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## Work & Family

### What's Hot

What would make a woman want to go through pregnancy and childbirth to carry a baby—or three—for a couple she just met?

By **Alexandra Robbins, Ali Eaves**



Kathy Powers, far left, was a surrogate for Kim Crane and her husband, Jody. Powers first gave birth to Max, now seven, and later to triplets—Flynn, Jude, and Mae. The couple already had a daughter, Charlotte, now nine. Photographs by Jeff Elkins.

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### In a dimly lit exam room, a sonographer at the University of Maryland Medical Center's Center for Advanced Fetal Care points to a bright spot.

"See this right here?" she asks. "This baby's intestines look a little brighter than the other ones." The discrepancy could be nothing, she says. It could also be a marker for Down syndrome or cystic fibrosis.

Kathy Powers stares at the screen. Naturally calm and optimistic, she has faith in the results from the amniocentesis, which showed that all three of the babies were healthy. But she's already worrying about how she'll relay the news to the babies' biological mother, whom she'll call the moment she leaves the appointment.

As the sonographer prints out images of the ultrasound, Powers, a mother of two from Odenton, wipes the warm gel from her stomach and hikes down her shirt. She glances at

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the quartz bracelet she made three pregnancies ago; a silver bead on it reads believe in miracles. She made an identical bracelet for Kim Crane, the Virginia woman to whom she'll send the photos.

Powers does believe in miracles. She has believed in them since she conceived her own children with help from fertility treatments, and since seeing Crane's tears of joy after Powers gave birth to Crane's son in 2006. "When you share that experience with someone else, it's the most amazing feeling, to see them holding their own biological child that they could not have on their own. To think I did that!" Powers says. "I knew right away, in the delivery room, that I wanted to do it again."

Now Powers is on her fourth pregnancy as a surrogate and her sixth overall. She is 48 years old and 18 weeks pregnant with triplets that aren't hers. Two of Crane's embryos implanted in Powers's uterus, and one split into identical twins, a situation so fraught with risk that a local fertility specialist calls Powers a "ticking time bomb."

## How to Pick a Surrogacy Agency

Learn how to avoid scams, plus a list of local agencies.

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Before she began in vitro fertilization, or IVF, Powers and the intended parents discussed what would happen if there were a problem with the pregnancy. All preferred to do everything they could to save the baby, or babies. Once they learned that Powers was carrying triplets, however, they decided to follow doctors' orders. Three of the four physicians they visited said the pregnancy should continue. The fourth disagreed, but Powers and the parents dismissed his concerns as "doom and gloom."

Now Powers holds fast to her belief that everything will be all right: "I choose to think positive and believe they are strong little miracles and nothing bad is going to happen to them."

...

In deciding to become a surrogate, Powers joined a small but growing contingent of women. Nationwide, the number of gestational surrogate births rose by 122 percent between 2004 and 2011, from 530 to 1,179, according to the American Society for Reproductive Medicine.

DC is the only jurisdiction in the country in which all surrogacy contracts are prohibited. Any party involved can be imprisoned for up to a year and fined as much as \$10,000. Maryland has no statutes or limitations governing gestational surrogacy and has become one of the world's hot spots for surrogacy. Virginia is another relatively surrogacy-friendly state.

For would-be parents—especially couples with fertility problems, gay couples, and single dads—surrogacy's appeal has grown as both domestic and international adoptions have become harder.

*There was a **122%** increase in the number of gestational surrogate births nationally between 2004 and 2011.*

But the reasons women decide to carry someone else's child are less obvious, especially when they do it for a stranger. Who would endure the morning sickness, weight gain, out-of-control hormones, and constant doctors' appointments—not to mention labor—without the payoff of a new baby at the end? For a mere \$20,000 to \$30,000?

The answer, in part, is women who love being pregnant, suffer few of the unpleasant side effects, and even enjoy giving birth.

The idea of becoming a surrogate occurred to Kathy Powers after she turned 40 and told her husband she wanted another baby. He wasn't receptive—another child would mean spending money on fertility treatments, risking the birth defects more frequent with older mothers, and managing a new college fund when they already had two great kids. He didn't want to tempt fate.

After some soul-searching, Powers realized that she craved pregnancy, not another child. With no morning sickness and with easy deliveries, her pregnancies had been dreamy. "My hormones are perfectly, 100 percent in line with the universe when I'm pregnant," she says. "I'm the happiest I ever can be in life."

So she presented her husband with a compromise: Instead of having a baby of their own,

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she would carry one for someone else. They'd had difficulty conceiving their second child, and they decided that she would be a surrogate only for someone who had struggled as they had. "I didn't want to be pregnant for a movie star who didn't want to be fat," Powers says. "It had to be someone we could relate to, who we really feel like we're helping, because we've been there."

She placed an ad on three surrogacy websites, received 30 replies within two days, and felt an immediate connection with Crane and her husband, who already had one adopted child. "It was one of those meant-to-be things," Powers says. "We agreed on every term." Three months after they met, a reproductive endocrinologist transferred Crane and her husband's embryos.

