



Our Family

We admire you greatly for having the courage and the generosity of heart to consider adoption, and we thank you for taking the time to consider our family for your child.

We have been blessed with four beautiful children, all with different personalities. We have striven to help our children experience the good, the true, and the beautiful things of life and to grow into the people that they were created to be. It will be a joy and honor to be able to love your child and help them grow into the person that they are created to be.



We have hoped for many years to have more children, but have experienced miscarriages since the birth of our youngest child. We're hopeful and excited about the opportunity to raise another child, and our children very much long for a new sibling as well.

Meet Erik and Cheryl...

A little about us:

- We met in college at the University of Illinois
- Married 23 happy years
- Blessed with 2 daughters and 2 sons

A little about Cheryl:

- Bachelor of science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Illinois and a master's degree in Structural Engineering from Virginia Tech
- Grew up in small town Illinois with lots of extended family that lived nearby
- Enjoyed studying and traveling far from home, but happy to be back in Illinois
- Enjoys hiking or playing games with the family
- Stays at home doing my best to make our house a happy home

A little about Erik:

- Aeronautical Engineering degree from University of Illinois and Mechanical Engineering master's degree from Purdue University
- Engineer for Boeing Aircraft working on the F/A-18 Super Hornet
- Enjoys taking our children to do fun activities near our home
- First generation American of mother born and raised in Austria, Europe and have Austrian relatives with whom we keep in contact
- Has traveled to Austria, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Finland, and Russia
- Understands that an important part of his mission in life is to sacrifice for and serve his wife and children
- Favorite holidays; Easter, Christmas, and Halloween



What we enjoy...



Erik enjoys:

- Traveling to new places and seeing new sights
- Airplanes & airshows
- Helping our children with their hobbies such as model trains
- Relaxing with the family around the fire pit in our backyard
- Automobile racing; used to race as a hobby
- Hiking in the mountains
- Watching a movie with the family or just my honey
- Reading

Cheryl enjoys:

- Reading & discussing books
- Hiking (preferably in the woods or mountains with family/friends)
- Vacationing in and exploring new places
- Playing a board or card game
- Watching a movie with the family or my sweetheart
- Visiting with family and friends
- Dancing
- Sewing



Time at home...



Front yard cherry tree fun

Backyard smores



4th of July party

- Inviting friends over for cookouts and parties
- Playing in our yard
- Enjoying backyard grilling and roasting hot dogs and marshmallows
- Playing in nearby parks & playgrounds
- Biking in neighborhood, to the library, and on local bike trails
- Walking to nearby stores and shops
- Watching movies as a family
- Playing board games together

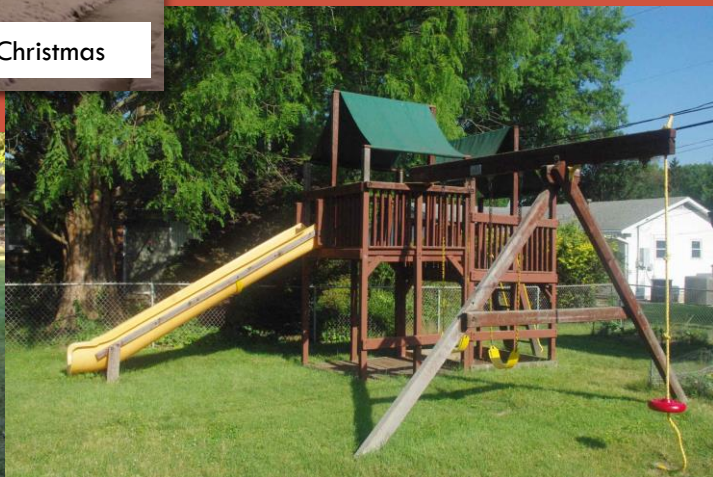
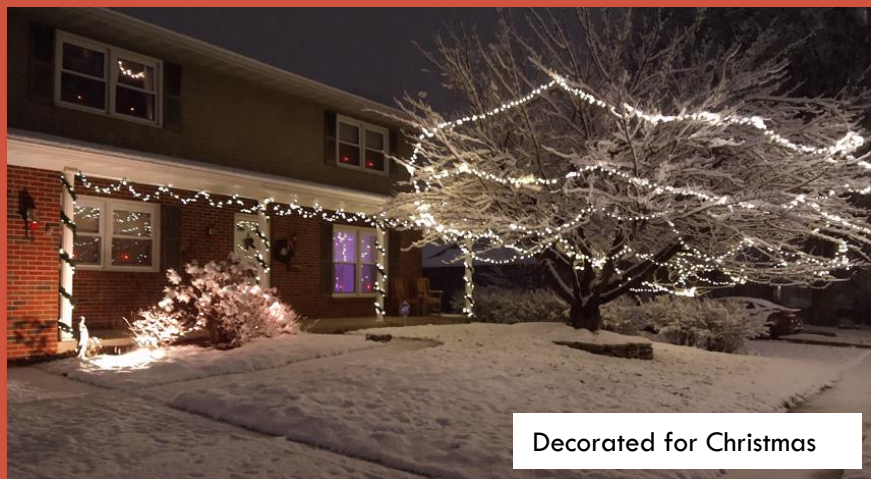
Our house and hometown...

