

Building Families

P.O. Box 1138
Lake Forest, CA 92609 USA

(949) 588-6015
(949) 588-6024 Fax

surrogacy@bidgfams.com
www.bidgfams.com

Carol's Corner

Our children. So many things are said; they are our future, they are the leaders of tomorrow, etc. This gives a lot of emphasis on how important they are to society, but if we bring it down a notch or two, what comes to mind? Our children are the source of the most beautiful love any person has ever experienced, they bring so much meaning to their parent's lives and for many the thought of experiencing that joy of becoming a parent is all they hope and dream about.



I receive calls and e-mails everyday from women who want to consider becoming a Surrogate Mother. Unfortunately they are not all suitable, because as most of you know, there

NAMESAKE



Angelic with Arnau

In our last newsletter issue, I wrote about Angelic's delivery on January 8, 2003 when she delivered a big baby boy, Arnau, to his awaiting parents. I mentioned that they hoped



Angelic & Arnau resting after the embryo transfer

to add to their family by Summer 2004.

Well their hopes and dreams came true!



Angelic threw a great Baby Shower for her Couple

Angelic, once again, brought a baby into this same Couple's awaiting arms, but this time it was a girl!

They were so moved by Angelic's generosity, they decided to give their baby girl her name.



Blau Angelic

So Blau Angelic was born on June 8, 2004 weighing 6lb 8oz.



Bailey smiling so pretty while Arnau is wondering, "Is that my new sister?"

TEXTBOOK PERFECT

The process went so smoothly it was like a page out of a textbook. That describes the IVF and the pregnancy. Then when you consider the relation-



Chris and Vanessa at one of many dr appointments



Vanessa with her mother, grandmother and Baby Chelsea

ship it too was like a book; one that was a beautiful story of one family helping another in a way that is more profound than anyone could imagine. This new family was so touched by Vanessa and her family's

generosity that they threw them a party at the end. They insisted that no gifts be bought for their baby, because they wanted the spotlight to be on the most special person they had ever had the privilege to meet. That's so sweet!!



Chelsea McKenna



Dr. Rad's News & Views

Independent Vs. Agency For The Surrogacy Arrangement

Why is an Agency necessary for the Surrogate Arrangement?

I have always worked closely and exclusively with Building Families. I have chosen to not work with any other agency or any independent surrogate arrangement. After eight years of performing psychological evaluations for the surrogacy program and understanding the importance of every party of the arrangement, I still got seduced into participating in an independent arrangement!

"I for one realize the immense value of the agency"

I couldn't believe I was agreeing to this as I had refused to do this at least one hundred times before. I have always advocated that the agency is the only way to go. I will explain my story here but let me say this now. I am here to tell you that without a structured program for the surrogacy and/or

egg donation arrangement the standard of care and success of our Couple's desires to become parents is seriously compromised. I AM AGAIN CONFIRMING MY COMMITMENT TO AGENCY WORK ONLY!

The seduction occurred this past year. I was approached by a young and intelligent Couple to perform the psychological evaluation on a woman they knew for quite some time and who had offered to become their Surrogate Mother. They were referred to me by a physician who is well respected in the industry. He, too, said that his policy has always been that all surrogate arrangements his clinic treats must be handled by a surrogacy agency. But like him, after hearing how prepared they were for the process, I felt there was no reasonable explanation for me to turn them down. I was very clear about the criteria that would need to be met to assure everyone's emotional health during this process and the Couple completely agreed. At every turn, I continued to urge the Couple to seek the help of an agency especially as it was becoming evident that things were not going to go well. The fact that they continued to refuse the help of an agency should have been my red flag, but I was seduced, remember? Shortly after performing the requested evaluation, everything we had agreed to was not adhered to...surprised? It became apparent to me why we needed to have an agency with a proven record to make all parties adhere to the required and recommended treatment for the larger good. In addition, the agency facilitates the progress without the Intended Parents feeling the stress or strain. One of the reasons

for independent surrogacy is often the "cost" of the agency. Well, frankly the price or "cost" of *not* having an agency, in this case, Building Families, is far greater in the long run in this independent surrogacy arrangement. In ways they are paying a price that I don't even want to think about!!

