

**BOURN HALL LAUNCHES EASTER DOZEN APPEAL WITH WORLD'S FIRST INTERACTIVE POSTER**

*Just 12 women donating eggs could reduce waiting times by years*

**11<sup>th</sup> April 2006 Press release:** Bourn Hall – the world's first 'test tube' baby clinic - is using the world's first interactive poster to publicise its Easter Dozen appeal for egg donors.

The giant interactive touch screen, from Visual Planet, will be fixed to the window of Cineworld Cambridge, it will feature a bouncing Easter egg game to attract young children, in the hope that young mothers who have completed their families will be inspired to donate real eggs.

The clinic is concerned by the drop in donations as Dr Thomas Mathews, Head of Medical Function of the Assisted Conception Unit: explains "We have seen a 50% fall in egg donors. Last year we only had 26 donations compared to 42 the year before, we have 90 plus couples on our list and at current rates we can only see waiting times increasing."

Bourn Hall Clinic has a waiting list of 90 plus couples, some of whom have been waiting over 2 years for the chance of a baby. The numbers of women donating eggs has fallen drastically over the last year, possibly as a reaction to the HFEA's changed policy in the area of Sperm, Egg and Embryo Donation (SEED) which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005\*

The interactive poster is unique - for the first time it is possible to create a temporary interactive surface on an ordinary window. Offering the possibility for properties with high street frontage to 'rent' their windows for promotional campaigns, create virtual shops or provide customised public information.

For Bourn Hall it provides an opportunity to use this prime location for a promotional event for maximum impact within a tight budget.

Gillian Bellars, egg donation coordinator hopes that an appeal at Easter – a time of new beginnings - will encourage more women to consider how they could help these childless couples: "We get to know these couples well, one husband called me around the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month, every month for 2 years before I could give him the good news." She said.

"One woman donating her eggs can help up to two couples, depending on the number of eggs produced. Some couples may receive enough eggs to have a fresh embryo transfer, with spare embryos to freeze for future treatment if required.

To donate you need to be healthy and aged from 18 to 35. The eggs are donated anonymously and unlike adoption the recipient becomes the 'birth mother'. Donors can be told, on request, if a birth has resulted from their donation. Full information about all aspects of donating eggs is given and Gillian talks it all through with the potential donor before that person needs to make a decision. The clinic is able to provide an allowance for expenses.

Ideally egg donors will have completed their families or decided not to have children, but as Gillian explains, all kinds of people come forward: "Often it is because they know of a friend or relative who can't conceive, and want to do something to help them. In these cases the eggs can be donated anonymously to other couples on the list, which would move their friend/relative to the top of the list."

Gillian is hopeful that the appeal will encourage more women to come forward: "Finding just 12 women prepared to give their eggs this Easter will be wonderful news. It will make a real difference to the lives of dozens of couples and their families."

- ENDS -

### **Notes for editors follow:-**

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**Photocaption:** Emma and her daughter Catrin, help to publicise the Bourn Hall Easter Dozen Appeal for egg donors, using the world's first interactive poster from Visual Planet.

Emma is an egg donor through an egg share programme, she comments "I felt very strongly about wanting to help other infertile women; I wanted them to experience the joy of motherhood." Following the egg share Emma became pregnant with Catrin via IVF at Bourn Hall, and has since become pregnant again with frozen embryo transfer from the same batch of eggs.

### **Change in policy**

\*Information about HFEA's changed policy in the area of Sperm, Egg and Embryo Donation (SEED). Is available from

<http://www.hfea.gov.uk/AboutHFEA/HFEAPolicy/SEEDGuidanceandDirections>. Note: the statistics on the site compare level of donations in 94/95 to present day. Bourn Hall's observations relate to a fall since last year.

### **Comments from other couples (note there is no connection between the stories)**

Sarah, 44, was diagnosed with premature menopause when she was aged 32 so knew when she met husband Lee in 1999 that IVF with donor eggs would be their only option of having their own baby.

Happily, Sarah has just given birth to a second baby boy, Thomas, at the end of last month. Sarah and Lee also have a two and half years old boy called Simon.

"Both the boys were born as a result of egg donation," explains Lee, "We were on the waiting list at Bourn Hall for over two years and were delighted when we got moved to the top of the list as a result of Sarah being a blood match with a donor."

He continued, "Infertility is emotionally difficult and I don't think you think about it until it happens to you. We were fortunate in that we are both Christians and our faith has really helped us through this time along with the infertility support group, AceBabes."

Sarah says it is almost impossible to put into words how grateful she feels towards the woman who came forward anonymously to help her and Lee have a family. "In my view, the enormous generosity of egg donors can't be measured, there can't be a greater gift. I look at my two children everyday and feel so blessed."

### **About the Interactive Poster - Launch of new interactive poster breathes new life into advertising**

There'll be a glimpse of the future at Cineworld Cambridge this Easter, as Visual Planet launches a new interactive poster. The 'poster' is in fact an image projected on to the world's first 100-inch reusable touch screen foil – wider than most people can reach - which will be attached to the cinema window. The use of touch-screen technology allows the public to interact with it – in this case by taking part in a virtual Easter Egg Hunt.

The touch screen foil is applied to the window using a non-permanent solution and can stay up for as little (or as long) as it wanted, making it a perfect option for temporary or portable campaigns as well as for more permanent installations.

The trial poster is to promote Bourn Hall Clinic's 'Easter Dozen Appeal'. Bourn Hall - the world's first IVF clinic - is campaigning to attract 12 new egg donors, which could help over a quarter of their 90 waiting couples to start a family. The interactive poster will feature chocolate eggs bouncing around, which need to be 'caught' by touching their image on the screen. In between games, the main campaign message will appear. Future possibilities for these posters are only limited by the imagination of the designers.

"Our interactive posters are great at grabbing people's attention," explains Vernon Spencer, Technology Director at Visual Planet. "In future a cinema, for example, could have different adverts being shown at different times of the day to precisely target the required audience profile. Additionally the customers could interact with the poster to select trailers they want to watch. The content can be anything - animation, pictures, text or video. The more interactive it is the better!"

The Cineworld marketing director comments: "This is a great way for us to support this highly visual campaign, with minimal disruption for our customers. With our windows being used as the 'screen' it really makes good use of our space and facilities."

The interactive posters are likely to be just as popular with the advertisers themselves as with the customers. Being able to 'play' with the posters allows greater customer choice and will mean more time spent at the poster (a 'captive audience' for advertisers). The interactive element also ensures information they access will be better retained. Advertisers themselves will be able to evaluate how effective their campaigns have been, by recording how much time is spent interacting with their adverts and what sort of information people are looking at.

"It gets a lot more attention than a normal poster or even a video" continues Spencer "People just love playing with them. At a recent demonstration we let people e-mail pictures from the screen. It was a very simple program, but the response was amazing!"

- Ends -

### **About Bourn Hall Limited**

Bourn Hall Limited provides services in two fields; Bourn Hall Clinic, the world's first and best known assisted conception clinic, established in 1980 by Patrick Steptoe and Robert Edwards, the pioneers of IVF. And LCG Bioscience, a contract research organisation, which provides exploratory phase human clinical development services for the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries which was founded by Mike Macnamee in 1993.

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