Our home:

- Comfortable two story home in a quiet neighborhood
- Backyard with vegetable gardens
- Backyard children's playset with two swings, rope swing, and slide. Add a garden hose, and we have our own water slide!
- Park with playground and fishing pond within walking distance

Our hometown:

- Two YMCA locations with accommodations such as indoor / outdoor pools, rock climbing wall, tennis courts, and roller skating rink
- Large rails-to-trails bicycle trail system
- 4th of July fireworks display and festival
- Annual Halloween parade
- Children's museum
- Large new family sports complex with multiple baseball fields, batting cages, and soccer fields
- Indoor ice skating rink
- Summer concerts in city park
- Local little league baseball league



Family adventures! (a.k.a. family vacations)...

As a family, we enjoy traveling and exploring. Our “family adventures” often involve time hiking in the outdoors and traveling to places we have not yet been as a family. Sometimes our children know where we are going before we depart, and sometimes they don’t know about a destination until we get there. One such trip where they did not know our destination was to Estes Park, Colorado. At the end of an already fun trip to Branson Missouri with family, the children thought we were going to head back home east. Not until the oldest child started to notice that the interstate signs were talking about heading west did they know something was up. They finally knew for certain where we were going to stay for the next week when we pulled up to the beautiful YMCA of the Rockies lodge to pick up the keys for our cabin! That week really was a family adventure; a beautiful snowy hike in Rocky Mountain National Park, hiking up to alpine lakes, watching elk dueling and bugle during their rut season, enjoying archery and miniature golf, and camp fires under a night sky with the most stars our children had ever seen.



Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado



Another such family adventure was a trip to Maine. Our family rented a house near the entrance to Acadia National Park for a week. Highlights included the children’s first opportunity to dip their toes in the Atlantic Ocean, an afternoon of sea kayaking, and our first lobster dinner as a family at a seaside restaurant. Side trips included a stop at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and its museum, and a day spent at Niagara Falls with a walk down to the base of the falls to see them from below.



Sea kayaking in Maine



Niagara Falls

More family fun...

Other vacation and outdoor activities:

- Multiple-day trips to Holiday World amusement and water park
- Visit to Virginia to see Washington, D.C., Virginia Beach, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and Colonial Williamsburg
- Trips to Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and Chicago, Illinois to visit family and friends
- Camping in Wisconsin at the world's largest airshow and aviation gathering
- Trips to St. Louis' excellent zoo to enjoy things such as the sea lion show and rides on their merry-go-round and train.
- Enjoying the indoor playgrounds, exploring the tunnels, and riding the indoor slides at the St. Louis City Museum

Zoo trip with friends



Things our children do:

- When younger, the kids attended sports summer camps and played in a soccer league at the local YMCA.
- The boys played T-ball and little league baseball in our community league.
- The girls have studied and continued to dance ballet and modern dance at a local dance studio.
- As they get older, they get to strike out on their own a bit at week-long summer camps in Wisconsin.

