



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 22, 2010

Up For Discussion: Queer Parenting Community Forums on Family Creation, Recognition, Conflict and Reconfiguration

In celebration of Family Day 2010, the LGBTQ Parenting Network (Sherbourne Health Centre), in collaboration with the Children's Aid Society of Toronto (Domestic Violence Team), is launching the first event in its ***Up for Discussion*** series on **February 11, 2010**.

The LGBTQ Parenting Network recognizes that the issues affecting LGBTQ families are as complex and diverse as the make-up of our families. The goal of this discussion series is to provide a space for community members to engage with, explore and discuss some of the dilemmas affecting LGBTQ families at all stages of family life – family creation, recognition, conflict and reconfiguration.

The ***Up for Discussion*** series will focus on a range of issues relating to LGBTQ parenting and families, including sperm donation, surrogacy, adoption, co-parenting, birth registration, violence, shared parenting, custody and access. All forums will feature key speakers, including academic, legal and local “experts,” and plenty of time for discussion amongst all who attend.

Part One: SPERM

Thursday, Feb. 11, 6:30 – 9:00 pm

Sherbourne Health Centre, 333 Sherbourne St.

For more information: parentingnetwork@sherbourne.on.ca

The decision to use an anonymous or a known sperm donor is one faced by many queer people in the process of family creation. This decision is a highly personal one, involving an exploration of thoughts and feelings about biology and biological connection, about family, about parenthood, and about gender. The decision often intersects with discussions about male and female “role models” and the significance of a “mother” or “father.” The decision to donate sperm is similarly complex.

The first of the ***Up for Discussion*** series will create a space to talk about the issues/controversies involved in anonymous/known sperm donation. Guest speakers will discuss the legal complexities of using known donors, the practical realities of managing

family dynamics with known donors, as well as the arguments against anonymous sperm donation brought forward by donor offspring groups and individuals.

Speakers include:

Barry Stevens, an adult donor offspring (conceived in the UK via donor insemination in the 1950s) and maker of two documentary films about his search for his genetic offspring (*Offspring* and *Bio-Dad*). Co-founder of The Alliance of People Produced by Assisted Reproductive Technology (APPART), an international support group for donor-conceived adults. <http://www.cbc.ca/documentaries/doczone/2009/biodad/>

Suhail Abualsameed works with immigrant and refugee queer youth and with Muslim communities in and around Toronto. An immigrant from Jordan, he is a community worker, public speaker, researcher, designer and human rights advocate. Suhail has acted as a sperm donor for a lesbian couple.

Chloe Brushwood-Rose, queer mom with a known sperm donor, co-editor of *And Baby Makes More: Known Donors, Queer Parents, and Our Unexpected Families* (Insomniac Press, 2009), and teaches at York University. www.edu.yorku.ca

Kelly Jordan, family lawyer and Partner at Jordan Battista LLP in Toronto. She practices in the areas of family law, wills and estate planning, and assisted reproductive technologies. She has particular expertise in family law issues pertaining to the gay and lesbian community, adoption, surrogacy and gamete donation. www.jordanbattista.com

Moderator:

Rachel Epstein, queer mom via anonymous sperm donation, Coordinator, LGBTQ Parenting Network (Sherbourne Health Centre), editor of *Who's Your Daddy? And Other Writings on Queer Parenting* (Sumach Press, 2009)

Pizza and snacks provided.

Childcare available. Preregistration required before Feb. 4, 1010.

Email: mtamaki@sherbourne.on.ca to register for child care.

Part 2: Thursday, March 11 (6:30 – 9:00 pm)

A forum on issues related to LGBTQ family recognition. Speakers TBA.