

# Shining Light Baby Celebrates Five Years of Heartfelt Surrogacy Support Amid Global Change

*Reflecting on five years of guiding families through surrogacy with integrity, cultural sensitivity, and compassion.*

SCHAUMBURG, IL, UNITED STATES, June 2, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This year marks five years since three women—Zara Griswold, Vicky Li, and Mariana Martinez—came together with a shared vision: to create a [surrogacy agency](#) that placed people, not process, at the center of the journey to parenthood. That vision became Shining Light Baby, founded in June 2020.

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As an agency, we consider it our responsibility to guide them through each step, clearly explaining the surrogacy process and matching them to the right surrogate with compassion and care.”

*Vicky Li, Shining Light Baby  
Co-Founder/ Asian Program  
Director*

What they didn't know at the time was how much they would need to overcome.

## A Mission Rooted in Trust

The three founders brought years of experience in surrogacy, advocacy, and client care. But as they began laying the groundwork for the agency, the COVID-19

pandemic erupted—bringing with it closed borders, delayed passports, and global uncertainty. For international [intended parents](#), the impact was immediate and devastating.

In March 2020, Vicky Li received a call from clients in China. Their baby had just been born through surrogacy in the U.S., but they were unable to travel due to pandemic restrictions. That first call marked the beginning of an [extraordinary chapter](#). She opened her home to a total of five newborns—becoming the legal guardian for two of them and caring for them as part of her family for nearly two years.

“Balancing work, parenting, and full-time infant care during a pandemic was incredibly demanding,” Vicky recalls. “But my clients entrusted their babies to me, and I devoted my entire heart to their care.”

Her dedication became part of the emotional blueprint for the agency's mission: to serve every family with integrity, transparency, and compassion.

### Loss, Legacy, and Leadership

In 2022, the Shining Light Baby team faced another challenge—the heartbreaking loss of co-founder Zara Griswold to ovarian cancer. Zara was not only a seasoned professional in the surrogacy field, she was also a mother through surrogacy herself. She chronicled her personal journey in her published book, *Surrogacy Was the Way: Twenty Intended Mothers Tell Their Stories*, a title that has offered hope and insight to families around the world.



Shining Light Baby co-founders Mariana Martinez, Vicky Li, and the late Zara Griswold at one of the agency's early events. Their shared vision of compassionate, culturally sensitive surrogacy continues to guide the agency five years later.

“Zara helped define who we are,” says Mariana. “Her passion still influences everything we do, especially when it comes to making sure parents and surrogates alike feel respected, seen, and supported.”

### Guiding Spanish Families Through Legal Barriers

As international surrogacy laws have tightened, Shining Light Baby has become a vital lifeline for Spanish intended parents navigating increasing restrictions. While surrogacy remains illegal in Spain and contracts are considered null and void, recent policy changes have made the path to legal recognition even more difficult.

In 2024, the Spanish Supreme Court ruled that foreign judgments establishing parentage through surrogacy were contrary to Spanish public policy. Then, in April 2025, Spain's civil registry authority issued a new directive clarifying birth registration rules, and by May 1, 2025, Spanish embassies and consulates were formally prohibited from registering children born through surrogacy abroad.

Despite these growing barriers, Spanish couples can still pursue surrogacy in countries like the U.S., but must often prove biological parenthood and go through additional legal steps, such as domestic adoption, to gain full recognition in Spain.

Recognizing the emotional and legal weight of this journey, co-founder Mariana Martinez, a

native Spanish speaker, has stepped in to guide families through these complexities. Her culturally informed, bilingual support has made Shining Light Baby a trusted agency for Spanish-speaking intended parents seeking clarity, respect, and reassurance.

“Spanish parents often arrive with heavy hearts and a lot of questions,” says Mariana. “Our job is to help them feel safe, supported, and never alone—even when the legal path isn’t straightforward.”

### Lighting the Way Forward

Five years in, Shining Light Baby has supported families from the U.S., China, Taiwan, Spain, Argentina, Mexico and beyond. The agency’s multilingual team remains focused on building strong, ethical matches between intended parents and gestational carriers, while avoiding the one-size-fits-all approach that can be common in other agencies

“In my view, the surrogacy industry today often lacks genuine, human-centered support,” says Vicky. “This is the core value that we have made central to our surrogacy agency.”

As Shining Light Baby celebrates its fifth anniversary, it continues to honor the legacy of its founders, the strength of the families it serves, and the commitment to keep lighting the way for families on the path to parenthood through surrogacy.

For more information, visit [www.shininglightbaby.com](http://www.shininglightbaby.com) or contact [info@shininglightbaby.com](mailto:info@shininglightbaby.com).

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