

## SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

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### Siblings from same 'dad' find each other

**Seattle woman, special sperm-donor Web site featured on TV show**

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**By HECTOR CASTRO**  
P-I REPORTER

Growing up in the Portland area, Stacy Smedley and Christopher Thompson never knew each other, but they had much in common -- both were athletic, musical, devoted Francophiles and fans of the Portland Trail Blazers and No. 22 Clyde Drexler.

There was one other thing they shared -- a father, donor No. 46 at the Oregon Health & Science University fertility clinic.

Last year, through the use of an online registry for children of anonymous sperm donors, Smedley, now living in Seattle, and Thompson, in Africa for a Peace Corps mission, found each other.

"All of a sudden, it's like you have a best friend," Smedley said.

Friday, the siblings will share their story on the Oprah Winfrey show, which airs at 4 p.m. on KING/5. The show's producers heard about them through the Donor Sibling Registry.

The registry was created in 2000 by a Colorado woman, Wendy Kramer, and her son, Ryan, who was conceived through a sperm donor.

When Ryan Kramer wanted to find out if he had any siblings, the two soon discovered there was no simple way of matching donor offspring to each other. So they created one.

Now, the Web site has more than 16,000 people signed up, including donors looking for their offspring and siblings looking for each other.

"There's not a day that goes by that at least two or three people don't match up on the Web site," Wendy Kramer said.

Some estimate that about 30,000 children are born through sperm donation annually, but Kramer said there are no reliable data available to support that.

"The truth is, nobody keeps track," she said. "There's no regulation."

Smedley, 27, and Thompson, 25, both knew from an early age that they were donor children. Thompson's mother, Becky Thompson, began explaining it to him when he was 2. Smedley's mother, Kim Hoffman, told her when she was still in kindergarten.

Both were fine with it.

"I never felt like I had a huge hole," Thompson said.

Smedley, not surprisingly, agrees.

"I never really thought about searching for siblings," she said.

But a television news program she saw last year mentioning the Donor Sibling Registry piqued her curiosity. Smedley registered, did some hunting around, and soon found Thompson's entry. They were among a few from that particular fertility clinic, and there was a photo.

"We do look very much alike," Smedley said.

She sent an e-mail to Thompson on July 7, 2007, a date Thompson remembers well.

"It was kind of like the jackpot," he said.

In the weeks that followed, they held long sessions of text messaging and spoke occasionally by phone.

In November, they met in Seattle.

Smedley said the reunion has pleased everyone involved, but she said her mother was particularly comforted to know that she had found a brother.

"I suddenly had somebody who would be there when she was no longer there," Smedley said.

Kramer said she knows of at least one donor who has fathered 66 children.

The clinic from where the donor for Smedley and Thompson came limited the number of children per donor to six.

So, the two know they could have an even bigger family than they yet know.

"There are possibilities out there," Smedley said.

## **ONLINE**

The Donor Sibling Registry can be found at [donorsiblingregistry.com](http://donorsiblingregistry.com).

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