

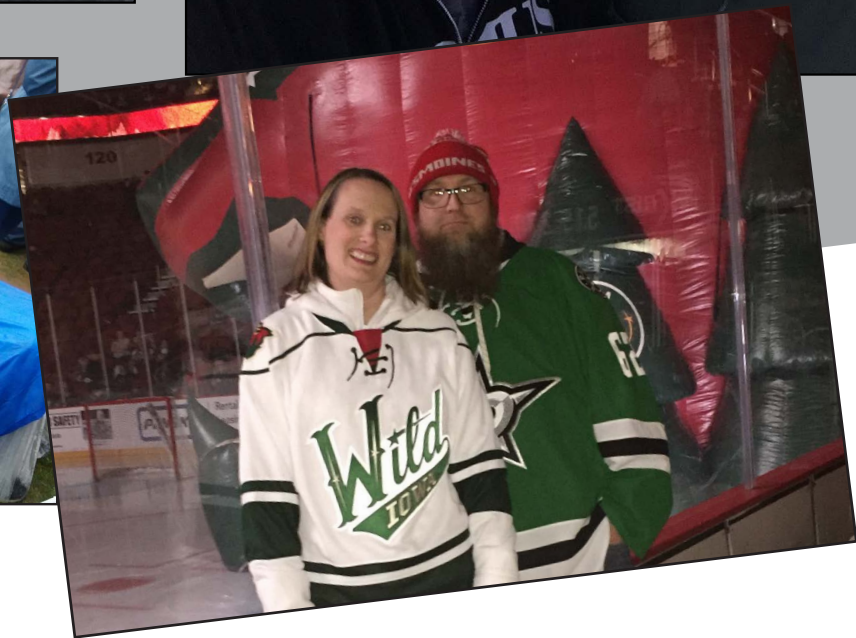


Tracy & Karen



Things we love

- All things music, especially outdoor concerts
- Traveling to new places, via car, plane, boat or train
- Watching hockey, cheering on our home team



Dear friend,

Hi. It's so hard to try and share who we are through a short picture book, but we have tried our very best to do so! We understand (as best we can) the importance and seriousness of the decision you are considering. If you do choose an adoption plan for your baby, we know there are so many families for you to choose from, and can't imagine how hard that would be. It is our hope that while you review our family book it will stand out to you, it will speak to you, about who each of us are, as individuals and as a couple. We would love nothing more than to be parents through an open adoption, if that's what you desire, and we would welcome the opportunity to get to know you and your baby.

With Love,

Tracy and Karen



our Love Story

in Karen's words



Tracy and I first met in high school, becoming fast friends and then dating for a little over a year before breaking up. We both loved each other, but had many of the typical high school relationship issues. Afterwards, Tracy remained in our home town while I moved away for college. We both found new relationships. But come to find out, we still thought about the other A LOT. After 10 years, one day, out of the blue I decided to call Tracy (I still had his phone number memorized). To my surprise, Tracy answered the phone call, his voice exactly the same as I had remembered. We talked for over an hour and decided to meet in person - that same day! Our old connection, our chemistry, our history was all there when I first saw him again, and within weeks we were inseparable. Three years after that Tracy proposed to me.

We were married the following year, and just celebrated our 12th anniversary. Tracy is the love of my life, and I couldn't have gotten through the heartbreaks we have faced in our marriage without him by my side. Tracy says the same thing about me, often reminding me that the only reason he kept his high school phone number was that he just knew that someday I would call him again. I still say that was the best decision I've ever made in my life.



“ We think we have a pretty incredible love story, and our commitment to the dream of sharing our love as parents continues to grow each day. ”



meet Karen

in Tracy's words

Karen is one of the smartest people I have ever met. For many years, Karen worked full-time at a non-profit agency that helps kids and families in crisis. She loved that her job allowed her to make a difference in kids' lives every day, but it was also very stressful. Earlier this year she changed careers and now works with college professors. She really enjoys it! In 2014, we were shocked to find out Karen was diagnosed with breast cancer. Together we went through her multiple surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation treatments. Thankfully at the end of 2015, doctors told Karen she was "cancer free" and would go on to live a long healthy life. We were so relieved.

Karen definitely prefers the warmer weather of spring and summer. She enjoys planting lots of flowers, spending time outside when the sun is shining, and watching dramas and documentaries on Netflix.



