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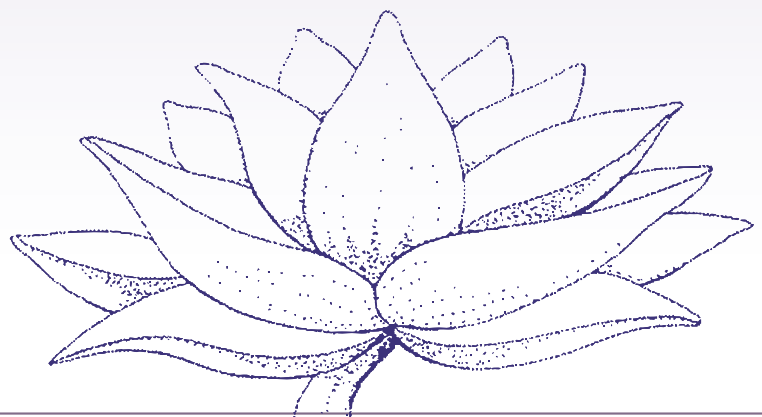
Birthworks®

International

Finding the Truths About Birth Conference



Because it's ancient



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BirthWorks International members who have questions about philosophies or policy are encouraged to contact the BirthWorks International office or their Regional Ambassadors.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

BWI Conference

There was a palpable energy of excitement in the air at our 2016 Conference “Finding the TRUTHS About Birth.” Nils Bergman set the tone on the pre-conference day in his full-day workshop entitled “Turning Ancient Truths Into Modern Science.” Attendees to his workshop were on the cutting edge of modern science with his in-depth explanations about “Zero Separation” of mother and baby at birth and how “the mother should not be left alone.” He advised against lying babies on their backs because it disturbs their sleep-wake cycle, affects brain maturity in the baby, and may have unintended consequences (see page 4). He explained this in such a simple way by asking if we knew of any mammals who lie their young babies on their backs to sleep. Of course, we are mammals so why would we do that? This is an ancient truth being violated today.

There were many amazing and accomplished speakers at our conference, and it was a thrill for the attendees to have such close contact with them. Carol Sakala from the Childbirth Connection at the National Partnership of Women and Families set a positive tone at the beginning of the conference by giving us an optimistic view of birth in the U.S. Payment reform is happening now and it will change many things. She mentioned pilot studies run in three hospitals where a cesarean and vaginal birth were priced the same and the immediate result was that cesarean rates went down.

There were moments when we were all laughing, like when Michel Odent suggested that high cesarean rates in Italy may be because Italians like to talk! Of course he referred to the fact that talking stimulates the neocortex, which needs to be quiet while a woman is in labor. Ina May Gaskin reminded us that baby reindeer are not born with horns—if they were, how could they survive, needing breastfeeding? We can have trust and faith in nature’s design.

It was time for lunch before we knew it. A spread of vegan foods had everyone raving. The exhibit hall had wonderful organizations sharing their products and programs. The Silent Auction table was lined with more than twenty gifts, and people got great deals.

Many special events were held in the conference evenings. Dancing to the 5Rhythms Saturday evening moved us into a meditative journey of life that was creative, and gave a sense of self-expression and feeling. The evening with Ina May was intimate and inspiring, with book signings and individual pictures taken with her afterwards.



Cathy Daub
PT, CCE (BWI)
CD (BWI)

Joel Evans, MD related the importance of good nutrition for birthing moms and families. Henci Goer enlightened us with the most current evidence-based research. Jennifer Margulis warned us of the dangers of Tylenol for babies and adults as it is an endocrine-blocking agent. Lysa Parker and Barbara Nicholson from Attachment Parenting International (API) and Lori Feldman Winter MD, PhD reinforced the importance of mother-baby, skin-to-skin contact in the immediate postpartum and parenting years.

On Sunday morning, we had live teleconferencing with Toni Harman, the producer of *Microbirth* whom we talked to

after viewing the film. The knowledge we now have of the microbiome supports the Primal Health (period of time from conception to the end of the first year of life) concepts that the experiences of babies in this time impacts our health as adults. It all connected with Nils Bergman MD and Lori Feldman Winter, MD PhD from Cooper Hospital in Philadelphia, because a strong microbiome makes a strong immunity, and mother-baby skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding help to support this. There is nothing more important than giving our babies a good start in life.

This was followed by a panel discussion with the speakers and moderated by Ruth Wilf, CNM. When asked what their TRUTHS about birth are, they responded as follows:

Carol Sakala said that pregnant women and college students are watching reality TV births and are under the illusion that birth is women bedridden, panicking and screaming. We have to counter this.

Ina May Gaskin said, “You can’t tighten a perineum and do horselips at the same time!” “A woman’s pupils dilate as her cervix dilates.” We must get the message out to young people about positive birth before they are taught to fear it. Teenagers visiting this conference said they were afraid their vaginas would explode in birth and not return to normal size again. We need to educate women earlier—in their teens. Ina May said that after receiving more information about birth, teens often say they aren’t as fearful anymore about birth. She reminded us that there are good births we can view on YouTube.

Michel Odent believes that when our ancestors became socialized and saw other women giving birth may have been when fear started. Humans might know too much and this could be making labor more difficult.

Jennifer Margulis said that facts don’t change your mind when you have a preconceived notion. A woman

said to me, "I had three cesareans. What's wrong with that?" Keep talking and be open-minded. Always keep learning and understanding, and don't be biased against another view.

Henci Goer asked why we keep reinventing the wheel. Instead, figure out what your piece of this puzzle is. She's cautiously hopeful for the future after hearing of Carol Sakala's work. She asks us to be compassionate to others and ourselves. We want to heal the world but we must not make women feel guilty. Figure out what you want to do now.

"We're all mammals," says Ruth Wilf. "We go by touch and smell like them. It is normal to sleep together!" Wilf continued by saying that in the U.S., we've found "independence", because people think babies are manipulating parents. However, parents need facts, because the baby doesn't know "I'm me and you're you". Parents don't know what they don't know!

Lysa Parker says that it's important to learn empathy, which must be experienced. The four "P's" are Proximity, Protection, Predictability, and Play. The eight principles of parenting: prepare for pregnancy, birth, and parenting; feed with love and respect; respond with sensitivity; use nurturing touch; ensure safe sleep – physically and emotionally; provide consistent loving care; practice positive discipline; and strive for balance in your personal and family life.

We all feel blessed to have been able to receive such knowledge and inspiration from our conference speakers and workshop leaders. If you missed this great conference, plan now to attend our next one...

