

Local boy seeks donor siblings

Mom Starts Donor Siblings Registry

Ryan and his mom check have had 231 inquiries on their Donor Siblings Registry web site.

By Barbara Lawlor - Nederland

In 1987 a 20-year-old southern California college student donated his sperm for cash. He was given donor number 1058.

He was six feet tall, 195 pounds, with brown eyes and brown straight hair and of Anglo-Saxon/Irish background. He was pursuing a mechanical engineering degree, participated in rugby, jogging and racquetball and wrote that he was a sperm donor because he needed the money.

His message to recipients of his semen was: "Educate the child. Raise him/her without bias of any kind. Teach him/her to trust in others but to rely on self. Instill in him/her a sense of humor and the ability to enjoy life."

Number 1058 went on to earn a master's degree in engineering management, graduating with a 3.9 gpa.

In 1989, when Colorado resident Wendy Kramer and her husband discovered they had infertility issues, they contacted Conceptions Reproductive Associates in Denver, paying \$500 for two artificial insemination sessions with sperm from California Cryobank, specifically number 1058.

In May, 1990, Ryan was born. He is an incredibly gifted child, raised without bias, full of trust in others and in himself, and he has a sense of humor and enjoys life. His biological dad would be proud.

Wendy was divorced when Ryan was 13 months old and has been a single mom ever since. Ryan has been an only child. He attended Mountain Child Montessori School, and when he was 5 he tested at one in a million gifted. He has been in many schools, skipping grades and searching for his niche.

Ryan is 12 years old now, a junior at September School in Boulder. He has a cheery, bright face with brown eyes and blonde hair and is large for his age. He studies second year college algebra, plays the cello, won first place in the Boulder Valley School District Science Fair, works part time at Once Again Books and volunteers at Full Cycle Bike Shop.

The only thing missing in his life is his dad and the other possible siblings who are somewhere in the world. In the last few months, he and his mother have set out on a journey to find his donor family. After starting a web site designed to match donor siblings, Ryan and Wendy have appeared on Channel 9 News and on Monday were interviewed by Diane Sawyer of Good Morning America.

Sperm donors are guaranteed anonymity, and the Kramers do not want to invade anyone's privacy. They do, however, want to match up donor families who seek each other, and hope, that in the

process, they might find Ryan's half brothers or sisters.

Wendy and Ryan have lived in Nederland since Ryan was 2 years old. He remembers asking his mom, "So did my dad die or what?"

"She thought I wouldn't ask about my father until I was about 5 years old. She gave me a skim-the-surface explanation about how I was born and from the beginning, I was okay with that. It's part of me, not a huge thing. But when I was 7 and found out that I might have brothers or sisters, that what got my curiosity up, and that's what got this ball rolling."

Ryan wrote a letter to Conceptions Reproductive Associates, "Dear haspitl. My name is ryan. I am a doner baby. Im 7 years old and my mom is wendy kramer. i have been witing to get in toch with you to find my dad. But you wont let me til im 18. i will try to keep kontakt with you to keep getting infurmachin about my dad, like his phon number. Becos id like to meet him as a kid ensted of being 18."

He was told his dad's identity was not available.

As Ryan grew up, Wendy realized she had a special child. She wondered where all of his 'smarts' came from. About four years ago, she was told that Ryan had half-siblings, and that some of the families had asked for re-donations. She also discovered that each donor was limited to 15 offspring, but only 40% of the women report live births, so there were potentially up to 30 of donor 1058 kids out there.

Every few years, Wendy would call the cyrobank to see if they would tell her anything. One woman said she knew who donor 1058 was. She had seen him, knew what he looked like, but wouldn't tell Wendy anything.

In September of 2000, she decided to look for these kids and set up the Donor Sibling Registry on a Yahoo message group on the Internet-a place for moms or kids to match siblings from the donor number.

Other people have found matches on the web site, but nothing was happening for Ryan. One day, a few months ago, Wendy told Ryan she was ready to take action, that maybe if they could get on national news, more people would be aware of the web site and make contact.

"If we could get the message out in a bigger way, we would have more hope of finding Ryan's biological family and of matching up other donor siblings. I knew we had to get on national news for it to reach California."

On Monday, Wendy and Ryan were on national television. He loved it. Wendy says, "He's a ham. I asked him if he wanted to stop the publicity, but he said no way, he wanted to do more. This has been educational for him. Ryan has always been big in the world-sometimes hard to contain him. He is a force to be reckoned with, but a good force with high energy."

Every day Wendy turns to the web site to see if there is any news. As of Tuesday, they have had 231 messages from donor recipients. One man wrote to Ryan thanking him for being so open, that he has

been curious about potential siblings for years, and now there was a chance of finding them. Mothers have thanked Ryan for going public, for making their donor children feel not so different than other kids.

Ryan says finding siblings, or even his dad, would satisfy a curiosity he has had all of his life. "I think this comes from wanting to see the other half of me in somebody else. It would be so cool, it would put a huge smile on my face. I'd say, 'Let's do lunch.' Do my donor siblings have my sense of humor? Do they resemble me? There is always the curiosity of what someone like me would be like."

Wendy says, "I'd love to talk to their mothers, find out if their children are as outgoing, as energetic as Ryan. Ryan is profoundly gifted. If we found some siblings, I want to race to his school one day, look at Ryan and say, guess what!"

It is journey that is so far filled with more questions and answers that will, perhaps, never be answered. But as Wendy and Ryan reach out, others are turning to them.

Ryan says his life won't change that much if he never hears from number 1058. "I've never had a father figure, so I won't be terribly upset. There's a fairly good chance I'll never meet him, but I have a wonderful mom who has been supportive of me my whole life. And now I feel privileged to be helping other people in similar situations."

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