



One Big

Little Miracle

WHEN I FIRST spoke to Vanessa I was impressed with how excited she was to be a first time mother; her enthusiasm was so real it was contagious. She had contacted me in October to arrange for me to photograph her baby who wasn't even due for six months. She explained with pride that a gestational surrogate was carrying her child and they wanted to honour this very special homecoming with a photo session.

Vanessa shared with me that the journey from deciding to have a child to now was a long one. Vanessa could conceive, but was told that due to a rare

bleeding disorder (hemophilia) she could not actually carry a child to term.

Despite this set back, they truly wanted to have their own baby. They began the research process. They were referred to the Canadian Surrogacy Options Inc (www.canadiansurrogacyoptions.com), who would eventually help their dream become a reality.

But finding an agency, it turned out, was only the beginning. To be accepted as biological intended parents is an incredibly rigorous process.

Vanessa and Rob each had to submit intense, personal profiles that included

information on their backgrounds, personality traits, outlooks on life, relationships, what kind of home they intended to provide, and even described their extended families. They also had to endure medical testing and a thorough psychiatric evaluation.

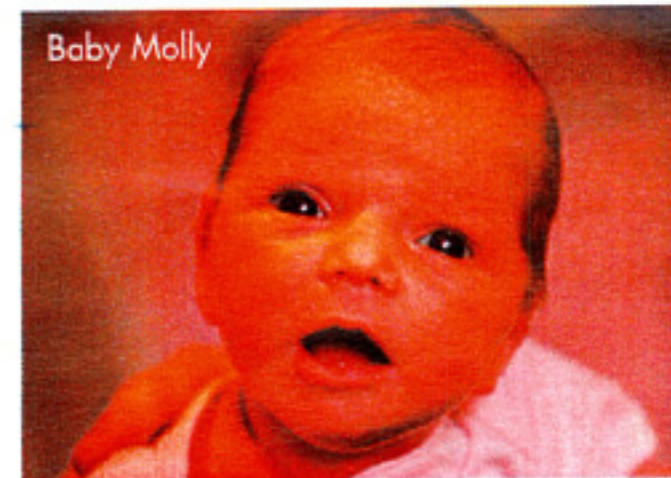
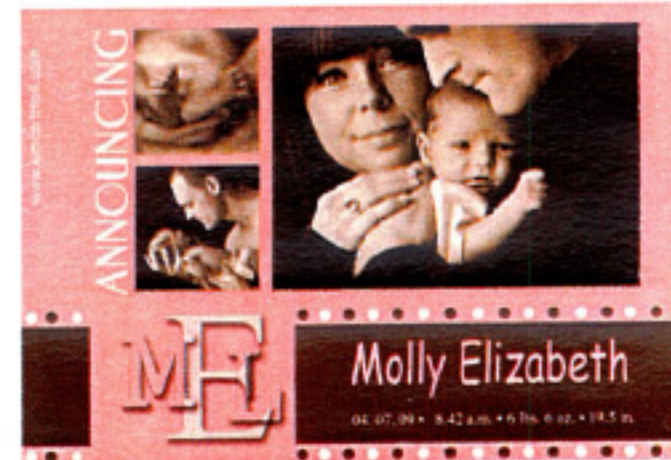
Even with their applications approved they still needed to find a surrogate. However, it's not the parents who choose the surrogate; with so many parents wanting children and so few surrogates available it is, rather, the surrogate who chooses the parents. So, Vanessa and Rob settled in to wait.

They were understandably excited when Andrea contacted them and asked if they'd like to meet on Mother's Day weekend. "We all just gelled," Vanessa said of their first meeting. The match was so perfect that Vanessa and Andrea were even mistaken as cousins or sisters throughout the process.

Vanessa was required to take two to four hormone injections per day for a full month to ensure that she would produce enough eggs for the retrieval procedure. Andrea also endured twelve weeks of intramuscular injections of progesterone – a total of 96 shots – to help her body prepare for the pregnancy.

Andrea carefully explained to her children that she was carrying Vanessa and Rob's baby and that when it was born it would go home to live with them and complete their family.

While Andrea was physically pregnant, Vanessa was pregnant emotionally. She spent this time documenting the entire experience for the coming baby. Her scrapbook shares each step along the



way, the emotional highs and lows, and especially all the people that helped to make this precious life possible.

Just under a year after Rob and Vanessa first met Andrea, she went into labour with their baby. Vanessa had twenty-four eggs harvested; sixteen of them matured, twelve were fertilized. Six were grade A embryos and only two were transferred to Andrea's womb; the result was one beautiful, perfect, little girl.

After all was said and done, with their baby girl in their arms, Vanessa and Rob said, "this (experience) restores our faith and trust, that dreams come true, miracles can happen. People should never take anything for granted..."

Baby Molly was born April 7th, 2009. 🍷

Photos & Story By Kim Cartmell of Focus on You Photography