



STEPHEN &
AMANDA



IT'S SO NICE TO "MEET" YOU!

Thank you for "meeting" us, too. We're Stephen and Amanda and this is our son, Ryder. We hope that through the words and pictures on the following pages, you can begin to see a bit of our personality and create a vision of the life we lead. We believe that knowing who we are and trusting us to walk this journey alongside you is important to make sure your voice is heard, your story is told, and what you want for your child is honored.



Hello!

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING US
TO INTRODUCE OURSELVES.

We wish we were in a place where we could introduce ourselves with a big hug and a bright-eyed smile. It's our greatest hope that you would feel seen and loved in these moments. We are honored you're taking a few moments to get a glimpse of who we are, and we admire you for the time you're devoting to consider the options available for you and your child.

Adoption holds a very special place in our hearts as it is how we met our son, and we're hopeful to have the privilege of welcoming another little life to our family. We also look forward to our son, Ryder, embracing a new sibling, and we're already imagining the things he will teach them, the tricks they will play, the ruckus they will raise, and the bond they will share.

While we are optimistic, excited, nervous, and a little bit scared, we can't begin to imagine the experience you are going through. The weight of the path that you're navigating and the momentous decision you are making isn't lost on us.

We are humbled by the abundance of love you've already shown to this child and to yourself. This process is every bit emotional. Wherever you are throughout its course - whether we are included in your future or not - we are praying for you, your little, and whatever comes next.

WITH BIG HUGS, WARMTH, AND PEACE,

Stephen and Amanda

APR 2015

We met in Texas but soon discovered we grew up less than 15 minutes from one another in Kansas.

OCT 2016

We got engaged in Savannah, GA in front of the famous Forsyth fountain.

AUG 2018

We rescued our dog, Chief, who has grown to be such a beloved member of our family.

MAY 2015

Amanda moved to Texas where we continued to grow our love for each other, all while also developing forever friendships with a close-knit "Texas family" that has become a strong support system for us.

OCT 2017

We went back to Savannah, GA with our friends and family to get married.

JULY 2022

Ryder was born in Florida. His birth momma chose us to love and raise him, and our lives changed forever.

OUR FAMILY

If there is one thing you should know about us, it's that we strive to love big, live freely, and honor the moments and people who are placed in our lives. While we're not perfect, we are fun, active, and easy-going, and our commitment to each other is our greatest priority.

A FEW FUN FACTS:

- We have a large extended family, and they are our favorite people. We get together as often as we can for holidays, birthdays, trips, cousin sleepovers, and dinners!
- We are very active people. Stephen often challenges himself to endurance races, Ryder loves to ride his tricycle, and Amanda loves to do anything outside under the warm sun. We even set up a gym in our garage.
- We are health-conscious, but we strike a balance for the delicious things in life. We enjoy cooking and the opportunities it provides to bring people together.
- We like to travel. Sometimes it's just us three and other times it's with our extended family. We have hiked multiple National Parks, gone tubing on several lakes, surfed waves in Costa Rica, and indulged in great food in Spain - just to name a few.





Meet Amanda

OPTIMISTIC AND CREATIVE

Who I am. I'm a caretaker, almost to a fault. I love connecting with others and value moments and experiences over tangible items. There is nothing that fills me up like time with "my people" - standing around the kitchen, belting out the latest Disney tune, or raising a toast to the latest achievement.

What I do. I have a degree in marketing and work as an Advertising Account Director. From the small screen to the Super Bowl, I help some of our country's biggest names craft their brand stories, and I love seeing the process unfold!

What I love. Warm homemade cookies with a spoonful of ice cream on top // Adventures - whether it's a trip across the ocean, taking our son on a scavenger hunt, or a weekend activity with friends // Cooking // Italian food // Being outside on a warm day - reading, hiking, paddle boarding, or walking our dog

A FEW OTHER THINGS YOU MIGHT ENJOY KNOWING ABOUT ME!

0 1

I'm a triplet, and my family nickname is Bear. My triplet sisters, along with my older sister, all look and act very different, but we're lifelong best friends.

0 2

My guilty pleasure is Cheetos. Also, if there is a middle piece missing from a pan of brownies (cinnamon rolls or whatever else), I am most certainly the culprit.

0 3

I grew up playing sports. I was a State Champion softball pitcher, played volleyball, and ran track. More recently, I coached my 4-year-old nephew's T-ball team!



