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Older moms a new movement

BY JOHN SAMMON
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Dan Coyro/Santa Cruz Sentinel/MCT

Angel La Liberte had daughter Isabella and son Leo while in her 40s. She runs a website for older moms.

WATSONVILLE, Calif. -- At one time, a woman older than 40 giving birth was a rarity. Today, it's a mainstream phenomenon.

"It's really changed dramatically in the last decade," said Angel La Liberte, manager of the website Flower Power Mom. "Many more women are having babies after age 40. It's a modern little baby boom."

She said recent advances in medical treatments and growing knowledge of the human body have changed previous assumptions about late motherhood. The website, www.flowerpowermom.com, is titled in recognition that older mothers are often baby boomers who grew up in the 1960s. La Liberte, 50, had her two children at age 41 and 44.

"If you're an older mom, you might wind up dropping your kids off at a day-care center next to other mothers young enough to be your own daughter," she said.

"I divorced at 30, and I ... didn't meet my current husband until 10 years later."

A video on the website discusses the ramifications.

La Liberte said she receives emails from older women who want to be moms. She said such women must first be realistic. "After 40, your fertility goes down. But there are

options, egg and sperm donations, even adoptions."

She said there's been age discrimination against older mothers. La Liberte said more people today are coming to understand that older motherhood is not a passing fad.

"There is a higher risk with age, and there's a test you can take before birth to check for Down syndrome," she said. "It can be tough and emotional to take. There was no way I was going to give my baby up, but there's also no point in chewing your fingernails over it."

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