



*Lauren + Ryan*

# 2104129

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# DEAR FRIEND

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Firstly, we just wanted to express our appreciation and gratitude for taking a minute to consider our family and read our book. We are genuinely touched that you have opened our book and are pondering your future with us in mind. While we don't yet know the journey that has led you to this point, we understand that life often unfolds in unexpected ways. However, we trust that everything becomes beautiful in its own time, as life reveals its many gifts. Your decision to plan for your baby is a brave and significant step, and we hold you in our thoughts and prayers, hoping for all the very best for you.

As you turn the pages ahead, we invite you to discover more about our family. Love is a cornerstone in our home, filled with the warmth of our family and friends, all eagerly awaiting the opportunity to embrace a new little one. Our deepest hope is that you feel the love that surrounds your baby, assuring you that they will be cherished and held dear as a part of our family.

Once again, thank you for your bravery. We truly appreciate your consideration and the path that has brought you to us.

All our love,

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WITH GRATITUDE,

*Lauren + Ryan*



## Our Story

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We met in 2018 after an exchange of Facebook messages - initiated by Lauren. We enjoyed our first several dates that included a St. Louis Cardinals game, St. Louis Blues game, and several dinners. However, as homebodies we both enjoyed quiet movie nights much better. We are both Christian, and although we don't attend church regularly, we pray and speak to God every day. We got our first dog, Gus in 2019, then rescued our 2nd dog, Isabel in 2020, and our first cat, Rusty, in 2024. We got engaged and broke ground on our forever home in 2021. Our home is in the country with farm animals all around us and tons of land to roam. We also live between Ryan's father and Ryan's brother so we have family very close to us, which is super important since we are both close with our families. In September 2022, we got married - it was everything we had ever dreamed of and the best day of our lives (so far!) Immediately after getting married, we started trying to conceive, but were unable. We had some difficult talks with each other and God, and decided that we would pursue adoption instead of IVF. We needed a guarantee that after all the heartbreak and lows, we would finally experience the joys of parenthood.



meet

Lauren

Licensed Senior Benefit Specialist

I grew up in a small town in Missouri and loved the close-knit community—city life just isn't for me. I attended a private Catholic school through eighth grade before moving to public high school, where I played basketball as a point guard. School wasn't always easy for me, as I was often picked on, but those experiences taught me empathy and resilience.

After two years of college and still unsure of my career path, I began working at a local preschool. I've always loved caring for others, and I spent several years teaching, mostly in two-year-old classrooms. I once dreamed of owning my own preschool someday—and still might after retirement. Eventually, I transitioned into a new field, starting as a receptionist for a Medicare brokerage. Six years later, I'm a licensed insurance specialist, helping clients with billing issues, claims, and customer service needs.

Outside of work, I enjoy reading, diamond painting, and spending time with my husband, our pets, family, and friends. My time teaching young children and assisting clients has taught me incredible patience and compassion—qualities I know will help me become a loving and nurturing mother.

### *Favorites*

**My guilty pleasure is Nerds Gummy Glusters**

**I love to read romance novels and mysterious thrillers**

**My favorite childhood movie is Toy Story**

# Ryan says

Lauren is one of the sweetest and most down to earth people I've ever met. She is always looking out for ways to help others. She picks up my slack around the house during my busy season at work. She is also very patient. Working in the insurance field and dealing with client's bills, she usually gets the angry side of clients because no one likes to deal with their insurance or their bills. She takes the time to talk through things with them, explain the rules, and resolve the situation as best as she can. When I get busy and stressed, she always helps me talk things through until I feel better. She is always ready to help her friends and family whenever they ask. Her ability to always make someone feel loved and supported will make her a great mother.





meet

Ryan

Lawn Care Owner

I grew up in a small town in the country called Marthasville. People in Washington would refer to us as kids from 'across the river.' I went to public school and have been close with 2 of my best friends since preschool. Growing up outside of town, I spent a lot of time outside where we had to use our imagination. My siblings and I spent a lot of time playing in the woods, building forts, and riding ATVs. Our family went camping a lot, which I really enjoyed. As I got older, I would go fishing with my grandparents, dad, and uncle. Around freshman year of high school, I decided I wanted to make a little money so I could buy a truck so I started cutting grass in Washington. I found that I enjoyed it and excelled at it so I continued all throughout high school and even continued on the side when I had other jobs. After I graduated, I started working for my dad's construction company. I quickly realized that this wasn't what I wanted to do forever since it was so taxing on my body so I started to build up my clientele for my lawn business. Over the years, I have continued to build it and now service about 70 lawns per week. In my spare time, I like woodworking projects and hunting with my family, as well as spending time with my wife and pets. I've always wanted to be a father and my own father has demonstrated the role model that I aspire to be. I think my calm collectedness and patience will both be qualities that help me navigate parenthood.