AMANDA IN THE WORDS OF OTHERS

“Amanda is impossible not to love. She is sweet, genuine, and goes above and beyond in her friendships.” (words from a friend)

“When I first met Amanda, I was struck by her beauty, but it was her gentle demeanor and kindness that I fell in love with. She’s rather shy and quiet but makes friends everywhere she goes. People enjoy being in her company, and I’ve never seen someone leave our house without a container full of cookies or brownies (much to my dismay). She loves the little things in life like playing games as a family, getting dressed up to go out to eat, or sitting outside and listening to live music. She’s also incredibly supportive. When I said I wanted to quit my job and build my own business, she said “I support you 100%! When I’ve participated in fitness events, she is always there encouraging me from the beginning to the end. The same is true for our son. Whether it’s making all of Ryder’s baby food, spending hours helping him learn a new skill, or going out of her way to make lasting memories, being a mom is Amanda’s favorite “job.” I don’t know what new things I will learn about Amanda as our lives unfold together. I do know she is a tremendous Mom and person, and I can’t wait to watch her love our little ones as they grow up.”

—Stephen



Meet Stephen

DEDICATED AND THOUGHTFUL

Who I am. I'm a straight shooter, a hard worker, and loyal to a fault. I find comfort in routine and care a great deal about how others feel. I love to set goals and accomplish difficult things. I'm always up for a good adventure and thrive on exploring new hobbies.

What I do. I have a degree in accounting and business and work as an investment advisor. I love the flexibility of owning my own business and building something that I know I can bless my family with in the future.

What I love. Being active - hiking, camping, hunting, endurance races, etc. // Drinking coffee before the sun comes up // Going to church // Spending time with Amanda, Ryder, and my brothers // Barbecuing // Traveling // When my teams (Chiefs, Royals, Jayhawks) win // Driving my truck // Exploring different National Parks // Wearing my cowboy boots // Mexican food

A FEW OTHER THINGS YOU MIGHT ENJOY KNOWING ABOUT ME!

0 1

I've had a life full of interesting experiences. From playing college football to living in four states (NE, WY, KS, and TX), and even raising cattle, many things have shaped me.

0 2

I enjoy driving trucks, pulling a trailer, or sitting and watching/listening to freight trains. I could also spend hours shooting hoops by myself.

0 3

One of my most prized possessions is a watch my dad gave to me in the 4th grade. I'm incredibly sentimental and could tell you a story about almost everything I own.



STEPHEN IN THE WORDS OF OTHERS

“Stephen is dependable, hardworking, caring, and a great friend. He’s very attentive and takes his responsibilities seriously.” (words from a friend)