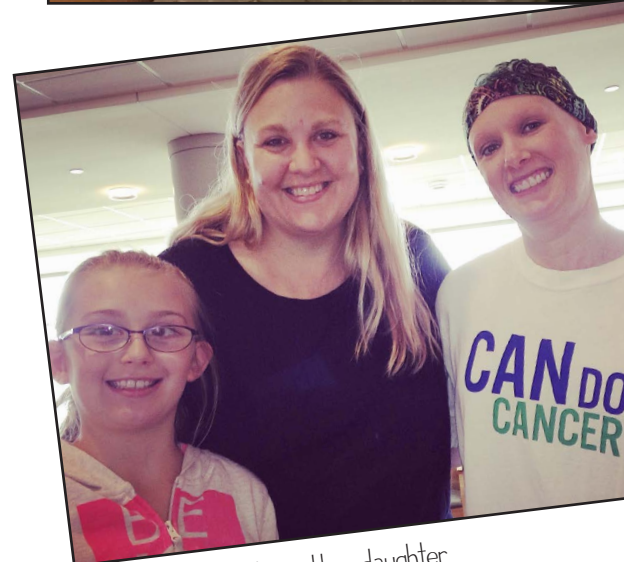
Visiting with long-time friend and her girls

FAVORITE MOVIE: Meet Joe Black
FAVORITE PLACE: Sitting on a sandy beach, watching and listening to the ocean
CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT: My dogs

Mel and Karen are both cancer survivors



“Karen's smile brightens any room and her caring nature provides comfort to all those around her.”



My best friend Colin and her daughter



meet Tracy

in Karen's words

Tracy is one of the most hard-working and creative people I have ever met. He enjoys lots of hobbies including listening to and playing music, photography and woodworking. He has a lot of artistic ability. For the past 9 years, Tracy has worked full-time at a retail store. He enjoys managing a team of 10 people and helping his team accomplish projects. He has to be at work by 6 am each day, which I don't think I could ever do! Before that, he attended a local community college where he studied photography, and he worked for many years as a fork-lift operator after high school.

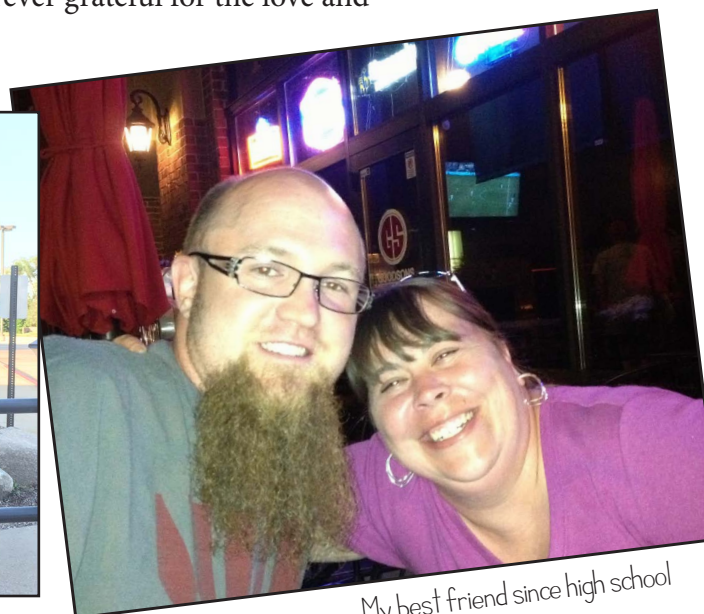
There is NO one else I would have wanted by my side during cancer. Tracy was there for me in every way - helping take care of me and going to every one of my appointments. It was not easy, we never expected our marriage vows of "in sickness and in health" would be tested so early. I learned what a truly loyal partner Tracy is, and I will be forever grateful for the love and support he gave me.



FAVORITE MOVIE: Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (the original) He has a tattoo from it on his calf.
FAVORITE PLACE: Vancouver Island
CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT: Music and my dogs



“ Tracy has a huge heart and enjoys making people smile. He is known for his dependability, his sense of humor, and his laid-back attitude. ”



My best friend since high school



Hockey with a friend's son



Our Extended Family

Our COMMUNITY and HOME

Iowa's not all cornfields

We live in the suburbs of Des Moines, Iowa. We like it here, it's just the right size city - not too big, and not too small. After living in Tracy's childhood home for many years, we bought our current house in 2013 with the hopes that we would grow our family in it. It has three bedrooms and a finished basement. We recently started decorating one of the bedrooms as a nursery.