### *Favorites*

In my spare time, I like to do DIY projects that involve woodworking

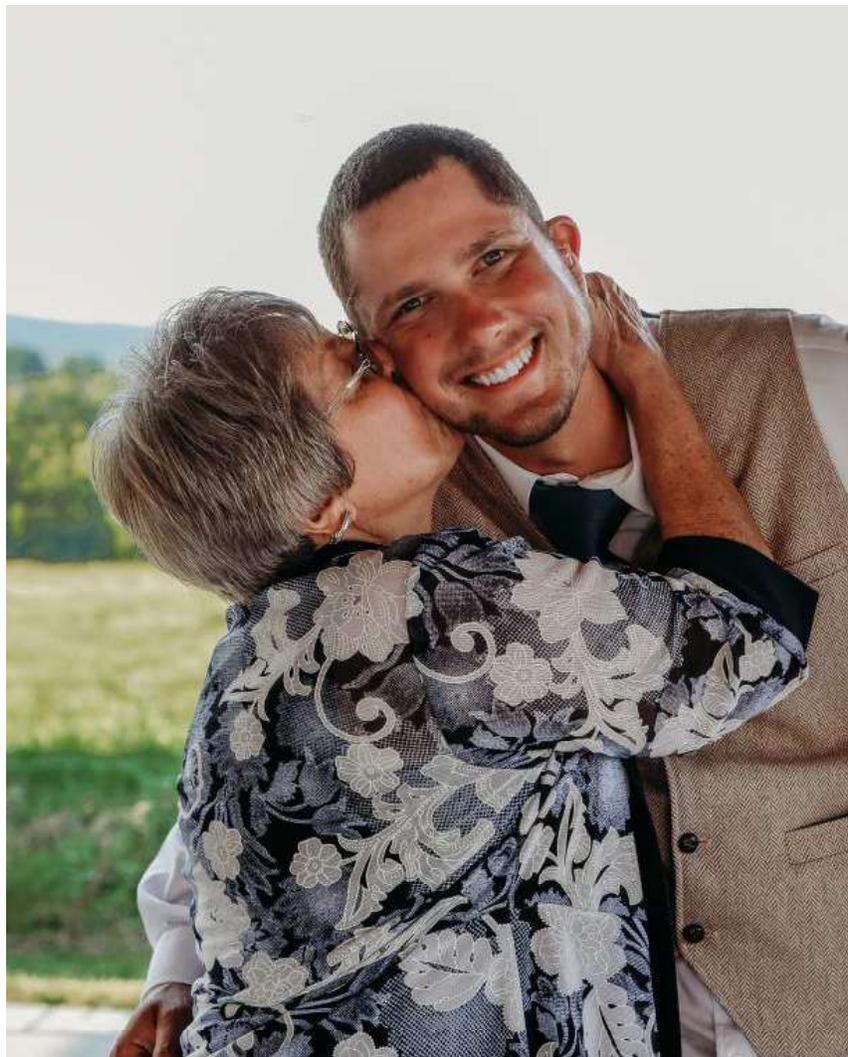
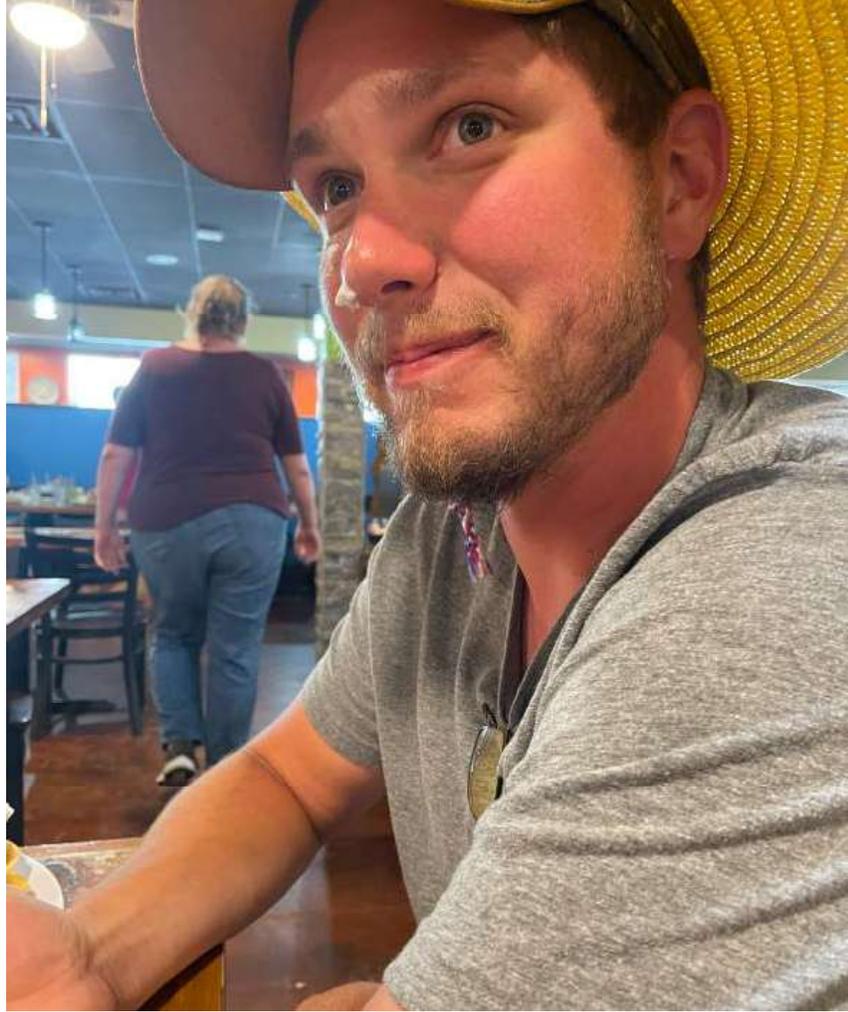
My favorite color is safety green, or as my wife says 'highlighter yellow'

