

## Carol's Corner

We have had another incredible year. I have been blessed in my continued work with such wonderful Surrogate Moms and their truly special Couples.

Last May, I had the opportunity to go to Spain to visit the many families we have helped. I most often only see each Couple before they become parents and then early in their parenting career. This opportunity allowed me to not only see them again, but to see their child/children growing and thriving in their loving homes. I met grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and neighbors. All of which were so grateful to have this child in their lives. Each day I encountered someone whose heart was touched by all of our efforts, especially those of the surrogate mom.

I wish to thank all of my Spanish Families for welcoming my sister, MaryJane, and I into their homes and into their hearts. I can hardly wait for my next trip to Spain to see my families again and to see all of the new families whose babies were born since then.

I want to acknowledge and show my appreciation to Chris Dacquisto, Tracy McHugh and Shelly Marino for doing their jobs so incredibly well!

Last but certainly not least, I send my gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Vesna Radojevic for her constant dedication to the program over the years.

## Our 100th Baby is an International Star !!!

In February 1999, a news program from Spain, "DOCUMENTO TVE", traveled to California to interview Dr. Garzo and our Program. During the filming, we were awaiting Tara's pregnancy test results. It was exciting and stressful at the same time. The news program announced this to their viewers and then at the end of the broadcast they were able to tell them that it was positive!

Tara and her husband, Jay, were wonderfully supportive of the program's participation in the TV interview and were a beautiful representation of who the Surrogate Families truly are. Little did they know that their media exposure had just begun.



Surrogate Moms share similar stories about the first time they meet their Couple and all of the preparations for that day. They try on several outfits then ask their husband what they think and regardless of his response, they toss it onto the heap of clothing that is forming on the bed and continue the search. Their nerves are nearly shot by the time they get to the restaurant. And within moments of their meeting, she realizes that there was nothing to fret about.

Well, Shelly's experience was not much different,

The pregnancy went along wonderfully with Mom & Dad traveling frequently to visit their Surrogate Family and to attend some OB appointments. We all had a great time at each of their visits. Then as we came close to the end, Mom & Dad arrived for their last trip to await the birth of their son. After several appointments, it was obvious this little guy wasn't going to arrive on his own. He was much too comfortable. Dr. Reading even tried to convince him to come out by speaking to/through Tara's tummy and telling him that Halloween was coming and if he didn't come out then he would miss out on the Halloween candy. That may be why he decided to stay put until after Halloween because he knew he wouldn't get any candy

unless he did stay in Tara's tummy! So, finally on November 3, Tara gave him his 24-hr eviction notice and the next day, we arrived at the hospital for an inducement.

After a short wait, the moment Mom & Dad had been dreaming of arrived. Quinton was born and was greeted by his parents, grandparents and nearly all of his Surrogate Family, as there were more people there than I could count. He weighed in at a perfect 8lb 1oz.

As I mentioned earlier, their media exposure began at his conception (literally) and was re-visited soon after his birth. The day after Tara and Quinton were released from the hospital, they and their

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## So Many Beautiful Moments

except one interesting (funny, really!) event. The conversation at the table was going so well and the dinner was great. We decided to share a frozen mud pie for dessert. Kim offered to cut it and when she went to insert her fork, it went flying across the table then took flight into the air and flew right past "Dad" nearly hitting his leather jacket! We were all so shocked that no one said anything for a moment, then "Dad" reached down to the floor and with his fork he picked up the pie and waved it over his head like a victory flag. We all just roared with laughter.

That was the beginning of what was to become a beautiful relationship. "Dad" did not speak any English, but you could always tell how he felt. Whenever he saw Shelly, tears would just well up in his eyes. His joy was so obvious. The bond with the Couple and Shelly's kids, Charlie and Aaron, was incredible. There was no language barrier between them at all. It was truly amazing. "Mom" was able to travel frequently to California to visit Shelly, Carlos and the kids. On one visit, Shelly and

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## Dr. Rad's News and Views



### "Well-Being and Surrogacy"

Fulfilling the dreams of couples who wish to become parents is the mission of Building Families Through Surrogacy and our Surrogate Mothers. We evaluate, with care, who can become part of this valuable program. In fact, we have an acceptance rate of 50% - 60% of those we have evaluated. The stringent criteria reflects our concern for both the Surrogate Mother's as well as the Couple's emotional well-being.

How important is the emotional well-being of the selected Surrogate Mothers? We define well-being as a sense that life has purpose, daily existence is experi-

enced as meaningful, and a positive self-image. We strive to promote this emotional state through stringent pre-selection, phone contacts and our support groups. We believe that surrogacy is an enormous gift to our Couples and we work to protect our Surrogate Mothers from undue stress, while promoting an environment of support and belonging. Given all the potential "hassles" that accompany surrogacy, we feel strongly that our support groups and availability facilitate the transitions from conception to delivery in a community of caring, support and concern.