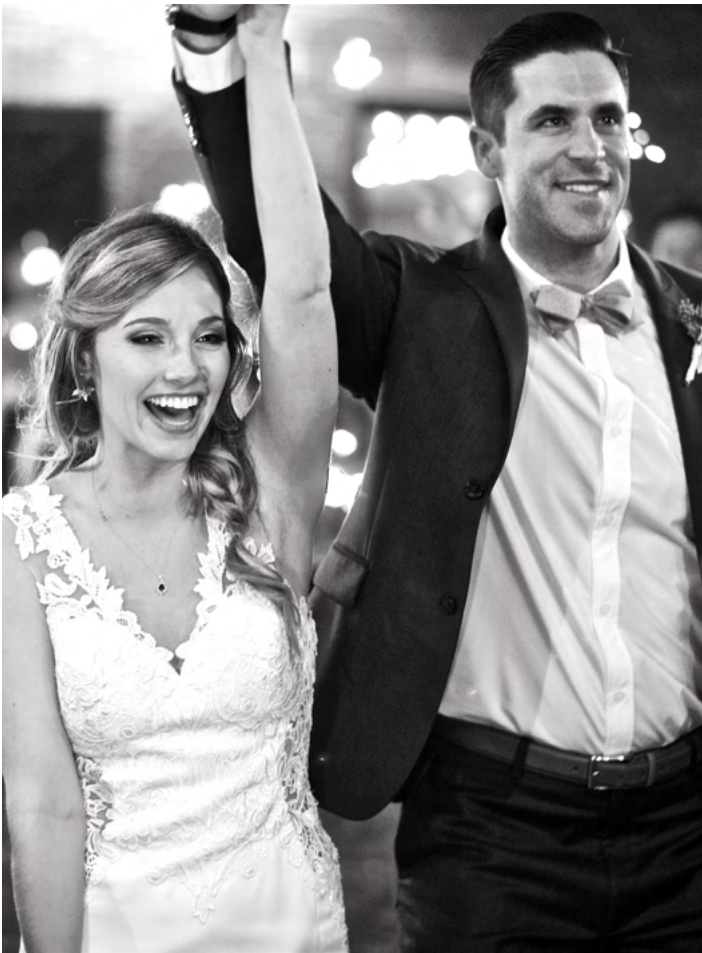
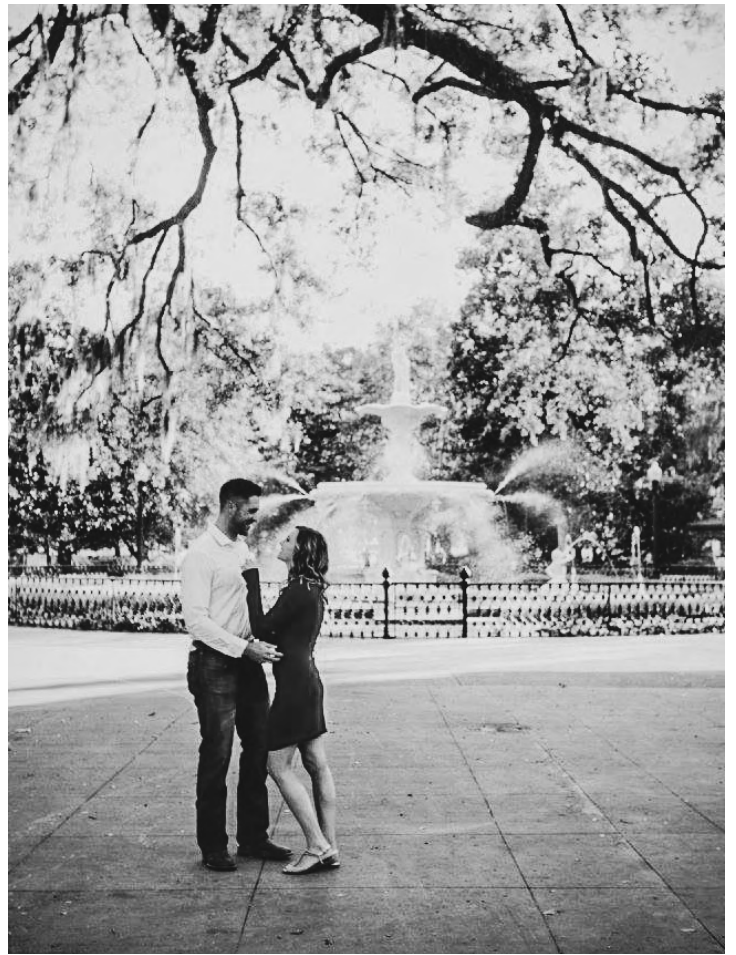
“From the moment I met Stephen, I knew he was “it”; he was my person. He is one of the most genuine people you will ever meet and is continually working to grow as a husband, a father, and an individual. He sets high standards for himself and inspires me with his diligence in staying active, building his business, and committing himself to being an engaged husband and father. He is always thinking of others and makes time for the things that matter most. With his brothers and friends, he is frequently the one suggesting something new or exciting they can do together (like a hunting or a fitness challenge) or offering advice on finances and parenting. Stephen also has a quick wit that keeps everyone laughing. He is someone others are drawn to and leave feeling heard. One of the things that made me fall in love with him is the immense love he has for his family, which I get to experience each day through his admiration for our son, Ryder. Watching him become a father bursting with pride for our son was one of the greatest privileges of my life, and I can’t wait to see the adoration he will pour into future little ones.” —Amanda

OUR STORY

We grew up in the same area of Kansas, knew the same people, and ate at the same restaurants but for some reason, our paths just never crossed. It wasn't until 2015 when I (Amanda) was in Texas for a job interview that we finally met. Unbeknownst to me, a friend invited Stephen to brunch with the sole purpose of setting us up. We connected again when I moved to Texas about a month later, and the rest is history!

My family knew before I did. With an Italian father, an independent mother, and 3 sisters, they're a tough crowd to win over, but they knew immediately that Stephen was "the one". For my 30th birthday, he gifted me a trip to Savannah, GA and proposed in front of the famous Forsyth fountain. We went back to Savannah a year later to get married. We said "I do" in the "haunted city" over Halloween weekend, and it was a blast. In the years since, our relationship has continued to deepen and grow. We have learned how to lean on one another and find the beauty in doing life with our best friend.







COMING TO ADOPTION

“We have come to understand that adoption is a process that doesn’t end upon delivery of a child but rather is a lifetime commitment...”

