

CAROL'S CORNER

It has been a while since my last newsletter, but as you can imagine after reading this issue, Kim & I have been left with little spare time. But we're not complaining, it's been an incredible year!

We have continued to have great success. Dr. Garzo, Dr. Meldrum and their staff have been instrumental in the successful birth stories you will read about in this issue. The care our surrogate moms and their couples receive from them is incredible and is very much appreciated.

In February, a television crew from the most prominent news program in Spain came to California to interview Building Families and Dr. Gabriel Garzo in La Jolla. The experience was unbelievable. When the producer explained to me that their goal was to describe what Surrogacy was about to the people in Spain, I was hesitant. Surrogacy is an experience, a beautiful experience, and I was not certain that this could be explained or even understood. I was wrong. When the interviews began and each surrogate mom began to explain what Surrogacy meant to them, it was clear to me that the message couldn't

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Rental Car Races to Hospital

After a basic textbook pregnancy, it came as a surprise that Monica's labor and delivery resembled a book written by George Lucas or Steven Spielberg. It was an action packed night!

It began shortly after midnight, January 26, 1999, with a phone call from Monica saying she thought she was in labor and it ended slightly more than an hour later when she delivered!! Her hus-

band, Lennie, remained calm and collected as he ushered Monica into their couple's rental car. The couple jumped into the backseat and Lennie sped off into the night. He put his flying license to good use that night as he sped faster and faster as each contraction became harder and harder. No one, not even Monica, knew the birth was only minutes away. Within moments of arriving to the hospital, Gerard was born, weighing in at a whopping 8 pounds! His

mother is overwhelmed by the whole experience and a nurse helps her to a chair and gets her some water. I finally get there and first see the new mom, sitting in a chair by herself outside of the delivery room, crying. I rushed over to her to see what was wrong. "Nothing is wrong. Everything is perfect!" she exclaims. "I have a son and he is so beautiful!" She saw my puzzled look and she explained, "Have you ever had your dreams

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Touched By An Angel

There were far less surprises in Mischa's journey, but it was no less incredible, believe me. Mischa's life, along with the pregnancy, remained uncomplicated. Every milestone was met or surpassed along the way and when she told her couple they were having a girl, all was wonderful with the world. They were thrilled to tell their son, Etai, that he had a baby sister on the way.

You must understand that Mischa is a woman with direction, you may

even say she is a No-Nonsense kind of gal. Her matter-of-fact attitude often amazed the other women in the support group. So it would seem that there were few things Mischa wasn't prepared for...but she couldn't anticipate what was to come on May 23, 1999. Her story can be summed up in the following statement she made and with the beautiful poem her experience inspired her to write which is printed in the "Special Thoughts" column.

When Mischa said, "This was the most incredible experience of my life" you knew it was true. You could see it in her face and hear it in her trembling voice. She was touched so deeply when she heard the mother sobbing softly and she saw her face streaming with tears as Yael, a sweet little angel, was born. The effect was more than she ever realized it would be.

Mischa, you have inspired us all! Congratulations on bringing your couple 7lb 6oz of pure joy!



“To Expand or Not to Expand? That is the Question”

As Building Families continues to grow from a small, intimate, “hands on company”, can we tolerate the growth pains? The debate and search for what to do has lasted at least a couple of years between Ms. Weathers and myself. We made our first step over a year ago when we welcomed Kim to the staff. Kim’s professionalism and wonderful ability to comfort and support the surrogate mothers has made us realize that with the right people, we are able to expand and still maintain the values this program was built on.

After much deliberation, we have decided to move forward and take on more cases, helping couples worldwide who want their own child. We believe we have made a worthwhile decision. We

Dr. Rad's News and Views

have agreed that growth and maintaining the quality of service is foremost and will always be our central focus.

Those of you who have had an experience with Building Families understand the abundance of caring, time and contact all of us provide to our surrogate moms and their couples. This is the core of our program. However, our surrogate moms have also learned to depend on each of us exclusively, which we nurtured. One of our fears was that this exclusive nurturance by each of us would be lost if Building Families expanded. We believe we have found a way to expand without losing our quality.

Carol has chosen surrogate moms to function as case managers or Surrogate Mentors. As the Director of Building Families, Carol will oversee the entire program while continuing to teach, train and guide each new case manager. Kim will be taking a more administrative role including marketing of the program while still being in-

involved in some case management. Finally, Dr. Radojevic has started a new support group in her Carlsbad office, while Dr. Tucker continues to run the support group in San Juan Capistrano. We are discussing the addition of support group meetings for our couples in the future. As you know, we are unique in that we evaluate our surrogate moms and the couples to ensure they are emotionally prepared to enter into a surrogacy relationship.