I can't live without my camo crocs

## Lauren says

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Ryan is the hardest working person I have ever met. He works long hours and lots of weekends to ensure that we have everything we need. He is pretty quiet at first, almost always calm, and never confrontational. I've always described Ryan as the calm to my storm because he's able to remain calm in the most stressful times when I am falling apart. He is always there to lend a hand to his friends and family, and even though he works constantly, he always makes time to help others. Ryan has always treated me with the utmost respect and never fails to make me laugh. He's unexpectedly goofy and can be a little bit of a practical joker. He usually takes a few trips each year with his dad, brother, and grandfathers to their farm to hunt deer and maintain the land. Even if they don't see anything, he gets to spend time with his family. His patience, calm demeanor, gentleness, and devotion will give him all the tools he needs to be a wonderful father.



# meet our pets

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**Gus** is our first pet—a  $\frac{3}{4}$  Basset Hound and  $\frac{1}{4}$  Beagle who's been part of our family since he was eight weeks old. Lauren had always wanted a Basset Hound, and although Ryan was hesitant (knowing they can be stubborn), he agreed, and they drove three hours to bring Gus home. Potty training took a little extra time, but he's brought us endless laughs and love. His favorite things are sleeping and sunbathing—he looks like a little hot dog stretched out in the sun. He's a total momma's boy and loves curling up on Lauren's lap. True to his hound nature, he makes sure we know when a bunny, deer, or mail carrier enters the yard. Around our nephews, he's gentle and curious, but usually loses interest once it's time for another nap. Lauren even has a tattoo of Gus and Izzy surrounded by flowers on her forearm.

**Isabel (Izzy)** is our second pet. Lauren's sister adopted her as a puppy but realized that an eight-month-old baby and a ten-week-old puppy were too much, so we welcomed her into our family. Gus loves other dogs, so it was a perfect fit. Izzy is part Golden Retriever, Poodle, and Labrador Retriever—smart, energetic, and sweet. She's a daddy's girl and loves playing fetch with Ryan, going on walks, and meeting new people (especially if she gets to give kisses). Her bark surprises everyone—it's much softer than you'd expect for her size! She's full of love and excitement and ready to take on her new role as "big sister."

**Rusty** is our most recent addition, a three-year-old orange tabby we adopted from our local Humane Society about a year and a half ago. Ryan initially wasn't sure about getting a cat, but he agreed after seeing how much Lauren was struggling with infertility. Now, Rusty has completely stolen his heart—and his lap! He's social, affectionate, and loves being in the middle of everything, though his favorite pastime is still napping.









