



After unsuccessful infertility treatment, we decided to pursue adoption. We always wanted children and even discussed adoption prior to trying to conceive. Even so, transitioning away from our plan to carry a biological child was a difficult moment for us. The loss of control, freedom, and flexibility was painful. We had to work through these complicated emotions before being ready to adopt.

As we began to look into adoption agencies, Hands Across The Water (HATW) stood out. We were interested in open adoption, and the approach HATW took towards birth parents and children, as well as waiting families, was heartening. We had so many questions about the process and about life as adoptive parents. The staff was incredibly helpful and patient as we worked through our questions. In the end, HATW was the right fit for us.

We waited six months after the completion of our home study to meet our daughter. Each day was a struggle and we weren't sure whether we wanted to prepare for the child we knew would come, or whether that felt like "jinxing" everything. We had wonderful support from our social worker at HATW during this difficult period.



In early 2017 we received "THE CALL," that there was an 11-day old baby whose mother wanted to meet us. We met her the next morning, accompanied by HATW staff. We were so nervous, but we could tell that our daughter's first mom was as well. The HATW staff handled this meeting beautifully and helped to put us all at ease. After years of trying various methods to become a family, we had four frantic days to prepare for our daughter's arrival.

One week after we brought our daughter home, an unforeseen issue arose which put our adoption in jeopardy. The idea that this baby might not be our daughter was devastating, and even though we understood that disruptions are part of the adoption landscape, nothing could have prepared us. During this period, HATW social workers checked in with us more than daily, working tirelessly behind the scenes, and doing everything within their power to ease our stress and advocate for the baby. We will be forever grateful for their support during this time. No one could have possibly done

more. In the end, we finalized our adoption and were able to celebrate our new family surrounded by loved ones and HATW staff.

One of the unexpected benefits that came from working with HATW has been the community of adoptive families that are now part of our lives. Social workers put us in touch with families with whom we share things in common. Through various trainings and events, we have connected with adoptive and waiting families. We have particularly benefited from seminars on transracial adoption and are always grateful to meet other multi-racial families. HATW's support for families both in the waiting stage but also in the years that follow a placement is a wonderfully unique attribute.

Because of these experiences, when we started the process to adopt again, there was no doubt that we would work with HATW. We could not be more confident in the work they do and the ethical, upstanding, loving approach they take to it. While choosing adoption is difficult, we can't imagine going through this with another agency.