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THE MODERN FAMILY ERA SEES THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW PARENTING OPTION

**** First Resource for “Parenting Partnerships” Launches ****

NEW YORK (February 11, 2013) – Changing social attitudes in the new millennium about when, and how, to start a family are transforming the way people are choosing to create their families. The American family is evolving: today, the majority of U.S. households are not headed by a married couple, and more adults than ever are remaining single. Yet many of these unattached adults are still thinking about parenting and families; in fact, a recent study found there are close to five million people in the United States in their mid-30s and older who are single, childless and still wish to be parents. Now there is a new parenting option for these millions of Americans who want to become parents, but who don’t want to have a child alone as a single parent or with an anonymous donor. Family By Design announced its launch today as the first online resource and community for people looking to form parenting partnerships and build a family.

“Being single in your 30s and 40s no longer means that your only family choices are either single parenthood or not becoming a parent at all,” said Darren Spedale, founder of Family By Design and author of *Family By Design: The Complete Guide to Successfully Finding a Parenting Partner and Navigating the Co-Parenting Process* (to be published April, 2013). “Popular shows like *Modern Family*, *30 Rock* and *The New Normal* are reflecting the desires of many adults who are not in traditional relationships to become parents and have a family of their own. Family By Design provides many of these real-life ‘aspiring parents’ with a new opportunity to create and build a family.”

The concept behind Family By Design is helping people create *parenting partnerships*. Parenting partnerships occur when people who are not romantically linked build a relationship with each other around the purpose of raising a child together. Family By Design provides a community where responsible adults interested in a parenting partnership can meet one another, with the goal of finding their ideal parenting partner.

The site also provides expert advice and valuable resources to help aspiring parents every step of the way – from understanding the basics about parenting partnerships to helping these modern families get the support they need as they raise their child. The Family By Design team includes leading experts in all fields related to the modern family – including legal, medical, psychological and financial experts. Other site experts include adults who are already in successful long-term parenting partnerships. Family By Design also provides opportunities for people currently in parenting partnerships to connect with others in similar situations.

“For many people, the desire to be a parent and have a family is strong,” said Spedale, who is single and was inspired by the many dozens of parenting partners he interviewed around the world – and the learnings they shared with him – as part of his research for his new book on parenting partnerships. “Our goal is to help people explore opportunities for parenthood in a responsible and thoughtful manner.”

While parenting partnerships may be relatively new, social and demographic changes in the U.S. suggest that they will have an important role to play in the future.

In addition to the fact that more adults are delaying family-building until well into their 30s to focus on personal and career development, a 2010 Pew Foundation study found that Millennials (people ages 18-29) value parenthood to a much greater extent than marriage. Whereas 52% of Millennials believe that parenthood is one of the most important things in life, only 30% say the same thing about a successful marriage. Additionally, that same study found that Millennials were less likely than previous generations to agree that marriage and parenthood need to be linked.

Family By Design was founded to provide help and guidance to millions of adults worldwide wishing to share their love, values and resources with a child of their own. Family By Design is committed to the values of any modern family – to love, care for and protect one’s children, and prepare them for success in the world. For more information, visit www.familybydesign.com.

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FAMILY BY DESIGN

FACT SHEET

Family By Design

- Family By Design provides a new parenting option for millions of Americans as an online resource and community for “parenting partnerships”.
- Family By Design was created as an alternative to childlessness, single parenting, surrogacy or even pressure to choose a romantic partner in order to become a parent. The concept reflects the desires of many adults who are not in traditional relationships to become parents and have a family of their own.
- The site is THE destination for prospective parenting partners. Family By Design helps people through every stage of the partnership process in three key parts: “Learn”, “Find” and “Share”:
 - The “Learn” section is a complete guide for aspiring parents through all stages of the parenting partnership process, including basic information about parenting partnerships and covering such topics as how to find the right partner, issues partners will need to address (legal, medical, financial, etc) and how to effectively co-parent a child together.
 - The “Find” section uses sophisticated matching techniques to connect people with highly compatible prospective parenting partners. Site users create detailed profiles about themselves and their parenting aspirations, and the site uses a unique compatibility survey and matching algorithm to help introduce prospective partners to one another.
 - The “Share” section is an interactive community for all people interested in parenting partnerships. The site’s professional experts and real-life parenting partners answer questions from site users in a “Dear Abby” Q&A format, and site users can connect with others and share thoughts and information with each other through the site’s “Town Square” forums.
- Family By Design’s team consists of the foremost experts in modern family issues:
 - Bill Singer, Esq (Legal Expert): Mr. Singer is the founder of the Family Law Institute, a national organization for attorneys practicing non-traditional family law. He is also a Founding Fellow of AAARTA, the national organization for legal issues related to reproductive technology.
 - Michael Doyle, MD (Medical Expert): Dr. Doyle is the founder of the fertility clinic Connecticut Fertility Associates. Over 4,500 babies have resulted from his treatment of patients, and non-traditional families make up a significant part of Dr. Doyle’s practice. He is a widely sought-after lecturer on non-traditional family fertility.
 - Dorothy Greenfeld, LCSW (Psychological Expert): Professor Greenfeld is a clinical professor of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive services at the Yale University School of Medicine. She has published extensively on psychological fertility issues of non-traditional families, including older prospective parents and same-sex couples.