## our Home + Community

We live in rural Missouri, about an hour from St. Louis. Many of our neighbors have cows, horses, chickens, goats, and sheep—and we're considering adding some goats and chickens of our own someday. One of Ryan's friends even brought a donkey over for a visit once! We built our home about four years ago and live between Ryan's dad and brother, with plenty of space and privacy between us. We love taking our golf cart out to explore our land, and Ryan enjoys working in his large shop where he keeps his tools and tackles DIY projects—he's built our headboard, dog kennels, and even a shoe tree.

Our small town has a wonderful elementary school known for its caring teachers and small class sizes. Just ten minutes away, the larger town has an excellent high school that offers a wide variety of clubs, sports, and activities—Friday night football games are a big community event.

Nearby, a growing town has added new restaurants, neighborhoods, and shopping centers. There are also several beautiful parks with walking trails, playgrounds, and live music during the warmer months. A renovated skating rink now features go-karts, an arcade, and golf simulators. And with the St. Louis Zoo, City Museum, Science Center, Six Flags, the Arch, Grant's Farm, and the Magic House all within an hour, there's never a shortage of family fun nearby.



Ryan's family on vacation in Mexico



family

Ryan's groomsmen



# Traditions

Sundays are family days. We enjoy visiting our parents, grandparents, and our nephews. We chat and catch up, and usually play monster trucks with our nephews. It's the best way to relax before going back to work on Monday. Around holidays, we visit Grandma Berry, Lauren's grandma that lives in an assisted living facility. She loves to show us around and show off all the crafts they make. Every month, we get together at Ryan's grandma and grandpa Elledge's house to celebrate the birthdays for that month. Everyone sings 'Happy Birthday' as loud as they can in their worst or funniest singing voices. Lauren's first time meeting Ryan's family was for someone's birthday and she couldn't stop laughing, even though she was caught by surprise!

Picking pumpkins at our uncles farm



Our first cruise together



Tandem bike riding in Mexico



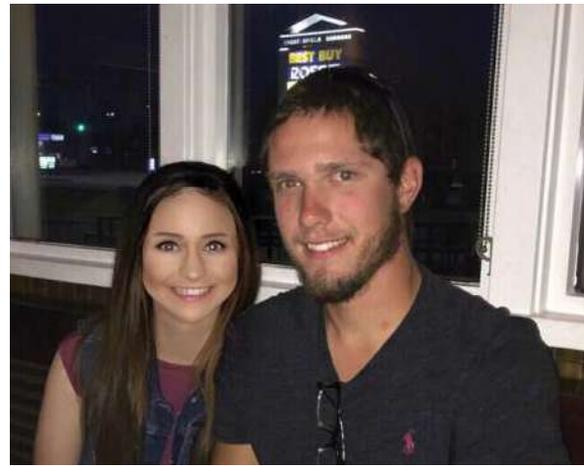
hobbies

Visiting our friends at the Humane Society



## + Activities

We are both homebodies, and enjoy spending time together at home, and with our pets. Ryan enjoys spending time outdoors gardening and doing DIY projects in his shed. Lauren enjoys reading romance and psychological thriller books. Lauren also loves to craft and enjoys diamond painting, which is something she can do while spending time with Ryan and her pets. We both enjoy spending time with our families and often visit our parents on Sunday afternoons. We also enjoy getting together with our friends for a game night, bonfire, or one of their kid's birthday parties. We don't travel much, but have enjoyed a family cruise to Mexico and a trip to Indiana for a family wedding.



# parenting + Adoption

The most important thing to us is helping our child understand their beauty and worth. We believe that God has crafted each of us with a special purpose, and it's our heartfelt desire for our children to grow surrounded by constant reminders of their skills and strengths. Above all, we pray that they recognize they are loved, desired, beautiful in their own unique way.

Celebrating the child means celebrating you too! We are eager to nurture an honest, open, and respectful relationship with you as we embark on this lifelong adventure together. An open adoption is important to us - we want this child to feel a deep pride in their roots and in their beautiful adoption story. From the very beginning, we will provide open communication about their journey, embracing the beauty that it brings to our lives.



