

Dear Intended Parents,

If you're reading this, chances are you've carried heavy, empty arms in one way or another.

While our journeys may look very different, I imagine we share one thing in common: a deep longing for a child. Some people become parents without ever realizing what a miracle it truly is. Others know the ache of waiting, praying, grieving, hoping, and wondering if their family will ever feel complete.

I know that ache.

While our stories are different, I hope that by sharing mine, you'll understand why becoming a gestational carrier is so deeply meaningful to me.

My husband, Brandon, and I have been together since high school. We started dating in 2007—he was the football player, and I was the cheerleader. We grew up together, built our dreams together, and eventually built a beautiful life together. I graduated with my nursing degree in 2013, Brandon built the business he had always dreamed of owning, and that same year we were married on the beautiful Daufuskie Island, South Carolina.

Like so many newlyweds, we couldn't wait to start a family.

After nearly a year of trying to conceive, we learned Brandon had severe male-factor infertility. After working with PREG, we were told that conceiving naturally would be extremely unlikely and that IVF would likely be our best option. As young newlyweds building a business from the ground up, IVF simply wasn't financially possible. We left that appointment heartbroken, but we never stopped hoping. Even when someone tells you it's nearly impossible, you still pray. You still try. And you still wonder, 'What if this is the month?'

Then one month... it was. Two pink lines.

Our son was our miracle after almost two years of wishing and testing. Seven months later, life surprised us again with two pink lines, another miracle—our beautiful daughter. Watching our children grow up together in our first home on the lake was one of life's sweetest gifts. We were truly living the dream.

We eventually purchased an old colonial farmhouse on land where we took on a huge renovation project. During that season, we quietly hoped for one more child, knowing the infertility journey we'd already walked would most likely not allow. Then God surprised us yet again. Grateful is not quite powerful enough of a word.

In preparation for our daughter Cadon's birth, our closest friends tragically lost their precious little boy, Hawkins, on our property while visiting our home. Our hearts were already carrying unimaginable grief. Seventeen days later, Cadon was born. Her scheduled homebirth with a certified nurse midwife was mismanaged and our midwife was found to be grossly negligent in her care which caused our daughter to suffer a devastating hypoxic brain injury. She spent ten days in the NICU before her brain death diagnosis. We advocated and were able to bring her home the next day one final time before placing her in the arms of Jesus.

There are no words to describe the unbearable pain of losing a child. Somehow, my empty arms became incredibly heavy. I desperately longed for my arms to be filled with life. That longing wasn't about replacing Cadon—she is, and always will be, irreplaceable.

In those months after losing Cadon, I continued pumping and donated my milk to help nourish other babies. It was one small way I could continue giving life and love during a season marked by profound grief.

As we searched for hope again, Brandon returned for another fertility evaluation. The results were heartbreaking:

Seven.

Seven (yes, just 7) moving sperm (15 total). Once again, we were told another biological child would likely never happen. To have endured such profound loss, only to be told my arms would remain empty was crushing. The longing I already carried suddenly felt even heavier.

By God's grace, after an experimental surgery and what we can only describe as another miracle, we welcomed our rainbow baby into the world.

That birth healed parts of my heart I wasn't sure would ever heal. For the first time since losing Cadon, I exhaled. I heard my baby cry. I held a healthy little girl in my arms. It didn't erase my grief, but it reminded me that joy and sorrow can coexist, and that miracles still happen.

Today, our home is filled with love, laughter, muddy boots by the back door, baseball and softball games, wrestling tournaments, homeschooling around the kitchen table, and the beautiful chaos that comes with raising children. My own longing has been met in ways I will never stop thanking God for.

Our journey has forever changed the way I see children. They are never something to be expected. Never something to be taken for granted. They are extraordinary gifts.

Although I can never fully understand your unique journey, I do understand longing. I understand infertility. I understand heartbreaking loss. I understand praying impossible prayers and hoping against all odds. I understand watching the person you love hurt, wishing you could somehow carry that burden for them.

And because I know what it feels like to long for a child... Because I know how heavy empty arms can be... I want to help fill yours.

Becoming a gestational carrier is not about replacing anything in my own life. It is about using my pain for good and using my body to help another family experience one of life's greatest miracles, a child.

It would be one of the greatest honors of my life to walk beside you through this journey, celebrate every milestone, and, by God's grace, place your precious baby into your waiting arms.

My prayer is that the longing you've carried for so long is finally met. That your once heavy, empty arms are forever filled with the child you've loved long before you ever held them.

With all my heart,

Camilla