

My wife, Amanda, is the best thing that's ever happened to me. After 7 years of marriage, she still sweeps me off my feet. She's beautiful and smart. She loves to cook for me, she cleans she even likes to mow the lawn! She's a Godly woman who loves me unconditionally and supports me without question. She accepts me for who I am regardless of my flaws. Our marriage is our greatest treasure however; our inability to conceive is our ultimate struggle. The fact that I'm unable to get her pregnant is my biggest flaw.

Amanda and I married in the spring of 2000. Our plan was to be homeowners first and then parents – I really wanted us to be ready. In 2002 we bought our home and began the fun of trying to have a baby. We tried for about a year before we ever considered seeing a doctor. We automatically assumed Amanda must have some type of issue preventing us from pregnancy. When all of her tests came back normal, her doctor suggested I be tested. Surprisingly, my semen test showed an extremely low sperm count (less than 2 million), abnormal morphology and high P.H. I have always had perfect health and no family history of such a problem, so I had trouble accepting the results. I went for another test and still they were the same. Being an optimistic person who stands firm in his faith, I tried not to let this get me down.

Amanda and I spent countless hours researching the Internet for different causes of male infertility. I immediately made lifestyle changes and began taking a vast assortment of herbs and supplements. I tried acupuncture and yoga, I even stopped the hot baths. I did anything and everything. Through it all we prayed. I tested several more times, but it wasn't until we saw a fertility specialist that we actually heard first-hand of our final options: IVF or adoption. The doctor explained to us that based on my test results we had about a 1% chance of conceiving on our own. The doctor also went into detail of the expected costs involved with the IVF treatment as well as adoption. As he was explaining everything, my head was spinning.

As we walked to the car that day I told my wife that 1% is A LOT for God to work with. "It only takes one of those little guys to do the job, you know." I was trying to make us both feel better. Over the next 5 years I became overwhelmed by the depth of my sorrow and the feelings of inadequacy. What was especially disconcerting to me was what I'd put my wife through. She's loving, supportive and ever faithful. I watch as she suffers through the same emotional cycle every month, and there is nothing I can do. We've watched our friends begin to start families of their own, and now most of them are on their second or third child. I want to very much to make my wife a mom and my deepest desire is to become a dad. I truly believe God has already planned for that to happen.

With this huge hole in our heart, Amanda and I became involved with mission work in El Salvador, Central America. Here we found joy in feeding, ministering, and just plain loving on the people of this beautiful country. Over time we felt God's calling for us to start our own mission work there. At about the same time we became involved with the youth group in our local church, ministering to and mentoring the kids. We are now considered the youth leaders and this summer we are so exciting to be taking over 50 kids to camp!

As a self-employed man, having been in business for almost 15 year, I have always felt like I can provide for my family the needs required for our happiness. However, the reality of paying for IVF would break us financially. We're finally ready to do the

procedure and that was the worst year my business had ever had. It's hard for me, as a man, to accept the fact that not only am I unable to get my wife pregnant, but I can't afford the treatment that can.

In the beginning I was unwilling to do IVF, mainly because it was so expensive, but also because the whole idea was so foreign to me. Infertility wasn't something we heard people talking about, especially since the people we surrounded ourselves with had no problem having children on their own. I also thought it showed a lack of faith, like we were taking matters into our own hands; giving up on God. Thankfully that has changed. My wife and I became more aware of the reality of infertility, the impact it has on the families of today, and the options available. In the midst of all this we began to realize that our miracle is in the opportunity that IVF holds for people like us. It lies in the hands of the doctors and staff that help make this dream come true.

Recently, we began to understand the concept of preparing your crops. There's a story in the bible that talks about two farmers in need of rain. One farmer sat quietly and prayed as he waited for God to send the rain while the other went out in to the fields and prepared his crops for the coming rain. It was the man who had done the preparation that was blessed with the rain. We took that story and applied it to our life. We recognized the changes that needed to be made, in our home, our lives and our hearts to prepare for our own blessing. As God closed the doors that needed to be closed, we began to notice new ones opening. Together we felt the fresh air of hope and peace in our lives and a few days later we heard about the Embracing Hope Grant.

This grant offers more than the possibility of a family for people like us. It offers knowledge and awareness to the community and to those who are in the same position we were once in.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my wife and I for this special opportunity. With this grant, my wife can finally be a mom and the vision of our family will soon be a reality. We believe God has already started designing our children. He already knows their name.

Jason Williams, husband to Amanda Williams

April 2007

February 4, 2008

Dear Fertile Dreams,

If you would have asked us at the beginning of our marriage how many kids we thought we would have one day, both of us would have told you *"Somewhere between two and ten!"* We have known since day one that we would have a family.

So when we found out after a few years of trying to conceive on our own that we would need a treatment called In Vitro Fertilization to achieve a pregnancy, we were stunned. At the time we were very uneducated about fertility issues and how common they are. We had never talked to anyone about this before so we didn't know of anyone who had experienced anything like this. Thankfully, we had each other to lean on. As time passed and the thought of going through this process became more of a reality, our financial situation became part of the mix.

We had been praying for years about our fertility issues, believing that God had a plan for us. When we first heard about the Fertile Dreams Embracing Hope Grant, we figured we'd give it a shot. We had nothing to lose by applying. After receiving the phone call with the news that we had been selected to receive the grant, we knew our prayers had surely been answered!

Attending the 2007 Embracing Hope Gala was the evening of a lifetime! We had the opportunity to meet Dr. Trolice and his staff on a more personal level and that was the start of a bond that will last a lifetime. We spent the following afternoon attending the Fertility Awareness Health Fair gaining the tools to understand exactly what was happening in our bodies and why. We learned everything we needed to know about the IVF process and became comfortable with the different steps it would take to get through this time as husband and wife.

As we began the IVF treatment, we felt confident with the education, instruction, tools and support offered to us through Fertile Dreams, Dr. Trolice and his staff. We knew we were prepared to take on the task of working together as a team to make a baby. And by the grace of God, our family has started to grow and we are expecting our first miracle baby this spring!

Dr. Trolice, his staff and all those involved with the Fertile Dreams Foundation have established a program that has made a difference in our life and will surely change the lives of many more to come. We don't think of what life would be like without this grant. We think of what life will be like because of this grant!

We would like to thank Dr. Mark Trolice and Fertile Dreams for the opportunity of a lifetime! We are so grateful to you for finding us to be one of the recipients for the 2007 Embracing Hope Grant Award. This grant has truly been a miracle in our lives!

Many blessings to you all!

Sincerely,

Jason, Amanda and Baby Williams



Sophia Marie was born on Mother's Day, May 11, 2008.