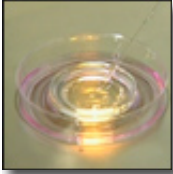


## Nederland family helps connect siblings of sperm donors

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NEDERLAND - As many as 50,000 babies are conceived through egg or sperm insemination each year. One anonymous donor can help many different couples conceive.

Until recently, 17-year-old twins Erin and Rebecca Baldwin had no idea they were related to 12-year-old McKenzie and 18-year-old Tyler Gibson. Fifteen-year-old Justin Senk thought he was an only child.

It turns out, all five teenagers are half siblings. They were all conceived from the same sperm donor.

"I grew up an only child and I always wanted siblings and all the sudden, boom, I have them!" says Justin Senk.

The siblings say they are grateful to Wendy Kramer and her 15-year-old son Ryan for helping them find each other.

Three years ago the Kramer's started an online Donor Sibling Registry from their home in Nederland. They came up with the idea as they were searching for information about Ryan's sperm donor father. "There was a whole half of me I didn't know about and I wanted some of those questions answered," Ryan says. He also wanted to find out if he had any half-siblings from the same donor.

The registry started with about 30 members. Wendy Kramer says she is amazed how much it's grown. "You can see there are 5,613 people on it, 996 people have matched," she says.

Two of those matches were Ryan Kramer's half sisters. "Filling in so many of these gaps that are missing from my paternal side of the family was just fascinating," says Ryan.

There is a easy connection between the five teenagers that are now getting to know each other. They sit around a dinner table together talking about school and friends and wrestling matches. Tyler Gibson says, "there is more than friendship because the kind of bond we have."

Most sperm and egg donors remain anonymous. But the Kramers are finding that some are willing to be found. They've had 236 donors sign up on the registry. Wendy Kramer says these donors are curious about the offspring they may have.

"Some are willing to answer questions for the kids, some are willing to meet them, some have formed relationships," she says. "Everyone on our website has to really take a look at their definition of family and maybe be willing to redefine it," she adds.