After 6 months, this Couple is still swimming in chaos even though they already have a Surrogate Mother...no progress has happened and they still believe they do not need an agency! Just the stress of no progress and the roller coaster of hope and let downs is detrimental to all parties. We tend to minimize the emotional toll that Couples as well as Surrogate Mothers have when things do not go according to plan. Building Families takes control to promote the least amount of damage to everyone with a proven record of success for Surrogate Mothers and their Couples. It is, in one way, insurance that reduces the emotional heartbreak during the surrogate arrangement of our often emotionally taxed Couples.

Maybe, because Carol Weathers and Building Families' staff handle the details of appointments, injections, medical, legal and psychological requirements with such ease that everyone, including myself (this time only), thinks it is easy to handle the intricacies and individual complexities of surrogacy. The amount of time and emotional agony for the Couple as well as the liability that all involved professionals take on is tremendous. We must respect the structure and realize that the worth of the agency is too great especially when a Couple "thinks" they can handle their own arrangement. I do not have any data on the success of agency vs. independent surrogacy arrangements, but I would bet you that the agency, especially Building Families, has a significantly greater success rate.

It really takes an awesome and competent team to help Couples and Surrogate Mothers navigate safely and efficiently through the troubled waters from conception to birth of the Couple's child. Building Families does this so beautifully that it makes a difficult task of coordination; implementation and all the tiny details until the Couple goes home with their baby seem so easy! I for one realize the immense value of the agency in getting a job done that otherwise is left to random occurrences; no matter how dedicated and competent all the other professionals may be.

I wish you all a Happy and Safe Holiday Season...with many blessings. Until we meet again. Dr. Rad.

RED CROSS



Vanesa, Chris with Baby Delia

During the Couple's visit to California, the Intended Mom had a medical complication and without immediate medical assistance she could have become gravely ill. Even before I considered that Vanesa might be their surrogate mom because she had just cleared into the program just days before, I enlisted Vanesa to

help me with their medical situation. I needed someone in San Diego who spoke Spanish to help them through the hospital process and Vanesa immediately came to my mind. She dropped everything and took them to UCSD Medical Center where she demanded immediate attention for this woman she didn't even know. She took such great care of this



Delia

Couple and after considering their experience thus far, it was so obvious that they would be a perfect match.

A bond was formed between them that day as Vanesa gave of herself to help this Intended Mom and it grew even stronger through to the day that Vanesa gave this Couple another wonderful gift, Delia, who was born on November 16, 2003 weighing 6lb 7oz. And their bond is still going strong!



Delia

Carol's Corner

(Continued from page 1) is always a shortage of Surrogate Mothers. Anyway, I almost always receive the same response from them when asked why they want to be a Surrogate Mother. "I love my kids so much that I couldn't imagine my life without them. I want to help someone achieve parenthood so they too can share in this beautiful experience." So, I want to say to the 200+ kids that have been the motivation behind their mother's generosity of helping a Couple have their family, a huge Thank You on behalf of Building Families, the over 165 babies that have been born through our program and their families. In my article you will see some pictures of just a handful of these special kids. I also want to take a moment to recognize Building Families'



staff. I have been truly blessed by the people I have around me everyday. Our Egg Donor Program has been growing by leaps and bounds. Ericka created a sturdy foundation for the program before having to take a break to prepare for a shaking of her own family foundation; she and Keith are expecting twins any day now! Congratulations to them!! Melissa has taken over and has already made fantastic strides. Way to go Melissa! Our busy bees, Tami & Jay, work in the background recruiting the Egg Donors but we never underestimate their worth. Their work is vital to the success of the program. Last but



not least, there is Chris. Chris has made such a difference during her time with us; words can never sufficiently describe what she has meant to each of us. Yes, unfortunately, the time has come for her departure. She is seeking greener pastures in Missouri, but I have already informed her that she won't find it there and will be back. Of course, that is my wishful thinking! I know you join me in wishing Chris and her family all of the best and ask God to watch over them always. Another year has passed. Where does the time go? As parents we ask this on a frequent basis. Our daughter, Jenny, left for college this Fall and Johnny is already in the 11th grade. Johnny has taken Jenny's job in the office and is doing it very well. I thank all of



you that shared your words of wisdom as we have been preparing for our little birdies to leave the nest. I could write a book with all of the great advice I received. But I barely have enough time to write this newsletter, so I don't see that happening anytime soon! We at Building Families wish you all a wonderful Holiday Season and we look forward to sharing the beautiful New Year with you all.