*Vesna Radojevic, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist who directs the psychological component of Building Fam-*



### Smooth Sailing

Ericka's surrogacy experience began like a boat rushing down a waterfall then settling into calm waters. She came into the program, met her couple and was pregnant within a month. Amazing!

With a foreign couple and a language barrier, you would think that a relationship was impossible. But Ericka and her husband, Keith, and their son, Alexander, made it look so easy. The extra efforts that were made to share the pregnancy with the Couple meant so much to them. They were happy when they finally arrived to California, so they could see Ericka everyday. They especially enjoyed the day that Ericka took them to the Babies R Us Store. They

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### Pregnancy Update

*Here are our pregnant surrogate moms and their due dates:*

Tawnya	December 8
Samantha	December 19
Amy	January 24
Chandra	March 25
Tara	April 9
Jackie	June 8
Michelle	June 10
Carrie	June 30
Rochelle	July 9



**WELCOME ABOARD!!!**

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

*Melissa, Tracy W.,  
Melissa D., Sylvia  
and Gracie*



### Just In Time

Every year I have a story or two about the Couple arriving for the birth of their baby/ies with little time to spare. This one definitely qualifies. The couple were not too surprised by my call, fortunately, and were able to organize themselves and her parents (new grandparents-to-be) for the next flight out of Europe to San Diego.

Their flight was due to arrive a few minutes before 5:00pm, the peak of traffic time! Fortunately, Shelly knew a back way from the airport to Grossmont Hospital. Unfortunately, they only spoke Spanish and desperately

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### Wonder Woman

When I first met Angie and Vic and their kids, I was impressed. They were a genuinely happy family and they wanted very much to give someone else the opportunity to experience the type of joy that comes from being a family. Vic was so obviously proud of his wife for her desire to help a couple in this special way and proud to be a part of the whole thing. Unfortunately, shortly after we got underway, his military obligations took him away for almost all of the surrogacy experience. We sure missed you Vic!

I was a bit concerned when I learned that Vic would be gone for a year. My worry was

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### Reality Check

I'm not sure of the exact moment Kristina realized what an incredible gift she had given her couple. Throughout the pregnancy, she was very modest about the praise and even somewhat embarrassed. She was matter-of-fact and often stated that she was "just" helping her Couple in a way that she knew how to and could. I smiled to myself after many of these conversations with her, because I knew the magnitude of this special gift would occur to her sooner or later.

When I saw Kristina after her release from the hospital, I knew the realization had hit her. She and her husband were speechless. She didn't have any

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### Surprise times Two!!!

After so many years of infertility treatments, "M" & "J" were sure that surrogacy would be the solution for them. They found me on the Internet and traveled afar to meet with me and with Dr. Garzo. I saw them after their meeting with Dr. Garzo and they were nervous. They said he had told them what many physicians had already

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## I Love Lucy

Twins were nothing new for Angelique as she had 8 year-old twins at home. So fortunately for her Couple, not only was Angelique prepared for a twin pregnancy but she had a lot of knowledge to pass on to them about raising twins. Lucky them!!

Angelique drove to Orange County from San Diego nearly every week for the first three months for visits with the infertility physician, Dr. Hatch, and then "Mom" drove to San Diego for all of the OB visits. What dedication!

The delivery was to be a scheduled C-Section as this was Angelique's history. Since Angelique had never had her water break prior to delivery, Mom & Dad were confident of the date their boys would arrive. So confident, that they never packed a bag or made any other early preparations. Then, of course, in the middle of the night Angelique calls and calmly explains that the oddest thing happened.....Her water broke!

Mom is an avid fan of the "I Love Lucy Show" and she suddenly felt like she was Lucy in one of her zaniest episodes ever. She leaps out of bed, bounces off the wall and falls back into bed again. Dad, aka "Ricky", calmly goes to the kitchen to start some coffee and prepare for the trip. Mom, aka "Lucy" is throwing clothes into a suitcase without noticing that she only packed tops and no bottoms! She rushes through the house frantically looking for Dad only to find him still in the kitchen. She grabs him, he grabs the coffee and they rush out the door. When they finally get in the car, she can't believe that only 15 minutes had passed since the phone call!

They arrived to Sharp Mary Birch within 45 minutes (clearly there were no cops out that night!) only to find that Angelique hadn't even arrived yet! But, she arrived shortly after, as did their sons. So, in the early morning hours of December 4, Joshua was born weighing in at 6lb 1oz and his little brother Justin weighed in at 5lb 14oz. Congratulations!!

