

# OUR BEAUTIFUL FAMILIES



## **LGBTQ+ Virginians' stories of birth, adoption, and surrogacy**

Being an LGBTQ+ person or couple trying to grow a family can be a daunting and sometimes lonely process. There are few roadmaps to follow, and many roadblocks to navigate. If you're lucky enough to know a queer-parented family who has gone down the road before you, you may have access to one of the most powerful antidotes to loneliness and uncertainty, and that is a story! We wanted to expand access to stories of Virginian LGBTQ+ families and families-to-be, so if you're a queer person thinking about going down this road, consider all the people here your new friends - friends who are ready to share their story with you. And if you're of the hetero variety, maybe these stories will build your capacity for empathy and ongoing allyship.

All of our storytellers were given a series of prompts, and instructed to answer as many/few as spoke to them or were relevant. The prompts have been deleted from most of the stories for flow, so it may be helpful to scan them on the next page before you dive in. We hope you enjoy!

If you're an LGBTQ+ family in Virginia who'd like to add your story to our collection, please reach out at [richmondstoryhouse@gmail.com](mailto:richmondstoryhouse@gmail.com).

## Part 1: BEGINNINGS

- If you have a partner, how did you and your partner(s) meet?
- How did you decide to create a family?
- If you don't have a partner, what was the decision like for you to start your family?

## Part 2: BRINGING YOUR FAMILY INTO BEING

- Did you explore different ways of bringing your family into being? How did you choose?
- What was your experience of conception, pregnancy and birth?
- What was your experience of surrogacy?
- What was your experience of fostering and/or adoption?
- If you have a partner, was the experience different for each of you?
- Did you feel supported by partner(s), family, friends and providers?
- Were providers LGBTQIA friendly?
- Did gender identity or gender performance affect your experience of being pregnant or supporting your pregnant partner?

## Part 3: BEING PARENTS

- Tell us about your experience of parenting so far.
- What/who has made you feel supported as a family as it relates to your LGBTQI identity (or in general)?
- What do you wish you'd known at the beginning of thinking about or trying to grow your family?
- What message or thoughts do you have for other queer couples/people in the beginning phases of this journey?