BirthWorks Virginia Beach, VA Conference: September 8-10, 2017 (Preconference Day: September 7)

Dear Cathy,

I want to thank you from my heart for organizing what turned out to be a truly wonderful event! I was in awe of the enlightened energy and deep wisdom surrounding me. All those luminaries in one place united by the deeply connected human vision of BirthWorks. As I wrote on Facebook, I felt so privileged, like I was in the center of the birthing universe. I simply wanted to share what a high I am on, and I know that so many others who attended from around the country are feeling that same way today and are carrying that energy and inspiration on to the places they live and work. Your work has touched so many lives. I look forward to an opportunity to bring the planning committee together for a session to reflect on the conference and share our personal realizations. Thank you for all you are doing, Cathy!!!!

*With joy and gratitude,
Shannon Haynie*

BIRTHWORKS ONLINE POSTPARTUM DOULA PROGRAM



A woman has just given birth. Her partner is traveling for work and she has no family in the area. Her body is recovering from the birth and she is trying to breastfeed. She is exhausted and becoming depressed. She needs support from a Postpartum Doula! You can be the one who supports her so she can get rest, recover from birth, and make the early weeks of parenting a positive experience.

Join our completely online at-distance Postpartum Doula Program. No workshop is required for the nine-month program.

Comprehensive training is based on the popular BirthWorks Philosophies of Human Values. Set your own hours and serve women and their families.

For more info, visit birthworks.org and click on "Postpartum Doula Program."



THE TREE OF YOUR LIFE *for Michel Odent, MD*

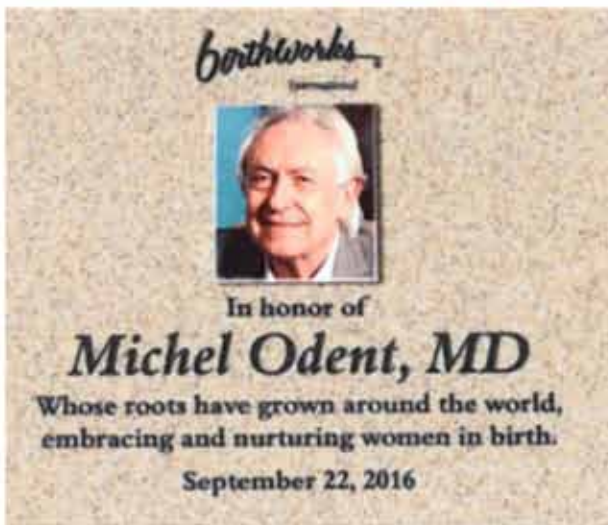


The tree of your life
has deep roots in the earth
and branches sky-high:

like a mother's placenta
imprinted dark red
on a white piece of paper –
like da Vinci's Renaissance drawings of man:
a microcosm in the macrocosm
of the universe –
like an ancient parable of a mustard seed
that springs up into eternity
where souls, like birds, find their home.

Every green leaf of your tree
holds the veins of memory,
open and thriving with sap:

so that even when the leaf ages in autumn,
turns red, then golden, then brown,
and falls, crackling under careless feet,
a powerful wind comes and carries away
the precious molecules of your tree-dust,
in which every cell holds the DNA
of the past that fertilizes the future
and the new seeds, the tiny seeds, implanted
and growing in a garden of love.



*Today, the tree of your life is already
grown tall, lifting up its branches
with the angels
and singing with the wind because
your birth-dreams are being fulfilled
in Time and Eternity.*

Jane Beal, PhD



Tree dedication ceremony at Gentle Beginnings Birth
Center/Inspira Health Network in Elmer, NJ

TURNING ANCIENT TRUTHS INTO SCIENCE

October 13 - Preconference Workshop by Nils Bergman, MD

Summary by Cathy Daub

Listening to Nils Bergman, MD speak during the BirthWorks full-day preconference workshop, we found ourselves taken quickly and deeply into two of the ancient TRUTHS he didn't want us to forget. In fact, he had the audience repeat them again and again. These two TRUTHS are "zero separation" and "the mother should never be left alone." These two phrases are now etched into our brains, not to be forgotten. As we ponder their meaning, we are taken to deeper and deeper levels of understanding how crucial they are for the health of the mother and baby at birth and into adulthood. Yes, there are long-term consequences to what happens to a baby in this primal period from conception to the end of the first year of life.

Bergman began his talk by stating that much of science is based on assumptions. One example was that incubators are safe for pre-term infants. He gave extensive evidence showing that incubators are perceived as life threatening for pre-term infants (changes their mindsets). The care may be the same, but the place (on its mother's skin) makes the difference. The environment influences everything, he said, and the environment for the baby is his mother. The environment controls the epigenetic switch in the genes and determines what proteins are made from the neurons.

Nils said we must understand what is going on in the infant brain. He said there are more synapses in the brain of a newborn baby than there are stars in the galaxy. Every baby is born with the full potential of the universe! In fact, half of what happens in the brain happens before we are born. He said the brain is fully functional at birth. At 28-weeks gestation, the last neurons are born. After that time, the brain grows through all the circuits between the neurons, which is also where memory is stored (not in the neurons, but in the circuits). Repeated firing is necessary to connect one neuron to another. An example given was baby kittens born without Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep are born blind because REM sleep fires the retina. It is repeated firing that makes circuits that make sight possible. Nils took this even a step further by stating that sleep cycling occurs only in skin-to-skin contact, and this is when the brain is being wired. We need sleep cycling to have brain maturity.

Another phrase Nils repeated is that "the mother should never be left alone", meaning that while she has

her baby, she herself should always have the company of another safe adult, father, or family member. This is because it is the maternal sensations that help regulate the baby's brain. The mother precisely controls every element of her infant's physiology from heart rate to its release of hormones, to appetite, to the intensity of activity. Nils (quoting Hofer) said this creates an invisible hothouse in which the infant's development can unfold.



Nils asked us, "When does an infant become conscious?" In my mother's generation, the belief was that babies didn't know very much at birth—that they weren't very conscious. Nils explained that at the moment of birth, nothing is as conscious as a newborn baby. However, the first hours after birth are a critical period for activating his neuronal connections, and that is what makes the brain grow.

Separation of the baby from his mother is life threatening because it causes dysregulation in the brain, and in time this leads to social withdrawal as evidenced by decreased play and slouched posture. This is followed by physiological disturbance in the regularity of heart rate, body temperature, sleep patterns, cortisol secretions, and a weakening of the immune system. Separation causes stress and leads to the production of the stress hormone cortisol, which impacts epigenetics, or gene expression, and in turn, influences how the DNA makes its protein. Nils said that babies in separation do not sleep. Separation disturbs sleep as you get a cortisol (stress) effect.

