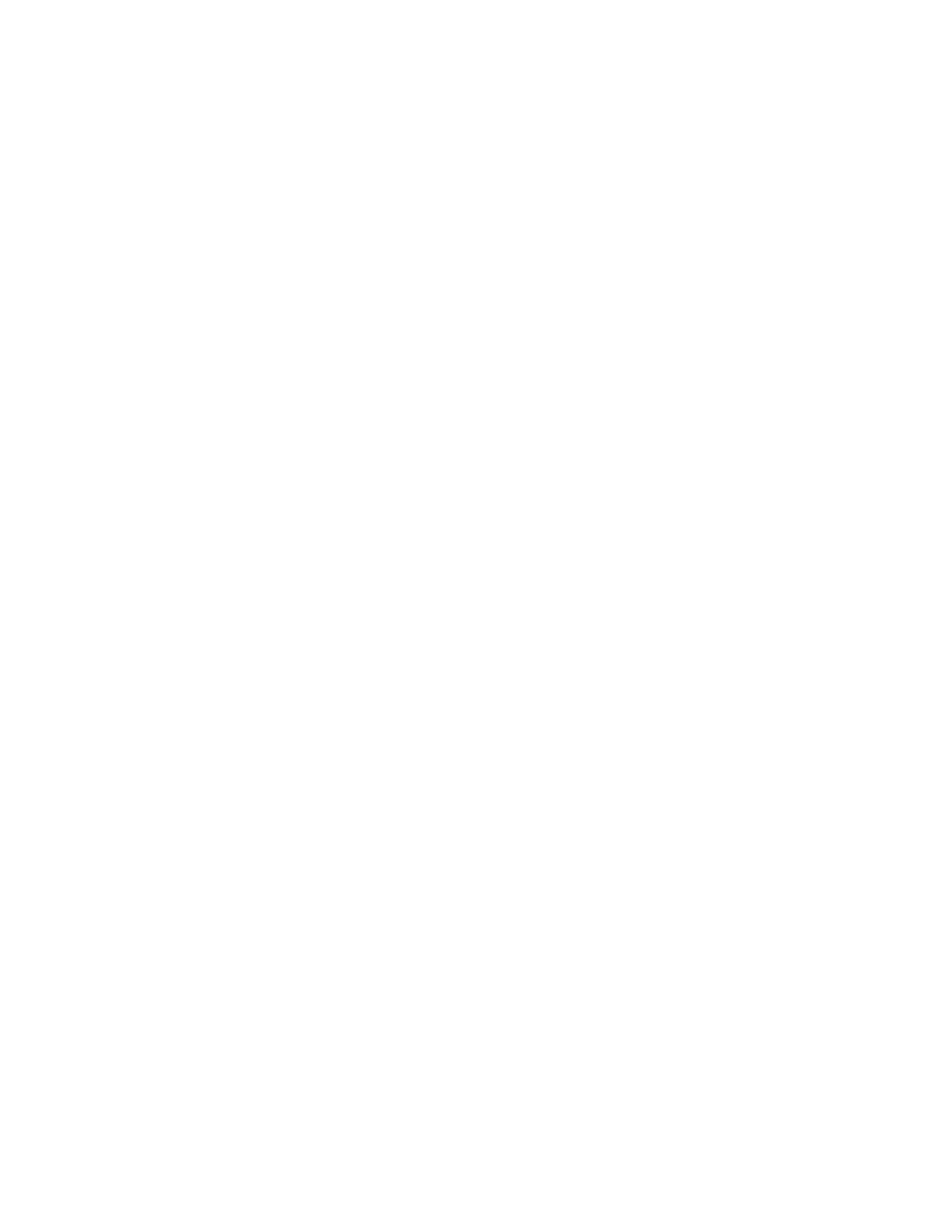


Rita and Patty





Welcome!

Hello! Our names are Rita (left) and Patty (right) and we are grateful that you are considering us as parents for your child. We respect the decision you are making and admire that you are considering an open adoption. We hope when you read this you will find comfort in your decision and know that there are choices for you. We hope these pages will be just the start of our conversation together.

We have been preparing ourselves for the privilege of parenting for a long time and we are filled with joy and excitement at the thought of bringing our child home. We hope we will have the opportunity to come to know each other beyond the pages of this brief summary. We want you to ask us the questions you want to ask and we commit to you that we will be open in our answers and throughout the adoption process.

We promise your child a loving family, faith, a superb education and many wonderful experiences and opportunities throughout life. We also promise lots of aunts and uncles, adoring grandparents and twenty-nine eager cousins waiting to welcome your child.

Please contact us anytime at 574-286-2214 (Rita's cell) or 574-286-9396 (Patty's cell) or email us at ritaandpatty@gmail.com. If you prefer, you may call Maggie Benz, our adoption counselor, at 1-800-869-1005. We wish you all the best!

