

# Home Study Resource Consulting, Inc

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## **ADOPTION HOME STUDY**

**Ron Peterson and Becky Peterson**

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### **DATES OF CONTACTS**

After an intake interview on January 4, 2014, home visit, and individual interviews occurred on June 10, 2014 there were numerous telephone and email contacts before after those dates.

### **MOTIVATION TO ADOPT**

Ron and Becky have been married for seven years and have experienced four miscarriages. They are both very fond of children and most of their friends have children already. After the first miscarriage, Becky started thinking about adoption but Ron was not ready to consider adoption. After the second miscarriage, they learned that any pregnancy would be high risk. After prayerful consideration, Ron is now enthusiastic about adoption option. They have chosen to work with Adoption Agency Inc. because of a friend's positive experience with them.

### **FAMILY BACKGROUNDS**

Ronald ("Ron") Michael Peterson was born on May 1, 1976, in Athens, Georgia. He is the second child in the family of six children. Ron has one older brother, two younger sisters and two younger brothers. He describes his life as that of an average, southern, middle class male. His parents married right after high school and are still married after some forty plus years. Because they had so many children,

Both parents worked diligently to support them and taught the meaning of hard work by personal example. His mother kept up the home, cared for the children and worked part-time the worked fulltime and often took park time jobs also. Thus, there was little time for personal attention or cuddling the children. Ron remembers his father as always working around the house trying to “fix” things. He tries engaging his children in these activities to little avail due to their short attention span and other interests. There was a noisy household with backyard football and basketball going every weekend with neighborhood children. There was little privacy and he always shared a room. He looks back on those years as having taught him valuable life lessons such as “hard work pays off,” “you reap what you sow,” and “treat others as you wanted to be treated.” One lesson I learned came from his brother who became involved with drugs and alcohol and had to leave the house. Another from a sister who made a poor choice in a mate, became pregnant and had to move back home for assistance. The only real loss he experienced in childhood and teenage years was the death of his grandmother. School was a pleasant experience for him. He enjoyed sports and did well academically in the area of math and science. Because he was shy and didn’t have much money, he hung out with a fairly rowdy crowd rather than a popular group in high school. Thus, he had to earn trust of his future in-laws when he began dating. They dated off and on though high school and college. He describes his college years and early twenties as a time when he experienced success, failure, love and loss. The untimely deaths of a brother, and a co-worker, and a close friend, and their first miscarriage mad a profound change in his life. He had to be supportive of Becky who was experiencing debilitating anxiety, deal with his own feelings and continue working to support his family. All these experiences have served to make him grateful for his faith, his supportive parents and in-laws and for Becky. He has learned new methods of managing stress in his own life through participating in Becky’s recovery. Ron continues to be a somewhat shy person but he is definitely a deep thinker and he has a quirky sense of humor. He manages stress through playing soft ball, working out with his guy friends, and fixing things around the house with Becky’s help. Ron looks physically much younger than his years but is emotionally more mature than might be expected.

Rebecca (“Becky”) Ann Peterson (maiden name: South) was born on August 16, 1978, in Little Rock, Arkansas. She has one brother, four years older. Her parents have been married to each other for forty one year’s having married just out of high school. Becky’s father has always worked hard developing a successful business. He was not physically demonstrative of his love during her early years considering that his loved was implied by their comfortable standard of living. Her Mother, in contrast, was a stay home wife and mother who were open, sharing and compassionate with everyone she encountered. Becky remembers hanging out with her mother and brother watching movies, ordering pizza and calling themselves the three musketeers. Her brother was warm affectionate, much like their mother, and often functions as a second father. However Becky and her brother sometime fought like siblings do. He became her special hero, when they were involved in an auto accident after school one day. She was seven, he was sixteen. Despite a broken leg back, he carried her up a ravine and to safety. Later, her brother developed problems with drugs and alcohol and was eventually diagnosed and treated for Bi Polar Disorder. She was devastated when he was

killed in another auto accident when she was 18. Despite these difficult memories of her brother, Becky enjoyed her school years very much while she struggled with weight problem, she was vivacious, friendly and funny. Thus, she always had a lot of friends and was voted many special honors in high school including best all round and prom queen. She had to study hard and found math particularly difficult. Those study habits helped when she entered college. Becky describes herself impulsive, a perfectionist, and generally a rule follower. She used to think if other people were happy, she was happy, about four years ago; Becky began experiencing anxiety and depression. She experienced a panic attack while shopping at the mall and sought help for the problem shortly thereafter. When she did not get better after outpatient therapy and medication, she voluntarily entered a 90 day program to deal with unresolved grief- in addition to her brother, she had lost a close friend who was shot while working a shift at a convenience store (that he had taken because Ron needed to be off that night). And another close friend drowned. She had already experience two miscarriages Becky's parents paid for this treatment and, of course, family therapy was a part of the treatment plan. She considers this investment in her health the greatest gift her parents could have given. Since then she has undergone maintenance therapy but is managing her emotions in a much healthier manner as delightful young woman who has a pleasure to interview. Without the pleasure of a business to run, she enjoys free dancing as a decorator, baby sitting for friends, decorating her house, painting, shopping with her mother and playing baseball with Ron.