After Powers gave birth to the couple's baby boy in 2006, the endocrinologist gave her phone number to another Virginia couple interested in surrogacy; in 2008, she delivered their first child, and two years later their second.

By then, Powers figured she was done. But when Kim Crane asked her to help find a surrogate for her leftover embryos, which had been frozen for 6½ years, she offered to come out of retirement. She felt a responsibility to the couple and couldn't imagine someone else completing their family.

The second embryo transfer was successful, but joy turned into shock when the five-week ultrasound showed three heartbeats. For the first time in her life, Powers hasn't had an easy pregnancy—suffering through nausea, bleeding, and exhaustion. She has already been restricted to some bed rest and been told to expect more.

"And then," she says, "there's the emotional part."

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8 months ago  
H ago  
I think this is an absolutely lovely story. Thank you for sharing it- I am so glad this article some of the negative comments, but I personally believe it is absolutely wonderful.

For you to be so unselfish, giving and generous for this family to have each other is truly is certainly meant to be for you to have found each other and created these beautiful liv  
9 • Reply • Share >

8 months ago  
Surromom → H ago  
Thank you!! I appreciate your kind remarks! Some people just feel the need to si  
1 • Reply • Share >

7 months ago  
Amommynous ago  
Beautiful story! I can't fathom how anyo e could not see the positive. Clearly they didn't think this is all about money.  
4 • Reply • Share >

7 months ago  
HappyMama ago  
Great article. What a blessing for both the intended parents and the surrogates to go on

Infertility brings so much heartache and it is nice to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

4

• Reply • Share >



**Surromom** → HappyMama ago • 6 months

Thank you!!

1



• Reply • Share >



**jan stewart** ago • 8 months

why dont the children have a voice in any of this.....how are they going to feel in 15 years for them? It is all about overly entitled people who think they can have everything and no one gets into the world in such a way...

4



• Reply • Share >



**Surromom** → jan stewart ago • 8 months

Jan... the children do in fact have a voice. You can see the young boy in the picture and his wonderful relationship! They all know that they were wanted so very much and brought them life! They know they grew in my tummy, we share birthdays and holidays as a surromom. THEY ARE LOVED!!!! And believe me, their parents are not entitled or have to borrow money or use savings to pay IVF and surrogate fees. If you read the article you were quoted as not wanting to have a baby for a celebrity who didn't want to gain weight and desperately wanted children for all the right reasons! So do you feel that children feel when they find out they are adopted? Some want to find their biological parents, the child doesn't have that worry, they are being raised by their biological parents. There is nothing negative or bad about gestational surrogacy, whether parents are loved.

11



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**jan stewart** → Surromom ago • 8 months

see that's just the thing.....you are speaking for the "children" they will be in adoption.....it is a money making business like no other in its ways of circumventing about finding children for needy people not about finding safe refuge for someone else's eggs/sperm that are used.....as well as a uterus.....and



• Reply • Share >



**Surromom** → jan stewart ago • 8 months

Whatever... I see you don't get it. But it's OK, I don't need your two wonderful couples to become parents! There are two sides to every coin.

11



• Reply • Share >



**Sam** → Surromom ago • 7 months

YOU do not give life.

^



• Reply • Share >



**Surromom** → Sam ago • 7 months

Yes you are right! I just carried that life until it was ready to be born.

^



• Reply • Share >



**Lynn** → jan stewart ago • 7 months

Adoption isn't surrogacy and surrogacy isn't adoption. So you're asking for an answer but have no answer for my previous question! You have NO way of being able to give a voice in their conception, because reality? Kids never asked to be born, then you don't even really understand what you are not doing.

1



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**tummymummy** → jan stewart ago • 7 months

I would imagine in 15 years time the "children" may not yet be able to conceive themselves.

20-25 years and I would imagine most would be awed by the fact that they would be a HUGE hearted surrogate.

6  
• Reply • Share >



**Surromom** → tummyummy ago • 7 months

Thank you for your very kind and positive comment!! :)

1  
• Reply • Share >



**jan stewart** → tummyummy ago • 7 months

so which parent are they supposed to be grateful too? any one of up to 4

^  
• Reply • Share >



**Lynn** → jan stewart ago • 7 months

Surrogates are not a child's PARENT. A parent is one who raises a child and has a LOT to learn about life!

1  
• Reply • Share >



**Surromom** → jan stewart ago • 7 months

I truly cannot take anyone seriously who has nothing positive to say about surrogacy and too!

1  
• Reply • Share >



**jan stewart** → Surromom ago • 7 months

seriously.....a typo offends you? I have nothing positive to say about this.....

^  
• Reply • Share >



**Surromom** → jan stewart ago • 7 months

"If you can't say something nice..." I read all of your responses to me and was positive to say about anything!!

1  
• Reply • Share >



**jan stewart** → Surromom ago • 7 months

wow seeing a little theme here are you.....follow the money trail..

