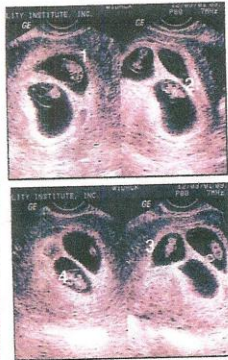




## A dream come true

◀ "When I married Bill, we longed to fill our old farmhouse with a big family," says Julie.



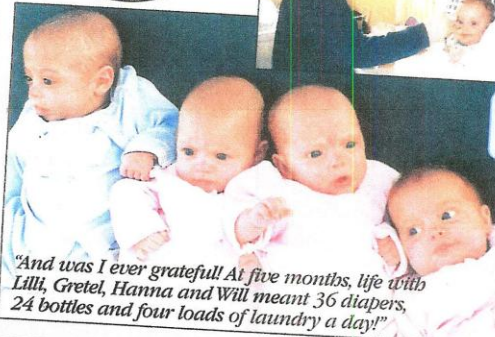
▲ "It took 3 1/2 years—and countless prayers—but after IVF, a sonogram showed I'd finally be a mom ... to four tiny new lives!"

## More than a handful!



◀ "Born nine weeks early, the babe seemed impossibly tiny, but I knew our responsibilities would be big. Would I be enough mom for four?"

▼ "My prayers were answered when 60 people—even children—offered to help."



"And was I ever grateful! At five months, life with Lilli, Gretel, Hanna and Will meant 36 diapers, 24 bottles and four loads of laundry a day!"

## Helping each other Scrapbook

# More than a

*God, if you give me a baby of my own to love, I'll raise her to bring out the good in the world, Julie Wurdack promised. When Julie gave birth to not one but four little angels, that prayer was answered in the warmest possible way ...*

**M**y babies! Julie Wurdack raced to the nursery. Seconds later, she was standing in front of their cribs—each baby reaching out with little arms, crying for their mama.

They all need me! Julie froze, not knowing which one to run to first. What do I do? Then suddenly, everything disappeared ...

It was just a dream! Julie's heart pounded as she awoke. Everything's okay. After all, this is what I wanted, she thought, hugging her swollen belly. Still, the 35-year-old St. Louis mom-to-be was scared. How am I going to have enough hands to take care of four babies at once? she worried.

The youngest of 10 children, Julie had loved the happy chaos of her big family. Years later, when she met her husband, Bill, they couldn't wait to have a big family of their own.

But after four years of trying, the doctor told Julie that in vitro fertilization was her only chance. "I'm implanting four eggs," the specialist said. "Don't worry—the chance

of all four taking is less than 1%."

But Julie's only worry was whether she'd have a baby at all. Please God, she prayed, if you give me a baby, I'll raise her to bring out the good in the world. Two weeks later ...

"Congratulations!" her doctor boomed. And when Julie went for her first ultrasound, the doctor spotted ... four babies!

"We're going to have a big family after all!" Julie and Bill laughed.

But then ...

Quadruplets! Their eyes met. Can we really handle four?

Yet somehow, it felt right. In the weeks that followed, Julie's days became a flurry of activity—there were four cribs to buy, four car seats. But at 11 weeks, when the doctor put Julie on bed rest, worry crept in.

And now, lying in the dark, her

dream seemed so real, so vivid "Sweetie," she jostled Bill and "I'm scared."

"I worry sometimes, too," admitted. "But if God's sending these babies, He'll send us a way to take care of them, too."

He's right, Julie told her. Besides, there's still plenty of time to work things out ...

But at 28 weeks, Julie began feeling contractions, and three weeks later, Hanna, Lilli, Gretel and



"With four babies, just going for a walk is a challenge!" Julie laughs.

## The "Quad Squad" in action!



*"Sometimes, I'd feel guilty—it's hard accepting help. We even tried to pay some of the nannies who gave our babies so much TLC."*



*"But no one would accept a dime. 'Give us those babies!' the volunteers we called the 'Quad Squad' would smile. 'Thanks for making us part of your miracle!'"*

## A circle of love

*"As small as they are, the quads—here at 10 months—have taught so many people what love and hope can do."*



*"And by the babies' first birthday, the Quad Squad like more than just volunteers—they were our family."*

# blessing

arrived—tiny but healthy. "They're perfect!" Julie marveled. But they're also a handful! she realized, watching an entire team of nurses tend to them.

"We'll hire a nurse to watch the babies at night," Bill reassured Julie.

Still, Julie couldn't help worrying. But what she didn't know was that as thrilled as she and Bill were about their new arrivals, so was everyone else! "I'd like to help with the babies," one woman after another told Julie's sisters at church.

One baby can be a challenge. Imagine four at once! another mom thought when she heard about the quadruplets. "If there's anything I can do to help..." she offered.

"Sign me up, too," another smiled. Julie's sisters began compiling a list. And the day Julie and Bill brought the last baby home from the hospital, Julie spotted a calendar on

the refrigerator door... filled with names! "What's this?" she asked.

"That's the first month's schedule for the Quad Squad!" her sister

Nancy grinned. More than 60 women, from preteens to grandmas—and even a handful of boys and men!—had volunteered to help out with the babies.

Tears sprang to Julie's eyes as three volunteers arrived. For the rest of that day—in three-hour shifts—new batches arrived.

"How can I ever thank you?" Julie told the stream of volunteers who came each day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

"I wouldn't miss this for anything," confided Beth Druhe. After years of struggling with infertility, Beth usually avoided babies. But she'd gotten caught up in the excitement of the Wurdack home. "Spending time with your babies is as big a blessing for me as it is for you," she smiled.

Beth's 75-year-old mother, Alma, felt the same way. Though battling cancer, she'd jumped at the opportunity to help out, too. "I'd forgotten what a joy it is to hold a little one in my arms," she confided to Beth. "After a few hours here, I forget I'm supposed to be sick!"

"I just love babies," 16-year-old Ellen Wagner grinned as she rocked Hanna. "This is more fun than going to the mall!"

And while Julie expected to see volunteers glancing at their watches, they couldn't get enough of the babies. Some would even return before their scheduled day... because they couldn't stand to be away!

The volunteers grew even more hooked as the babies' personalities emerged, and it wasn't long before they'd given them nicknames. There was High-Maintenance Hanna because she was always hungry—and impatient;

Luscious Lilli because she was so cute and irresistible; Gracious Gretel, so sweet and mellow; and Wonderful Will, who waited like a gentleman for his bottle.

Still, Julie couldn't help feeling guilty as she watched volunteers spending so much of their time caring for her babies. "I wish I knew

how to thank you," she told volunteers. "I know this is difficult? This is the best week!" volunteer Mary Kluesner insisted. And around, Julie could see the woman in the room agreed.

And like Julie's babies, the growing. Sitting in the nurse women told stories, shared secrets and became friends. And the Quad Squad would offer to take a break—to shop or walk—she couldn't wait to get home to her circle of love.

"Before the babies were born, I prayed I'd have enough hands to take care of them all," Julie said. "Who'd have thought God would send so many hands—and help

And on a morning, as stands wait the Quad Squad in action with now one-year-old babies, she helped answer an

answered prayer...

"I always knew having a would change my life," she said. "But I never imagined God would fill my life—or so many other—with so much love. I truly believe that the Quad Squad is more a blessing—they're a miracle!"

*In dreams and in love, there are no impossibilities.*

Janos Arany