



PHOTOS BY MARTY DAVIS

Scott (left) and Alex joined the home of Steve Wagenhoffer and Mitch Zahn as foster kids before the couple adopted both children in 1997

Salem. But when she learned of a couple who had been turned down for adoption because they were gay, she contacted them.

In the beginning Edmark says she spent a lot of time with the couple as they got to know each other. "I had to ask myself: 'Do I want to be a surrogate for these guys? Do I want them to be my baby's fathers?'"

After some consideration they decided to move forward with the surrogacy, and in 1999 Edmark was inseminated using sperm from one of the intended parents. It took four tries for her to get pregnant, but a year later she learned that she was carrying a child.

Edmark notes numerous benefits to being a surrogate. "The guys took a very active role in my pregnancy," she says. "[They] were wonderful. They went to every doctor's appointment with me. They were even there for the C-section."

As a traditional surrogate, Edmark used her own eggs and is the biological mother of the baby boy she carried. "I had the goods," she jokes. "Using someone else's eggs was never an issue."

For Edmark, money wasn't an issue, either. Surrogates who work through an agency are paid upward of \$20,000 plus medical and travel expenses, but she sought no compensation at all.

"I didn't do it for the money," she says, adding that although she wanted to experience what it would be like to have a child, she didn't want to raise a baby in her single-parent household.

Hodgson agrees that money isn't always the primary motivator for being a surrogate. "It's about more than getting a paycheck at the end," she says. "They are giving a family a baby."

## Insemination

Lauren Gevurtz never imagined she would have children. "I never had any sense of wanting to be a mom," she says.

But when she fell in love with Rivka Gevurtz, she agreed to explore the options. The couple, who are both 44 and live in Portland, took a parenting class where Lauren decided she was ready to consider parenthood.

"I had so much fear before I said yes," she says. "I took Rivka on an emotional roller-coaster ride."

When she decided she wanted to become a parent, Lauren says, "I told Rivka, 'If we're going to do this, I want to be the genetic mom.' I was worried that I wouldn't feel committed enough as a parent if I didn't have a genetic connection."

But Rivka also wanted a connection to the

baby, so the couple decided to become parents using a combination of insemination and surrogacy. Using Lauren's eggs and donor sperm, fertilized embryos were implanted in Rivka.

"We're both her mothers," says Rivka. "We both contributed to her biological formation at the most basic level. Lauren is the genetic mother, and I am the gestational mother. She's part of both of us."

## Choosing a donor

Their 4 1/2-year-old daughter is also part of another person: her father. The couple considered donors from Rivka's family but couldn't find an appropriate match. Eventually, they settled on a gay friend.

"I approached Steven at work and told him we wanted to be parents," explains Lauren. "I asked if he would consider being the donor."

Lauren explained to Steven, 55, that they would encourage him to have a relationship with the child but wanted him to give up his parental rights. After some consideration, he agreed to participate.

**"For infertile hetero couples, surrogacy is their last stop.... But gay men are the opposite. This is their first stop, and they are thrilled to be going through this process."**

—Stuart Miller



Doctors recovered 32 healthy eggs from Lauren, and in early 1998—two weeks after the eggs were fertilized with Steven's sperm and implanted into Rivka's uterus—the couple discovered they were pregnant on their first attempt. Hannah was born nine months later.

Both women say the decision to use a known donor was simple. "We felt like it was the most important gift we could give to Hannah," says Rivka of her daughter's relationship with Steven. "They are very close."

Tinker, a lesbian who conceived her 20-year-old son through insemination with a known donor, agrees with the Gevurtzes about the benefits of using a known donor. "I wanted my child to have a genetic father that he could know and be proud of," she says.

Not only did her son grow up knowing who

his father was, Tinker says the two have a relationship. "There are all sorts of rules for what you 'should' do. But it's a really individual choice. I know a lot of kids who have unknown donors, and they're fine with it."

But with a known donor, Tinker cautions: "You can't just take the sperm and run: There is a relationship. You have to really think about whether this is someone you want in your life."

For the Gevurtzes, there were other challenges. "The most frustrating piece is that from every emotional and biological standpoint, we are her mothers, but we had to adopt our own child," explains Rivka.

## Legal and ethical considerations

Because laws vary from state to state (in Oregon, for example, Rivka would be the legal mother because she carried the child, but in California, Lauren would be the mother because she's the genetic donor), the Gevurtzes wanted to ensure they were her legal parents no matter where they lived. "We adopted Hannah as a couple," Rivka says. "Both of our names are on the birth certificate."

The couple also faced the challenge of expensive medical bills and say they were fortunate to have Lauren's mother pay for the procedure, which cost \$12,000.

"She was so committed to our dream," Rivka says, "but it was frustrating to spend thousands of dollars to have our child and thousands more on top of that to adopt her."

"Our hope is that Hannah will never doubt how much she is loved and how much she was wanted," adds Rivka. "We would move heaven and earth for her, and we did."

## Happy endings

"It's not new for the queer community to have children," Tinker says. "What's new is that couples are falling in love, getting married and then going out and looking for children, and having some say in how they're having children."

Rosenthal agrees: "The far right accuses us of bringing kids into these decadent, immoral families, but I've never seen a group of people who are more thoughtful about the decision to parent."

JODI HELMER is a Portland free-lance writer.

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