With admiration,

Rita and Patty



About Us

We recently celebrated our 13th anniversary together as a committed couple. Our life together is characterized by our rich relationships with our family and friends. We remember the warm, nurturing, lively households of our own childhoods that we hope to create for our child. We enjoy having friends and family in our home, and we frequently entertain on holidays, birthdays, and other special events. We are delighted to have others come to our home, relax, enjoy each other's company, share good conversation, and savor some good food. We are excited about being parents and look forward to celebrating these traditions with our child.

We also want to be direct and honest with you, so let's talk about what can be a challenging subject. We are offering two moms to your baby. We are comfortable with ourselves, and our families are supportive of our relationship. All of our siblings are delighted to have gained a sister, and our parents have warmly embraced a new daughter. Since we don't believe in secrets, we know we can instill in our child a great sense of pride in being adopted.

We both grew up in large families. We know all about lively households since we are both one of seven children! With twenty-nine nieces and nephews between us, children are a big part of our lives. We love being a part of their lives and the lives of our friends' children. We've hopped on sleds and gone flying down the golf course hill with our friends' younger children, followed by cups of hot cocoa with extra marshmallows and popcorn. We have rolled on the floor laughing while playing charades with our friends and their children at our annual New Year's Eve party, and we've known the agony of defeat from pulling out the wrong Jenga piece as the tower of blocks came tumbling down. We have baked Easy Bake Oven cakes, tossed footballs, and painted our nails. And we've enjoyed many excursions to the Chicago aquarium, art museum, theater and other sites.



About Our Work

I'm Rita and I'd like to introduce myself. I have worked as a commercial photographer shooting photos for companies, firms, universities and magazines needing images for advertising, brochures, and editorials. However, my curiosity about people prompted me to merge my other interests in writing and storytelling with my photography to produce still documentaries. I have recently launched several projects. One documents travel on the Amtrak and another chronicles the ordinary lives of same-gendered couples.

I'm Patty and I am an attorney with graduate degrees both in law and theology. I have built a strong practice in the areas of estate planning, litigation, and health care law. After practicing with the two largest firms in our state, I decided to open my own firm based on the values and principles I believe are central to who I am as a Catholic lawyer. Those values encompass focusing on client service. I strive to provide legal service with empathy and integrity.



What Patty has to say about Rita

Rita is the creative spirit and passionate energy of our home. Throughout the years I've marveled at how Rita creates beauty from the simplest things. Her desire for that which is authentic and good reflects our life together, her art, her causes and her relationship with others.

When I first met Rita she was graduating from Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana. Rita, like me, is the fifth of seven children. She was born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri. Rita's father was a homebuilder and her mother was a dietician and homemaker. Rita attended Catholic schools for twelve years before going to college. In high school, Rita enjoyed music, theater, voice and academics. When Rita packed her trunk and headed for college in Indiana, she was the first in her family to leave the state of Missouri to study.

Rita also spent a year studying abroad in Rome, Italy. This experience forever broadened her knowledge of history and the world. Upon graduating from college with a degree in psychology and religious studies, Rita worked for five years as a social worker teaching parenting skills to families in which children had been neglected or abused. Rita learned first hand how we all need each other to get through difficult circumstances. After working for five years in social work, Rita lived in Houston, Texas where she attended the Art Institute of Houston and received a degree in photography. Currently, Rita is also completing a Masters of Fine Arts degree.

Our home also reflects Rita's creativity. We have original art pieces on the walls and our yard is filled with Rita's flower gardens, fruit trees and bird feeders visited by yellow and purple finches, orioles, humming birds, woodpeckers, cardinals and the like. Our kitchen at Thanksgiving is filled with the smell of Rita's pumpkin, apple and pecan pies, and at Christmas her iced and decorated sugar cookies, Russian tea cakes, bulls eyes, and peanut brittle fill close to twenty-five tins that we give as gifts to friends and family.



I know that as a mother, Rita will share with our child great goodness, intelligence, compassion, and a home filled with family and friends. I look forward to the joy and fun our child will know even in the simplest and most ordinary of days because Rita has the ability to make the ordinary quite extraordinary.



What Rita has to say about Patty

Patty is the anchor that keeps me centered. She is the one whose presence calms me after a long and busy day. She is the one whose laughter and sense of humor reminds me to laugh at myself and enjoy the moment.

Patty is the fifth of seven girls born in Detroit, Michigan. She attended an all girl Catholic high school that imparted on her the value of a strong education for women. She went on to study at the University of Notre Dame where she graduated with a law degree.

