



Jennifer Barr & Drew Loney

Welcome

Hello--

Thank you for looking at our book! We look forward to meeting you and growing our family with you. In this book, we hope you can get to learn a little bit more about us, our lives, and what a child's life might look like with us.

Both of us strongly believe that family is about who you love, and we and our family have a lot of love to share with you and your child. Each person comes to the adoption process with a different story, and we recognize the complexity of those stories. Through adoption, the stories of our families will become entwined and grow together. We would want to help a child have a loving, happy relationship with their birth family in whatever way that makes sense. We've both had challenging times in our lives. We've watched and helped our loved ones go through their own difficulties. Drew was raised by a single mother who struggled to provide, but she loved him and emphasized caring for others and working hard. The small town that he grew up helped raise him, especially when his mom was having a hard time. Open adoption builds a supportive community for a child and helps give them the best start possible to their story.

We hope this book helps you get to know us and envision the kind of life a child would have with us. You are making such a brave decision, and we admire you so much for it. We hope to meet you and welcome you and your child into our family.

Sincerely,

Jen and Drew



Ballroom Dancing

Jiving at a ballroom dance competition.



Southern Living

A family friendly Mardi Gras parade in Vicksburg, MS.

Relaxed Evenings

Watching the sun set over the Mississippi river during its annual flood.





Whale Watching

Adventures in San Diego

Great Outdoors

Adventures in Colorado

Delhi!?

Jen showing off to her Indian friends that Delhi also exists in Louisiana



About Us



We've been married for five years but have been together for about 12 (it took Drew a while to convince Jen). We met while we were both doing our PhDs in Atlanta, Georgia on the university ballroom dance team. After moving around for a little bit, we got married in San Diego, California, where Jen's parents lived. In 2020, Drew got a great job offer in Denver. The two of us packed up and drove across the country to our new home. Since we plan to stay here for a while and we felt ready, we began the process to grow our family.

Meet Cute

September 2011

We meet when Jen joins the GeorgiaTech ballroom dance team.

To Vicksburg!

January 2015

Drew moves to Vicksburg for work. Jen joins later in the summer.

It's More Official

November 2018

We get married in San Diego after Jen returns from her dissertation research in India.

Starting Our Family

Now

The Saga Begins

March 2012

We start dating after Jen asks Drew to coffee three times.

It's Official

August 2015

Drew proposes to Jen on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River.

To Denver!

March 2020

We move to Denver for Drew to start a new job.

The best things about us as a couple are that we communicate really well, and we love to laugh. We're clear about what we're feeling and what we need from each other, and we set aside time to communicate about the important things. We also don't take ourselves seriously. Jen can make Drew laugh so hard he turns bright red; Drew can be a complete goofball. Laughter helps us get through some of the challenging times in our lives.

When we're not working or fixing up our new house, Drew and I like listening to jazz music, hiking, having picnics in the local parks, cooking, visiting farmers markets, or exploring the events and activities Denver offers. We both have stable jobs for different government agencies that allow us to serve our community.



Why we're adopting...

Drew and I have a great deal of love for each other, our family, and our community. We are at a point in our lives where we want to share that love with a child and their family. We are so excited about growing our family and hope you can be a part of it. As we undergo this journey together, we look forward to hearing more of your story and sharing more of ours.

About Jen



Jen is curious, enthusiastic, and loves to laugh. She loves meeting new people in new places and hearing people's stories. She believes in bringing empathy and kindness to every encounter.

Jen grew up in San Diego, California, but has spent time bouncing around the country and the world. She did undergraduate degrees in Creative Writing and Anthropology in California, then moved to Atlanta to do masters

degrees in Global Health and Anthropology and a PhD in Medical Anthropology. She's done research in the US, Ethiopia, and India. She's lived in India for over two years, and generally loves learning about new places, learning new languages, and meeting new kinds of people. Now, she does research for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and writes stories and articles. Jen is passionate about working with communities to protect people's health and wellbeing. In her free time, she loves reading a good mystery, cooking, cross stitching, or visiting historical sites and museums.





What Drew says about Jen...