Nils then approached the question of whether or not neonates should sleep alone. His answer was an emphatic, "No! Zero separation is the science." Research shows the presence of a doula increases oxytocin and decreases fetal distress. The mere presence of oxytocin proves the mother feels safe. In fact, it is the sense of safety that makes the oxytocin. Oxytocin and dopamine (pleasure hormone) circuits need to connect together. He showed a slide indicating that a midwife helps to decrease cortisol, the doula helps to increase oxytocin, and the father helps to increase dopamine in the woman in labor. Nils stressed that "the mother must never be alone," and also that the first 1,000 minutes are crucial for the physical and emotional health of the mother and baby.

ANCIENT TRUTHS

The next amazing moment was when Nils talked about “supine sleep”, or sleeping on the back. His research that he shared with us showed different measures of sympathetic stress in babies sleeping on their backs. For the brain to mature, there needs to be sleep cycling. Supine sleep comes with no sleep cycling, and in fact profoundly disrupts sleep cycling. He said that a baby lying on his back may look like he is sleeping, but he really isn’t because how can anyone sleep when in a stressed state. He explained that with supine sleep you get parasympathetic shutdown and the parallel increase in sympathetic tone. This does not happen normally; it keeps the baby awake and increases REM sleep, which does not allow for sleep cycling and resulting brain maturity.

Nils has a way of saying something so we won’t forget it. For example, he mentioned that no mammals lie their babies on their backs to sleep! Of course, we are mammals, so it is not natural for us to do that either. I asked Nils after the conference if “supine sleep as a stressor” also applies to adolescents and adults as well, and he responded that there is some research to support that it does.

Both Nils and Michel Odent said that we have to learn to think long-term. The risk of suppression or disruption of needed neural processes is very significant and potentially lasts a lifetime (quote Stanley Gracen 2004). He said that if we interfere with infant and toddler sleep, we can interfere with the orexin circuits by methylation—the very mechanism that makes our neurodevelopment possible. Sleep is that important.

Nils then described autism as a condition of the “connectome” where networks in the brain that are supposed to connect fail to do so. When a baby lies on her back in the stressed state, the brain can’t establish a sleep/wake cycle and therefore the brain can’t mature in the way it was intended. He said that autism is hard to develop because the body has a first line of defense against adverse gene expression, but when that line of defense is gone, the gene can be expressed. Therefore, if there is a genetic code for autism, it may not be expressed unless the first line of defense is gone. That first line of defense just might be eliminated by lying a baby on his/her back, or supine.

Nils went on to say that in autism, the common denominator is a dysfunctional Fusiform Gyrus and the prefronto-orbital area of the brain. There is abnormal functional connectivity of the default mode sub-networks in autism with a disruption of the orbital frontal oxytocin and dopamine circuits. This information comes at a time when the SIDS Task Force is recommending that mothers lie their babies on their backs to reduce the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Yet, supine sleep has been shown to increase the incidence of specific particular autistic criteria in the population.

Nils showed a graph of five countries: Denmark, the United Kingdom, Australia, Israel, and the U.S., who began anti-SIDS campaigns by telling mothers to lie their babies on their backs. The results showed a four-fold increase in the rate of autism with a decrease in the rate of SIDS. Nils explained that SIDS is a defect in the gasp reflex, which is actually quite rare. A link to his two articles on this topic can be found at <http://www.skintoskincontact.com/supine-sleep-research-aspx>.

Supine sleep does reduce SIDS, but supine sleep is a stressor that carries a side effect: autism in those babies who have susceptible genes. Remember that the incidence of SIDS is very rare (was 1, now 0.5/1000 babies). Nils acknowledged that autism has been present all along but perhaps the very thing that we are trying to decrease, SIDS, has the side effect of increasing autism.

Nils said, “The result is that treating the whole population by encouraging supine sleep may result in a rare side effect (autism) becoming more common than the disease (SIDS) being treated.”

Nils said that before the 1990s there was always autism, but you need a lot of gene problems to get autism and then you need to activate all of these genes. In fact, he said it is difficult to get autism. Epigenetics or environmental influences can result in network disruption that activates genes with autism. He said if you don’t have these genes, you can’t get autism, even if you are treated badly.

But supine sleep is a stressor! It is an epigenetic phenomenon of sleep disturbance: a late insult. Skin-to-skin contact, breastfeeding, vaginal birth, co-sleeping, and bonding are all compensatory mechanisms that can buffer autistic gene expression.

Nils described resilience as the capacity to maintain healthy emotional functioning in the aftermath of stressful experiences. When infants are in stressed states, they develop an allostatic overload that can result in disease. And yet there is resilience, because first the infant must develop susceptibility. One infant may have more resilience than another. However, when looking at an entire population, Nils said we will see poorer health in the presence of allostatic load/allostasis.

Nils said that the health of a population in thirty years’ time is directly related to the quality of their perinatal care. Zero separation is a public health message. The fetus asks, “Am I safe?” If the answer is yes, then the body produces oxytocin. If the fetus feels unsafe, he produces vasopressin a stress hormone. When asked, “How long to keep skin-to-skin contact with the mother and her baby?” Nils replied, “Until the baby tells you I’ve had enough.”

Nils emphasized again and again that maternal/infant separation has NO scientific foundation. The environment IS the mother. The baby is 100% dependent on his mother. Even a one-year-old is 99% dependent on his mother. The baby depends on his mother for sensory social stimulation. Pre-term separation totally deprives the baby of every single maternal input that

ANCIENT TRUTHS

feeds the baby's physical, psychological, and neurological development. The absence of buffering protection of adult support equals toxic stress deprivation. Kangaroo mother care (KMC), mother/baby skin-to-skin contact, and oxytocin are direct opposites to mother/baby separation and the production of the stress hormones including cortisol. Maternal separation is toxic stress.

Nils emphasized that zero separation is our biology. The scientific basis of KMC is neuroscience based on 50 years of mammalian/private research and ten years of modern neuroscientific research. Skin-to-skin contact must start at birth and must be a continuum without separation.

Skin-to-skin care:

- Assures safe neuroception
- Regulates basic physiology
- Provides positive sensations
- Organizes states (sleep and feed)
- Optimizes bonding and attachment

To make his point, Nils quoted James McKenna, who said that, "There is no such thing as breastfeeding. There is only 'breast sleeping'." We must work slowly: by talking to and educating parents, and involving parents in safe care for their babies. The mother should never be left alone and there should be a safe technique in place. Zero separation is the science.

The human body is wiser than we think. For example, a cesarean baby suckles long before a vaginal birth baby, even suckling with mom on the surgical table while she is being stitched up. This suckling helps to control the bleeding. There is an innate wisdom that we can trust.

Nils ended his workshop with three targets upon which perinatal health care could focus to protect the otherwise healthy newborn:

- Safe early skin-to-skin care in the delivery room
- Safe breastfeeding established in first days of life
- Secure positioning of infants during sleep.

BirthWorks Believes...

