NEW YORK (CNN) -- With a full load of classes, two young children and her bills piling up, Michelle decided to face her economic straits in a pretty unorthodox way.

She is donating her eggs to an infertile couple.

"The cost of living is crazy right now, with two kids, gas prices and rent. ... I'm living paycheck to paycheck," said the 24-year-old, who did not give her last name to protect her identity. "I just really need the money to finish school."

Michelle is not alone. As the nation's economy is slumping, some fertility clinics say interest in donating has surged.

"We are seeing an increase in inquiries, but we're not sure if it's due to the economy or increased awareness," said Dr. Susan Willman, a reproductive endocrinologist at the Reproductive Science Center of the Bay Area. In July 2007, the Reproductive Science Center received 120 calls inquiring about egg donation. This year, that number jumped to 158 calls. "We are so inundated right now," said Robin von Halle, president of Alternative Reproductive Resources.

Von Halle said that 30 to 50 inquiries a day from potential donors come in to her Chicago, Illinois, agency, which connects would-be parents with donors and surrogates. A year ago, it would have been 10 to 30, she said.

"I think there is a spike more for financial reasons," said Mahshid Albrecht, manager of Donor Services at the Reproductive Science Center. "But is that the only reason? Probably not."

An egg donor is typically compensated between $5,000 and $10,000. Experts say that although most women donate out of desire to help infertile couples, the financial allure is real.

"It's important to understand that if a young woman walks into a clinic and says she wants to be an egg donor, the clinic doesn't just sit down and say, 'Sure' and hand them money," said Dr. Mark Hornstein, president of the Society of Assisted Reproductive Technology. "There are national guidelines. It's a tightly orchestrated, stringent process."
And it's not an easy process.

Before a single egg is cultivated, a donor must undergo a battery of psychological and physical exams. That vetting process can last from 30 to 40 days, and 90 percent of women are eliminated before a single egg is culled.

Once a donor is selected, she is injected with powerful hormones for up to three weeks to promote egg production. There are also blood tests and up to 10 visits to the fertility center for ultrasound monitoring.

"It is such a long, agonizing process," Michelle said. "It's six to eight weeks of poking and probing and blood work."

Then there are the risks. The most dangerous is a condition called ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome, when ovaries become enlarged. Although most short-term risks are mild -- bloating, weight gain and abdominal pain -- less is known about long-term risks.

Despite the intensive screening, ethical questions still linger about fertility for financial gain.

Michelle says that although her finances drove her to donate, she's also motivated by wanting to help others.

"The best thing I've ever been in my life is a mom, and to help someone else is a cool opportunity," said Michelle. "Knowing that it works is much better than the money."

Please answer the following two questions in your own words, in both English and Spanish and e-mail your response to akyriaco@kennesaw.edu and arrange a time to complete the Verbal Assessment.

1. What happens to a donor once she is selected?
2. In a few words, what is the theme of this article?

Thank you and good luck.

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