

Quadruplets live up Jackson home

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Parents see babies' emerging personalities

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JACKSON TWP. — The Revs. Cheryl and Steven Clifford are first-time parents.

And second time. And third time. And fourth time.

On Oct. 11 Cheryl gave birth to quadruplets — two boys and two girls — at Akron City Hospital, and Monday the last one came home.

Ruth, the smallest and the oldest, keeps up a constant gravely chatter of "Ruthy noises" whether she's eating, sleeping or just hanging out.

"Paul's our thinker," said Cheryl. "He wrinkles up his forehead and gives you this very thoughtful look. He's going to be our college professor with a bow tie."

Heidi has a mohawk from having the side of her head shaved at the hospital. She keeps the most dependable schedule, and she is hands down the biggest eater, knocking off 22 ounces of formula Thursday — 5 ounces more than the nearest competitor.

"She likes to eat," said Cheryl, "and she's got the pudgy cheeks to prove it."

They call Robert "Mr. Congeniality." He's the most laid-back and the easiest to feed. According to Cheryl, saying "how about a burp, Robert?" is all the coaxing he needs to come through with a healthy belch.

Of course, distinctive personalities and feeding styles don't

make it easier to remember who actually needs to be fed next.

"Is this Paul?" Steven asked his mother-in-law, Gertrude Kuchta, as she fed a baby.

"This is Robert," she said.

It's not that they're hard to tell apart, according to Steven, "we just lose track of who's where."

Keeping a log helps. Time and quantity of feedings get documented, as does who gave the bottle so the parents and live-in grandmother can all be sure to spend time with each one of the babies.

And yes, according to Cheryl, there are stretches of up to two hours at a time when Robert, Heidi, Paul and Ruth all sleep at once, and all is quiet.

The Cliffords said community support, particularly from churches, has been amazing.

Baby gifts, along with cards and letters of prayer and encouragement, have poured in. Four teddy bears sit in a row on a roll-top desk in the living room, and all around are stacks of toys and gift boxes that need to be sorted and stowed.

The quads have been given most of the high chairs, cribs, car seats and infant clothes they need, as well as supplies to keep them diapered and fed for a little while anyway.

But appetites are growing, and diapers, which come 28 to a pack, are being used at the rate of 32 a day, so it's a good bet there will be frequent outings to the supermarket.

All four babies have gained



Repository / Scott Heckel

■ FOUR CHARMERS. The Revs. Cheryl and Steven Clifford of Jackson Township had four more things to be thankful for this Thanksgiving. Their quadruplets, born Oct. 11, are home from the hospital. They are (from left) Ruth, Paul, Heidi and Robert.

about 3 pounds, which for some has doubled their birth weight. Cheryl said she's feeling great, though she was running on three hours sleep at the time.

The Cliffords said being inundated with community interest in the quadruplets hasn't been a burden. On the contrary, the Cliffords said they're not surprised people have been deeply touched, and they are pleased that God has used these children to bring people together in prayer who may not have known

each other before.

"People see the miracle of their little lives and how well they've done," Cheryl said. "People are just awed by it."

"There's something wonderful and miraculous about these little gifts of life," Steven said. "Obviously we can't handle it ourselves, so that means a lot of people will get to share the joy. I think we know that these children are meant to bring joy to more than just us."