*Birth is instinctive.
We believe that the knowledge
about how to give birth
is born within every woman.*

*We help women
to have more trust and faith
in their own body knowledge,
which already knows how to give birth.*

THE BABY WAY

What better way to show cardinal movement, or rotation of a baby through the pelvis, than by demonstrating with *The Baby Way*, manufactured by BirthWorks International. This is an "ah ha" moment for any pregnant woman, helping her to understand the importance of movement in labor. A must-have tool for any childbirth educator, doula, or pregnant woman.

Available now at the BirthWorks online store at www.birthworks.org



***If a woman is left undisturbed
during labor, her body will know
how to birth her baby!***

***Listen to your body, use your mind,
and follow your heart.***

***Your body will grow a baby that is
the perfect size for you!***

We have the capacity to birth in joy.

***You mess with Mother Nature
at your peril.***

REINDEER DON'T HAVE HORNS

Lessons From the BWI Conference

Jennifer Margulis, Ph.D.

About two hundred people, including certified nurse midwives, homebirth midwives, labor and delivery nurses, doulas, childbirth educators, physicians, and interested parents gathered October 13-16, 2016 for the BirthWorks International Conference in Mt. Laurel, NJ. The conference was organized by Cathy Daub, founder of BirthWorks, and her team of energetic staffers and volunteers.



Photo: University of Alaska Fairbanks

Barbara NicholSEN and Lysa Parker, co-founders of Attachment Parenting International

Michel Odent, M.D., French obstetrician, founder of the Primal Health Research Center, and book author

Carol Sakala, Ph.D., director of Childbirth Connections Programs at the National Partnership for Women & Families

The name of the conference explains its philosophy: BirthWorks. Birth works. Which it does. Except when it doesn't.

Keynote Speakers

Nils Bergman, M.D., a doctor, researcher, and internationally known expert on neonates

Joel Evans, M.D., an integrative ob-gyn and founder of The Center for Women's Health

Lori Feldman-Winter, M.D., pediatrician and chair of the Policy Committee for the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Breastfeeding

Ina May Gaskin, the most famous midwife in America, author of *Spiritual Midwifery* and *Ina May's Guide to Childbirth*

Henci Goer, an award-winning medical writer and author of *The Thinking Woman's Guide to a Better Birth*

Jennifer Margulis, Ph.D. (aka me), award-winning science journalist, Fulbright grantee, author of *Your Baby, Your Way* and co-author of *The Vaccine-Friendly Plan*

And in America, Unfortunately, Birth Is Not Always Working Very Well

While other countries have been making substantive improvements in how they care for women during and just after labor, America's maternal mortality rate has continued to rise. We have the highest maternal mortality rate of any country in the industrialized world. Our infant mortality rate, while it has been improving, is also ignominiously high.

We also have sub-par breastfeeding initiation rates in the United States, which results in many unnecessarily sick babies and costs our health care system over \$13 billion a year.

Most of this is yesterday's news. In the 15 years I've been researching and writing about women's health, children's health, and childbirth, the situation has sadly gotten worse. Our Cesarean rates have



Michel Odent, Ina May Gaskin, and Jennifer Margulis speaking at BirthWorks International's conference, "Finding the Truths About Birth." Ruth Wilf CNM, PhD moderating

Reindeer Don't Have Horns

climbed, and the rates of chronic disease among our children have skyrocketed. Today's young people are so misinformed about and frightened of birth that it's not uncommon to hear young women say things like, "I don't want to give birth because I'm afraid my vagina will explode."

What Gives?

Since ours is a for-profit system, anything that adds money to the system is a win for the hospitals, pharmaceutical giants, insurance companies, and doctors. There are perverse economic incentives to keep people sick.

A incredulous Canadian doctor who sat next to me on an airplane asked, "That's a conflict of interests, isn't it?"

Obstetricians advertise branded formula to pregnant women through "free" samples, coupons, and branded gifts; post-partum nurses get continuing education units from formula-sponsored "experts," passing on their bogus "knowledge" to new moms by wrongly telling them that infant formula is similar to breast milk. Infant formula companies set up breastfeeding hotlines (with the sole goal of capturing new moms' personal information so they can sell them formula and destroy their breastfeeding dreams). Pediatricians are not adequately trained in breastfeeding support, and even lactation consultants sometimes undermine women's ability to breastfeed. All of these factors result in a perfect storm of booby traps.

Lori Feldman-Winter, M.D.'s presentation explored how just one bottle of formula can completely disrupt an infant's immune system.

Breast milk is not just the perfect food for newborns, Dr. Feldman-Winter explained. It is a substance teeming with immune properties that protect the baby from disease. Artificially fed infants are more susceptible to infectious disease and even death. Formula-fed infants do not get the passive immunity from the antibodies found in mother's milk. Even more troubling, infant formula promotes the growth of harmful gut bacteria,



American hospitals make an estimated \$10,000 MORE per surgical complication.

(Source: *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*)



Pregnancy is a state of good health, not a disaster waiting to happen. Photo: Pixabay.

whereas breast milk encourages optimal microbes to flourish. These microbes, in turn, help babies fight off disease.

Birth Matters.

The film *In Utero*, screened Thursday night, explores the importance of an infant's time in the womb, and argues that early in utero trauma, including stress and sub-standard nutrition, can affect a baby for a lifetime. The documentary discusses how some of the effects experienced in utero can be passed down to a fetus's grandchildren.

One situation in particular was explored in the film and also mentioned by other speakers at the conference: the Dutch famine of 1944-45. When Dutch mothers in World War II were on restricted rations, their fetuses adapted by epigenetic changes brought on by starvation.

These babies were followed into adulthood, and their offspring were also studied. It turns out that if you mature in utero in starvation conditions but then have enough to eat as an adult, you are going to have lasting health effects. Offspring of Dutch women who were malnourished in the first trimester after conception were much more likely to become obese, have cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and even mental health problems. When epidemiologists followed these adult children's children, they continued to see health effects. The conclusion drawn from studying this population is that it's not just the mothers and babies affected by how much food they had during pregnancy, it is also their children. So while it is true you are what you eat, it also may be true that **you are what your grandmother ate.**

Reindeer Don't Have Horns

Why Doesn't Birth Work Well in America?

The philosophy of most of the speakers was that the most common reason for birth not working is interference. In her talk, Ina May Gaskin reminded the audience that cervical dilation is not controllable by the conscious mind.

"Try to sneeze," she urged everyone listening. "Right now. Make yourself sneeze. Without pepper."

Michel Odent, an obstetrician who is a champion of natural vaginal childbirth, explained that in order for birth to work, a human mother has to turn off the neocortex: the thinking, less primitive part of the brain. The neocortex is involved in higher functions, including conscious thought, language, and spatial thinking. Neocortical inhibition is the key to a successful birth, Odent insisted, which is why the lights must be low for a woman giving birth, it is better to speak softly (or not speak at all), and a woman must feel safe, protected, and undisturbed.

