



# Adoption Council of Ontario

"Ubuntu: People are people through other people"

From the young age of around 14-years old, I knew that I wanted to build my family by adoption. Later when my husband came into my life and joined me in the dream of adopting children.

From the beginning we knew that we wanted to pursue an intercountry adoption, and we research a number of countries before learning in 2003 that South Africa was an option. Even though the program was still in its infancy then and a bit unpredictable, we immediately knew it was for us – it was where our heart took us. We signed up with the agency in June 2004 and started our homestudy a few months later. Our beautiful son was placed in our arms in Durban, South Africa on September 7, 2005 when he was four-months old.

As much as he is an amazing joy for us, we are painfully aware that my son had to lose a lot to join our family. He has lost his birth family, his culture, his community, his country and his language. At different points in his life he will grieve the loss of these things, both unknown, known and what might have been. And hopefully we are preparing him to handle these emotions and support him through this lifelong journey.

We are doing our best to raise a strong bi-cultural competent person who has a healthy sense of identity and pride in his birth heritage. Admittedly, it is a lot of work and takes commitment, however the rewards are too numerous to list, and the dangers of not embracing the culture are too great.

Beyond the obvious thrill of raising our son, one of the most unexpected outcomes of our journey is the wonderful friendships we have gained with other families we've met through our parent lead "*Families with Children from South Africa*" support network. Being part of the adoption network means that our son has regular contact with other children from the same birth country and an opportunity to build lifelong friendships with the other adoptees.

It is important for us that our whole family is actively involved in the African community in Toronto. Our bookshelves have a full shelf of South African children's books and adult literature, we regularly cook Zulu foods, listen to a variety of styles of South African music, and keep up-to-date on current events. Essentially, we genuinely share a passion for our son's heritage.

We will do our best to teach him about UBUNTU, the fundamental South African philosophy of humanness, community and caring that means: "*people are people through other people.*"

Adoption has been an amazing thrilling journey for our whole family, and the ride isn't over yet!

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Every Child Deserves a Forever Family.

[www.adoption.on.ca](http://www.adoption.on.ca)