Pre-school soccer with the "Y"



Wisconsin summer camp



Time with extended family and friends...

Time with our extended family and friends is an important part of our family life. In addition to birthday celebrations for the kiddos within our immediate family, we also have birthday gatherings with extended family. Another fun birthday related activity we've hosted for our boys has been a backyard Nerf gun fight with their friends.



Fun with friends



Grandparents and cousins

The close proximity of extended family has blessed us with the ability to spend time with them every year on occasions like Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, and has resulted in close bonds with them.



4th of July party

We also very much enjoy spending time with our dear friends. We're able to visit with several of them on most weekends after church; sometimes involving activities like pot-luck meals and dances for kiddos alone or the entire family. The children are involved with our church's youth group and enjoy spending time with children both older and younger than they.

Another such occasion, and one of our favorites, is Halloween. We invite friends over to our home for Halloween trick-or-treating in our neighborhood.



Raiders of the Lost Ark



Back to the Future

Our family and the arts...

- We enjoy music and are blessed to have live music in our home
- The children all study piano and are learning to play other instruments: clarinet, oboe, and percussion instruments. One enjoys singing in our church's children's choir.
- Christmas time in our home is especially beautiful with all of the Christmas carols that are played and sung by our children!



- The girls very much enjoy dance and have studied ballet and modern dance at a local studio for several years
- They dance in yearly recitals and ballets, and their favorite opportunity to dance has been the Nutcracker at our local theatre.



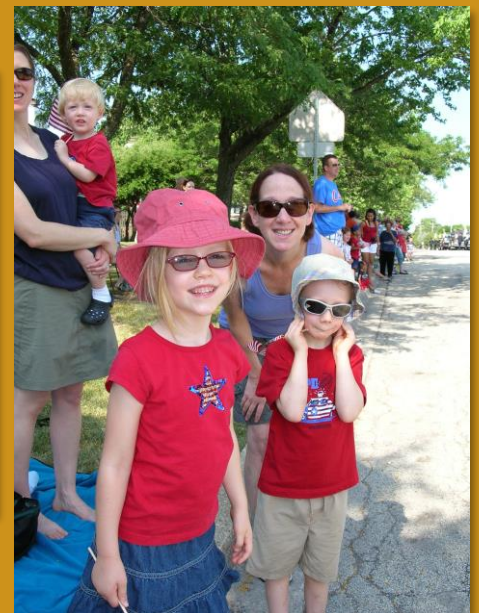
Importance of culture...

We enjoy learning about other cultures, both in past and present times, and in particular their history, art, and foods. We especially like to go to the St. Louis art museum where they have wonderful displays of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Asian artifacts, and they have art from around the world and many different historical periods. Erik's mother was an immigrant from Austria, so he's a first generation American on her side. We keep in touch with his relatives in Austria, and have incorporated some of the Austrian culture into our family life. If your child's cultural heritage is outside what we've named here, we'd love to embrace this new culture, add it to our family, and learn about it together.

Our commitment to your child...

Our desire for and commitment to your child is that they enjoy all of the very same blessings we have been able to provide our other children. We desire all of the same opportunities for your child to grow into the adult they were created to be, and will do all we can to expose them to and help them experience the true, the good, and the beautiful. We will work to help your child to discover and develop their natural talents and interests. We will look at your child, and we will recognize in them all of the same essential things that make our own children so precious to us. It is important to us that they will grow up knowing how loved they are by you and ourselves, and that they are every bit as much a part of our family as their adoptive siblings. Our promise to you is that we will make the very same sacrifices out of love for your child as we have done many times before for our own biological children. We also promise to love them as you are when making this difficult and loving decision to trust us with helping your child become the person they were created to be.

More family moments...



below Niagara Falls



first lobster meal



building an arch





Halloween trick-or-treating party



zoo Christmas lights



Road side lobster shack in Maine



U.S.S. Constitution at Boston