

Newsletter
Summer 2021

SurroGay Network

Communication

Despite several efforts done by the clinic and us in the first half of 2021, communication has remained a challenging issue, to say the least. However, at the start of last June, Edgardo Paz joined the clinic's team to lead the Customer Service Department. In these past weeks he has been working on normalizing communication, sending due reports and talking to as many intentional parents as possible to make sure they are well informed. Edgardo will be the main communicator from the clinic with all SurroGay dads. If needed, you are always able to contact any other person directly, of course.

Edgardo will be setting in the coming months a reliable and functional system to keep everyone better informed. One of the first changes has been to move the weekly reports from Friday to Tuesdays/Wednesdays. We know receiving a report on Friday night meant not having any feedback question answered until Monday night the earliest, leaving you with questions, which is not a fun way to start the weekend.

We personally share your concerns and dissatisfaction with how the communication has been done so far, and we will continue to support the clinic to improve it until everyone is satisfied. We thank you for your patience, and appreciate all your feedback.



The impact of COVID

The pandemic continues to cause delays in different areas. It has been a challenge for intentional dads, for new dads, for the clinic, lawyers - and for us -, to deal with the limitations and obstacles we have and continue to face. Some intentional dads, during the strict lockdowns in Colombia, had to travel to Galicia to have their sperm samples shipped. Another dad had to travel in advance to be able to welcome his baby. Some others had to delay their traveling or face quarantines on their way back home. The things we do for our children!

Shortages of inputs to carry out genetic tests is the latest of the impacts this pandemic has caused. The laboratories kept pushing back the date to deliver the results, and as of today, PGS tests are being delivered. In a few weeks all intended dads waiting for their tests will have them and the processes will carry on. All in all, the clinic and everyone involved has continued to work, adapting their processes, and do their best in order not to stop working to make you all dads.

Milestones

We're happy to announce that the dads in our young network have reached several important milestones. As of today, there are:

- 2 babies born (November 2020, and January 2021)
- 29 active processes currently in our portfolio (12 of those processes started in the past 4 months)
- 6 confirmed pregnancies under 12 weeks
- 3 confirmed pregnancies past the 12 weeks
- Before the end of the summer, there are – at least - 7 embryo transfers planned.

Things are moving at a more “normal pace” for most intentional dads; and we experience more and more “positive” pregnancy results. Unfortunately, this is not the case for everyone. There are single men or couples for which the process has been more challenging. Despite the failed attempts or miscarriages at different stages, the clinic carries on her promise of a guaranteed pregnancy. We know how hard it is to experience these situations, and we are confident that every single dad will soon be joining the list of *pregnant* dads.



The Network

In these past months we have been asking some of you what a network like SurroGay should look like. We have Intentional Dads and Dads, with significantly different issues and challenges. So we want to make sure to find the best structure and make sure that we can all support each other.

A gathering in Sitges, for September 2021 was ruled out a few months ago, since we could not comply with the safety measures required; and some countries had – and some still do have - Spain in the “red list”. We are not yet back to normal, particularly with the new “Delta” variant of the virus. The current plan is to host you all in Sitges, for an in-person gathering in April or May 2022, dates to be confirmed). We hope we can welcome some brand new dads to this meeting. I am sure they will have plenty of babysitters ready to give them a hand.

We’re glad to be welcoming and meeting intentional dads in Sitges these days. A few weeks ago, a couple from Belgium stopped by to say hi, and soon in August another couple from France will be here. We will be in Sitges all summer, so if you feel like stopping by and say hi, you’re more than welcome.

As a Network, we will be gaining from everyone experiences, knowledge and skills. Just recently, one of the intentional dads (a judge) offered himself to write a document on legal issues regarding the adoption of the partner’s baby, in France. He was motivated to do this after reading so much misinformation going on in social media groups. We will be sharing this document with the French dads in the network and we will have it available for other French future gay dads. Since the topic is so relevant, we will most likely organize a Webinar where he can answer your questions on how to best work this topic out. Stay tuned!