## **MARRIAGE**

Ron Peterson and Becky Peterson were married on December 11, 2006 in Atlantic Georgia (verified). While they had dated off and on since high school and were committed to each other, they postponed marriage until both had graduated college and establish careers. Their marriage might be described as one in which opposites attract but they prefer to describe themselves as having differences that complement each other. While Becky is impulsive and intuitive, Ron is a thinker and a planner. Ron's sister says in her reference letter that Ron became "softer and more empathic" after he me Becky. He, on the other hand, has been stable rock on which she leaned during difficult emotional upheavals in her life. They both are devoted to the children of friends and family and their home is filled with photographs of these young people. Because they are so different in personality, they admit to annoying each other sometimes. While they plan date nights for each other, they also plan girl or guy time where they can be apart and pursue their own interest. From the beginning of the marriage they have divide the household chores equally with both cleaning the house and both doing yard work. Now that she is not working full time outside the home, she takes on more of the load. Of course, during the time she was being treated for anxiety he had to shoulder a heavier load. They believe this is how good marriages work and both credit their own parents for laying such a strong foundation for sharing the burdens and joys of married life.

## **CHILDREN**

There have been no children born to the marriage but they have experienced four miscarriages including one in the 13<sup>th</sup> week. This last was particularly difficult because she did not spontaneously abort. They learned that the fetus was no longer alive when she went for her first ultrasound. Instead of the joy of a live fetus, she was scheduled for a D&C.

They have two dogs in the household upon which they lavish attention. A statement of care from their Veterinarian is attached.

## **HEALTH**

Both Becky and Ron had statements completed by their family physician, Dr. Lerado Larson, who practices at 100 East Main St. Athens Georgia. Both medical statements were dated 10-8-2013. Dr. Lerado states both Ron and Becky are physically, mentally and emotionally able to take on the care and responsibility of a child. He notes that Ron is in excellent health and states that a protein deficiency is the reason Becky is unable to carry a pregnancy to term. At my request, also provided statements from her psychiatrist and psychotherapist Dr. Frank Ross is a Board Certified Psychiatrist and wrote a letter dated December 16, 2013 stating that he treats her for Panic Disorder and Major Depression. She takes Lexapro (20 mg per day) and dietary supplements. He has treated her since May 6, 2010 and she has been stable and free of disabling depression or anxiety since that time. He expects her to continue to be stable and maintain the same regime of medicine and dietary supplements. Angela Forge letter is dated December 9, 2013. She has known Becky in therapy for several years and states that she had a successful resolution to all problems for which she sought therapy and now is in a place of thriving and truly living life. As noted earlier both Becky and Ron are physically active and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Both of them work out and she does Pilates as therapy for her back which has troubled her since the childhood auto accident.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Ron is the main breadwinner in this family. He is the IT Director for FMCA Consult Company of Athens, Georgia. As a Professional, his goal is to keep the IT department running smoothly without incident. He says it is satisfying to know that the employees can come to work and provide for their families. Ron tells them that their families need them and we want to send them home the same way they arrive each morning. He has worked there since college graduation. The downside to this job is that he must get up at 5:00 a.m. to make it to his job by 6:00 a.m. The upside is that he gets off about 4:00 p.m. to play baseball or do projects around the house. Becky is a freelance Decorator having own her own business for several years. She sold the business to be able to stay home and be a fulltime mother.

## **CHILD CARE PLANS**

Becky's plans to be a fulltime mother as stated above. However, her mother, his mother and sisters and friends are available should be need assistance in an emergency.

## **FINANCES**

This couple manages their finance in a very responsible manner. They own their home and automobile outright. Thus, their living expenses are easily managed within his salary which is \$98,289 annually (see attached W-2 for 2013). He is also furnished a car and gasoline that they are allowed to use for personal activities. They have \$30,000.00 in savings and stocks amounting to \$10,838.85 and maintain about a 2,000.00 balance in checking. Their monthly expenses include the following: property tax on house, \$107.48; house upkeep, \$90.00; groceries, \$ 650.00; utilities, \$254.45; clothing, \$50.00; medical and dental (he is wearing braces), \$80.00; car expenses, \$170.00; insurance, \$160.01; recreation and hobbies, \$150.00; church and charity, \$30.00; club membership, \$42.00; saving and investments, 455.00; and cable, internet and phones \$280.00. This leaves approximately \$500.00 per month that can be used for child's expenses. Her parents can assist them in an emergency and will pay part of the adoption agency fee.