Jen is a caring, empathetic person that supports those she loves. I really struggle to pick out one thing about her as what I like most, because I love the entirety of who she is. It's like picking a petal from a flower. There's beauty in the petal, but no matter how many petals you pick there's still more beauty in those remaining on the flower. I love each part of her, but it's everything together that makes Jen who she is.



About Drew



Drew grew up in a small farming town in northern Wisconsin with his mother and grandparents. They instilled in him the importance of hard work, perseverance, and lovingly supporting your community and your family. He was the town babysitter and spent a lot of time changing diapers. After high school, he left his town to get a civil engineering degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and then from there he moved to Atlanta to get a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Tech.

Now, Drew works as a water engineer for the Bureau of Reclamation, where he works to help farmers and communities get the water they need while protecting the environment. In Drew's free time, he likes to tinker—whether it's installing flooring in the new house, preserving fruit in a canner, or upgrading a computer, he likes his hands and his brain to be busy. His favorite children's book is Johnny Tractor, about the farm adventures of a little green tractor, and he insists on buying a copy for every friend who has a kid.



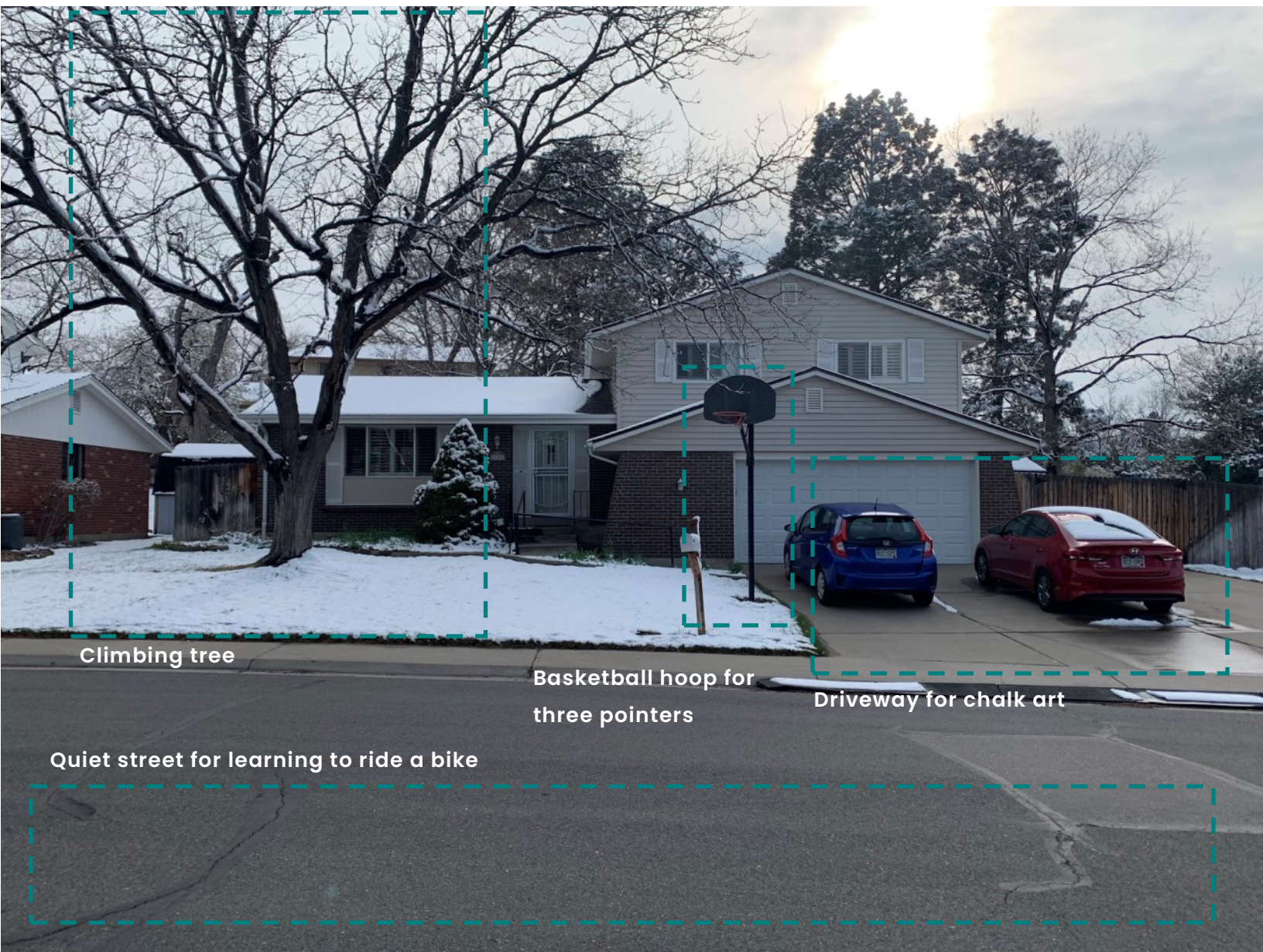


What Jen says about Drew...

Drew is one of the most loving, loyal, and steadfast people I know. When he commits to helping someone—whether it's his grandmother, the people who he serves as a government employee, his friends, or me—he is 1000% in. He will be there for them and not rest until he has done the best he can.



