

# The Gordon Family!

SENATOR WYDEN



We are a growing family of adopted people. While adopting our own daughter came as a surprise through kinship adoption, we have fully embraced this path. It has turned into a life-changing event that has made our family of Gordons even stronger. Carol was adopted herself as a young child. While she was given a great foundation, she understands the complexity of having an adoption story.

Emma is a helpful and friendly child who can't wait to be a big sister, hopefully through another future adoption. Emma a bright, fun artist who also loves music, especially singing in the shower. She often says, "I'd like a sister to make slime with," and "Adoption is special because I got to choose my parents -and they chose me."

Overall, our family enjoys being together and appreciates the unique qualities of each family member. Being in nature and doing many fun and safe activities outdoors, such as hiking, the beach, road trip vacations in the RV, and visiting national parks are all part of our repertoire. Our two sweet and loving cats are fun to be with at home, and we are open to the idea of getting a dog in the future. We consider them members of the family. It's important to us that everyone feel safe to share their feelings and express themselves safely. We want everyone to feel seen and heard. During the week, we focus on school. On the weekends, we will enjoy bike / scooter rides or hikes in the park. We enjoy eating out sometimes, but we also enjoy preparing meals together at home.

The adoption process was complicated, as it often is, and perhaps in some ways felt more so for us as a kinship adoption. We had to navigate legal barriers, set boundaries, and learn how to advocate both for ourselves and for our daughter. Since adopting, we've had to educate ourselves continually about all the different needs children who experience the child welfare system might face. Fortunately, our counseling and military backgrounds have come in handy in both these regards.

We want Congress to know that the stories of adoptive families like ours need to be widely shared, and our stories should be heard and valued for the knowledge and experiences we have had in getting to where we are. Children who are coming into foster care- or who are adopted- need the support of a "village" that understands their journeys and includes them in the conversation. But most of all, we want Congress to know that at the end of the day, despite the hard work, the struggles and whatever comes next, the bottom line is "We adopted a wonderful child." And that's truly what matters most.