We both come from large, loud, and loving families, and having a big, close-knit family of our own was a dream we shared from the very beginning of our relationship. After four years of trying to grow our family naturally, we discovered that having children was not likely possible. To say we were crushed is an understatement. *Not because we couldn't have children naturally*, but because we had never previously considered what other options were available.

Over the next year, we spent time learning about our options, and through conversations with friends and family who had adopted, we felt like adoption was the path we were intended to take.

In 2022, we met our son, Ryder, and our hearts grew in unfathomable ways. We have come to understand that adoption is a very human process; it's beautiful, stressful, messy, inspirational, and every bit emotional. It is a process that doesn't end upon the delivery of a child but rather is a lifetime commitment that relies on diligence, empathy, and respect for one another. This has been and will always be our promise - that whatever comes, we are here for it all.



1. We value time together. While we're intentional about personal time, we do most things together. We enjoy each other's families and interests, and we make decisions as a team.

2. We don't sweat the small stuff but we also don't ignore the hard stuff. We value open communication and remind ourselves often that we are in this crazy life together.

3. We value our faith and strive to live a life that reflects love and grace. We attend church on Saturday evenings and are grateful for the community we get to do life with.

4. We value health and the gift of being active. We believe any time spent outdoors is not time wasted. We also both love to cook and enjoy preparing healthy meals for our family.

5. We laugh often. We both grew up with well-worn seats at the dinner table, a packed house at holidays, and loud laughter over shared jokes. We bring the same joy into our life as a family.





Meet Our Son

RYDER, 2 YEARS OLD

A bit about our son. Ryder is a zestful little one. He came into this world fighting for life and hasn't wasted a single second. He is charismatic, ambitious, and affectionate. Give him 10 minutes in the morning to have some milk and shake off the "sleepies", and he is powered up for the day. He's also very generous with his hugs and high-fives. The thing Ryder loves most in this world is to get a running start with arms open wide to land "BIG HUGS" on Mom or Dad.

Future big brother. Seeing Ryder's excitement as he interacts with his nine cousins gives us a glimpse of how excited he will be to become a big brother. We can't wait for him to have a "best buddy", and one who shares a piece of his story. It is our prayer that they will always find a safe place in each other,

A FEW OF RYDER'S FAVORITE THINGS IN THIS SEASON OF LIFE:

0 1

Ryder loves to go on "hikes" with Mom around the neighborhood and build Lego towers with Dad. He also likes to climb, play with trucks, and play fetch with our dog Chief.

0 2

His favorite song is "The Wheels on The Bus" and you can often find him dancing around! He also loves running "full speed" and climbing in and out of empty boxes.

0 3

He loves being outside (pushing his lawnmower, riding his trike, or running around in the grass) and anything water (bath time, going to the pool, or swimming in the lake with Dad).



WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT BEINGS PARENTS

"I've learned that parenthood is a type of love that hurts your heart if you think about it for too long and a privilege beyond words." (Amanda)

A few things I love about being a mom: "When I was younger, I didn't dream about my wedding or the career I might have. It was the privilege of being called Mom by the little humans I would one day get to love and watch grow that I looked forward to. When Ryder came into our lives, my dream started to come true. It was everything and nothing I imagined it would be. I love listening to his belly laughs when I prop him up on my legs and whiz him around like an airplane and the feeling his head lay on my shoulder when he's been awake for just a little too long. I love that I get to be the holiday magic maker – bringing the wonder of Christmas, the Easter bunny, and birthdays to life. It's all of this and so much more I cannot wait to share with another child." (Amanda)

A few things I love about being a dad: "It's the little things about fatherhood I love the most. I love it when he gets excited and takes off running to nothing in particular. I love doing things one-on-one and listening to him laugh. I love sitting on the floor while he brings me book after book. I love building forts and playing outside. I love leading by example and being a rock of reliability my son knows he can always turn to. I can't wait to invest the same in another child." (Stephen)

Life as a Family

T H E R E I S S E C U R I T Y I N T H E R H Y T H M S O F L I F E .

Stephen gets up before the sun every morning to work out, read, and walk Chief. When Ryder wakes up, Amanda gets his milk and some coffee for herself, and they sit in the living room and "Cheers" to the day before the business of school/work takes hold. During the day, Ryder goes to school while Mom and Dad work from home. Each day starts and ends on the living room floor at the toy box - building towers with Ryder's blocks or crafting the latest bop with his turntables. We also sit down together every evening to eat dinner as a family. The rhythm of all of this gives us life and we're grateful for the safety and consistency we can give each other.