Our Home



Climbing tree

Basketball hoop for
three pointers

Driveway for chalk art

Quiet street for learning to ride a bike

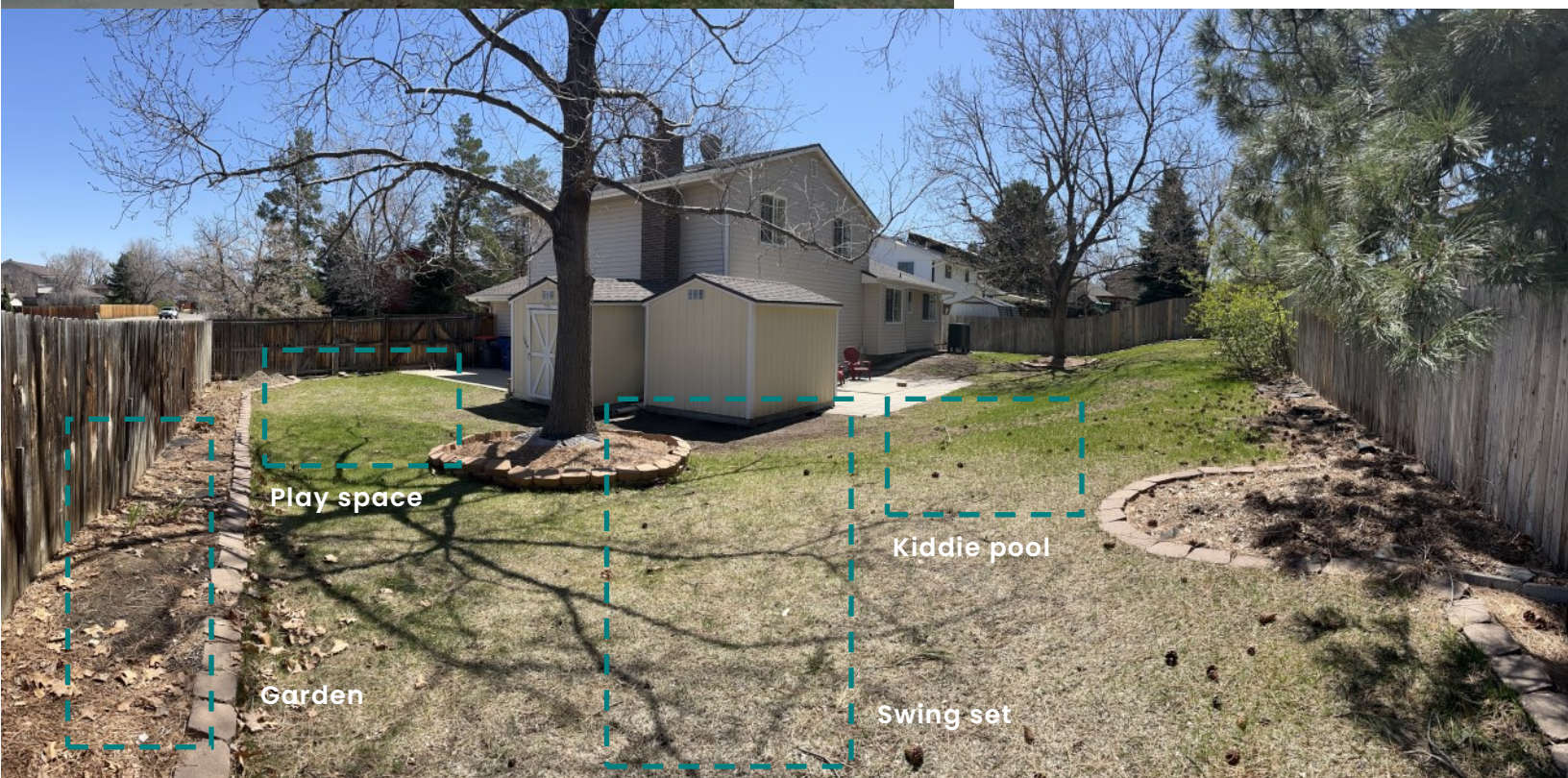


We bought our first house about a year and a half ago, and it's been a never-ending adventure of renovation that we've been mostly doing ourselves: we've installed the floors, re-did the bathroom, painted the walls, installed baseboards, and a hundred other tasks that we can't think of right now. It's still not "done," but we enjoy working on making it our own. Jen's next project will be to re-design the yard; Drew's will be to make custom closet doors.



The house has three bedrooms and three bathrooms. We have a big dining table, and so we host a lot of family events. Once we're done renovating, we plan to invite the neighbors over for a party. Our backyard is huge, and it's one of the things that attracted us to this home. We're excited about filling it with swing sets, wading pools, or whatever else a kid might need.

We live in a quiet suburb in Lakewood with beautiful parks nearby. The house has plenty of space for play, and future kids will get their own room with a view of a tree and a backyard with furry visitors. There are parks, libraries, and schools short distances away.



Our Family

We both believe that family is about love and that you can choose who you want to be in your family.

We were really lucky that when we moved to Denver, Jen's family was here too. Her older brother, Steve, lives about twenty minutes away with his daughter Kayleigh (9 years old), wife Heather, and fluffy dog Phoenix. Steve works for a nonprofit, Heather is a special education teacher, and Kayleigh wants to be an astronaut/doctor when she grows up. We're very close to them, and we love borrowing our niece and taking her out. They have already offered to babysit.