Both Patty's parents are retired attorneys. Her father was a railroad lawyer for many years and received special recognition from the State of Michigan's transportation department. Her mother, one of the first women to graduate from her law school, is a retired federal judge. Patty has her own law firm which she shares with her two associates. She is a respected attorney in our community. The opening of her own firm was a big adventure for us but a very rewarding one. It has provided more freedom for us personally and provides Patty an environment where she thrives on living a more balanced life.



Patty is incredibly intelligent and has a compassionate, generous spirit and an openness of heart. Her devotion to our friends and family is readily seen on a daily basis. Patty is sought after by friends and colleagues for counsel in private and personal matters alike. She enjoys healthy living as is evidenced by her dedication to exercise and cooking delicious, nutritious meals to share with others. She doesn't hesitate when friends call needing a favor like picking up all five of their children on the weekend to take them to a concert because they have to work or driving a dear friend to and from events because it is hard for her to see at night.

I know that Patty will be a fully involved mother whose wisdom and strength of character will provide for your child the emotional support and security needed so that he or she will be fully ready for the world ahead.



Our dog Wicklow

Picture this- two relatively serious people driving to Chicago's O'Hare airport to pick up their new little puppy arriving on a flight from Sacramento, CA. There we are down at the baggage claim waiting with five or six other families, their little children in tow, to pick up our soon to be pets. One by one, a man in uniform begins to carry out crates of all sizes lining them up in a row according to size. Rita goes to pick up the smallest crate excited to see our little Chihuahua only to discover it is not our dog. Worried we both look around. After another minute or two, the gentleman walks out with a crate not much bigger than a shoebox. There inside is this tiny little face peering up at us. We are so overcome by this vulnerable little creature that we have to open the crate right then and there so as to hold this little fur ball in our cupped hands. She was all of three pounds. We couldn't bear to put her back in the crate, so Rita wrapped her up in a blanket that we had brought from home and held her the entire two hour car ride back home while Patty drove. From that day on, we were completely smitten.

Her coat looks like an Irish tweed coat so we named her "Wicklow" after our favorite place in Ireland—County Wicklow. Rita grew up with all sorts of pets: horses, chickens, dogs, cats, bunny rabbits, etc... Patty grew up with cats and dogs. Still, we were not quite sure what to expect from this little longhaired Chihuahua. Now nearly three years old and seven pounds, Wicklow truly is the sweetest little dog. She is super friendly to anyone who comes to the house and she loves our friends and their children. Our friends' five-year-old daughter and Wicklow adore one another. Once they are together you cannot separate them. Wicklow follows her all around the house. Wicklow is also very social with other dogs. In fact, the bigger they are the more she loves them! We know Wicklow will be a wonderful pet for our child and will be delighted to have the company.



Our Family

Family gatherings are always full of fun, activity, food, and games. Both our families live out of state so we are happy for the opportunities to get together with them as often as we can. My side of the family (this is Rita) lives mostly in Kansas City. We travel out to Kansas City at least once a year at Christmas to spend time with my mom, my siblings, nieces and nephews. I admire my mom who at seventy-one remarried after twenty plus years of being a single parent and living independently. Both Patty and I delighted in watching my mom so young at heart enjoy life so fully with her new husband, Francis, for the last six years. Sadly, Francis recently passed away. Despite my mom's loss, she has a resilient nature and continues to involve herself in volunteer activities and time with her grandchildren. I have inherited my mom's love of gardening and bird watching. Together, we compare sightings of birds and enjoy planting new perennials in our gardens that attract various species of birds and butterflies. Two of my four sisters are nurses, another is a teacher and one is an accountant. My older brother followed in my dad's footsteps and is a homebuilder. My younger brother is a major in the US Army.

My side of the family (this is Patty) is rooted in Michigan. We are able to travel up to see my family more frequently since it is a shorter distance. Two of my six sisters are attorneys, one is a nurse practitioner who is finishing graduate studies in developmental psychology, one is a tenured professor at a women's college down south, one is a mathematician and stay at home mom, and my youngest sister has worked for several years in community organizing. My parents are retired, but are still very active. They spend most of their time in Michigan where they love being close to family and friends, but also enjoy spending winters in Florida. Our child will have the opportunity to enjoy not only the snowy winters here at home, but the warm sunshine of Florida when visiting Pappa and Grandma.



Our Friends

We have such affection for our friends. They nurture us with their laughter and good humor. We have been present at the births of their children. We meet them for Saturday breakfasts and Sunday coffees. We vacation together, go trick-or-treating, and cut down Christmas trees together. We attend their children's birthday parties and choral concerts. In short, our friends share with us the simple, ordinary joys of life, and they eagerly await with us the arrival of our child. We know our friends and their children will be overjoyed at the news and will be waiting with open arms to welcome our little one.