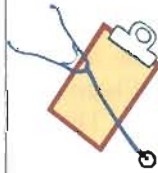
## Our 100th Baby

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families posed for the cover of O.C. Family Magazine and were the Featured Article in the February 2000 issue. It was a beautiful article. The readers of O.C. Family Magazine were very fortunate to have shared in these precious moments.

Then Quinton went home to find a life-sized cardboard picture of John Wayne waiting for him along with a fully decorated Cowboy themed nursery. What a lucky boy!

P.S. Their story doesn't end here. Guess who is expecting a baby brother or sister? That's right! Tara is expecting for her Couple and Quinton and they are due in April! Congratulations and best wishes on the next arrival!



## MEDICAL UPDATE

### What Do The Numbers Mean?

**Our featured physician is Dr. Gabriel Garzo, Medical Director of Reproductive Partners' Medical Group in La Jolla, CA**

The pregnancy test (BhCG) is performed on the 14th day following the IVF Embryo Transfer and the results are reported in numeric

form. There is a direct correlation between this test result and the prediction of the IVF pregnancy outcome. The following chart\* is based on a study examining 305 IVF/GIFT pregnancies at our center in Redondo Beach.

When we receive a low positive result, I believe we

should be cautious about stopping hormonal support until we are certain that the pregnancy is not viable. During the initial period of evaluation, if there is any uncertainty, serial blood tests and ultrasound examinations can be performed. For example, we once had a first BhCG level that was 8 mIU/ml, but then it increased at a normal rate. Even though it was a rocky road for several months, we had a successful outcome.

The moral is to never make a major decision based on one result unless the one result is clear-cut. Occasionally, we will see results that seem to have a poor prognosis which evolve into happy outcomes.

BhCG(mIU/ml)	<100 (n=70)	100-300 (n=94)	300-500 (n=65)	>500 (n=76)
Singleton	13%	72%	65%	34%
Multiple	3%	5%	29%	62%
SAB	80%	19%	6%	4%
Ectopic	4%	4%	0%	0%

\*SINGLE QUANTITATIVE BhCG LEVEL CAN PREDICT IVF/GIFT PREGNANCY OUTCOME? JS Heier, K Hansworth, RJ Kiltz, DR Meldrum, Div. of Reproductive Endocrinology, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center and the Center for Advanced Reproductive Care, Redondo Beach, CA

## Just In Time

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wanted to know how Marcy was and if the delivery had occurred. Shelly managed between some Spanish words and some sign language (I'm sure) to ease their worry. They arrived a few minutes before Marcy was taken back for her C-Section which was enough time for them to feel her tummy and feel their babies moving around.

This was the first C-Section for Marcy and her husband, George. George seemed a bit nervous about going in for the surgery. I gave George my camera and told him to take some pictures if he felt up to it. I was amazed (as was my film developer!) at the pictures George took. He was a natural!

While they were in there having a good time, (obvious from the pictures we saw!) we, patiently (ok, impatiently), waited outside the Operating Room doors for Dr. Goicoechea to come out and tell us how everything went. Finally he and George, came out to share the news that Jonathan and Kevin were born and weighed 5lb 4oz and 4lb 14oz, respectively.

## Reality Check

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matter-of-fact statements to make, not one. Only two words did she say in our first few moments together. "Thank you." Her husband said the same thing and we just hugged and cried.

Hannah was born on February 4 weighing 7lb 12oz and was awaited by her Mom, Dad and big sister. Then the following day it seemed as if the whole world came to see Hannah. There were so many people at the Del Mar Inn and they all traveled to California just to see this precious child. I am sure her popularity continues in Kansas.

## Wonder Woman

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for Angie to suddenly become a single mom of three boys and have a surrogate pregnancy to contend with as well. Not to mention the Cheerleading programs she headed for the teenage girls in her community. Well my concerns quickly vanished, as she proved to be a champ. Her dedication to her family, to her Couple and to the program never wavered. She kept me in amazement and awe right down to the day of delivery.



Once her Couple arrived to California, we all went to a baby shower for the "Mom". I got pulled over for speeding. (I know this is hard for everyone to believe, but yes it's true.) And here was Angie trying to talk the officer out of giving me a ticket. I looked over at this nearly 9-month pregnant woman and she was worried about me! I got tears in my eyes as I wondered if there was any limit to this woman's caring nature. I think she thought I was upset about the ticket but I quickly assured her it was no big deal. I don't think I ever told her about my feelings that day because as life is, we quickly moved on to the next thing. But the moment was stored in my memory bank until I would write about it one day.

