

Angel La Liberte: Turning life's challenges into positives

By Justine DaCosta

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Angel La Liberte is not one to shy away from a challenge.

In October the now 49-year-old mother of two launched Flower Power Mom, a Web site aimed at providing information and support for mothers older than 40. The site has since taken off, she says.

"It's gone gangbusters since then," said La Liberte, who has a 7-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter. "We're a growing demographic, but no one's talking about it."

For La Liberte, who's lived in Santa Cruz County about two years, the site is an extension of her desire to reach out to people in need, something she's been drawn to most of her life. After earning a psychology degree in her native Canada, she thought she'd likely become a psychotherapist. Instead, she found herself moving to the United Kingdom at the age of 25, where she settled into a career in health care public relations. Less than two years later she was married. The marriage was short-lived, and she found herself struggling through the divorce.

"There was a lot of social stigma about being divorced," she said.

Instead of rolling over, she faced the divorce head on and decided to reach out to others in the same situation. She began producing a newsletter that focused on the realities of divorce and offered support for people going through the emotional transition. What began as a one-page flier soon turned into "Single Again," an organization aimed at helping people cope with the many aspects of divorce. The nonprofit kept growing and after several years of doing everything from producing newsletters to speaking on talk and radio shows, she called it quits.

"I wasn't getting any sleep," she said.

The experience solidified her belief that she was meant to help others through difficult times.

"Single Again' woke something up in me that was sleeping," she said. "I enjoy campaigning, I enjoy getting a message across, I enjoy communicating."

About 10 years after splitting from her husband, La Liberte found herself single, 40 and not so hopeful about finding the man of her dreams. As soon as she threw in the towel, though, she met that man. The couple fell in love, got married and soon discovered La Liberte was pregnant. At 5 months pregnant, they moved from England to Canada, and in 2002 they welcomed into the world their son, Alex.

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Less than two years later La Liberte became pregnant again, but this time the pregnancy ended in miscarriage. She became depressed, and when she turned 44 in November of 2004, she feared her dreams of having a daughter would never come true.

"My fertility was dropping like an elevator at the top of the Empire State Building," she said.

She never gave up hope, she said, because she believed her family was meant to grow.

"I knew there was a daughter waiting for me," she said.

And indeed there was. "Lizzie" was born in 2005.

La Liberte hopes to reach the masses with her Web site, blog and potential new book, and show the world that a mother's love is ageless.

"I don't recommend having children after 40 as a preference," she said. "I don't think any woman should be denied her right to have children. Because it's a right."

Angel La Liberte

Place of Birth: Nov. 27, 1960, in Toronto.

Occupation: Being a SAHM (Stay at Home Mom) and providing support to mothers having children after 40, as well as raising awareness of the unique challenges and joys of midlife motherhood, through her Web site and blog, www.flowerpowermom.com.

Hobbies: Long walks on Seacliff State Beach

Family: Husband Frank, 46, children Alex, 7, and Lizzie, 4

Current Residence: Watsonville for the past 20 months.

She and her family moved to the area from Canada in October 2007.

Favorite quote: Something her mother, Marguerite Joan La Liberte Basciano, used to say: 'A mother's heart is like a great big pie. No matter how many children there are, there's a piece of equal size for each child.'

What she'd like to tell women over 40 who'd like to conceive: 'Know you are a member of a fast-growing demographic of midlife mothers, many of whom conceive naturally, and have more sophisticated scientific fertility treatments as well as natural ways to enhance fertility than ever before. Remain balanced, keep faith in your mission to become a mother and trust in the miraculous process. Remember: It isn't over until the pregnant lady sings!'

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