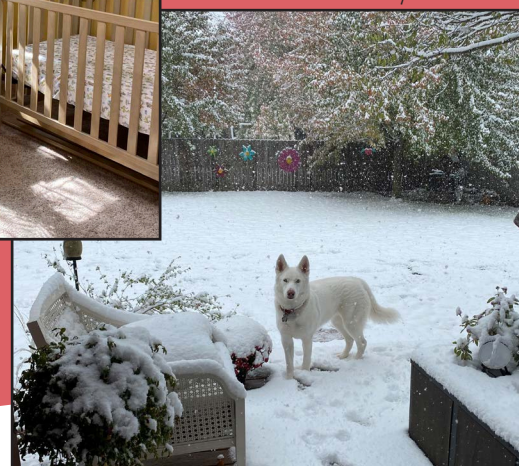
Our favorite thing about our house is the backyard. We really enjoy spending time outside, sitting on our deck, playing with the dogs, and relaxing. The yard is just missing a swing set, which we can't wait to add someday when our family grows (Karen loves to swing too). We are also considering adding an in-ground pool someday.



Our home



The start to our nursery



Our backyard



Todd with Molly



Travis and family



Karen's mom & Todd

Tracy's mom lives in Texas. Unfortunately, Tracy's dad passed away this past year, after battling health issues for many years. Tracy has one older brother, Travis, who lives about 10 minutes away from us with his family, which includes Tracy's nephews and niece. Tracy's dad served in the Navy, and his brother served in the Army and Iowa National Guard for 30 years. Now his oldest nephew is also serving in the Guard.



Tracy's parents

Karen has also lost her dad, he passed away unexpectedly in 2016. He served in the Navy too. She is very close to her mom, who lives about 15 minutes away, and she can't wait to make her a grandma for the first time, as we know she would provide a child with so much love. Karen also has a younger brother, Todd, who also lives nearby, and can't wait to be an uncle!



Biking break with friends



Cheering our hockey team with friends

Visiting dear friends in Canada



Our FRIENDS

Christmas with Karen's best friend's family



Although our families are small, we have a close-knit group of friends that make us feel surrounded with love and support. We truly consider many of these friends our family members, and we celebrate many holidays, birthdays, and special events together. Our group of friends is very diverse. Some of our friends we have known since elementary and high school, while other friends we have met over the years. We have also made a lot of friends through attending hockey games. Karen's work as a volunteer and breast cancer advocate over the past 4 years has also connected her to many women that she has developed strong friendships with. All of our friends can't wait to be aunts and uncles to our future child!