Another decision we need to make is in what platform to host this Network, a group on Facebook seems like a good option, but we want to stay away from the noise social media brings. We are exploring other platforms like Slack or Meetup. We will make a choice during the summer and present to you the official place for the network next September.

If you have any experience on setting up an online network, or any idea or suggestion, please let us know.



Highlighted Profile: our boys!

We have included this section in this newsletter, where we want to highlight the “SurroGay” babies and their families. We start by showing off our two little boys: Alexandre (17/07/2019) and Benjamin (19/11/2019). They are 4 months and 2 days apart, so Alexandre feels as the big brother.

They have grown together and have the same dads, but they could not have more different personalities. Alexandre has always loved and enjoyed being a baby, something Benjamin never really liked. They are both good eaters, and by far, their favorite food is avocado.

They enjoy the sea and beach quite a lot, but are starting to dislike baths and showers. Despite spending a large part of their short lives in social isolation during COVID lockdowns, they are very social and empathize with adults and children very well. Benjamin is currently in a phase where he sends kisses to everyone (a Miss complex, we call it). Their favorite animal is the cow.



These little monsters have transformed our lives entirely, and have learned really quick what buttons to press to get what they want.

At times, it has been a hard process to accept ourselves in this new role of dads, where we are no longer the main priority. Sounds selfish, but it is hard to let the ‘old you’ go; it is a process, and we are finally accepting and embracing the new us.

Also, it is something that everybody mentions: the relationship between parents with young children gets affected. We have had to work harder than ever in us as couple. It is difficult to have nice words and plan to have a nice time just the two of us at the end of the day, when there is so much to do, and there is so little energy, mostly because of sleep deprivation, not to mention Covid and the mess it brings.

Luckily, all comes in phases (they say!), our little ones are more independent every day, and we are finally finding our new balance as a young family. We want the network to offer support to all new dads/couples, including ourselves, so we can have more tools to deal better in this situation.

Our responsibility

As you can all attest, during our calls, we always stress out the importance of doing your homework as intentional dads and research as many alternatives as possible before taking your decision. Some intentional dads have chosen other paths, and some have chosen this one.

We are in 2021, and as gay men, we have never had so many options to become fathers, something that we applaud. Each option has her own advantages and disadvantages for everyone; and we will never judge any intentional dads on their decision, we understand the wish of becoming a dad is worth fighting for.

We do, as gay (intentional) dads, have the moral obligation to make sure that surrogacy remains ethical for everyone involved. So we will always be showcasing our own experience as an example of ethical surrogacy and we encourage you to do that as well.

We remind you that by joining this surrogacy program, you are supporting the Fundación Grandes Corazones, that works with the surrogates to improve their living situation and their families. This is a positive and long lasting effect that you can bring to your surrogates and their families, so you can feel proud about it. Check their website for updates at:

www.fundaciongrandescorazones.org

Being a network and not an agency is our strength; since we set you, the intentional dads, as our top priority. This gives the surrogacy process the human touch you deserve, including all the ups and downs. We thank you for realizing that having a baby is not a linear process, like assembling a car, and that the road is many times filled with twists and turns. We are confident we'll get there. Sometimes, it takes time, and lots of patience.

We also thank you for your kind words of encouragement to continue supporting more gay intentional dads, and the referrals you have sent to us. We're glad our services fill in a need many of you have and you see us as an added value to our community.



“SurroGay is the network of gay dads supporting other gay men become fathers”.

Fight for your rights!

Finally, a word from the activists in us.

Let's continue to fight for our rights to be fathers and the right to be recognized as such. Let's continue to challenge our local and national governments to change and adapt to the new reality. Even changing small things, such as administrative forms, to allow two moms or two dads to sign, is a big win.

Local service providers, schools, hospitals, they should have their processes adapted. We need to be and feel included, we should not have to scratch the word 'Mother' and write 'Father' when we sign school or hospital forms.

Let's be active in our communities, join government councils, join LGBT+ groups and advocate, sign petitions, start petitions, vote. A post on Instagram is great, but it won't change much since we share it with our own friends and family who are already on our side. Ask them to be active out of social media.

We owe it to our (future) children and the generations who fought for us to have the rights we have now!

