

Falling in love with a picture

“You’ll fall in love with a photo,” people had told us. I wasn’t sure I believed it. Then five years ago today we got a call we hadn’t expected for months. We were matched with a boy! He was 13 months old. He lived in Hunan Province. And our social worker said he was really cute. Then this will sound absurd. John and I were almost afraid to look at his file. We stumbled around the house in a daze, barely speaking to each other, unsure we were ready to say yes so soon, but knowing in our hearts that we would. Finally we went to our computer. And using the slowest dial-up connection in the universe, we opened a PDF at a desk in the room that would become Leo’s bedroom. When the file finally opened 20 years—or minutes—later, there he was. He had solemn brown eyes. He had black shiny hair. He looked bewildered and shy. He was so, so beautiful. And it was true. We knew. He was our son. We were in love. Seeing his photo changed everything. Up to that point I had been eager to become a mother, but I had been relatively patient. That all changed when we looked into our son’s eyes. Immediately I wanted to board a plane to China. I wanted to know everything about the people who were caring for him. I pored over every detail in the handful of photos we had. Was he happy? Was he healthy? Was he loved? That part of our adoption journey forced me to grow, to trust God, and to believe this child was in His hands. Naturally I wanted this little boy—our son—to be in our arms. But I had to wait and pray and hope our lives would be intertwined. We had waited years to become parents. The 11 months between that phone call and the day we held our son felt interminable. But the time passed. And we became a family.



Today our son has been in our arms, in our family, for more than four years. But he has been in our hearts since that moment we saw his photo five years ago today.