



## Oregon Reproductive Medicine

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## KIM THAYER



**Kim always knew she wanted to be a mom.** There was no question in her mind that she would someday have a child. She distinctly remembers talking with a classmate in middle school about what they wanted to do when they grew up.

"I said 'I want to be a mom.' Even back then, I knew."

When she was in her late 30s, Kim began preparing to have a baby. She was single – a factor she did not consider to be an issue. Modern science combined with her fierce desire to have children were all she needed to start her family. While some people thought it would be best to wait until she met and settled down with the perfect guy, Kim thought otherwise.

"I knew I could do it alone. I didn't need to wait for anyone."

But Kim did encounter something that put her dreams on hold. In 2008, she was diagnosed with Stage 1 breast cancer. Her world was flipped upside down. Within days, she would begin to face tests, surgeries, chemotherapy and many unknowns. But one thing she did know: She wanted to have a baby when she recovered from cancer. Kim quickly researched options and opted to freeze her own embryos. When her cancer struggle was over, she would get to have the baby she always wanted. Throughout her cancer treatments, not a day went by that Kim didn't think of her "kidsicles," as she called them, waiting to come into the world.

Kim's cancer journey was long and difficult. But in 2012, she was ecstatic to meet with a fertility doctor to thaw her embryos and become pregnant. But the very next day, she had a bone scan—a regular follow-up test after cancer treatment. The news flattened Kim, and seemingly her dreams of becoming a mom. The cancer had spread to her bones. She was told that she had Stage IV breast cancer, which is not curable. One doesn't "beat" metastatic cancer, rather, "Mets" patients have continuous treatments and tests for the rest of their lives.

"I cried nonstop for a month. It wasn't the cancer I was crying about. It was that I would never get to have a baby. I wouldn't feel my baby grow inside me. For a long time, I couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. But eventually, I learned that I needed to let myself grieve and I did. Through that process, I came to understand that pregnancy was a short period of time. I realized that I may not be able to carry a baby on my own, but that's why I had frozen my

embryos in the first place. I asked my sister if she would support me, because I was a single mom and I needed to ensure that my baby would be well-loved and cared for if my cancer progressed. My sister is the best mom I've ever met. She is raising two thoughtful, amazing children. She didn't hesitate to say yes."

At that point, Kim needed compassion and support. She had originally frozen her embryos at a clinic, but she was not entirely comfortable with their staff or processes. She was about to embark on the most important thing she had ever done, and she needed her doctors and fertility clinic to have empathy.

Kim had previously accompanied a friend on an appointment at Oregon Reproductive Medicine (ORM), so she decided to check it out for herself.

"The first time I sat down with Dr. Bankowski, I felt the entire weight of the world fall off my shoulders. He cared so much about making things work for me. There is a warmth and a love that comes from within Dr. Bankowski. I knew that I could trust him."

Meanwhile, Kim was also researching surrogates to carry her baby. She found "B," a wonderful, giving person and they clicked immediately.

They met in March and by September, they were ready to transfer Kim's embryos to B.

First, Kim needed to bring her embryos over to ORM from the other clinic.

"I buckled them into my car with the seatbelt. I felt so good. I knew that this was my one chance."

Of five embryos, two survived the thaw. The embryo transfer was successful, and 10 days later, Kim and B learned they were pregnant with one baby. Although B had some health scares through the pregnancy, it was a wonderful experience for everyone. Kim and B kept in close contact and shared much of the pregnancy together.

In May, Margaux was born, one day after Kim's birthday.

"I feel so honored that I can celebrate my birthday with her each year. How lucky I am. It's amazing luck and beautiful science!"

Today, Kim and Margaux are living a wonderful life together. Margaux is a happy, healthy, funny baby. And Kim treasures their time together as any mom would.

"I don't focus on cancer, I focus on Margaux. I don't stress about the future—that's terrifying and it can get the best of you. I just focus on Margaux. I can't believe how lucky I am to be her mom."

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