Jen's parents, Chris and Cathy, live on the west side of Denver with two cats who are absolute terrors. Chris and Cathy have been married for almost 40 years and love photography, bird watching, and doting on their grandkid. Family meetups are common and often involve brunch, long noisy conversations, and spoiling Kayleigh.

Drew's grandparents—Wayne and Betty—are not related by blood at all, but they are still very much his grandparents. They helped raise him, and every time he goes back to Wisconsin to visit his other grandmother in a nursing home, he stays with them (and Betty tries to feed him too much). Drew is the legal guardian of his other grandmother who has dementia. Every three months, Drew drives 18 hours to visit her, even though she hasn't recognized him in years. Drew's mother, who he was very close to, has passed away, but we try to honor her memory with love and good cooking. Drew has a bundle of aunts, uncles, and cousins in Wisconsin as well who we keep in touch with and visit as we can.



Drew's Grandparents

Wayne and Betty

Siblings and Spouses

Christmas at the Barr household



Jen's Extended Family

Everyone finally corralled for a family photo at our wedding



Our Niece

Uncle Drew shows Kayleigh how to take an ear of corn from its stalk



Jen's Parents

Chris and Cathy at their son's wedding

Traditions



Drew's mother passed onto him that food is love; a lot of our joint traditions are about feeding our loved ones. Every Thanksgiving, no matter where we are, we invite everyone we know who doesn't have another place to go to come over. Drew does all the cooking that day (he makes an amazing pumpkin pie). Jen's job is keeping everyone else out of the kitchen.

For Christmas, we put up a tree and have a gift exchange with our local family members. With our new house, we finally have enough room for a big tree! Christmas and Easter brunches must include the famous Barr Family Egg Bake (that Jen has finally learned how to make) and coffee cake.