- Anthony M. Brown, Esq (Estate Planning Expert): Mr. Brown is the head of the non-traditional estate planning practice at the law firm Chianese & Associates. He writes and speaks regularly on estate planning issues for non-traditional families, and his personal story was told in the CNN documentary “Gary and Tony have a baby”.
- Family By Design’s team also includes several “real-life” successful parenting partners who are sharing their stories with the site’s audience (their bios are available on the company website).
- Darren Spedale, the company’s founder and a subject matter expert on modern family issues, created Family By Design out of his own desire to become a parent. Finding himself single in his mid-30s, he felt limited in his parenting options. Family By Design provides that option. (His bio is provided separately.)

About Parenting Partnerships

- Parenting partnerships are when two persons who are not romantically linked build a relationship with each other around the purpose of raising a child together.
- As compared to single parenthood, some people believe parenting partnerships are better for both parents and children because they provide greater support for everyone – including more time spent between parents and children, more financial support, and more emotional support for all involved.
- Given the child-centric nature of parenting partnerships, prospective parenting partners spend significant time with each other before pregnancy – not only taking the time to get to know each other as friends, but also discussing their wishes and goals for their child(ren) and their beliefs about the child’s best interests. This leads to greater agreement on parenting after their baby is born.
- Parenting partnerships have grown in popularity over the last many years in such countries as the UK, Denmark, Israel, and Australia. This trend began in part due to the fact that many European countries do not allow for paid surrogates. There are a number of organizations that exist in these countries for the sole purpose of forming parenting partnerships.
- As more adults choose to delay “settling down” and family-building until well into their 30s so they can first focus on personal and career development, parenting partnerships are likely to become the next frontier of the ‘modern family.’ In addition, Millennials (age 20-30) value parenthood to a much greater extent than marriage – suggesting that parenting partnerships are likely to see much further growth in the next generation.

THE EVOLVING AMERICAN FAMILY

FACT SHEET FROM FAMILY BY DESIGN

Marriage

- Married couples now make up fewer than half (49 percent) of all households in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau's report titled *America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012* reported that the prevalence of married households has continued to decline, from 78 percent in 1950 to 71 percent in 1970 to 49 percent in 2012.
- A 2010 nationwide survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in association with TIME, and complemented by data from the U.S. Census Bureau, found that in 1960, 72 percent of all adults in the U.S. were married. In 2008, 52 percent were married and in 2010, 51 percent were.
- The U.S. Census Bureau's report titled *America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012* reported that the number of couples living together without being married has more than doubled since the 1990s, from 2.9 million in 1996 to 7.8 million in 2012. In 2012, 40 percent of unmarried partners had children younger than 18.
- The U.S. Census Bureau's report titled *America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012* noted that the median age at first marriage in 2012 was 28.6 for men and 26.6 for women, the highest ever recorded. In 2000, the median age at first marriage was 26.8 for men and 25.1 for women.
- According to a Pew Research Center report based on Census Bureau data, the recent decline in the number of Americans getting married shows no sign of reversing. In 2011, 4.2 million adults were newly married, about the same number as in 2010 but lower than the 4.5 million newlyweds in 2008.
- A 2010 nationwide survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in association with TIME, and complemented by data from the U.S. Census Bureau, found that in 1960, two-thirds (68 percent) of all twenty-somethings were married. In 2008, just 26 percent of twenty-somethings were married.

