

November 28, 2018

Dear Roger and Sandra:

The day after Valentine's Day, I am at work when my wife, Sandra, calls. She rapidly recounts a call she just received from the Department of Health and Human Services.

"We have a baby about to be discharged from the hospital that needs a home *NOW*. He's a boy, and he is only 4 days old...We need an answer within an hour."

In our mid 50's, we recognize newborn babies demand a lot of physical and mental stamina that is more often found in 20 and 30 year-olds. But when we think about this infant in need of a safe, loving home at such a critical moment in his life, the decision is easy. *Together we agree we are ready to care for another foster child.*

Sandra and I have cared for over 20 children as foster parents, four of which we have adopted through FamilyBuilders and Lutheran Community Services Northwest. The guidance and support we have received from FamilyBuilders over the years has prepared us well to welcome this new baby boy.

I arrive home to find a tiny blond, blue-eyed, delicate, frail, peanut of a baby that, at just over six pounds, occupies little more than my left hand. His legs still fold up into his abdomen where they had been tucked for the previous nine months. And he is tired.

For the next couple weeks, our new roommate can eat about an ounce or two at a time. He wakes during the night every couple hours and we change his diaper, snuggle him up, put a couple ounces of formula in him, tuck him back into his cradle, and remind him, "No failure to thrive on our watch."

By March our guy has perked up and remains awake for more than an hour at a time. He is eating more and goes nearly four hours between feedings. At three months he is sleeping through the night.



Sandra and Roger with their youngest daughter, Molly.

Having received little prenatal care and medical attention, his development is monitored carefully with the support of professionals. At four months we bring him in for a developmental evaluation. Not only is he doing well, he's excelling! His ability to track and manipulate toys is double his chronological age. At five months he starts army-crawling around the room.

Every night, as I give him his bedtime bottle and rock him to sleep, I look into his face and am reminded that he is a tiny, sacred life. It is clear he knows he can trust us, and that he is safe in our house. He is easy to love.

At six months, it's time to break our bond. This foster baby is ready to join his forever family. And they are an awesome family. There will be joy and heartache, laughter and tears, hope and disappointment, failure and success.

But most of all, he will be loved. Loved well. Without us. By the time he is two he will have forgotten his time at our house and have no memory of life beyond his new family.

Sandra and I sit on the kitchen floor, eat ice cream and grieve our loss. We are going to miss his grin and the excitement of watching him discover the world around him. But we also celebrate his new hope. We will remember that it was in our house that he was given a chance to grow, to thrive, to develop, and to know how to be loved.

Today, you can give a vulnerable child stability, love and a chance to thrive with a holiday gift to FamilyBuilders. Right now, there is an urgent need in our community, with many more foster children than available homes. Your gift helps FamilyBuilders create new foster families and makes sure these families have the tools and support needed to flourish with the children in their care.

Your contribution will truly change lives and provide foster kids the most precious gift of all: the chance to grow up in a safe and loving forever family.

Our deep gratitude for your support of foster children in our community. Blessings and peace to you this holiday season,

Roger + Sandra

Roger and Sandra

p.s. Your gift will create new, incredible families and make sure that foster babies, like the little guy we cared for, always have a safe, loving place to call home. Send your gift today!!!