God Bless,
Carol Weathers

PUNCTUALITY



After Noemi was confirmed pregnant, we notified her Couple of the anticipated due date. As the pregnancy progressed, we realized that the excited parents were literally expecting that their bundle of joy would arrive on this anticipated due date of February 3, 2004. Even after I explained to

them that the due date was an approximation, they were certain they knew when their baby girl was going to arrive. And they were right! Noemi gave birth right on time to their beautiful baby girl, Paula, who weighed in at 8lb 3oz. Obviously their parental intuition was right on track. I wonder how it is working now?



FAMILY TIES



From the moment I met Michelle's Couple, they often spoke about their family and especially their nieces and nephews. They were a very proud Aunt & Uncle. Then when they met Michelle and her family, they instantly became a part of each others family and were named Honorary Aunt &

Uncle to her kids too! Although they were very happy loving all of these children, they were ready to become parents of their own little bundle of joy.

Michelle made their dreams come true on February 17, 2004 when their gorgeous baby girl named Lorca was born and she weighed 7lb 13oz.



POWER OF PRAYER

After Holly and her doctors tried everything to stop their arrival, Jackson, Ivy and Anna Belle decided to bless us with their presence on November 17, 2003. This experience gave us all a lesson on how powerful prayers, love and determination can be. Their continued progress is a true testament to that!



ELITE CLUB

We have a club that most Surrogate Moms and their Couples don't want to join. The members can tell you that to enter this club; you must narrowly make the birth of your children. In some instances, the new parents only make the delivery by minutes as we madly rush them to the hospital from the airport. Well, Adriana & Eduardo's parents are the newest members of this club. After arriving to San Diego Airport, my husband & I shuttled them to the hospital so they could share in the birth of their children. And we made it just in time! Leticia patiently awaited

their arrival and moments later gave birth to Adriana who weighed 6lb 5oz and Eduardo who weighed in at 5lb 8oz. Leticia has blessed two special international Couples by helping them have their family. Her first delivery on March 4, 2003 added to a beautiful family when Baby Emilio was born. Way to go, Leticia!!



SPECIAL ALBUM



Jennifer and the new Mom showing Adriana to Cody & Cory

Jennifer has such a big heart. Not only did she make her Couple's dreams come true on April 28, 2004 when she gave birth to their daughter, Adriana, who weighed in at 8lb 4oz, but she also gave them a special gift. Jennifer chronicled her entire pregnancy and

along with the pictures we took she created a beautiful memory album for them to treasure forever. I'm sure they will think of Jennifer everyday for her incredible generosity in helping them have their family and by giving them something they can look at and share with their

family and friends forever.



IN SYNC

It is so strange how children can be in sync with their parents even when they are thousand of miles apart....and not even born yet! Although Gustavo &



Guillherme's parents thought they were arriving to California with plenty of time to get settled, relax with Miriam & her family and even visit Disneyland, this was not their chil-

dren's plans. They must have heard Miriam say that their parents were arriving on January 13, 2004 so they decided they wanted to arrive then too....and they did! So after a relatively easy twin pregnancy (At least Miriam made it seem that way)

Gustavo weighed in at 5lb 12oz and his brother, Guillherme, arrived shortly after weighing 6lb 3oz.



Dr. Garzo & Lisa with Chris & Miriam sharing in the new parent's joy!



Here is a small handful of photos I received this year from some proud parents!



WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.BLDGFAMS.COM

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P.O. BOX 1138
LAKE FOREST, CA 92609 USA