

by Silvia Sanides  
(translated from German)

Reproductive Medicine

## Babies for Gays

*Homosexual couples are becoming parents in the USA with the help of egg donors and surrogate mothers*

The fathers couldn't be happier. "Logan and Chance are sleeping through the night and are crawling already," says Tracy Thorne-Begland. "They are simply perfect," enthuses his partner Michael. Michael and Tracy are gay and for ten months they have been the fathers of twins. Like other parents, they proudly recount their babies' progress. Contrary to other parents, however, they had to invest amazing amounts of time, patience and money in order to accomplish their goal of having children.

**"We always knew that we would have a family,"** Michael states. "We wanted everything -- a relationship, good jobs and children. Just like other couples. But when they started to deal seriously with the question of offspring, they found themselves confronted with a maze of laws. In their home state of Virginia, homosexual couples are not allowed to jointly adopt. In addition, they liked the thought of having biologically related offspring. With the help of reproductive technology and the appointment of an experienced lawyer, last autumn their wish came true with the birth of twins.

**"Creative Family Connections"** is what Diane Hinson calls her three-year old agency in the Washington capital. In an innovative way, she is helping to build families that don't fit traditional norms, says the attorney. Singles and gay couples are among her clients. "We carefully examine and comply with the laws of individual states before we search for egg donors and gestational surrogates in that state," Hinson explains.

In the Thorne-Begland case, Tracy donated the sperm and Michael's sister donated the eggs. That way, both twins are genetically related to both men. Creative Family Connections found them a surrogate who already was the mother of her own triplets and did not want any more children of her own. The whole process took three years until the Thorne-Begland's brought their babies home.

With Diane Hinson's help, two more gay couples have become parents. A single man became a father at the end of June, and additional surrogates are pregnant. So far, Hinson's intricate family-building operation has run smoothly. Bioethicists, however, doubt that these types of negotiated contracts are legally incontestable. "The laws drag far behind the developments in reproductive technology," is how Lori Andrews of the

Chicago Kent College of Law gives voice to this concern. Should a surrogate mother change her mind and want to keep the child, there could be trouble. In Germany, Egg Donation and Surrogacy are illegal.

The Thorne-Begland's were deterred neither by the potential problems nor by the roughly \$100,000 it cost them to create their offspring. Rather, they are convinced that other gays should do the same. Michael believes that the babies help overcome barriers: "When we go for a walk, people talk to us who otherwise would never approach gays."



**GAY DADS** -- Genetically related offspring thanks to modern medicine

**Surrogate Mothers** -- Receive \$20,000, \$25,000 for twins. The contracts are not valid in every state in the USA.

**Egg Donors** -- Receive \$7,500 on average. Often they are university students who can use the extra money.

**DOUBLE LUCK**

Tracy Thorne-Begland (left) and his partner Michael are the parents of daughter Logan and son Chance.

**Ad** in a Washington newspaper: A gay doctor is seeking an egg donor. He is looking forward, along with his offspring, to keeping pets and doing sports.

**Seeking Special Egg Donor:**  
*N. European, British or Irish ancestry preferred.*

**Help Me Become A Dad**

I am a successful doctor whose dream is to become a father. I'm fortunate to have a supportive family and great friends. But now I'm ready for life's most rewarding challenge: *being a father*. I can't wait to teach my child the importance of family and share my enthusiasm for interests like traveling, bicycling and caring for all my pets. But I



(This article appeared in Focus Magazine, a weekly news magazine in Germany and was translated from German.)