Medical researcher Henci Goer and others explored how much of what is done to pregnant women, in the hospital setting, flies in the face of scientific evidence and best practices.

The science shows that electronic fetal monitoring does not improve fetal outcomes (but does make it more likely that a woman will have a surgical birth). A woman must be allowed freedom of movement during childbirth; continuous labor support from a loving

assistant (like a doula or a midwife) helps a woman have a shorter, more positive birth experience and avoid unnecessary interventions, including vacuum extractions and C-section. Lying flat on one's back is the worst position for a woman to have a baby, and labor augmentation (in the form of synthetic oxytocin) should not be routine.

There's No Such Thing as Normal

In her talk on Saturday morning, midwife Ina May Gaskin showed a slide of a reindeer with her baby. The calf was nursing.

"Baby reindeer don't have horns," she said. "which is a good thing." Her point? Since having horns would make it hard to nurse, we see that this is a perfect example of how nature's design works well in animals AND in humans.

Baby rhinos are born without a horn, as well. And baby porcupines don't have quills.

"Wouldn't be good for bonding if they did," Gaskin quipped in her matter-of-fact way.

There's no reason to believe, she went on, that humans are poorly designed, or that we are so dysfunctional in our bodies as to be incapable of birthing vaginally, like bulldogs.

At the same time, she said, we must create conditions for optimal birth and understand that no birth is the same as any other. Gaskin shared that she has attended first-time moms who gave birth in twenty minutes and other moms whose labors lasted nearly two weeks. As long as the mom and baby are doing fine, there is no one rule, time limit, or pattern that labor has to follow.

Gaskin said it is normal to be 10 centimeters dilated and have no urge to push. And when that happens, often the best solution is for mom to take a nap.

"Do you see anything wrong with napping?" she asked. "I don't."

Gaskin also mentioned that most women need to eat and drink during labor, and recalled several labors at The Farm where she fed women bits of soup and other nourishing food. Without that soup, she speculated, those women might have ended up with C-sections. Yet protocol in most American hospitals is to deprive food and even water to women during labor.

The women who gave birth on The Farm were in good physical shape, Gaskin said. No one had a car or a bicycle, so they walked everywhere. Gaskin believes that one of the reasons they were able to have such outstanding birth statistics (no maternal deaths and a C-section rate of



Ina May Gaskin
Photo:
Jennifer Margulis



American doctors who say they support breastfeeding give "free" samples of branded infant formula to nursing moms. By advertising infant formula in their offices and institutions, American hospitals and doctors play a key role in promoting poor health.

Reindeer Don't Have Horns

less than two percent) was because women were in good physical shape. Having a baby is a very physical activity. The women who live on The Farm now are not in as good physical shape and their births are not as easy. Encouraging pregnant women to move as much as they can throughout the day, and to exercise as well is very important.

Birth is a paradox, Gaskin concluded.

It Takes Love to Get the Baby in There, and Love Helps the Baby Come Out



Photo: Pixabay

I attended a workshop with Debra Pascali-Bonaro, the director of the movie *Orgasmic Birth*. A doula, as well as a childbirth educator and international speaker, she has many tools in her birthing toolbox.

She encourages birth affirmations, kissing, hugging, massaging, and lots of sensuality during labor. Privacy, intimacy, and the certainty of safety

and protection, Pascali-Bonaro and other speakers pointed out, are what will help a woman have the best labor experience she can.

Pascali-Bonaro shared a video of an orgasmic birth that is not yet available to the public of a Dutch couple who had recently moved to Bali. At one point when labor started getting really intense, the mom decided she needed an ambulance to go to the hospital. Her midwife, Robin Lim, was on her way and instructed the laboring mom's husband to get into the Jacuzzi with her and start kissing her.

The kissing really worked, and the mom started enjoying and relaxing through contractions. She looked totally gorgeous, concentrating intently, smiling, her face flushed and excited.

Her baby was born effortlessly into her husband's loving arms, while he cried "give it back to me, give it back to me." They were both laughing and crying, in love with each other and their new baby. The midwife had no idea why the dad kept telling his wife to give it back to him. Later the happy couple, cradling their beautiful new baby, explained: they had made love in that same position nine months before (from behind). He had given his sperm to her, and she had given him back a baby!

Imagine how much more peaceful and beautiful our world would be if every baby could be born into that much love and joy.

Jennifer Margulis, Ph.D., is an award-winning science journalist, a Fulbright grantee, and a sought-after speaker. She has worked on a child survival campaign in West Africa, appeared live on prime-time TV in France to condemn child slavery, and taught post-colonial literature to non-traditional students in inner-city Atlanta. She earned a B.A. from Cornell University, a M.A. from the University of California at Berkeley, and a PhD. from Emory. She is the author of *Your Baby, Your Way: Taking Charge of Your Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Parenting Decisions for a Happier, Healthier Family* (Scribner, 2015) and co-author of *The Vaccine-Friendly Plan: Dr. Paul's Safe and Effective Approach to Immunity and Health, From Pregnancy Through Your Child's Teen Years* (Ballantine, 2016). A Boston native, she lives in Southern Oregon with her husband and their four children.

Photo: Bryon DeVore



Check out the Conference Slideshow at birthworks.org!

***Your body knows how to be pregnant....therefore, it knows how to birth!
Get your head out of the way, and let your body do what it knows what to do!***

Let it be, let it be! Speaking words of wisdom: let it be!

Your body knows what to do! Your baby knows what to do!

TRUSTING BIRTH

Chris Waters

CCE(BWI), PPNE (APPPAH), CD (DONA)

Is there a connection to a phobia that you may have and how you were born? Scientific research says yes.

I've just completed two certifications that I've been working on for the last few years: my BirthWorks Child-birth Educator certification and my Prenatal Educator certification from APPPAH (Association Prenatal & Perinatal Psychology and Health). As part of the curriculum for these studies, I watched Michel Odent's video on primal health and videos of Ina May Gaskin and Jean Parvati Baker, all pioneers so passionate about protecting birth. Every now and then while reading or watching an interview I will get an "aha" moment that touches me deep in my soul. This comes right on the heels of returning from the "Finding the TRUTHS About Birth" conference that I had the honor of being a part of.

Throughout my birthing career, I have been led to each next step in my path by an internal guidance system: my intuition. Learning to listen and trust this inner voice has been part of that discovery. The coursework that I have studied in both the BirthWorks and APPPAH programs have kept re-igniting my passion and reinforces the understanding about why this work is so important. This feeling of understanding is about the importance and the depth of the information processed: information powerful enough to help society move in a better direction.