^  
• Reply • Share >



**Surromom** → jan stewart ago • 7 months

I didn't say I was offended, I just said I cannot take you seriously and proud that surrogacy exists today!

1  
• Reply • Share >



**Lynn** → jan stewart ago • 7 months

Do the children have a voice when someone gets pregnant in a traditional situation?

3  
• Reply • Share >



**jan stewart** → Lynn ago • 7 months

they dont need one do they? There are two parents.....not 4 .....

^  
• Reply • Share >



**Surromom** → jan stewart ago • 7 months

I agree with Lynn, you have much to learn about life! Just because someone is a surrogate doesn't mean they should become parents. Some are unfit, some abuse the child, sometimes it's too late! Surrogate children do NOT have two sets of parents.

like nieces and nephews to me. There is no confusion about who t

1  
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**jan stewart** → Surromom ago • 7 months

maybe not for you :) wait till these children who are experiments in

^  
• Reply • Share >



• 7 months  
**athursto** ago

This story was really touching...it's amazing to do that for another person.

2  
• Reply • Share >



• 7 months  
**Surromom** → athursto ago

Thank you!

^  
• Reply • Share >



• 8 months  
**SimonAlipio** ago

Wow 9 children sold at a minimum \$23,000 a piece. Selling human flesh is a big business economy. Already one baby farming company is quoted on the stock market.

2  
• Reply • Share >



• 7 months  
**Lynn** → SimonAlipio ago

Ignorance is bliss, isn't it Simon? I guess you'd know. :)

1  
• Reply • Share >



• 7 months  
**Just wondering..** ago

Are there any age cutoffs for surrogate mothers? I imagine it is not so healthy for a 48- I have no problem with surrogacy otherwise, but I am somewhat surprised that women health. Triplets at 48? 12 pregnancies at 44? Just out of 'love of being pregnant' and a 'c Something is amiss here.

^  
• Reply • Share >



• 6 months  
**Surromom** → Just wondering.. ago

No, nothing is amiss!! First and foremost, all surrogates go through extensive medical healthy and no obvious health risks! At 48 yrs old, I was at no higher risk than a a proven track record of uncomplicated pregnancies! No one sets out to get pregnant is a failure in their eyes! In my previous surrogate pregnancies, we had always had ONE baby! So for two embryos to result in 3 babies is very rare!! We consulted with a doctor factor, and they in fact said since I had a proven uterus, I was a better candidate to carry a baby to term. So we took the pregnancy one day at a time, and because of the pregnancy and each other, three miracle babies were born!

3  
• Reply • Share >



• 8 months  
**Shim** ago

The University of Maryland DRUGGED ME TO THE POINT OF STUPOR AND TRIED TO ONLY MEDICALLY NECESSARY BECAUSE THEY DRUGGED ME. I COULD NOT EVEN CRIMINALLY THEM WHISPER THAT MY REFLEXES WERE FAILING. THEY ARGUED AGAINST LESSON THEY INSISTED THAT I MUST STAY THERE FOR SEVERAL WEEKS BUT BE MOVED OFF THAT I WAS RISKING THE LIFE OF MY BABY FOR WHICH I SIGNED IT SAYING THAT MY LIVES SO THEY CAN PAY FOR THEIR SPORTSCARS. THEY THEN RETALIATED AGAIN! CLAIMING THAT I CHECKED MYSELF OUT BECAUSE I FELT BAD. THESE PEOPLE ARE DECIDED TO PLACE ME AND MY INFANT ON THEIR MAILING LIST. NO I WILL NOT FORGET THE WOMAN WHO WILL MAKE SURE IT IS KNOWN THAT THE U OF M FORCES WOMEN AND DRUGS THEM TO MAKE IT NECESSARY. OH AND THEIR CEO IS A WOMAN WHOSE CHILDREN ARE ENDANGERED FOR SURGERIES THEY DO NOT NEED.

^  
• Reply • Share >



• 8 months



**Surromom** → Shim ago • 8 months

I'm sorry that happened to you. This article is not about UMD, but I personally have the best care for myself and the triplets! I witnessed many, many women have r

^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Shim** → Surromom ago • 8 months

That they can do this to even 1 person does not make all the good they article is not about them but here they are not acknowledging the great p acknowledgement and an apology but they can't do that because they kr a lawsuit especially since the statistics show I am not the ONLY person th

^ | v • Reply • Share >



**Vicki Ferrara** ago • 8 months

Worldwide Surrogacy Specialists is working with a high profile couple who live in CT. "B" ar cancer death of "B's" wife. They have a child with autism and their last baby was born p have turned to surrogacy and feel that while some families can be torn apart by their ch

"B" is a famous composer and music publisher and owns his own music business in NYC and is 100% committed to growing his wonderful family.

"G's" passion is fashion and photography and she has had careers in magazine/media w place for her family to grow.

They share a lifetime together of music, literature, tennis and travel. But most of all we

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If you'd like to learn more about "B" and "G" please respond to this ad by emailing Serer <http://www.assistedreproductio...>

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