

# In-vitro financing creates 'big family'

By Sharon Coolidge  
Enquirer staff writer

Tafari Zanders turned 13 weeks old Saturday.

But the party at Adams Place condominiums downtown wasn't just for him – it was for him and the other 19 babies born through the Madeleine Gordon Gift of Life Foundation, which is celebrating its first decade of helping families.

"I tried for three years to have a baby," said Brandalynn Zanders, 23, of Clifton.

Many days she was in tears. Finally doctors removed one of her fallopian tubes, making getting pregnant impossible without in-vitro fertilization, in which a woman's eggs are fertilized in a lab and the embryos transferred into the woman's uterus.

It's an expensive process – \$12,000 in Cincinnati and more in other cities – but Zanders and her husband, John, knew it was the only option.

Then they heard about the foundation at Christ Hospital, where couples in financial need have to pay only one-third of the cost.

Zanders says she didn't just get Tafari.

"I got a big family."

The Gordon families represent a group not found anywhere else in the country, said Dr. Michael A. Thomas, a Cincinnati infertility specialist and partner in the project.

The oldest child born through the program is Katie Mulhollen, a Loveland 7-year-old. She calls Gordon "Aunt Mady," and breaks down Gordon's work



**Names of children** who benefited from Gift of Life fertility funding adorn a cake at the Adams Place picnic.

simply: "She kind of helped make everyone here."

As Katie talks, the other children crowd around Gordon, yelling, "Hi, Aunt Mady," stopping for a hug or looking up for help in opening a juice drink.

Unable to have a baby of her own, Gordon, who turns 60 next month, decided that for her 50th birthday she wanted to help others do what she couldn't.

Gordon said she never pictured such success.

"I thought one baby would be a triumph," she said. "Now, I have 20." Twenty-one when she counts Colton Kidwell, 1.

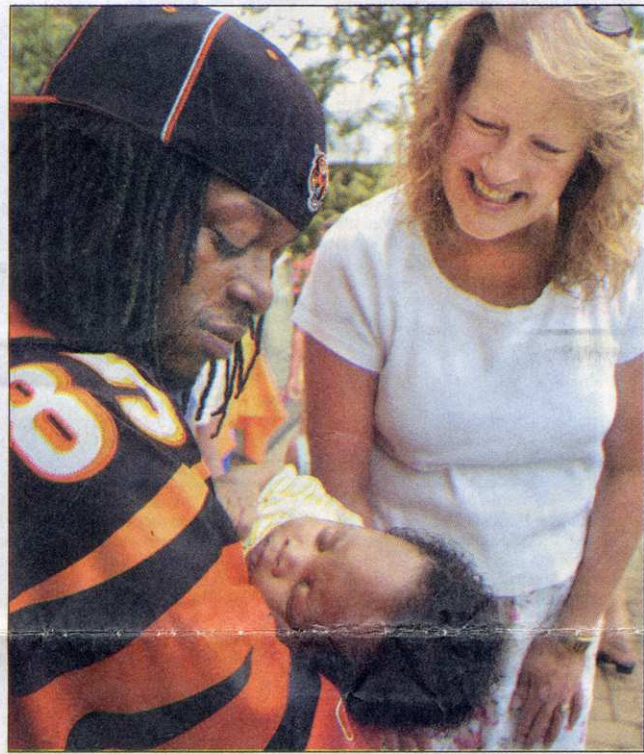
Kristi and Fred Kidwell had Nathan, 3, with help from the foundation, and then the Lawrenceburg couple got pregnant naturally.

"My friends will talk about their grandkids," said Gordon. "But, with me, they ask about my very large family."

She's happy to tell them.

E-mail [scoolidge@enquirer.com](mailto:scoolidge@enquirer.com)

Gift of Life Foundation | 20 'triumphs'



Photos by Tony Jones/The Enquirer  
John Zanders shows tiny Tafari Zanders to Tina Mulhollen, mother of Katie Mulhollen, 7, Saturday. They are the first and latest Gift of Life families.