During the conference, I listened to so many people who continue to make a difference in understanding and finding answers to this question. Appropriately named, the BirthWorks' conference brought together like minds seeking a similar purpose to discuss, share, learn, and understand the importance of current birthing practices and their effect on us as a culture—now and in the future.

The understanding of human physiology and the role of hormones and their effects on the body are important key factors in bringing more awareness about birth to the public. The significance of the natural progression of hormones in birth is something that is trivialized and often overlooked. Hormones have a distinct interaction with the body and also important effects upon each other. Inducing labor without signs that the mother's body and her baby are ready can have long-reaching consequences. Society as a culture is always looking for ways to improve upon things, which can be a good thing, but during this "modernization" there must be a time to reevaluate and reconsider the outcomes and results, both short- and long-term. I was taught that if a person is unaware of consequences, then responsibility is not applicable. This may be a different story when awareness is present and choices are made without regard or care.

Researchers have detected links to what happens

in birth and the far-reaching consequences through to adulthood. There are risk factors surfacing, such as an impaired capacity to love, social ability, well-being, and disease. Studies on the Primal Health Database with teenage suicide have shown a correlation of how they are born and the way in which they commit suicide. For example, suicides involving asphyxiation were closely associated with asphyxiation at birth; suicides by violent mechanical means were associated with mechanical birth trauma; drug addiction was associated with opiate or barbiturate administration to mothers during labor. (Perinatal origin of adult self destructive behavior; Jacobson B. Eklund G, et al, ACTA Psychiatr. Scand 1987;76:364-371, Sweden).

An important point in the Michel Odent interview while discussing the Primal Health Database and in the conference presentation, was the thought of long-term consequences and the effects of how we are born on the well-being and health on this generation and the next. For example, with an epidural, we know that both the mother's production of oxytocin (hormone of love) and her beta endorphins that help her cope with the pain of labor contractions are decreased. The behavioral effects of both of these hormones may significantly affect the bonding and attachment of the mother and her baby: a long term consequence. In addition, Pitocin is often administered to keep the uterus contracting efficiently for labor to progress, yet the rhythm of the uterus is unlikely to be in synchrony with the administration of the Pitocin. This may affect the progress of labor, in turn increasing the fatigue of the mother, and resulting in more medical interventions that may impact a woman's memory of her birth experience.

The capacity to love is part of the human chain of events—what happens at birth is just one link in that chain determining who we become in this world and society at large. The moment after birth is a critical time for the mother and baby in the attachment and bonding process. Many hospitals have called this the "magic hour" or "golden hour." This is a beautiful first step, but actually it should be at least seven hours of bonding for optimal neural development. When a baby is born, the brain is not fully developed, and these most important hours help the new neural pathways develop. There are "windows" of opportunity in early life when an infant is primed to receive sensory input in order to develop more advanced neural systems—these building blocks are the foundation which build on each other. With the mother is where the new infant belongs, as Nils Bergman explained in his preconference presentation. In fact, he emphasized "zero separation" of the mother and baby. The feeling of being wanted and loved has profound effects on our health as adults and our relationships with others, and helps shape who we become.

During the discussion of birth, Ina May mentioned the success of the movie *March of the Penguins*. She said that if nature is able to get that right, what about us? The innate knowing of how and when to proceed was inborn in each penguin.

(continued on p12)

HEALTHWISE

Broccoli: Powerhouse of Nutrition

Cathy Daub PT, CCE/CD (BWI)



Broccoli is a powerhouse of nutrition with few calories. In fact, it has a reputation of being one of the healthiest vegetables! It is a member of the cruciferous vegetable family which includes kale, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, bok choy, cabbage, collard greens, rutabaga, and turnips.

Its health benefits range from helping to prevent a variety of cancers to preventing bone fractures. Just one cup of chopped broccoli provides your daily need for calcium and vitamin K. Broccoli improves calcium absorption, which decreases the loss of calcium in urinary excretion. It is also a good source of vitamin A, folate, and potassium. One cup of broccoli has more vitamin C than you need in an entire day. Because broccoli has a lot of fiber, eating it also helps to prevent constipation. Fiber plays a role in regulating the immune system and decreasing inflammation. Broccoli helps to lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and improve insulin sensitivity.

Furthermore, many studies suggest that eating plant foods like broccoli help to decrease the risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease as well as overall mortality. In addition to helping to prevent such diseases, broccoli is known to promote a healthy complexion and hair, give you more energy, and help to stabilize and/or lower weight, all of which can help you look younger.

Pregnant women can help to ensure a healthy fetus by making broccoli a regular part of their meal plans. When your baby reaches the grasping stage of eating, try lightly steaming broccoli and just setting the stalks on their highchair tray. Grasping the stem of the broccoli and putting it into their mouths improves fine motor skills.

*Babies come when they are ready –
not when we want them to.
They don't know their "due date"!*

NEWS TO SHARE

IPISTOSS Funding Approved

October 2016

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) have approved the funding of our research project, "Immediate Kangaroo Mother Care Study". This will take place in Malawi, Tanzania, Ghana, Nigeria, and India, and will test whether skin-to-skin contact (SSC) started immediately after birth and practised continuously, even on unstable babies, can lower mortality by 20%. It will test this on some 5,000 babies, all born weighing less than 1800g. The project will launch in 2017, and recruitment will be completed after two years, so we should have results at the beginning of 2020. The WHO (World Health Organization) will be responsible, and will subcontract to the Karolinska Institute (KI, Sweden), who will be in charge of intervention. I (Nils) will be sharing this responsibility with Bjorn Westrup, working with him from KI.