Both of us were raised as culturally Christian in liberal denominations. The rural United Church of Christ congregation Drew grew up in had a strong influence on him and his values, like responsibility, respect, and community. When he goes home, he'll visit the church and chat with the ladies who've known him since he was potty training. Jen's family didn't go to church as she grew up, but they celebrated Christmas and Easter together every year. Today, religious faith isn't a part of our lives, and we focus on supporting our community and family as we learned when we were younger.

We're looking forward to teaching a child the same values we learned and help them navigate on their own faith journey, wherever it may take them.

Friends



In addition to family, Jen and Drew have friends and loved ones all over the world who would be a part of a new family's life and who are excited to support us. Our neighbors are friendly and upbeat, and there are a lot of kids in the neighborhood.

Sean and Aiman

Jen's graduate school friends



Sarah

Jen's sister by love not birth

The Hargis'

Friends we met in Mississippi, still in Mississippi

The Races

Friends we met in Mississippi, now in Pennsylvania



Adventures

We are all about having adventures, both big and small! It matters less where you're going than you who go with and being open to new things.

We love exploring this state that we've made our home. In the fall, we take a trip up to a local farm and pick our own vegetables. Drew channels his Midwestern roots and has taken up canning. We'll have local adventures, like the time we took our niece to a candy factory in Denver, or Jen going on a ghost tour with her friend. We like camping and exploring new places, like the time we went camping at National Monument or went down south to explore Colorado Springs.

We also have both travelled internationally. When Jen was in India for a couple of years for her PhD, Drew came to visit. We spent several weeks exploring some of her favorite places in the country, including a coffee plantation, an ancient fort, and her favorite café. Drew's been to South Korea, Chile, and Jamaica, and Jen has been to Ethiopia, Jamaica, and Germany. We're excited to meet new people and learn about a lot of different ways of life.



India During Holi

Jen is celebrating the Indian spring festival of Holi with her friends and neighbours during her graduate work there

Korean Exercise

Drew gets a chance to visit Korea as part of his work with the Army Corps to monitor a military exercise





Jen in India

Visiting ancient ruins

Us in San Diego, CA

Jen showing Drew the pandas

Jen in Memphis, TN

During a weekend getaway

Jen in New Orleans, LA

During our honeymoon



Trivia

Favorite	Drew	Jen
Family movie	Kung Fu Panda	Mulan (the animated one, of course)
Dance	Cha Cha	Swing and waltz, a dance for every occasion
Book	Anything by Arthur C. Clarke	Franny and Zooey by JD Salinger
Board game	Othello	Clue (Barr family tradition!)
Ice cream flavor	Blue Moon (only made in Wisconsin and one random place in Denver)	Brownie swirl
Coffee beverage	Mocha with an extra shot	Latte
Camping location	Shores of Lake Superior	National Monument in Colorado
Vacation	When Jen and I spent time in a cabin in the middle of the forest near Chattanooga, TN	When Drew came to visit me while I was working in Delhi, India, and I took him to my favorite spots in the city
Thing to do with our nine-year-old niece	Building things	Reading stories
Dog breed	Cocker spaniel	Cat
Food to eat	Sushi	Eggs Benedict
Food to cook	Homemade thick crust pizza or biscuits and gravy	Enchiladas or banana bread
Thing to do to relax	Tinker with computers	Write stories
Languages	Lots of computer ones	English, German, and Hindi





Names	Drew Loney	Jennifer Barr
City	Lakewood, CO	
Education	BS Civil Engineering (MIT) MS Mechanical Engineering (Georgia Tech) PhD Mechanical Engineering (Georgia Tech)	BS Anthropology (University of California, Riverside) BA Creative Writing (UC Riverside) MA Anthropology (Emory) MPH Global Health (Emory) PhD Anthropology (Emory)
Occupation	Civil Engineer (Water)	Public Health Researcher/Writer
Ethnic heritage	German/Scandinavian	Swedish/Polish
Favorite children's book	Good Night, Johnny Tractor	There's a Monster at the End of This Book
Interests	Woodworking, computers, stamp collecting, hiking	Reading, writing, camping, cooking dance, travel