In summary, I and Ms. Weathers would like to reassure all of you that as we expand, we will not compromise our core values of quality, caring and complete nurturance of all of our surrogate moms and their couples. We welcome discussions and feedback from each and every one of you. Your comments are always important to us.

Enjoy the warmth of the summer!



Pregnancy Update

As you can see by the number of birth stories in this issue, the stork has been very busy! He will be taking the summer off, but will be in flight soon thereafter. Here are our latest pregnancies:

Tara Oct. 27
 Angelique Dec. 17
 (with twins!)
 Kristina Feb. 13

WELCOME ABOARD!!!



We welcome these surrogate moms and wish them speedy success!!!

Melissa Marsi
 Monica Tracy
 Juliette

 Vesna Radojevic, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist who directs the psychology component of Building Families Through Surrogacy



No Time to Spare

You can just imagine how many close calls we have. It is even more difficult when the couple live in another country, to try and coordinate everyone arriving in time Tracy's delivery on November 11, 1998 was definitely one for the record books. When her labor began, a couple weeks before the parents were due to arrive, it was the middle of the night in Europe. They were panicked, as they couldn't get an international flight until morning! Their flight was due in at 4:30pm in San Diego, so Kim went to meet them as things seemed calm at the hospital. I was on my way from Los Angeles to San Diego, stuck in traffic.

Suddenly, I get a page from Tracy's husband, Mark, that Dr. Blake has decided a C-Section is nec-

essary and they will begin preparing her for surgery soon. As they are wheeling her into the operating room, Tracy's couple arrive. They hadn't slept in over 24 hours, but you wouldn't know it by their excitement. Tracy arranges for Mom to be in the operating room with her and Mark so she can witness the birth of her children. Dad-to-be, Kim and myself are in an adjoining viewing room anxiously awaiting the birth.

We waited a very short time to see Xavier and his brother, Guillem, be born. These precious boys weighed in at 5lb 11oz and 4lb 5oz, respectively. It was certain that these new parents were exhausted and we wondered how they managed to function, but I guess as parents we just do! I wonder if they have caught up on any of that lost sleep...somehow I doubt it!!



Surrogate Mom Wins Gold Medal

Well, not really, but Carol would have won a gold medal if there was a pregnancy race that had hurdles every 10 feet! On April 1, 1999, Carol calls Kim and announces that her water broke. After realizing that this was no April Fool's joke, Kim whisks Carol off to the hospital. I am in Texas, her couple are in Europe and we are all frantically trying to get to Southern California. Incredibly, the doctor decides that they will stop her labor and see if she can hang on to the pregnancy for a while longer to give the twins' lungs some more time to mature. After 16 days of hospital confined bed rest, the doctor walked in and without saying a word handed Carol a note. The note read that the babies' lungs were mature and she could now deliver.

So that afternoon, Alvaro and Ignacio, were born weighing in at 6lb 3oz and 6lb 15oz, respectively. Just outside of the delivery room, their big brother and their aunt eagerly awaited their arrival. If Carol could have seen her couple's faces when they walked out of the Operating Room holding their babies, she would have realized, at that moment, that she did win the Gold Medal after all!



Special Thoughts

Poem written by Mischa

*I never thought it would feel like this
I just never understood
The way it felt to hold you
The feeling so amazingly good.*

*After having you inside me,
And feeling like it would never end.
Now seeing your beautiful face
I know I'd do it all again.*

*My heart is so full of love for you
I thought it would be easier than this
Your kicks that kept me up at night
I will, no doubt, miss.*

*There will never be good-bye
In my heart you'll go on living
Such a wonderful lesson I've learned from you
The amazing gift of giving.*



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"Rental Car Races"

come true? Well, I just did and it was the most overwhelming feeling I have ever felt in my life. I had to sit down and the tears started flowing. I am happier than I ever knew I could be." What an incredible moment, that may have been missed if they weren't all together when Monica's labor began. Wow!!




Almost Two Decades of Infertility Overcome by Surrogacy



After a whirlwind beginning, Michele couldn't believe the news that she was pregnant for her couple. When I received the positive result, I called her and asked what her plans were for the next summer. She replied, "I don't have any big plans." I told her, "You do now, you're having a baby for your couple!" Then we both just started screaming! After nearly 20 years of infertility, on June 24, 1998, her couple became the proud parents of not one, but two kids. Their daughter, Sushi, weighed 6lb and their son, Ashi, weighed 5lb 12oz. Congratulations!!

A Star Is Born

 Chris, her husband John and their daughters Brooke and Nicole are a team. Chris's family supported her and participated in helping two couples realize their dream of parenthood.

