

A photograph of a woman and a man sitting closely together on a light-colored, textured couch. The woman, on the left, has long brown hair and is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt under a denim jacket and a light-colored skirt. The man, on the right, has dark curly hair and a beard, wearing a green t-shirt and dark shorts. They are both smiling at the camera. In the background, there are light-colored curtains. In the foreground, a round wooden coffee table is partially visible with a black and white checkered board and a remote control on it.

SHELLY *and* DONOVAN



# Our Story

Hello! We are Shelly and Donovan from Ohio! We met in 2016 through a mutual friend, who also officiated our wedding. Upon meeting, we bonded right away over our careers and love for children. We are both educators. Shelly is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher, and Donovan is a 9<sup>th</sup> grade school counselor. We have dedicated much of our lives to supporting children (our students). It's enriching and powerful.

We also have been largely enriched to have a son named Maddux. Maddux is Donovan's biological son and Shelly's stepson, but Shelly has been in Maddux's life since he was young. Raising Maddux has been unbelievably satisfying. He brings much happiness and fulfillment to our lives. He is so easy to love and will make a great big brother.

In the past few years, we have tried to expand our family naturally and then with medical inventions, but those attempts did not work. Yet, we remain committed to wanting a bigger family and hope we get the chance to add more love to our lives through adoption.

# Our Home

We live in a craftsman style house in a culturally diverse neighborhood. We have 3 livable levels. Our adoptive baby will have his/her own room.

There is an elementary school and a community pool several blocks away within walking distance. Our house is warm, inviting, and full of laughs. In the winter months, we spend many weekends cooking as a family, playing family board games, and watching movies. In the warmer months, we tend to our vegetable garden and enjoy bird watching in our yard. And in all seasons, we love to host. We have a nice-sized backyard with bistro lighting to host family and friends, grill good food, and play nighttime bocce ball.



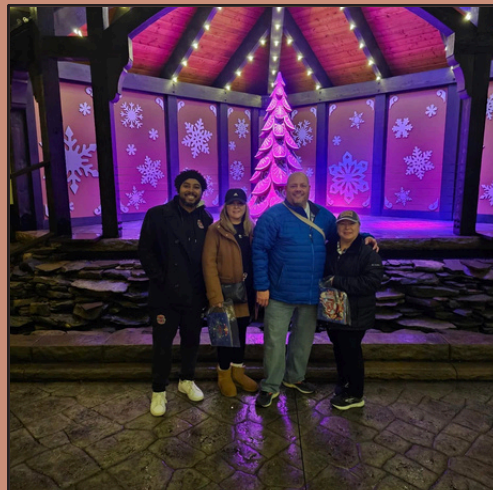


# Our Loves

We love and are grateful for our large circle of family and friends. And we love experiencing life with them. Between Shelly's large family, Donovan's small local family, and our large friend group (many of whom we've been friends with since elementary and middle school), we have a circle of people around who we make memories with and who are ready to welcome a baby into their lives.

We mentioned we love to host, but we also love to travel and have adventures both locally and by distance. There are many years that we purchase Cedar Point (an amusement park) season passes. We love the thrill of roller coasters. Other regular experiences for us are spending time swimming at a quarry (a tradition with the whole family) and enjoying sporting events. We are Cleveland sport fans, so each year, we travel to a Cleveland Browns away game. Last year, we went to New Orleans for that game. And most years, we also have a friends' trip where we all bring our kids and go on vacation. Some of our last trips include going to New York where we visited Niagara Falls and to the Finger Lakes where we went boating and tubing with 6 adults and 6 boys under 12. Also, Donovan's mom and dad recently celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, so the whole family went on a Caribbean cruise and had an opportunity to zip line and swim at the base of waterfalls. And because we work in education and we get summers off together, we love road trips. We have a family goal to visit each of the 50 states. We have visited 12 so far.

Traveling is an activity we love, but our trips are also growing moments where we learn to communicate as a family, where we learn to negotiate how we spend our time, where we broaden our knowledge of history, and where we get exposure to different cultures and beliefs with the hope of cultivating a welcoming and inclusive mindset in our child(ren). This is deeply important to us.





## Get to know... SHELLY

Shelly was born in Ohio and has a racially diverse and large family. Shelly grew up surrounded by grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Shelly has 3 siblings including one adoptive sibling and 2 nieces and a nephew. Shelly's parents are soon-to-be retired and are doting grandparents. They can't wait to help with our adoptive baby. With regard to Shelly's personality, Donovan calls Shelly "Sure Thing Shelly" because she is responsible and dependable, and she is also deliberate and thoughtful in her decision-making. Also, as a caring and selfless person, Shelly tends to the needs of not only our immediate family but also our extended family. She wants everyone to feel special and noticed, so Shelly initiates, plans, and organizes birthdays and events to celebrate others.



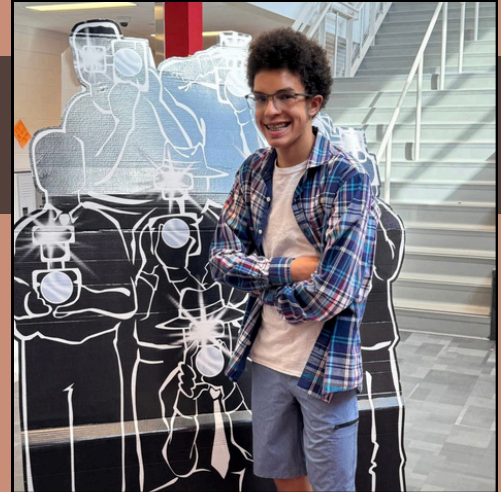
## Get to know... DONOVAN

Donovan was born in Ohio, but Donovan's extended family lives overseas. Donovan's mom is from the Bahamas, and his dad is from St. Lucia. Living locally is Donovan's mom, dad, and two brothers. Donovan's parents retired years ago and have always helped us with Maddux. They are very involved grandparents. In terms of personality, Donovan knows no stranger. He is easy to talk to and welcoming of everyone. His extroverted personality makes him fun to be around. He is silly and doesn't take himself too seriously. He is also kind-hearted and community-oriented. Donovan volunteers for our county's School Counselor's Crisis Team, where he provides mental health support to people in the community who have experienced trauma. Donovan also sees the benefit in playing sports. He is the Head Soccer Coach for the local high school. He also coached Maddux's youth soccer team for 9 years.



## Get to know... MADDUX

Maddux was also born in Ohio. He is smart, witty, compassionate, and silly at the least. Maddux excels academically and wants to be an attorney one day. Maddux will be joining Donovan at the local high school next year because Maddux will be entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Maddux is on the robotics team and has been in a chess club. He also plays soccer and runs cross country and track. But if you asked Maddux what his favorite things to do are, he'll tell you having his friends over, playing with his legos, playing both video games and board games (Monopoly is his favorite), and watching movies while eating extra buttery popcorn.



## Thank you

We're holding you in our hearts with deep gratitude for even considering us. If given the chance, we promise to raise your baby in a safe environment with unconditional love and with a deep appreciation for his/her story—a story that will always include *you*, *your love*, and *your courage*. And because we believe in honoring the connection you have with your child, we would be happy to have continued communications with you.



### WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONNECTING WITH YOU

If you have any questions for us or would like to speak with us about adopting your child, please contact your case worker at Open Arms Adoptions by calling 330-697-4751 or 614-349-1510.