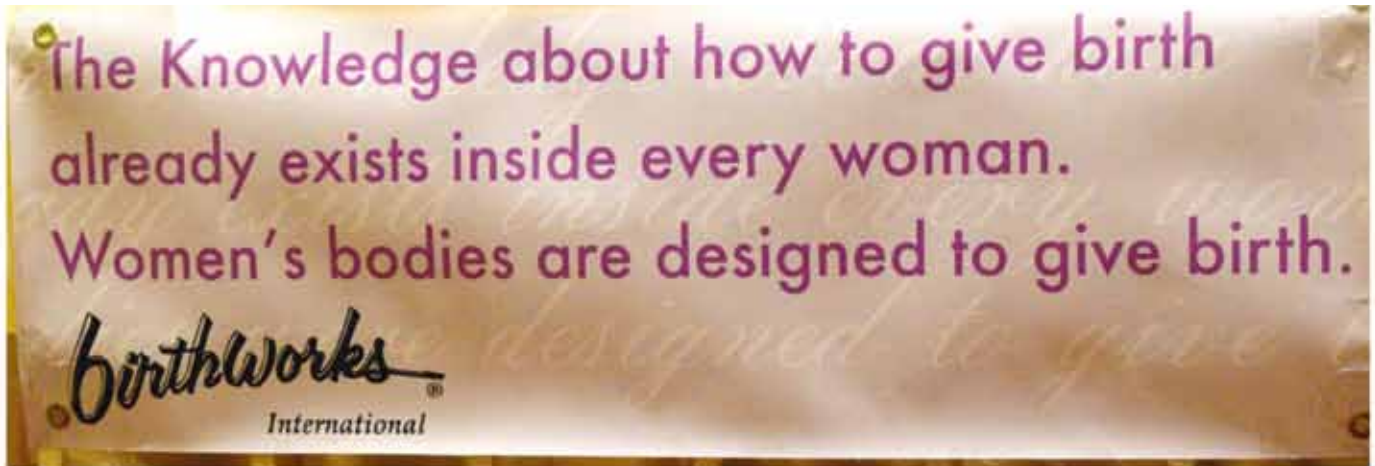
The above study is focused only on lowering mortality, with focus on low-income countries where mortality is as high as 20% in such small babies. We see this as the first building block of a larger research project we call IPISTOSS (Immediate Parent-Infant Skin-to-Skin Study). We are now optimistic that we will be able to find further funding to study the exact same intervention in two middle-income countries. We are calling these "mechanistic studies", which will research the latest cutting-edge neuroscience to explain why IPISTOSS works. We think this is necessary, so IPISTOSS is not only seen as a low-income country solution, but as best practice, evidence-based medicine that should be practised in high-income countries as standard of care. Low-income country neonatologists will only promote what they have been taught by high-income countries. In fact, the intervention that we will use in the LIC studies funded by BMGF and the middle-income countries we still seek funding for will be identical to that currently being researched in our primary research sites in Sweden and Norway. (NJB 161029)

—Nils Bergman, MD

TRUSTING BIRTH

(continued from p11)

Somewhere along the way, we may have forgotten how to let go and trust in our bodies. The process of going within and drawing on her own inner strength may help a woman come into her own. When society is busy telling us there is always a better way, trusting the instinctive process is what can help us learn to trust and believe in ourselves again. This is how we are reminded of our own TRUTH that all women are born with the knowledge about how to give birth and that birth is instinctive. What is instinctive doesn't need to be taught. This is both empowering and transforming in nature, letting the "inner knowing" surface, which may lead to becoming who we are meant to be.



Chris Waters, Cathy Daub, Nils Bergman



Rickie Kashdan and Shelley Albini

**Pre-Conference Full-Day Workshop
with Nils Bergman
"Turning Ancient Truths Into Modern Science"
Advocate of:
"Zero Separation" (mother and baby)
"Supine Sleep is a Stressor"**



Susan Greene



Special Moments with speakers at BirthWorks Conference 2016

Finding the TRUTHS About Birth



Top L -R: Karen Shields, Cathy Daub, Ina May Gaskin, Michel Odent, Lysa Parker, Joel Evans, Jennifer Margulis
 Middle L - R: Ruth Wilf, Carol Sakala, Henci Goer, Lori Feldman-Winter
 Bottom L-R: Debra Pascali-Bonaro, Sally Dear- Healey, Barbara Nicholson, Brittany McCollum, Jeannie Ohm



Susan Greene greets attendees at registration



Jennifer Margulis, Karla and Alberto Lopez from Panama



Sue Kaczinski and Shelley Albini



BirthWorks Bookstore



Jessica Ruscetta and Shannon Haynie
with babies and Erik Gilbert Sonnenberg



Carol Sakala, Cathv Daub, and Ruth Wilf



Valerie Borek , Esquire



Debra Pascali Bonaro Workshop



Karen Shields, Midwife



Joel Evans, MD



Lori Feldman-Winter, MD, PhD



Ina May Gaskin



Carol Sakala



Jennifer Margulis and Jeannie Ohm



Everyone
raving about
the food!



Brittany McCollum demonstrates Pelvic Positioning



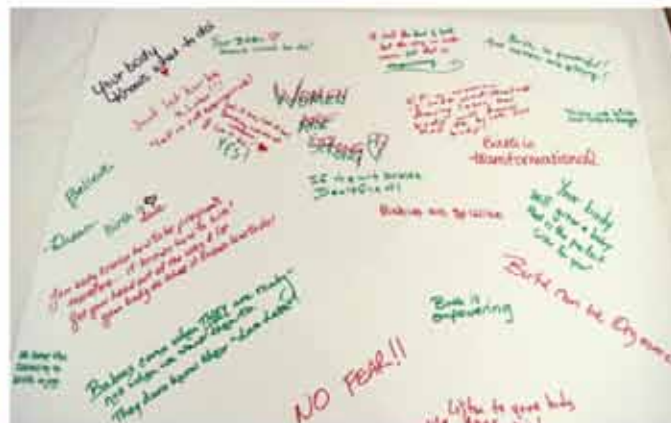
Janelle Bartzatt with Ina May



An evening with Ina May and tender moments with a baby



Amara Minnis with Ina May



Infallible TRUTHS about birth expressed by attendees



Rickie Kashdan with Michel Odent





Lysa Parker of API



Sally Dear Healey



Henci Goer and Karen Shields



Barbara Nicholson of API



"And the BirthWorks Childbirth Educator of the Year Award goes to ... Amara Minnis from Virginia Beach!"



Cathy Daub, President of BirthWorks International awards Michel Odent MD with Tree Dedication Poem by Jane Beal, and Amara Minnis with plaque for BWI Childbirth Educator of the Year Award.



Panel Speakers addressing conference theme "Finding the TRUTHS About Birth" moderated by Ruth Wilf. L-R: Michel Odent. Ina May Gaskin. Jennifer Maraulis. Ruth Wilf. Henci Goer. Lysa Parker. Carol Sakala



CONFERENCE WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Sally Dear-Healey, Ph.D., CBA, CCE, CD

I had the privilege of presenting at the BWI Conference, which was inspiring and educational, and I was proud to be part of such a momentous event.

My presentation was titled "The Biology of Beliefs About Birth; An Integrative Perspective." The purpose of the workshop was to invite birthing women and caregivers to focus on the myriad ways which women receive and embody pregnancy and birth-related information and images and, more specifically, how thoughts, beliefs, and values impact the birth experience by creating the context with which "choice" and decision-making take place.

The highly research-focused presentation emphasized integrating information from a variety of fields including sociology, psychology (traditional and

positive), neurobiology, energy work, and Buddhism. We began with a quote by Gayle Peterson: "As women live, so do they give birth," and then modified it to reflect the focus of the workshop, which was, "As women think and believe, so do they give birth."

After reviewing several sociological theories and fields of study such as the sociology of emotion, we moved toward an understanding of the biopsychosocial approaches to understanding health and well-being. This was followed by a discussion of the different parts of the brain, various psychological influences, including attitudinal orientations and an overview of neuroplasticity and neurosculpting. Finally, the presentation integrated research on the biology of beliefs and various types of energy work in order to provide strategies and tools for creating better birth experiences and outcomes. The workshop was well-attended and feedback was extremely positive.

