

# Gift of Life is gift of hope for couples

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As human beings, we may take it for granted that we have the ability to create a life. For some, it's not so easy; and for others, it's impossible.

Mady Gordon was one of those for whom it was impossible. For 15 years, she tried numerous infertility treatments, with no luck. She finally had to face the heartbreaking reality that she'd never be able to have a baby.

As her 50th birthday approached, Gordon took stock of her life. The East End resident thought back to her years of infertility procedures and recalled how fortunate she was to have had the

financial means to receive the best treatments available.

She thought, what if you were denied that opportunity because you didn't have the money? Infertility procedures aren't covered by most insurance companies, and one complete treatment cycle costs around \$9,000.

Mady Gordon made up her mind. She would do something to help couples defray the cost of infertility treatments. For her 50th birthday in 1995, she asked friends to contribute to a new foundation that she was forming. And so, the Gift of Life was born.

Because of Mady's Gift of Life, 13 babies have been born. Their parents know the joy of

having a child, a joy they might never have felt had it not been for the selflessness and vision of Mady Gordon.

"It's the only foundation of its kind that we know of anywhere," Gordon said. The "we" includes the Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, the medical provider and financial partner for the foundation. Dr. Michael Thomas of the Health Alliance is the medical director for the Gift of Life.

"It's a great opportunity for people who would never be able to afford it," Thomas said. Each couple is asked to pay for one-third of the cost of treatment, and the foundation and Health Alliance each pick up one-third as well.

Thomas and a committee of doctors decide which couples are chosen for the program. Five couples, who must live in the Greater Cincinnati area, are selected each year from a pool of 50-100 candidates. About 50 percent of the women have given birth.

"(Mady) takes a hands-off approach," Thomas said. "She doesn't in any way, shape, or form influence our opinion on who should be in the program. She just wants to make sure that the finances are used appropriately."

The first couple to successfully conceive in the program are Tina and John Mulhollen of

Loveland. They had given up hope of having a child, until Tina's mother told them about Gordon Gift of Life.

The Mulhollens now have a 5-year-old daughter.

"I vowed to Mady when we got pregnant that if there was ever anything I could do to help her with the foundation, I would," Tina said.

And she has.

"I have never seen more enduring appreciation in my life than (the foundation recipients) have had," Gordon said. "I have become very close to some of them." The children call her "Auntie Mady," and most of them join her for a Christmas card photo every year.

Mulhollen found another way to help the foundation recently. When her mother, longtime Sycamore Township resident Nannie Oak, passed away, Mulhollen asked for donations in Nannie's name to the Gift of Life.

"There was enough made for one couple," Mulhollen said. "And now I'll know that there's a baby out there who is here because of my mom."

Tax-deductible donations can be sent to Gordon Gift of Life Foundation, P.O. Box 6945, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45206. For more information, log on to their Web site at [www.gordongiftoflife.com](http://www.gordongiftoflife.com).