

Fashion & Style

Search All NYTimes.com

Go



**MANLY STYLE
UNDER \$50**
Free shipping & return

SHOP

[Advertise on NYTimes.com](#)

Making a Child, Minus the Couple

Log in to see what your friends are sharing on

Log In With Facebook



Evan Sung for The New York Times

Colin Weil had a daughter through a partnership with her mother.

By ABBY ELLIN

Published: February 8, 2013

Rachel Hope is 5-foot-9 and likes yoga, dance and martial arts. A real estate developer and freelance writer in Los Angeles, Ms. Hope, 41, is seeking a man who lives near her, is healthy and fit, and “has his financial stuff together,” she said. Parker Williams, the 42-year-old founder of QTheory, a charity auction company also in Los Angeles, would seem like a good candidate. A 6-foot-2 former model who loves animals, Mr. Williams is athletic, easygoing, compassionate and organized.

 FACEBOOK

 TWITTER

 GOOGLE+

 SAVE

 E-MAIL

 SHARE

 PRINT

Friends are sharing on
nytimes.com. [Privacy Policy](#) | [What's This?](#)

What's Popular Now

How Mexico Got
Back in the
Game



In Italy, Illusion
Is the Only
Reality



Advertise on NYTimes.com

A collection of various items including a colorful patterned chair, a black and white panda-shaped pan, a white mug with a gold handle, a green chair, a red chair, a red robot figurine, and a black and white speaker. Below the items is the Fab.com logo and a red button that says "Shop Now!" with a right-pointing arrow.

Today's Headlines Daily E-Mail



Sign up for a roundup of the day's top stories, sent every morning.

Sign Up

[See Sample](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

MOST E-MAILED

MOST VIEWED



1. OPINION
[Who Has the Guts for Gluten?](#)

Related

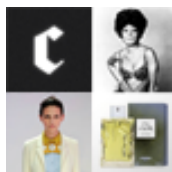
Motherlode Blog: Do Parents Really Brag Too Much? (February 1, 2013)

Motherlode Blog: Foster Parenting Creates a Future, Without Erasing the Past (January 27, 2013)

Times Topic: Parenting

The Collection: A Fashion App for the iPad

A one-stop destination for Times fashion coverage and the latest from the runways.



• Download It From the App Store

Follow Us on Twitter

Follow @NYTimesfashion for fashion, beauty and lifestyle news and headlines.



[Enlarge This Image](#)



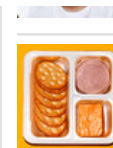
Neither Ms. Hope nor Mr. Williams is interested in a romantic liaison. But they both want a child, and they're in serious discussions about having, and raising, one together. Never mind that Mr. Williams is gay and that the two did not know of each other's existence until last October, when they met on [Modamily.com](#), a Web site for people looking to share [parenting](#) arrangements.

Mr. Williams and Ms. Hope are among a new breed of online daters, looking not for love but rather a partner with whom to build a decidedly non-nuclear family. And several social networks, including [PollenTree.com](#), [Coparents.com](#), [Co-ParentMatch.com](#), and [MyAlternativeFamily.com](#), as well as Modamily, have sprung up over the past few years to help them.

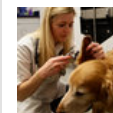
“While some people have chosen to be a single parent, many more people look at scheduling and the financial pressures and the lack of an emotional partner and decide that single parenting is too daunting and wouldn't be good for them or the child,” said Darren Spedale, 38, the founder of [Family by Design](#), a free parenting partnership site officially introduced in early January. “If you can share the support and the ups and downs with someone, it makes it a much more interesting parenting option.”

SINGLE PAGE

REPRINTS



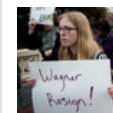
2. [The Extraordinary Science of Addictive Junk Food](#)



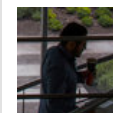
3. [High Debt and Falling Demand Trap New Vets](#)



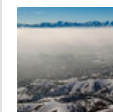
4. OPINION
[In Italy, Illusion Is the Only Reality](#)



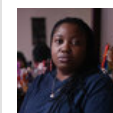
5. [Emory University's Leader Reopens Its Racial Wounds](#)



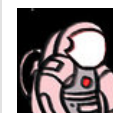
6. THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
[How Mexico Got Back in the Game](#)



7. [Seen as Nature Lovers' Paradise, Utah Struggles With Air Quality](#)



8. [Major Banks Aid in Payday Loans Banned by States](#)



9. OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR
[What Our Brains Can Teach Us](#)



10. DIGITAL DOMAIN
[There Is an Algorithm for Everything, Even Bras](#)

[Go to Complete List »](#)

[Show My Recommendations](#)



Emily Berl for The New York Times
Above, Rachel Hope and her daughter Grace at their home in Los Angeles.