We have a higher instance of boy babies in the program, but interestingly, Chris had girls both times!! One day when shopping in a grocery store, a shopper asked Chris's girls if their mommy was finally having a baby boy. "Oh no!" they exclaimed, "My mommy only knows how to make girl babies!" Then on January 18, 1999, Gabriella was born, proving Brooke and Nicole right! But no one would have guessed her to be as big as she was, 7lb 8oz!

Another interesting thing happened to Chris and her family when they, Gabriella and her parents became international stars when they were featured on Building Families Through Surrogacy's television interview with a prominent news program in Spain. They were quite the stars!!

Hospital Waiting Room Exceeds Capacity

When I arrived to the hospital, I was amazed by the amount of people that had come to Sandy's delivery. It was obvious that this baby girl Sandy was carrying had a large family eagerly awaiting her delivery. I saw Grandma, whom I saw regularly at Sandy's OB appointments, and I met the aunts, cousins and family friends. Sandy looked great as she comfortably sat in her bed making conversation with all of us.

Since Sandy was so comfortable, the extended family felt safe to leave so they went out to eat. Then almost suddenly everything changed. We tried to reach them



Baby Makes Call on Mom's Cellphone

April 21, 1999 brought several surprises for Deena. After an unexpected C-Section delivery, she was surprised to hear that Bennett had made his first cellphone call within the first half-hour of his life! His mom called his grandparents on the East Coast and they wanted to hear their grandson, so Mom put the phone next to him. It was a like a script, he cried on cue!

And, boy, could he cry! During the surgery, Deena asked me to tell her the moment he was born so she could listen for his cry and know that he was okay, but I didn't have to say a word. The moment Bennett was born he belted out an incredibly loud cry. We were sure everyone in that wing of the hospital knew he had arrived.

And, my oh my, was this boy big. After the doctors and nurses made their weight predictions of about 6 lbs, he made his entrance weighing 8lb 8oz!! Where were you hiding him, Deena?? Way to go!!!



on their cell phone, to no avail. This baby was coming and she was coming fast.

Then our wonderful, Dr. Cantu, asked Mom if she wanted to help deliver her baby. Scrubs were ordered for Mom, but Sandy couldn't hold on much longer. So, the nurse took off her own scrubs and gave them to her. Then only moments later, Mom was holding her baby girl as she took her first breath. Incredible!! Nicolette was born on April 3, 1999 and she weighed an even 7 pounds. I am very interested to know if Nicolette will be a shy girl as she seemed to wait until only her parents, myself and Sandy's husband, Jeff were present before she made her entrance. Hmmm??

Great Gifts Come in Small Packages



Who says great gifts don't come in small packages? I know two people who would disagree; the proud parents of GiGi Marie and Jacob. GiGi Marie was the chunkier one at 3lb 15oz and Jacob, her younger brother (by half an hour!), was a little smaller at 3lb 6oz.

Here's their story. Early in the morning, Kim and I got a page, but we didn't immediately recognize the telephone number. We first called Mischa as she was due to deliver any day, but it wasn't her. Puzzled, Kim and I knew it couldn't be Juliette as her due date was not until July....but it was! You can imagine our disbelief when she told us her water had broken.

Incredibly, Juliette and the babies waited until the parents arrived to the hospital and even gave them a few hours of rest before they were born early the next morning on May 21, 1999. The NICU was so pleased with their condition which was clearly a reflection of the great care Juliette had been giving them. At only two weeks old, the twins have a frequent flyer card as they were flown to a hospital nearer to their home. Congratulations!!



SURROGATE SUMMER PARTY

Hey Girls!

We're planning a pool party for you and your families on July 17. Keep an eye out for your invitation or call us for more info!!

Check out our website!!!

www.bldgfams.com
or
www.bldgfams.com/spanish

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Carol's Corner

get lost or even be misunderstood. As Gabriella's parents detailed their road to and through Surrogacy, we were all moved by the impact Chris and her family had on this couple. Each interview brought another dimension of understanding until finally the amazing reality of what Surrogacy is all about came bursting through.

Thank you is not sufficient enough to express my gratitude to those who participated in the interview. You opened your hearts and shared your experiences to help people you didn't even know. Actually, this is another fine example of the kind of people our surrogate moms are. My warmest thanks to Tara & Jay, Juliette, Chris, John, Nicole & Brooke, Dr. Radojevic, Kevin Mahan and Dr. Garzo and his staff. My heartfelt appreciation to Kim for your participation and constant support of our mission here at Building Families Through Surrogacy.

I wish to thank Marina and Lola, the producer and host of "Documentos TV" and their cameraman, Kris and lighting tech, Brandon for treating everyone with so much care and respect. I will forever be grateful for this incredible experience!

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My husband, John, and I would like to thank everyone for the many expressions of sympathy we received on the passing of my father-in-law. Your thoughts and prayers were greatly appreciated.