Family

- According to U.S. Census data, the traditional nuclear or two-parent family now represents just one-fifth or 20 percent of all families. In 1950, the traditional nuclear family represented 43 percent of all U.S. families.
- According to the U.S. Census, today, households with a non-nuclear family structure are the majority. In 1950, only 22 percent of households were non-nuclear.
- According to the U.S. Census, between 2000 and 2010, non-traditional households, including those headed by women without husbands, increased by 18 percent. Households made up of occupants who were not related, such as unmarried couples, rose 16 percent in the same decade.
- In California alone, U.S. Census data from 2010 showed that the percentage of residents who lived in traditional, nuclear family households dropped to 23.4 percent of all households, a 10 percent decline since 2000.
- Census figures for California showed that the number of single-father households grew by 36 percent between 2000 and 2010.

- The U.S. Census Bureau's report titled *America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012* showed that, while the majority of stay-at-home parents (96 percent) were mothers, between 1994 and 2012, the percentage of stay-at-home fathers increased from 1.6 percent to 3.6 percent. (The number of stay-at-home fathers more than doubled from 76,000 to 189,000.)
- Information compiled by the Pew Research Center found that the share of births to unmarried women rose dramatically over the past half century, from 5 percent in 1960 to 41 percent in 2008. Similarly, the number of children under age 18 living with two married parents declined – from 87 percent in 1960 to 64 percent in 2008.
- According to a report from the U.S. Census Bureau titled *America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012*, the percentage of children under 18 living with two married parents declined to 66 percent in 2010, down from 69 percent in 2000.
- According to the Pew Research Center, today more than four in ten Americans (42 percent) have at least one step relative in their family – either a stepparent, a step or half sibling or a stepchild.
- According to the Center for American Progress, today, between 2 million and 2.8 million children are being raised by LGBT parents.

Attitudes

- A 2010 nationwide survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in association with TIME, reported that the public does not see marriage as the only path to family formation. Fully 86 percent of respondents said a single parent and child constitute a family; nearly as many (80 percent) said an unmarried couple living together with a child is a family; 63 percent said a gay or lesbian couple raising a child is a family.
- A survey from the Pew Research Center found that nearly half of those under age 30 (46 percent) say the growing variety of family arrangements is a good thing, compared with just 30 percent of those ages 30 and older.
- Today's 18- to 29-year-olds value parenthood far more than marriage, according to a 2010 Pew Research Center analysis of attitudinal surveys. A 2010 Pew Research survey found that 52 percent of Millennials said being a good parent is "one of the most important things" in life. Just 30 percent said the same about having a successful marriage, meaning there is a 22 percentage point gap in the way Millennials value parenthood over marriage. This suggests an increasing de-linkage between the concepts of marriage and parenthood.
- The Pew Research Center also found that Millennials are less likely than adults ages 30 and older to say that a child needs a home with both a father and mother to grow up happily and that single parenthood and unmarried couple parenthood are bad for society. About a third of Millennials (34 percent) think that more unmarried couples raising children is a bad thing for society, compared with 45 percent of those ages 30 and older.
- The Pew Research Center found that more than four in ten (44 percent) Millennials said the institution of marriage is becoming obsolete, compared with 37 percent of those ages 30 and older.

Darren Spedale
Founder, Family By Design
Biography

Darren Spedale has been researching the concept of “modern family” since the mid-1990s, when as an undergraduate at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina he published his honors thesis “Domestic Partnerships” analyzing both opposite and same-sex domestic partnerships.

In 1997, Darren was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to research modern family patterns in Europe where he worked with governments, NGOs and dozens of couples living in non-traditional family relationships. In 2006, Darren and Prof. William Eskridge of Yale Law School published *Gay Marriage: For Better or For Worse? What We've Learned from the Evidence* (Oxford University Press) sharing insights on the modern family growth trend.

Darren’s second book, “*Family By Design: The Complete Guide to Successfully Finding a Parenting Partner and Navigating the Co-Parenting Process*” will be published in July, 2013. This is the first book that truly explores the concept of parenting partnerships from all angles. Darren interviewed dozens of parenting partners and worked closely with prominent experts who shared additional insight on legal, medical, financial and psychological considerations for this new modern family structure.

But most importantly, this is personal. Having gone through the search for the right parenting partner himself, Darren understands how challenging and confusing the process can be. Darren hopes Family By Design (and familybydesign.com) will help many people wishing to become parents to find happiness and fulfillment in a modern family of their own.

Darren holds a bachelor’s degree from Duke University, a law degree from Stanford Law School, and an MBA from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business. He currently lives in New York City.

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