AS PARENTS.

**When we finalized Gabe's adoption,**

the judge asked us to make a promise to love, support and provide for him, which we agreed to.

**We made that same promise to Tristan's birth family**

at his birth and fulfilled that promise through his time on Earth.

**We are excited and awaiting the day**

that we will make the same promises before the judge for Jameson.

**Now, we are here to make that same promise to you.**

We will support your baby, provide for them and love them unconditionally. We promise to take them on adventures, to teach them everything we can, to get them all of the services they will need, to make sure they are included at school, the community and beyond and to support their every dream.

*All our love,*

ADAM, SHAWN, GABE,  
JAMESON *and* TRISTAN



