

NBC's 3rd Hour of Today

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9:17:20 a.m. [TEASE]

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Next; Dad's Got This]

CRAIG MELVIN: Coming up, I'm going to introduce you to an incredible father using his own path to parenthood to help others build families of their own.

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9:21:16 a.m.

4 minutes and 6 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Dad's Got This; Helping LGBTQ+ Couples Start Families]

MELVIN: Back now with our series, Dad's Got This, and I recently caught up with a father who is stepping up for members of the LGPTQ+ [sic] community. He is learning from his own unique challenges and roadblocks to help others achieve the dream of starting a family. Boston dad, Brian Rosenberg, has his hands full with three teenagers at home. But that full house is a gift, considering the journey he and his husband, Ferd, took to start their family. [TO ROSENBERG] How would you describe the family building process for LGBTQ+ folks?

BRIAN ROSENBERG: I can do it in one word: overwhelming.

MELVIN: Brian and Ferd adopted their son Levi. Then, just 17 months later, their twins Ella and Sadie were born via a surrogate. But it was not an easy road.

ROSENBERG: We'd go into meetings with an adoption agency, and adoption attorney, or a surrogacy agency, and I remember always walking out of every single meeting, feeling like I had more questions coming out of them than I did going into it. And I remember thinking back then I wish there was someplace we could go to for help.

MELVIN: So, in 2014, Brian launched Gays With Kids, a platform focused on telling the stories of dads and their families.

ROSENBERG: Over the years, we've shared, you know, hundreds and hundreds, well into a thousand stories. So, we inspired people, but then we left them thinking, so how do I do it? And that realization is what led me to create what is now called GWK Academy.

MELVIN: The Academy is a not-for-profit information hub, educating the LGBTQ community on how to start a family with detailed guides, video explainers, and one-on-one coaching.

ROSENBERG: We also expanded our services to support family building for the entire LGBTQ+ community, and we just finished all of our content for our queer women and for trans-fertility pathways.

MELVIN [TO ROSENBERG]: Why was it so important to make sure that the services provided were free?

ROSENBERG: Family building is one of the biggest things you'll do in your life, and I don't want anyone not to come because they think they can't afford it.

MELVIN: Brian has personally helped hundreds across the country, like husbands, Aaron Schulman, and Horacio Romero Castillo

AARON SCHULMAN: When you're going through this journey, everyone wants something from you. Everyone wants either, like, tons of paperwork or tons of money, and we felt like Brian was really the only source that we could genuinely call for just baseline feedback or advice.

MELVIN: The couple was deep into the adoption process before learning the child's birth parents had a change of heart.

SCHULMAN: We'd comment, okay Brian, here's what we're at now, you know?

HORACIO ROMERO CASTILLO: It didn't work out. He's really willing to hop on a Zoom call with you, and just, okay, what happened? How are you feeling? Are you okay? We don't have many friends who have to go through this experience –

MELVIN: Yeah.

CASTILLO: – to start their families. So, as much as people can empathize and listen, Brian was someone who understood.

MELVIN: It almost sounds like he was sort of, like, part – part mentor, part therapist.

SCHULMAN: All –

CASTILLO: All of the above.

MELVIN: With Brian's support, Aaron and Horacio welcomed their daughter Lila via surrogacy last year.

CASTILLO: She's just so beautiful and it's brought so much light into our lives. It doesn't matter how little sleep you get. It's all worth it because she's there in the morning, bright and early, they're smiling at you.

MELVIN [TO ROSENBERG]: I would imagine it's also got to be pretty cool, from time to time, getting a phone call from someone. It's like, hey, Brian, we got – we got the baby. We got the baby.

ROSENBERG: Oh my God.

MELVIN: And you – you helped us get the baby.

ROSENBERG: I cry every time. That's the best thing I know we're out there.

MELVIN: So, since our story first aired, Lila celebrated her first birthday. Aaron and Horacio – they're working with Brian for future family-building plans, so Lila hopefully soon becomes a big sister.

DYLAN DREYER: Aw, that's sweet.

MELVIN: Ohhh.

DREYER: What a great story.

MELVIN: Fingers crossed.