## **HOME AND COMMUNITY**

The home is located in a gated community in Athens, Georgia. The house is of brick construction and has 3400 square feet including a kitchen, living room, dining room, three bed rooms, 2 and a half baths, laundry and enclosed garage downstairs and a large bonus room upstairs. Required smoke detectors are located in the kitchen area and bedrooms and a fire extinguisher is located in the laundry room. The house is beautifully decorated with custom features that they designed since it was built for them. They moved in on their second wedding anniversary and have been here about four years. The bay window of their breakfast room looks out on a park. There is a fence to provide protection for the dog and eventually their child. School system serving the area are Athens city schools and there are private school alternatives. The city of Athens is located in central Georgia, there are cultural and recreational opportunities associated with the community. Shopping, medical care, schools, parks, ECT. Are within ten minutes of this location. Atlanta Georgia, Augusta Georgia, is the largest nearby cities.

## **RELIGION**

Both Ron and Becky grew up in homes where the Christian faith was practiced. Both believe that this grounding in religious faith sustained them through the trials that both experienced in their twenties with the loss of her brother, friends, and their miscarriages. They presently attend a non denominational church called the church of Athens County and they would expect their child to participate with them in the programs of this church.

## **PARENTING EXPERIENCES AND PHILOSOPHY**

Becky has been around children her whole life. She has taking care of her cousin's children, babysat when she was younger, and is presently helping a friend out by babysitting her infant one or two days a week. Ron has had experience with his younger siblings and with the children of his sisters. Most of theirs now have children and these children are included in

their social activities. While they look forward to playing with their child, they are aware that children “can be precious one moment and difficult and hardheaded” in the next moment. Thus, the parent must define what is expected and set boundaries when necessary. They do not plan to be the best friend but the parent to their child. Since several friends have recently given birth and another friend recently adopted, they expect to have plenty advice. However, they also expect and want to be similar to their own parents in many ways. In other ways they will be different. Ron wants to be more nurturing than his parents were and Becky wants that for him since her father was rather distant in her early years. These are thoughtful people who research ideas, discuss them and make considered decisions. They will be the same way with their children. While religion and education are very important to them, they want their child to make his own decisions when possible. Teaching their own values will mold the child into becoming a well rounded adult. They look forward to ordinary days and doing ordinary things like getting up at night to comfort a crying infant.

### **ATTITUDES TOWARD ADOPTION**

As noted earlier Ron came slower to the realization that adoption was the best plan for them. However, both are now excitedly looking forward to the process. They laughed about the difficult projects such as preparing a video for the birth mother. Because they have friends who adopted, the process is not quite as mysterious as they imagined. They are researching books and educating themselves. Both Becky and Ron have the upmost respect for a birth mother but that has to do with own fear of rejection. Becky has been especially fearful that her battles with anxiety and depression will be negatively received. I have tried to reassure that the healthy way she dealt with losses in her life makes her a better candidate for adoption than someone who has never experienced loss. She can better identify with birth mother and her child.

### **CHILD DESIRED**

While Ron and Becky would like to open as possible in considering a child, they believe that a healthy white infant would best fit their home. Minor and correctible health conditions are acceptable and a biracial child that is part Hispanic, or Native American, or Asian would be acceptable.

### **CLEARANCES**

We were fingerprinted and suitability for adoption letters received showing clearances by the ABI and FBI on November 7, 2013. The Georgia Central Registry on Child Abuse/Neglect was clear no reports located on their Ron or Becky on December 15, 2012 as lifelong residents of Georgia, they are in compliance with the Adam Walsh Act.

### **REFERENCES**

References letters were received from Nancy & David Wilson, Ron’s boss and Becky friend; Donna Price, an aunt to Becky, and friend; Melinda Muller; their minister’s wife and a special education teacher; Joyce Spindle, Ron’s aunt who owns a day care; and Gail Doffmay, Ron

sister. There were many, many others. All spoke positively about the strength of the marriage, their joyful interactions with children, and their stellar reputation in the community.

### **EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This is the case of young couples who have been married for nine years. They have experienced grief and loss issues but have faced these together with strength, determination and mutual support. They are financially secure, and physically and emotionally healthy. I do not hesitate to recommend them for the adoption of a healthy infant child.

### **CERTIFICATION AND STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY**

I am a social worker licensed by the State Board of Social Work Examiners for Private Independent practice as provided by the Code of Georgia, section 2g11-A-19(D). My License expires and will be renewed in November, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Approval Date: 1-15-2014

Rhonda P. Clarkston, MSW, LCSW, ACSW

Social Worker Licensed for Private Independent Practice