

## **The Rosenthal Family**

David and I have always wanted to be parents, and we believe that God placed that desire in our hearts. After eight years of marriage, we realized that He may have a different path for us to become parents.

Although we were always positively predisposed to adoption, we arrived at it as the personal choice for us through a few different experiences. First, I was adopted by my stepfather and had a wonderful, loving relationship with him. Second, we know other couples who have adopted and have shown us that blood ties are not always necessary for a strong family bond. Lastly, and most importantly, we felt God's leading. There are many stories we could tell, ones with a supernatural touch, experiences which, in hindsight, were steps pointing us to adopt a child, or, rather, three.

Once we arrived at the conclusion that adoption was a real option for our family, we had two big questions: where would we adopt from, i.e. domestic or international; and who, meaning which agency, would we choose to help us reach our goal? Both of us labored long and hard over both questions. We did online research, went to seminars, and prayed for the Lord's leading. (We don't believe He steers parked cars.)

Both of us have European and Eastern European heritage (I was born in Poland), so international adoption had a strong pull for us. We searched for over a year, considered many Eastern European countries, and were not able to find a solid program in Poland. As we continued our search, one late night David came across the Lifeline Polish program on their web site. Wow! We were very impressed with Lifeline's information, presentation, and above all, their mission statement. We are believers and followers of Christ, so choosing a Christian adoption agency that is strongly committed to helping orphans was a high priority.

Once we began to work with the folks at Lifeline, it was clear that their mission statement was backed by committed Christian professionals who made us feel at ease through the entire process. Adoption is a necessarily lengthy and somewhat challenging process, designed for the benefit and protection of the child/ren and parents, which is to be expected in the case of any worthwhile commitment. The wonderful people at Lifeline never pressured, never over-promised, and were always there to answer questions. They prayed with us! Lifeline spelled out, well in advance, all the steps we would need to take. They told us what to expect and gave us the tools to be informed, educated, and well-prepared. We wholeheartedly recommend Lifeline to anyone who is considering adoption for their family.

Finally, one year after we began the adoption process we got to meet our children! That day, that moment is difficult to put into words—such a flood of emotions! Our bonding went very well and we enjoyed our stay in Poland, despite the fact that it went longer than expected. Although there are certainly challenges when residing in a foreign country for an extended period of time, there are also wonderful experiences and moments of discovery. Poland has a rich history, striking cities, beautiful countryside, and combines modern conveniences with old-world charm.

Our dream has come true: we became parents; we are now a large family! This past year has been the toughest, most exhausting, yet the most wonderful and amazing time of our lives. We simply cannot imagine our lives without our precious kiddos! We never envisioned having three of them, but we are thrilled God led us to them. A few words of advice: don't ever put constraints on your dreams or God's plans for you; you will be surprised and amazed by what He has in store for you. You just might experience blessings beyond belief; that's what our Joshua, Katie, and Jesse are to us, their grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.

**Ilona and David Rosenthal**