Our Home

We live in a diverse neighborhood in South Bend, Indiana where children abound. Our home is a large open-style ranch house that sits on the entranceway of a private country club. Our yard looks over the golf course and tennis courts and is large enough for running and romping without interference from the street. We have hosted well over thirty families for various parties like our annual Fourth of July event. The club next-door offers the advantages of a swimming pool and tennis courts, and in the wintertime the tenth hole of the club provides the perfect hill for sledding. Patty's law office, in downtown South Bend, is just seven minutes away, and we are within biking distance to the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College campuses which are beautiful and contain wonderful stone buildings, landscaped quads, walking paths, lakes, the Grotto, stadium and the golden dome.

The inside of our home is open and spacious. The way each room connects to the next creates a circular floor plan through which children love to run circles. The bay windows and French style doors bring in lots of light and movement from the outside even on rainy days. French doors open out to a back porch from both the living room and master bedroom. It is a great place to gather for parties. We have a large kitchen which we enjoy since we love to entertain so often. The lower level is finished and will make a perfect playroom for older children when the upstairs play areas are outgrown. There is a master bedroom and a bedroom for our child on the main level each with its own bathroom, another full bathroom in the hall, and a guest bedroom with a full bath on the lower level. At various times, like graduations, we've been able to accommodate three separate out-of-town families in our house along with us, each family having their own room and bathroom.



Our Community

We value education and higher education is one of our community's greatest assets. Within South Bend alone, we have the University of Notre Dame, Saint Mary's College, Holy Cross College, Bethel College, Indiana University of South Bend, and even a small extension of Purdue University. There are a number of public and private elementary and high schools from which to choose.

Chicago and its museums, art galleries, aquarium and other cultural opportunities is a short ninety-minute drive from our home. We are forty-five minutes from Lake Michigan and the Indiana Dunes, sites we visit regularly. The summer art and sports camps for children at Saint Mary's College and Notre Dame also are wonderful offerings.





Letters from Friends

Dear Birthmother,

For us, family is more than a genetic code. Family is love, happiness, support and always present at Christmas Eve, graduations, birthday dinners, and trick-or-treating. Patty and Rita are family. They have always been active in every aspect of our lives for the last 18 years. Patty became friends with our mom in graduate school at the University of Notre Dame and we were fortunate enough for Patty to bring Rita into our lives. As devoted friends and role models, Patty and Rita's love for us is unconditional.

Although our parents did not grow up in Indiana, we have lived here for the past 18 years. We have no blood relatives in town, but we have found family in Patty and Rita. They treat us as if we were their own children. We never hesitate to call or text when we are in need of direction and truly value their opinions. They are more than adults or our parents' friends - they are our friends. Through interaction with us and time spent with younger children, it is clear how well they communicate with the "younger crowd." They are able to relate to our problems, offer guidance and support, and always want to know the inside scoop.

Patty and Rita both come from big families and their love for children is undeniable. They are more than qualified to be great parents and offer a stable home for a child of their own. Every opportunity their child could ever want would be available to him or her. Their home is a place of warmth, tranquility, and peace, but also full of laughter, hospitality, and style. When we talk about or picture Patty and Rita, it is never one or the other, but always "Patty AND Rita." Together they bring out the best in each other, and we know as parents they will bring out the best in their child. As an 18 year-old girl and a 20 year-old girl, we could not recommend a better couple for adoption.

Best,
Sarah and Christine



Dear Birthmother,

You've learned a great deal about our friends, Pat and Rita, from their profile. The previous pages paint a picture of two women committed to life, each other, their friends, their community, and ready to embrace a child to raise as their own. We'd like to speak to another very important commitment – you.

We know that, for Rita and Pat, an open adoption does not mean merely that they, as the adoptive parents, would let you know about your child. It means that, if you chose to appoint them as your child's adoptive parents, they would endeavor to cultivate a real connection between you and that child.

We know Rita and Pat have the maturity and commitment to love your child and work with you to stay in touch with your/their child. We're confident that many women in your situation would find themselves looking for potential adoptive parents close to their own age, living life with a high degree of spontaneity and creativity. We've known Rita and Pat for many years and we can assure you they are spontaneous and creative, but they also possess the grounding in strong values and love that only comes with years of self exploration and living as partners.

In short: Pat and Rita are people easy to love and enjoy life with, but they are also grounded in strong principles that would enable them to navigate an open adoption and all its ramifications with you. We feel confident that they would be as concerned with you as they would the child you might consider sharing with them.

We speak from the advantage of being parents ourselves and having three adopted siblings. We can assure you that Rita and Pat are able to provide for a child, be terrific parents and love their child with all their hearts. You will not be disappointed in choosing them for your baby.

Nancy and Hank