Then on May 7, 2000 Angie delivered a beautiful baby girl whose parents named Amanda. She weighed in at 7lb 6oz. Way to go, Angie!!

Way to go, Angie!!

## Smooth Sailing

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spent 4 hours in the store walking through every single aisle. I was surprised that all of that walking didn't induce labor!

An unexpected turn of events, literally, made it necessary for Ericka to have a C-Section. The baby was breech and all of the doctor's efforts couldn't turn her around. But they were all together shortly after delivery in Ericka's room. The moment they walked in with their baby, the room suddenly became brighter. These new parents were just glowing. No words were spoken for a while, only tears of happiness were shared by all. Then I began translating the words that were so important for each of them to say to one another. It was such a beautiful moment.

The little person that bonded these people forever was born on August 29, 2000, weighing 7lb 9oz. Her parents named her Irene.



*May your Holidays be a happy blending of caring and sharing, loving and giving, and laughing and living. We wish you good cheer for now and always.*



## Surprise times Two!!

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said many times before, "I can help you. Let me try." Somehow, they managed to calm their fears and let him try. Since they were here from another country, they relied upon the program for support. So, "M" became an Honorary Surrogate Mom in our program. We took care of her before and after her embryo transfer as we do all of our Surrogate Moms. Then the time came for them to go home and await the results.

This was a familiar experience and they were afraid that the results would be the same as they had been so many times before. Two weeks later I received a fax with her pregnancy test results with a note attached asking "What does this mean??!!" Dr. Garzo and I couldn't wait to call them and share the wonderful news, which took them by complete surprise. They were sure the results were negative because this was what they were used to hearing time and time again.

A few weeks later, we were the ones who were surprised when they called to say they were having twins! I thought this would be the last I would hear from them as they were on their way to having the children they had been dreaming of. But, to my wonderful surprise, they kept in contact throughout the entire pregnancy with pictures and faxed notes. Then on July 7, 1999 their prayers were answered. "M" delivered two healthy baby boys; Roger who weighed 5lb 3oz and his brother Arnau who was slightly bigger at 5lb 8oz. Fortunately for me, they continue to send me updates and pictures of their gorgeous boys.

## Mission Impossible

In the last newsletter you read about Monica's first surrogacy experience and how her poor husband, Lennie, had to drive rocket speed in the middle of the night only to arrive 10 minutes before Gerard was born. Well picture this: Life Flight Helicopter ride from Wildomar to San Diego. Now don't worry, it was not a life-threatening emergency, but the story is still very interesting and I will share it with you.

Monica experienced some pregnancy complications and was put on bedrest halfway through her twin pregnancy. When I asked the doctor how long he thought the bedrest would continue, he stated, "Until she delivers." I left Monica and Lennie alone to discuss this as this would definitely alter their lives. Monica worked full-time, they have two kids, etc. After a while I returned to the hospital room to see tears in both of their eyes. I asked them what they wanted to do. They held hands and Monica responded, "Whatever we can do to help these babies survive. I must do whatever their Mom would have done if she were in my position. How can I do any less? We made a promise to them and we are not going to break it." So the months of bedrest began.

Since we didn't know when Monica would deliver, the Expectant Parents came to California to await the birth of their children. Then, once we reached 26 weeks gestation, the doctors in Wildomar wanted Monica's and the babies' care to continue in San Diego where they are best equipped for a premature birth.

They ordered that she be

transported by ambulance to Sharp Mary Birch Hospital. Monica's husband and Couple returned to the house to get ready for the trip to San Diego. I told them I would follow the ambulance to San Diego and meet them there.

After a while, I went to ask the nurse when the ambulance was coming as it had been quite a while. "Oh, didn't anyone tell you?" she asked. "We couldn't spare the staff that is needed for an ambulance transport so a helicopter is on its way to pick up Monica." I was sure she was kidding. I was looking for the Candid Camera crew or some sign that this was a joke. No one appeared.

When I told Monica, I think she too was looking for the camera crew. Then suddenly we could hear the helicopter approaching. She grabbed my arm and said, "You're going with me!" I asked the nurse if it was possible for me to accompany Monica and she said it was up to the pilot. He needs to consider the weight of each passenger and other things. I knew that I had to tell him how much I really weighed as the information wasn't for my driver's license! He sized me up and cleared me to go. I was nervous, scared actually, but comforted myself with the thought of riding in the back with Monica and focusing on her throughout the trip. The fear returned when the pilot announced that

I was to ride in front with him as there is no room in back with all of the equipment and personnel. I wanted to scream but didn't, of course. All I said was "Cool". Actually my vocabulary from that point until we arrived to San Diego consisted of Cool, Neat, Wow and a few other muttered responses. I wondered if the pilot knew I was scared or if he thought I was just an idiot!

