



THE CUTTING EDGE

TWO COUPLES SHARE OPEN EMBRYO ADOPTION

BY AGENT ERIN HOLDEN

After riding what Roz and Ryan LeBlanc describe as a 10 year “emotional roller-coaster” with two failed in vitro fertilization attempts and other treatments that cost them around \$50,000, they turned to embryo donation, hoping to start the family they had long wanted. “We decided that if we were ever to do anything again, we were going to use an embryo donor,” Roz said. “We were scared because we didn’t know if it was going to work, but you want to take your chances.”

More than one million frozen embryos in the U.S. are stored after couples have either conceived, separated, or changed their mind about having a child. In most states, a couple can opt to destroy the embryos, allow them to remain frozen, or choose to donate them to another couple. The LeBlancs found hope with the gift of embryo donation. We hadn’t told many people about it,” Roz said, “only a select few friends, and I guess we told the right friends because that’s how this story began.”

Dr. John Storment, a fertility specialist practicing in advanced fertility treatments – IVF, ICSI and egg freezing – at Fertility Answers in Lafayette, offers a highly individualized approach to every couple, discusses realistic expectations and outcomes, and uses state-of-the-art, evidence-based medical treatments. “The first thing we do for couples who have been trying to conceive is to have them in for a consultation,” he said. “We ascertain the big three – good sperm, good eggs, and open fallopian tubes.” He added that 80 percent of all conception issues are from the latter.

A stroke of serendipity connected the LeBlancs with Chelse and Bobby Breaux who also used Fertility Answers for IVF, resulting in the birth of their twins. Later, able to conceive another child on their own, the couple was left with frozen embryos. Their initial plan was to use Snowflake, an embryo adoption program that pairs embryos with parents who want the experience of carrying a child but have exhausted options using their own DNA. Chelse emphasized, “We wanted to do this so that someone could have the love we have from our own children.”

Chelse’s last step in the process was completing a form, which a doctor needed to sign, and as good fortune would have it, the receptionist who received her form happened



An empty gift box symbolizes Chelse and Bobby Breaux (right) gifting their embryo to Roz and Ryan LeBlanc.



Chelse and Bobby Breaux's children, Cooper, Chanler (Dawson on his lap) and Adaleigh

to be one of those few friends Roz confided in about their plan for embryo adoption. Chelse’s contact information was shared with Roz, and that connection would forever change both couples’ lives.

Chelse said, “Within an hour or two Roz called me, and we talked over what we wanted to do, which was an open adoption. We wanted to have contact; that was the only way we wanted to do it. We still wanted to have a relationship with the baby and the family.” Roz added, “Normally, if someone donates their embryos, they don’t want to even know who has them, where they’re at or anything,” Roz said. “Our case was different.”

Both couples were comfortable with the arrangement, so Storment put in motion the steps for the LeBlanc’s adoption. “It’s important to make sure both couples understand the social and psychological ramifications,” he explained. He connected them with a lawyer who navigated legal requirements and



Roz, Ryan and Dawson LeBlanc

an agreement between couples like any other adoption proceeding. Then there is counseling to make sure couples are on the same page to handle various things that come up in a non-traditional arrangement of this kind.

The embryos were successfully implanted, and Roz successfully carried Dawson, who is now one year old. The Breaux family was there for his gender reveal and spent Dawson’s first birthday with him. Chelse shared that, “A lot of people ask, ‘How do you do it?’ Just to know that we’ve helped another family enjoy the love and affection a child gives his parents – it’s been so good for us. I couldn’t have picked a better mother for him.”

Roz and Ryan are incredibly grateful to Storment and his staff at Fertility Answers, and they are indebted to the Breauxs. “It was truly meant to be,” said Roz. “Everything happens for a reason. To be able to go through that – adopting and being able to carry – is mind-blowing.”