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MySpace couple find birth mother

Pair's profile on popular site seeking baby girl helps them connect with Metro area woman.

Christine Ferretti / The Detroit News

Advertisement

TAYLOR -- Less than two months after making national news by posting their adoption plea on MySpace.com, a couple desperate for a baby girl says they've found a birth mother.

Sherry and Karl Dittmar, who gained kudos and scorn for bypassing traditional adoption avenues and searching for an infant girl on the social networking site, say they've connected with an unidentified Metro Detroit woman who has verbally agreed to give them her daughter upon her birth in July.

The deal -- which hasn't yet been finalized legally -- follows discussions the couple had with expectant mothers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Florida that poured in among the 800 messages after the Dittmars created the site April 21.

"It (MySpace) does work," said Sherry Dittmar, 32, who had her first face-to-face meeting with the woman and her family over a three-hour dinner at a local Olive Garden restaurant last week.

"They are wonderful people. It's exactly what we've been wanting."

The Taylor couple made the decision to post their baby plea on the free site that boasts 100 million profiles, after five years of unsuccessful attempts at conception and delays in becoming state-registered foster parents. They also hoped to spare the \$18,000 that an average adoption costs, Dittmar said.

First reported in The Detroit News, their Web page is loaded with photographs and information about their home and family -- including the two sons they took guardianship of seven years ago and their youngest, 5, who

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took eight years to conceive. Within days, the family had more than 30,000 page views.

The overwhelming response attracted the attention of their current birth mother, whom Dittmar declined to describe at length, citing privacy concerns.

This week, Dittmar said she will accompany the woman to a doctor appointment and take her shopping to "pick the crib set for the baby." She and her husband believe in open adoption.

"I want her to feel that her baby is sleeping in the blankets that she picked out," she said. "I want her to be a big part of the baby's life."

The Dittmars' site, which is believed to be one of the first of its kind, has spurred dozens of other couples throughout the country to follow suit. Guy and Amanda Anderson of Iron Range, Minn., who are also looking to adopt, said the Dittmars inspired them to create a page on MySpace.

"I am excited for their family. To see a dream come true like that is awesome and I have more hope it will happen for us," said Amanda Anderson, 29.

To facilitate the adoption, both sides are deciding if they'll work with an agency or an attorney, Dittmar said.

The popular technology, although cost-saving and creative, isn't without its risks, some experts warn.

"People think today's technology and MySpace.com guarantees a reasonable transaction and that's not so," said Michael Bernacchi, a marketing professor at University of Detroit Mercy. "The yellow caution sign forevermore should be up and blinking."

Others, such as Joseph Walther, a professor of communication studies and media for Michigan State University, argued there are just as many, if not more, problems that arise from face-to-face interaction.


"It's not a technology problem, it's a human problem," he said.

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