



Dear friend, we are Roland and Marijke

First of all we would like to thank you so much for taking the time to read our letter. Although we have never met at this moment, you might become a very special person in our lives. We wrote this letter and selected the pictures with you in our minds, and we think it shows quite well who we are and how we live.

Please take your time to get to know us!



Marijke and Roland, springtime in Beijing, China
Above: on our wedding day

We are Roland and Marijke (36 and 35 years old), a couple living in Holland, Europe. We have a beautiful son, Philip, who is born on December 10th 2007. We met sixteen years ago on a Greek island, and from that first moment we knew we were meant to be together. Our love and respect for each other increases every year. We have been living together since 1996, and have had so many good times and fun moments, but we have also overcome personal challenges together. It was in the summer of 2000 when we decided we would love to have a baby together. Time went by and after a few years we visited the hospital. Doctors told us that the chances for us to get pregnant were minimal. We had a difficult time but it also made us stronger as individuals and as a couple.



We became very enthusiastic about adopting a child. After more than two years of taking adoption courses, gathering paperwork and lots of waiting, we were ready to adopt a baby from the USA. And then Marijke got pregnant! We were totally surprised! Our son Philip is now almost two years old and a very bright and healthy young boy.

Some time after his birth we found out that adopting a child still has a very special place in our hearts. Time went by and the feeling became stronger and stronger. We have lots of love to give to a second child, there is space in our hearts and home. We would love to extend our family through adoption, have another baby and a little brother or sister for Philip. Adopting our second child will be one of the happiest moments of our lives!



We live in a nice town in the middle of Holland. Our home is in a spacious neighbourhood where lots of families with children of all ages live. A school is just, literally, around the corner and sporting fields and playgrounds are across the street. Every evening and weekend there are children playing soccer and baseball, wonderful to see!



Clockwise, starting top left:

Philip playing in his bedroom
Having a drink in the backyard

The primary school behind our house
Children walking to the school at
'Carnaval', a holiday like Halloween

Philip in front of our home playing in the
leaves, November 2009

In the weekends we love to spend time with our friends and family. They all live nearby and we often visit each other to chat and have fun. We are very proud of our nephews and niece. Our nephews Lucas and Oscar are sons of Marijke's brother, and Florine and Jelle are the daughter and son of Roland's sister. A third baby is to be born in April. They are absolutely adorable and Philip is always excited to play together with them. Both our parents can't wait to embrace their new grandchild and all four of them are very, very proud of our adoption plans!



Roland and Marijke together with Hugo, Marijke's brother
Roland's parents and Florine, our niece, at Christmas and Marijke holding Valentijn



Roland's sister Jiska with her husband and babygirl Florine, in front of our house
Marijke's parents with our youngest nephew Oscar on the day he was born



Marijke with friend Femke and her beautiful daughter Bo (adopted from the USA)
Philip and Lucas at a party in our backyard

Together with our two dogs: Aster, a Labrador Retriever and Splinter, an English Pointer, we spend lots of time at the beach or in the woods. They never get tired of walking and playing together. Philip loves to throw balls and Aster keeps bringing them back, over and over again. There is not a day going by without going outside and play for Philip. Even when it's rainy he puts on his boots and gets his little umbrella to dance in the rain puddles. At the moment he loves to look for chestnuts and acorns and of course look at the mushrooms. Nature takes a specific place in our daily life.



Clockwise, starting top left:

Marijke and Roland at the beach with Aster
Philip and Aster
Marijke, Roland and the dogs before Philip was born
Splinter looking handsome
Roland and Philip looking at a chicken

During the years we are together we have travelled a lot around Europe, to the Dutch Caribbeans and to the United States, for example to San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York and Las Vegas. But also to several countries in Asia, like Thailand, Indonesia, China, Vietnam and Cambodia. Everywhere we are we love to meet people and make friends to learn about their culture and way of life. Since Philip is born we have been to Italy, Spain and Morocco together. He loves airplanes, being together with both his mum and dad and have fun all day long.



Roland and Marijke on the Mekong River, Vietnam
Roland and Philip having breakfast in Tuscany, Italy, September 2009



At the Grand Canyon, USA
On a temple in Bagan, Myanmar



Marijke teaching Philip how to swim in Morocco, March 2009
Taking a cooking class in Thailand

Marijke about Roland:

Roland is a very friendly, fun person to be around. He works very hard as a director in financial accounting, but always has time for Philip and me and his friends and family. He loves to play sports, has always loved to swim and ride bicycle and hike. He is a wonderful dad, it is amazing to see how Philip enjoys spending time with him, and hear them laugh as they are together. At this moment he is already working on the nursery. I am so very happy and thankful that we met and that he's my husband!



Roland about Marijke:

Marijke is a kind and caring person. She is very patient and a good listener, she loves to help people whenever she can. She is a warm and loving mother to Philip and will be for our other child. One day a week she works in an animalshelter. She has been crazy about animals and nature since she was a little girl. Other interests she has are cooking delicious meals, gardening and spending time with friends and family. She can't wait to get to know our second child and show him or her all the beauty of the world!



We would like to tell you about our thoughts about raising children. We think it is important to let children grow up in a very safe and loving home. Marijke is a stay-at-home mom for four days a week, and Roland is at home every Thursday. Whenever they can, his grandparents come over and also love to take care of him. When Philip is almost 2.5 years old, in May 2010, he will visit a playgroup two sessions a week.

In the upbringing of our children we have some important values. First of all we teach Philip to take care of other people and to be a kind and friendly boy. We tell him that everyone is special and wonderful in their own way. He grows up in a country where people of different cultures live together, and we love that aspect of our little country very much. We think that this provides a perfect example for children! Other moral values we intend to teach our children are honesty and reliability.

Education is very important to us. Philip has lots of books and he loves to listen to stories and look at the pictures. He also loves to sing and dance, that's why he will start his first course at the local School of Music in January. Singing and dancing together with other toddlers! We think it's important to find out the strengths and interests of our children and to aid them in developing these.



Philip and his grandmother, and children in the school right behind our home

Since we are in the adoption process since 2005, we know a lot of other adoptive parents by now. We think it's important for a child to see that there are other children who have been adopted and who have different skin colors. We cherish these friendships! We will be open and honest to our child about his or her background.

We live in Holland, a small country in Europe. It's about half an hour drive to Amsterdam, four hours by car to Paris and you can get to New York in just seven hours! We are very happy to live in this country, mostly because of the tolerant nation. People with different ethnic backgrounds are living and working together. Roland, for example, has Spanish, African-American, Chinese and Indian colleagues. We are proud of the diversity of the people living in Holland and know for sure that this community gives the good example for children growing up!



Some famous Dutch canalhouses

Vondelpark in Amsterdam, and children with balloons in Amsterdam.

There are lots of windmills in Holland



There is one thing left we would like to share with you...although we have been living together since 1996, we just got married a few years ago. That day, September 15th 2006, has been so wonderful! All of our friends and family were there and the sun was shining all day. Everyone was smiling and having a good time. The memory of that day is so special, this letter would not be complete without some pictures of it!



The bride and groom enjoying the day



Together with Roland's sister Jiska and her husband adoring our niece Florine, only six weeks old

Roland's family

Marijke's family, with her grandmother. Despite her age she is healthy and strong and very much involved with our adoptionplans!