The sites present what can seem like a compelling alternative to surrogacy, adoption or simple sperm donation.

“I’ve met so many women in this same situation, who aren’t married and feel like they missed the boat,” said Dawn Pieke, 43, a sales and marketing manager in Omaha, Neb., whose daughter, Indigo, was born last October. Ms. Pieke met Indigo’s father, Fabian Blue, on a Facebook page for Co-parents.net in June 2011, not long after the end of her 10-year relationship. She wanted a baby, but feared doing it alone because, she said, “I didn’t grow up with my dad.” Rather than focusing on a love match, she decided to find someone to share both the financial and emotional stresses of child rearing.

Mr. Blue, for his part, had wanted to be a father since 2006. He had considered adoption, but “figured no one would let a single gay male adopt a child, and I didn’t have the kind of income for a surrogate,” he said. He went on Craigslist and parenting Web sites and had coffee dates with a handful of women, but “just like in any relationship there needed to be a spark and it simply wasn’t there,” he said. With Ms. Pieke, though, he said the electricity was palpable from the start. The two corresponded on Facebook and then Skype, asking each other questions about everything from religion to dating to child-rearing philosophies. By November he decided to move from Melbourne, Australia, where he was living, to Omaha.

“My twin sister was like, ‘Are you kidding me?’ ” Ms. Pieke recalled with a laugh. “I said, ‘No. He wants a child. I want a child. We want to meet and see if it’s anything bigger.’ ”

They first met in person on Thanksgiving 2011. “I felt like this guy was my relative or long-lost brother, but then again he was also a stranger,” Ms. Pieke said. They continued the dialogue: reading each other’s medical charts, undergoing fertility tests. He moved into a separate bedroom in her home, and, she said, four weeks later, “He handed me a semen sample, we hugged, and I went into my bedroom and inseminated myself.”

**REAL-TIME
OSCAR®
COVERAGE.**
PHOTOS, VIDEO, CONVERSATION AND
EXPERT ANALYSIS WITH THE
CARPETBAGGER.

Catch every second
nytimes.com/awards

The New York Times
NYTIMES.COM
HOME DELIVERY
+ FREE DIGITAL ACCESS. [SUBSCRIBE NOW](#)

Ads by Google

[what's this?](#)

Become A Better Parent

Stop Defiance, Backtalk, Lying

Outbursts & Cursing. Guaranteed!

TheTotalTransformation.com

While Mr. Blue and Ms. Pieke plan on sharing parenting responsibility for Indigo equally, they never drafted any kind of legal agreement, which they both agree was unwise. “There were so many things I didn’t anticipate — like, how much should I be responsible financially? What happens if I lose a job? What happens if he does? It’s not a marriage,” she said.

Mr. Spedale, who is writing a book on parenting partnerships, a term he prefers to co-parenting since the latter is sometimes used among the divorced, stresses the importance of having some kind of written agreement in place, not just for legal reasons but “to get that conversation going about things you might not have thought about asking,” he said.

As with [same-sex marriage](#), the laws on parenting partnerships vary from state to state. Family by Design publishes a list on its Web site, along with a template for parenting agreements. And there have been some court cases that could affect them. In 2008, a New Mexico state appeals court decided against a sperm donor who was somewhat involved in the children’s lives and had agreed to pay some child support but refused once the amount increased. Last year, a state appeals court in California ruled in favor of a Texas sperm donor who was sued for child support.

A version of this article appeared in print on February 10, 2013, on page ST1 of the New York edition with the headline: Making a Child, Minus the Couple.

[f](#) [t](#) [+](#) [SAVE](#) [✉](#) E-MAIL [+](#) SHARE

 **Get 50% Off The New York Times & Free All Digital Access.**

Get Free E-mail Alerts on These Topics

- Parenting
- Children and Childhood
- Families and Family Life
- Dating and Courtship

Master's in Social Work

Earn a USC MSW Degree Online. Get

More Info About USC Programs Today!

msw.USC.edu/Virtual-Academic-Center

INSIDE NYTIMES.COM



DANCE »



New York's World of Movement

BOOKS »



Jackie Collins: By the Book

SUNDAY REVIEW »

Observer: The Next Frontier Is Your Brain

A sweeping new scientific initiative could help us understand memories, dreams and the nature of consciousness.

TRAVEL »



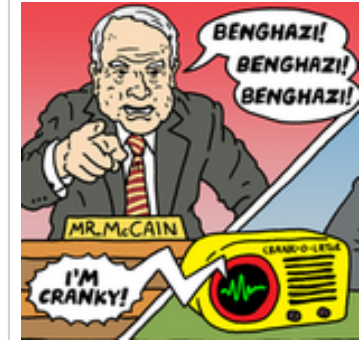
Extreme Alaska

FASHION & STYLE »



Weddings and Celebrations

SUNDAY REVIEW »



The Strip: Tomorrow's Technology News Today