Father's Name:  
Ryan

Occupation:  
Lawn Care Owner

Education:  
High School Diploma

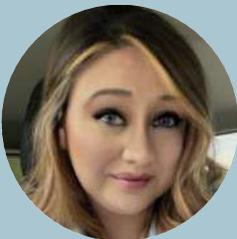
Religion:  
Christian

Date of birth:  
05/04/1994

Hair Color:  
Brown

Eye Color:  
Blue

Height:  
6' 0"



Mother's Name:  
Lauren

Occupation:  
Licensed Senior Benefit Specialist

Education:  
Some college

Religion:  
Christian

Date of birth:  
03/28/1992

Hair Color:  
Brown

Eye Color:  
Blue

Height:  
5' 2"

# Family Information

**Date of marriage:** 09/10/2022

**Children:** We were not able to conceive children on our own.

**Interest and hobbies:** Ryan enjoys spending time outdoors. He spends most of his day outside working, but he also enjoys gardening, working in his shed, and hunting. Hunting is an activity that Ryan enjoys with his brother, father, and grandpa, giving them time to talk and bond. Lauren enjoys hobbies to help keep her mind busy like reading, diamond painting, and word searches. She also loves to visit her family or go to dinner with her girlfriends. As a family, we both enjoy curling up with our pets and watching a funny movie together, having a bonfire, going to our local nursery/produce store, and sitting on our back patio chatting. We get to see lots of wildlife like deer, eagles, groundhogs, turtles, bunnies, and butterflies while we sit outside.

**Home:** We live on a quiet road where our neighbors are visible, but not too close. Our three bedroom house sits on 5 acres, but Ryan's father and Ryan's brother live on both sides so there's about 40 acres to roam. We built the house 4 years ago, after deciding we wanted more space, but still wanted to be close to our families. Our closest neighbors, aside from Ryan's family, have been very welcoming and tend to keep to themselves. One day, we would love to build a chicken coop and add some goats and chickens to our little farmhouse. We have several major grocery stores within 10 minutes of our house and our commutes to work are also minimal, making our house the perfect location for us.

**Pets:** Our first pet, Gus, is a Basset Hound/Beagle mix who loves naps, sunshine, and sniffing the fence line to keep bunnies out of his yard. He's a friendly guy who's never met a person he didn't like. Our second pet, Isabel (Izzy), is a Golden Retriever/Poodle/Lab mix we adopted from Lauren's sister. She's smart, energetic, and loves playing fetch—unless Gus beats her to the toy. Her endless excitement has earned her the nickname "wiggle butt." Our cat, Rusty, is an orange tabby we adopted from the Humane Society. He's a sweet, social cat who prefers being around people and loves watching the backyard from his perch. Though he chose Ryan as his favorite, he happily snuggles with both of us.

**Why are you interested in building your family through adoption:** After trying to conceive naturally for a year, we reached out to a doctor for help. Lauren had countless ultrasounds, her tubes flushed, and extensive bloodwork, while Ryan also underwent testing. When no clear issue was found, we were referred to an infertility clinic where Lauren completed nine rounds of IUI with fertility medications. After another year without success and a diagnosis of "unexplained infertility," we were referred for IVF. Knowing we couldn't afford both IVF and adoption, we had many heartfelt talks with each other and with God before deciding to put all our efforts into adoption. Once we made that decision, Lauren felt an immediate sense of peace and relief, knowing that one day we would have our perfect baby and that all the struggles would be worth it. **Openness to birthparent(s):** We are open to sharing regular updates through pictures, texts, letters, phone calls, and emails. We're also open to at least 1 in person visit per year, possibly more, depending on location and willingness to travel. We want to build a meaningful, respectful relationship that feels natural and supportive for everyone involved. We want our child to be completely fulfilled in their relationships with both sets of parents and we want our child to know who and where they came from. We feel this is super important to bringing up a healthy, happy, well-rounded child.

**Childcare plans:** Ryan and Lauren both work full-time so we will be looking for a small in-home daycare until preschool. After Lauren worked at several daycares, she realized how overwhelming larger classes can be for teachers and not necessarily the best learning environment. Smaller classes allow for more one-on-one attention and we feel that's important. This area offers many wonderful in-home daycares and amazing preschools. Since it's a small town, most of them have been around for many years so we know them and know they are trustworthy. Lauren's job allows for some remote work so she will take our baby to and from daycare/school and she will be able to stay at home caring for the baby if they become sick.



# THANK YOU

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for taking the time to learn about our family and for considering giving us the absolute honor of spending the rest of our lives loving this child.

There is no way to know what you are going through, but we hope you can find peace knowing this child will be unconditionally loved, forever and always. We hope to continue this journey with you, and stay connected throughout this child's life. Regardless of your decision, we want you to know how much we respect and admire the strong woman you are.

Love,

*Lauren & Ryan*