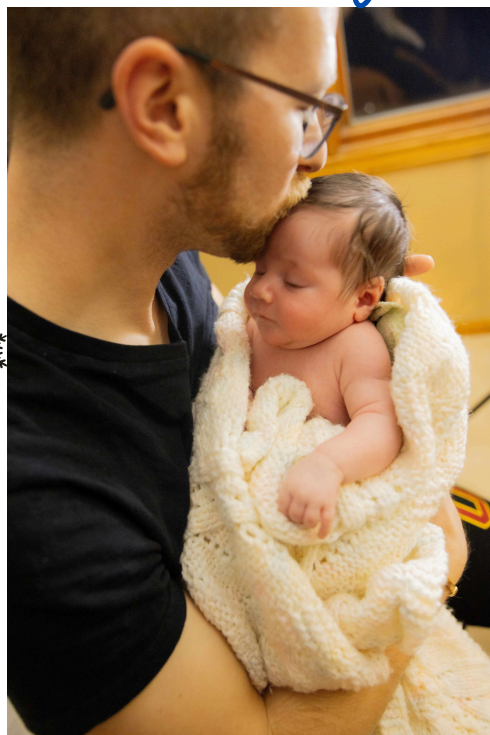


Happy Holidays



Love makes a family: Hopeful Beginnings walks with parents on their journey

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Part of the holidays includes time to reflect on the year gone by and what it has brought for us. At Hopeful Beginnings, we are thankful that our reflections include the families that we have been able to walk alongside in their journeys of pregnancy and/or parenting. For many families in our adoption program, the holidays can bring up so many strong emotions. We would like to share with you a testament from one of our beams of light this year – Aiden and his family:

“We could not be more thrilled to have been able to grow our family with the help of Hopeful Beginnings of St Mary Services! While it was a long wait for us, and what felt like forever, the Hopeful Beginnings team was there at every turn with support and words of encouragement. We did experience a spectrum of emotions during the waiting period, but our social worker, Julia, was able to help us navigate these feelings into productive outlets. Then, out of nowhere, we got the phone call we never thought possible... a beautiful baby boy who was 4 days old and excited to meet us! We rushed to the hospital to meet him and it was the most surreal experience imaginable. This little bundle of joy was ours! Even after placement, both Julia and Allyson were able to help sort through all the emotions and logistics of bringing this newborn home after a few days in the hospital. Fast forward, our son Aiden is thriving. He loves playing with his dog brother and can't get enough of his favorite food, peaches. Being a local organization, we can easily share Aiden's smiling face all the time. We cannot thank Hopeful Beginnings enough for what they have done for us. Their services are invaluable in helping families feel whole.”





At Hopeful Beginnings we are so fortunate to witness the joy of families through adoption. We also carry the weight of adoption related loss and the grief of our clients who have experienced the loss of a pregnancy. During the holidays, it can be hard to know how to acknowledge these losses. While words will always come up short, here are a few points that may be helpful:

To support a family dealing with infant loss during the holidays, its important to: be present, acknowledge their pain, offer practical help, respect their choices, and allow them to share memories of their baby while giving them space to grieve in their own way; you can also suggest including a symbolic gesture to remember their child, like a special ornament or a moment of silence during celebrations.

Reach out proactively: It's okay to let someone know you are thinking of them and available to listen (if they want to talk)

Ask how you can help: Don't assume what others need. Some hearts heal better while hands are busy, others need to rest.

Validate their feelings: Let your loved ones know all feelings are acceptable, even during the holidays.

Share memories and memorialize with respect: Some individuals find comfort in sharing, creating memorials such as ornaments or candles. Others do not.

Grief is not linear: Every day is a journey for those dealing with grief and some days may be better than others. Leave open invitations for those dealing with grief, letting them know their presence is cherished but never required.

Please remember that Hopeful Beginnings is only able to do the work that it does because of supporters like you. Every gift, big or small, is appreciated and used to support families across Illinois in one of life's most beautiful, difficult and rewarding seasons.

Scan to Donate!



*Wishing you much light and love,
Natalie Rodriguez
Hopeful Beginnings Staff
and Board of Trustees*