A few other things you might find us doing on an average day or throughout the year:

- Going to the Little Gym - a facility near our home that offers gym classes for toddlers. We go as a family, sing songs, play on the balance beam, and jump in the foam pit.
- Spending an afternoon at the pool - in the summer, we go to our local pool; in the winter, our YMCA has a pool where Ryder takes swimming lessons and we can all splash around.
- Baking together in the kitchen or playing outside while Stephen grills in the backyard.
- Dressing in red on Sunday afternoons to cheer on the Kansas City Chiefs followed by a big Sunday dinner that Amanda prepares.
- Splurging on some take-out and balling up on the couch with a good show.
- Walking on the trails in our neighborhood or swinging at the park.
- Reading books at bedtime, saying our prayers, and "giving hugs all our stuffies" before finally saying goodnight.
- Enjoying a sleepover with cousins, big dinners, or a day at the lake with our families.
- Making ravioli to eat with Thanksgiving dinner before standing in the driveway and watching as Amanda's dad "flips the switch" and the magical Christmas lights illuminate.
- Decorating our Christmas tree while enjoying peppermint milkshakes and listening to music.
- Eating Reubens on January 1st to ring in the New Year and bring good luck.
- Celebrating birthday mornings with donuts, cinnamon roll french toast, or pancakes...as well as a homemade birthday cake, a house filled with cousins, and giggles later on in the day.



OUR HOME

Our home in Texas is cozy, comfortable, and warm. It has an open-concept floor plan that is centered around a large kitchen, and there is nothing more fitting for our family who loves to eat and entertain! We also have a large, fenced-in backyard with a ton of room to play. We are within walking distance of a huge park with a splash pad, jungle gym, neighborhood swimming pool, and elementary school. We are also only a five-minute car ride from a lake lined with restaurants that host water-side concerts during the summer and ice-skating in the winter. More than anything, we love that our home is a place where others feel at peace. Visitors can expect to be greeted by our 80 lb German Shepherd who will demand a belly rub as a cost of entry as well as some freshly baked cookies and a home-cooked meal before they leave. Because Stephen's job opens opportunities to live in other states, we know we might not always call this same city home. And yet, Texas will always have a piece of our heart and a million reasons to visit.





AND FINALLY, OUR PUP: CHIEF

“Despite his intimidating appearance, Chief is the definition of a love bug. He is a gentle giant with a very calm demeanor.”

Our dog, Chief, is a 6-year-old, 80-pound, German Shepherd/Border Collie mix that we rescued from a local shelter. Despite his intimidating appearance, Chief is the definition of a love bug! He is a gentle giant with a very calm demeanor and, upon meeting him, it's almost certain that he'll roll over for a belly rub. Once at risk of being put down at the shelter, he is currently living as the fan-favorite among our 9 nieces and nephews. In fact, any time our nephews come for a weekend visit; they ask if they can have a sleepover with Chief in their room.

Chief's favorite things include having his belly rubbed, playing fetch, treats, and most importantly, his basket of toys. Chief and Ryder are also best buddies. Chief will often bring his ball and drop it at Ryder's feet so Ryder will play fetch with him. Since the very beginning, Chief has kept an eye out for Ryder, many times going to bed in Ryder's room right next to his crib.



Before you go ...

THIS IS OUR PROMISE TO YOU.

Thank you again for getting to know us. While we couldn't possibly understand your position, the momentous decision you are navigating isn't lost on us, and we're grateful beyond words that you have considered us as parents for your child. While it is hard to express our hearts through a book, at the core of all of this, we hope you know we are praying for your heart as you make *whatever* choice is best for you and your child. If you should choose us to join you in loving this child, we would be honored to welcome you and your child into our lives. We promise that you will always have a place in our hearts. We also promise to...

01 Honor your child's story and speak of you often. They will never question where they came from, the love you have for them, or the strength you displayed.

04 Empower them with bravery so they are willing to take risks and make their mark on this world in whatever way they may wish to do it.

02 Surround your child with unconditional love and a village of support. We will celebrate their personality, invest in their interests, and honor their origin.

05 Support your child through every up and down, holding their adoption as an open conversation in our home that is protected and celebrated.

03 Teach them resilience so they can handle the tough times and lead them with kindness so they may understand the value of generosity.

06 Have fun and enjoy life together! We promise to laugh, read books, play games, travel, see family, and teach them to find the joy in every day.

WITH LOVE - STEPHEN AND AMANDA



fortraischild
ADOPTION PROFILE BOOKS

