



our adoption story

JAY & ROBERT

We Knew From the Start

We can still remember our third date and the half-joking conversation we had about the names of hypothetical future children. It did not take us long to know that we wanted to grow our family and build a life together. Although we had to wait several years before marriage equality became a reality, once we were married in 2016, we quickly began exploring our options. We felt a strong pull toward adoption because Jay's grandmother was adopted as a young child. That selfless act not only changed her life, but the lives of each generation that followed.

We were referred to LifeLong Adoptions by a coworker. After our first call with staff, we were impressed with what LifeLong could do to help us. As we embarked on our new adventure, we quickly realized this was going to be an exercise in letting go. We had been together 11 years and could hardly believe that we were one step closer to realizing our dream of growing our family. We were excited and scared, but had faith that once we signed on, things would work out. We started telling our family and friends, and we were blown away by the level of support and excitement they had for us.

Meeting Our Birthmother

We had plans to be in the Chicago area for business and

decided to stop by LifeLong to meet the staff in-person. It was a great experience being able to put faces to names and connect with those who had already been so helpful in our journey. Within days of our arrival back home, we received a call. We were extremely excited to learn that an expectant mother had selected us! Once we got over that shock, we were given more news that we were not prepared for. She was having twins! Our jaws hit the floor. We talked with her and started the process of building a relationship, discussing her wishes and how they fit with our own. A few weeks later we found out that the twins were girls! We were overjoyed and excited as we continued to talk and grow our relationship with our expectant mother. She was incredibly thoughtful throughout the process, ensuring we felt involved by sending videos of ultrasounds and pictures.

The Girls Are on Their Way

We were hosting a dinner with friends one weekend when we received a call from our expectant mother who was having contractions and headed to the hospital. Our quiet night soon became chaotic as we raced around the house packing our belongings and waiting on word to start the drive to Tennessee. A few hours later, she called back to say it was a false alarm. We were glad that everyone was okay, and happy

that now at least we were all packed and ready to go.

That following Monday, Robert was giving a speech in front of a room full of people when his phone rang, and he knew it was our expectant mother. He walked out of the room and answered the call to find out that her water had broken and she was headed to the hospital. We received a second call from the expectant mother's mother, who put us on speaker as our daughter, Ada, was being born. It was an experience we will never forget.

Within a couple hours we were on the road, making the nine-hour trip to meet our girls. The drive was a blur – we were full of anticipation and excitement and nervousness. As we drove, Jay came clean to Robert that he and his coworkers had planned a surprise baby shower for him that very afternoon! His coworkers happily had the party anyway, and sent us videos showing how much we were loved.

When we arrived, we were led to the NICU, where the girls remained for a week. They needed a bit longer to grow before going home. They were so tiny, and it was hard to see them hooked up to machines and wires, but that feeling was short lived. In that moment, we realized that our hearts were now living outside our bodies, and we were overcome with unconditional love for these two precious lives, Ada and Willow. We were able to hold the girls the second day and had expert training on caring for them from the amazing NICU nurses.

During our stay in Tennessee, there was so much up in the air, both legally and medically. We knew there were multiple legal hurdles to overcome and, when we arrived, we were told the girls might stay in the NICU for as long as 10-14 days. Thankfully we were able to clear the legal hurdles at the end of the week, and we have two strong daughters who were able to pass all of their discharge milestones in just seven days. During our hospital stay, we were able to spend time with the girls, their birthmother, and her family. We continued our conversations about what open adoption would mean for us, and made plans for yearly visits and a private Facebook group to share updates.

Welcoming our Ada and Willow to Our Family

Welcoming twins into our family has been one of the most incredible experiences of our lives. Our home and hearts are exploding with love for these two precious girls, and we couldn't be happier. Watching them grow and show off



their little personalities keeps us very busy. But, it's a kind of chaos we happily welcome. We are enjoying every moment we have together.

At this point it's hard to imagine adopting again, but we may be open to adopting older children once the twins are older. Even though our journey was quick, it was not without its own unique set of challenges and complications. It was sometimes hard to manage our own emotions and anxieties while building relationships with all those involved. We knew that our greatest moment was an incredibly challenging moment for our birthmother and her family, and we wanted to be as respectful and helpful as we could. Honoring that space for her and for them was important to us. We talk with our birthmother often and share tons of photos with her. She sends Willow and Ada little gifts and we look forward to continuing our relationship.

If we could give any advice it would be to try your best to roll with as many things as you can. So much is out of your control and it's important to surrender to that. If friends or family offer to help, take them up on it and trust the process. It truly is an incredible experience, and LifeLong has been phenomenal. We feel both lucky and incredibly blessed that Ada and Willow have come into our lives, and we look forward to watching them grow into the people they are meant to become.