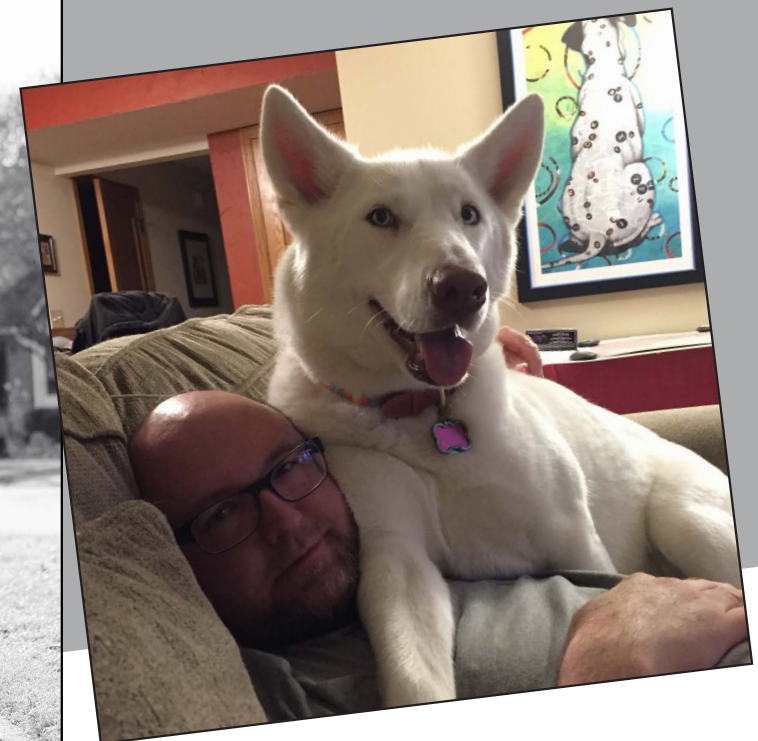
Our Furry FRIENDS

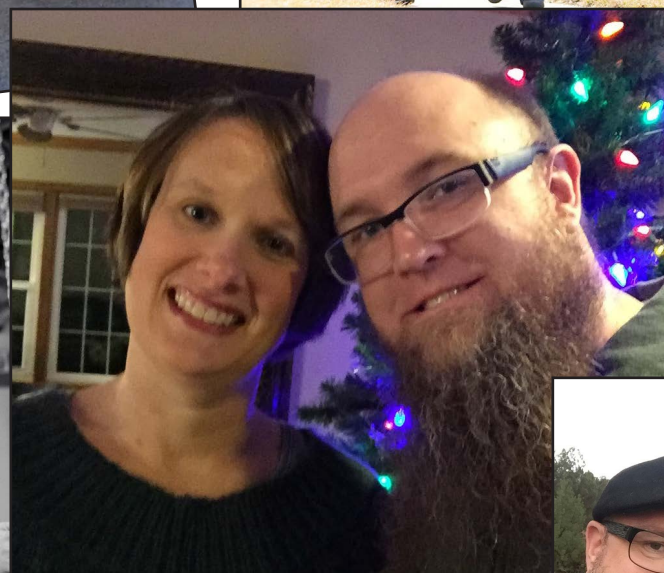
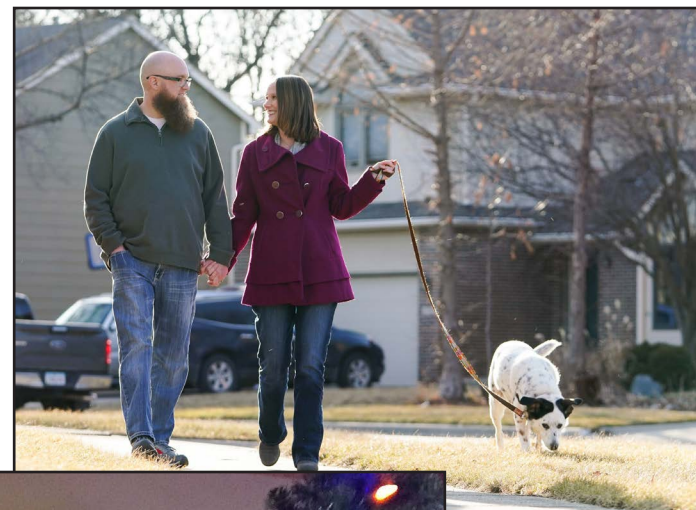
We have two spoiled dogs, Molly and Zella. We've had Molly (blue healer mix) since she was a puppy and we adopted Zella (husky shepherd mix) from a rescue last year. When it's nice out, the girls love to be in our backyard playing. When inside, they're usually laying in our laps or sleeping on our bed. Molly's tail rarely stops wagging, and Zella's curiosity is unending. We know they will really enjoy having a child in our home and that they will be great companions to a child.



Fun facts about us

- Tracy is trained as a Luthier (guitar builder). He went to Luthier school in Canada.
- Karen's favorite musician is John Mayer, she has been to 20 of his concerts.
- Tracy plans to be a stay-at-home dad once we have a child.
- Karen has known her best friend, Colin, since 3rd grade.
- Tracy loves Dr. Seuss and has an entire tattoo sleeve from "Horton Hears a Who".
- Karen loves to decorate for Halloween.





why we are choosing Adoption

We struggled with infertility and pregnancy loss for two years before Karen was diagnosed with breast cancer. We paused Karen's cancer treatment when she was first diagnosed, so that she could do IVF and freeze her eggs before starting chemotherapy. Two years later, when Karen was healthy again, she went through the rest of the IVF process, with the hopes of conceiving with our two created embryos. Sadly, those efforts didn't work and the harsh chemo treatments made it impossible to try again.

We spent time grieving that loss, but after many months we decided together that we still very much wanted to be parents, and we were excited to begin the adoption process! It's been a long and difficult journey to parenthood, but we continue to believe that the child that is meant to be in our life will come.



She found that the hot & cold could coexist. She could hold sadness and hope, joy and frustration and potential and heartache all together.

This quote really speaks to us and the struggles we have faced over the past several years with infertility and cancer. Although your situation is different, we think these words may possibly speak to what you are feeling today, and what you may feel if you choose an adoption plan for your child.

Our PROMISES to you

- We want you to know that you can feel confident in trusting us.
- If we are given the blessing of raising your baby, we will give your child unconditional love.
- We will support, encourage, and motivate him/her in times of happiness and success, as well as in times of sadness and disappointment.
- As parents, we will draw upon our life experiences and will do everything we can to ensure your child is raised in a loving and joy-filled home.



Thank you for considering us. We send you and your baby our love, light and peace as you make your decision.

Tracy & Karen



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