At one point, Monica commented to the paramedic that they should have better viewing for the patients as she was unable to see anything outside. He responded that usually the patients were unconscious or seriously injured and are unaware that they are going for a helicopter ride. "Oh" she said suddenly adopting my limited vocabulary. I am happy to report that the ride was very smooth and nothing at all like I feared. Apparently, I watch too much television as I envisioned us swooping up and down along the way and Monica strapped on the outside of the helicopter!

Anyway, after a month's stay at "Hotel de la Sharp Mary Birch" where Monica received wonderful care from their staff, the experience came to a successful end. Andres and Isabel were born on March 5, 2000 and flew to Europe in May finally to go home with their parents. Monica and her family made many sacrifices throughout those months but have never regretted the decision they made that first day in the hospital.



## Marathon Day Starts Labor

I often hear about the bonding between the Surrogate Mom, her family and her Couple. The relationship that is formed is more special than I can explain. Those of you who have gone through this know what I mean. Melissa explained it when she said, "I never thought it was possible to bond with someone so quickly and so permanently. We can't imagine our lives without them now."

The Surrogate Moms come forward to help someone and don't realize how much they will get in return. The rewards are lifetime and overwhelmingly beautiful. Melissa's husband, Dennis, told me he gets goosebumps whenever he thinks about their experience. It was so incredible!

Since Melissa's Couple were not local, they too arrived in plenty of time for the birth of their baby. Amanda, Melissa's daughter, was sure it was their marathon day that brought labor on. They started the day with a trip to the Wild Animal Park, then went on to play miniature golf only making a



quick stop at the Dairy Queen in between. So, in the wee hours of the morning, Melissa's water broke. Labor didn't start right away, so she thought she would let her Couple rest a bit longer before calling them. Finally, she decided it was time and she called them. She told them to relax as labor still hadn't really begun and that she and Dennis would drive over and pick them up so they could go to the hospital together. Within 5 minutes they were by the door waiting. Unfortunately, the 15 Freeway had other plans for them. There was a huge traffic jam and in the middle of that, Melissa's labor began!



The Couple were getting anxious because Melissa hadn't arrived yet. Finally she did and they rushed to the hospital, taking side streets only! They arrived in plenty of time before Marta made her entrance. Marta was born on June 12, 2000 and was greeted by her new parents and most if not all of Melissa's family. Marta weighed in at a perfect 6lb 8oz. Congratulations!



## TWINS ???



Tracy's second surrogacy experience took on a new twist. Both she and the Intended Mom ("D") received embryos and both became pregnant! So, Tracy would deliver the baby girl they always dreamed of and "D" would deliver the son they always hoped to have. Twins?? Well, sort of!

Some would ask why did this Couple seek out surrogacy when they could have a baby. Well, this attempt came after many, many years of infertility. They had given up hope and went to see Dr. Garzo because of his extensive experience with IVF Surrogacy. He tried to convince them to give him an opportunity to help them before trying surrogacy, but so many years had passed without success, they just couldn't agree. So a compromise was made.

Tracy and "D" had a wonderful time sharing their experiences and attending each other's appointments. Tracy's support throughout "D"'s pregnancy was astounding. The underlying concern felt by all was the idea of them delivering at the same time and not being able to support each other through labor and delivery. But as fate would have it, "D" delivered a month early on June 23, 2000, exactly 3 weeks before Tracy did.

Spencer weighed in at a very healthy 6lb 3oz. Of course, the thought of the baby weighing over 6 pounds at a month early, brought some concern (fear, really) as we wondered how big the baby girl Tracy was carrying would be. But it was a girl, aren't they usually more petite?? Well, on July 14, 2000, 3 weeks after Spencer made his arrival, his baby sister arrived weighing exactly 3 pounds more! Emily weighed a whopping 9lb 3oz!!

Fortunately "D" had recovered from her C-Section and was able to attend Tracy's delivery along with Emily's Daddy and her big (older) brother, Spencer. Tracy had some extra support in the delivery as her daughter, Kaitlin, was in attendance. It was amazing how attentive she was to her Mom throughout her labor and delivery. For a moment I thought she was going to assist Dr. Blake in the delivery! When it was all over, I asked this 6-year-old what she thought of the birth experience. She announced without hesitation, "It's fine, but I'm not having a baby until I'm 94 years old!" Hey, Dr. Garzo, this would be a pregnancy for the medical journals!

Congratulations to everyone and extra kudos to Tracy for making this experience doubly wonderful for her Couple.