BirthWorks Statement of Beliefs

- The knowledge of how to give birth already exists inside every woman. Women's bodies were designed to give birth.
- The nutrition of a pregnant woman has a great impact on the health of her baby from its life as a fetus through adulthood, and breast milk provides optimum nutrition for the newborn baby.
- A woman will labor the best wherever she feels the safest and most secure. For some that may be a hospital; for others it may mean at home or in an alternative birthing center.
- Birthing a baby requires integration of the mind, body, and spirit.
- Birth is one of the greatest challenges life has to offer; it provides an opportunity for personal growth.
- While a cesarean section can be necessary at times, the current rate is too high.
- In most cases, VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Cesarean) is a safer alternative to routine repeat cesareans.
- BirthWorks is a process, not a method. BirthWorks seeks to facilitate a woman's or a couple's personal process in childbearing, not to impart a preconceived method of labor and birth. There is not one right way to give birth; each birth is unique.
- A woman in labor deserves an environment in which her privacy, autonomy, and emotional security are protected, and her mobility is encouraged.
- Expectant parents should have access to information they need about obstetrical procedures. They should participate in decisions regarding the judicious use of obstetrical medications and procedures.
- A woman's beliefs influence her birth. Exploring her beliefs heightens self-awareness, serving as a catalyst for positive change.
- The emotions of a birthing woman have profound effects on the birth outcome. Women must be allowed to express all their birth-related feelings.
- The practice of human values builds character and instills confidence in birth and life.
- Love is the foundation upon which positive birthing begins, and one must have love of oneself before being able to love others.

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POETRY CORNER

Birth Moments

Jane Beal PhD

Morning!

*You wake your mother
with a great gush of water
to let us know
you are coming into the world.*

*We rock the baby-belly
with a pink cloth from the Philippines
til your mother's back pain eases up,
And you turn into the place
to be born.*

*In less than five hours,
you and your mother have finished
the first work,
so we breathe through,
waiting for the midwife to arrive.*

*Now it is time
to bring you down—bright, light, heat,
push the sun into the sky—
push you, little one, toward life's first cry.*

*Into the water and out you come!
Into your mother's arms
under the radiance of your father's joy
startled only for a moment,
then silent in wonder at the world.*

Birth is Transformational....Birth is Empowering

HOST A CHILDBIRTH EDUCATOR AND/OR DOULA WORKSHOP

Are you interested in hosting a childbirth educator and/or doula workshop for BirthWorks in your community? Could you benefit from getting a reduced training fee? We are looking for women who are, or would like to be, connected to their birthing community by bringing BirthWorks to their area. Before applying, please have a location for the workshop in mind, suggestions for advertising in your area, and allow for six months of planning time. Write to info@birthworks.org for more information about this unique and rewarding opportunity.

CHILDBIRTH EDUCATOR & DOULA TRAINING & CERTIFICATION

Training & Certification

BirthWorks has been an internationally recognized childbirth-education program for over 25 years. Its innovative and experiential design develops a woman's self-confidence, trust, and faith in her innate ability to give birth and nurture her child.

BirthWorks childbirth classes are also approved by DONA (Doulas of North America) International to fulfill the childbirth-educator requirement for their birth doula certification.

BirthWorks began offering doula training in 2006. The same philosophies embodied in our childbirth education classes are also included in our doula trainings. Offer women an extension of your childbirth classes by taking the BirthWorks Doula Training.

For information about attending BirthWorks childbirth education classes or doula trainings in your area, as well as information about BirthWorks childbirth educator workshops or finding a BirthWorks doula, visit www.birthworks.org.

2017 Upcoming Workshops

Childbirth Education

February 3-5: Seattle, WA

ACED

(Accelerated Childbirth Educator Doula)

Combined Educator Doula Certification Program

April 6-9: Medford, NJ

Congratulations Newly Certified!

Childbirth Educator

Christine Waters, NJ

BirthWorks Trainers

Cathy Daub, Sally Dear-Healey

Reviewers Needed

Reviewers are needed for new childbirth educators-in-training. If you are certified and have been teaching BirthWorks classes, please contact the office at 1-888-TO BIRTH (862-4784) or info@birthworks.org. What a great way to help other women who are working on their certification!

Do You Need More Confidence To Give Birth?

The BirthWorks' human values approach to childbirth preparation is unique, and offers an emotional and academic preparation for birth.

ON THE BUSINESS SIDE: NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

BirthWorks on Facebook

Women are attracted to our organization because of its unique philosophies, evidence-based curriculum, and the comprehensive nature of our certification materials, as well as our educational and inspiring workshops.

BirthWorks currently has over 12,000 friends on our Facebook pages, and that number grows daily. You can help spread the word about BirthWorks by encouraging your friends to follow us on Facebook. You can ask birth-related questions, post inspirational quotes, or mention birth-related stories you've seen in the news. Also, be sure to watch Facebook for great deals on products and/or services.

Become a BirthWorks Ambassador

Our goal is to have an Ambassador in every state by the end of 2017! If you are a student in one or both of our certification programs, being an Ambassador will help you make contacts to build your own small business, and at the same time promote the BirthWorks name. You can also be an Ambassador for BirthWorks, even if you are not currently enrolled in one of our certification programs. If you are attracted to our philosophies and want to help us further our mission by becoming an Ambassador for BirthWorks, please write to Janell Bartzatt, chair of our Ambassador Committee, at janell94@gmail.com.

Board Positions Open

BirthWorks continues to undergo exciting changes! In order to enhance the support we can provide to our members, as well as the birthing and parenting community, we are expanding our Board of Directors. BirthWorks is currently accepting applications for the following positions: Director of Public Relations, Director of Marketing, and Director of Fundraising.

Not only is this an opportunity to contribute your time and expertise to BirthWorks, it is a great way to keep your skills up-to-date, and looks great on your resume! If you are interested in applying for one of these positions, or you have questions about the requirements of a particular position, please contact the BirthWorks office by calling 1-888-TO BIRTH (862-4784) or via email at info@birthworks.org.

Help Spread our Message

GoodSearch.com and GoodShop.com are search engines that donate half their revenues to the charities their users designate. Powered by Yahoo, you use them as you would any search engine. Enter BirthWorks International as the charity you want to support.

BirthWorks Online Store

Please note that all orders from the online store, or those made through the office, will be sent by priority mail. Two weeks advance notice ensures that you will receive your items in a timely manner. You can also call the office to request UPS or FedEx options. Be sure to look for postal slips when looking for your package, as it has come to our attention that some orders have not been picked up.

iGive - You Save and We Grow

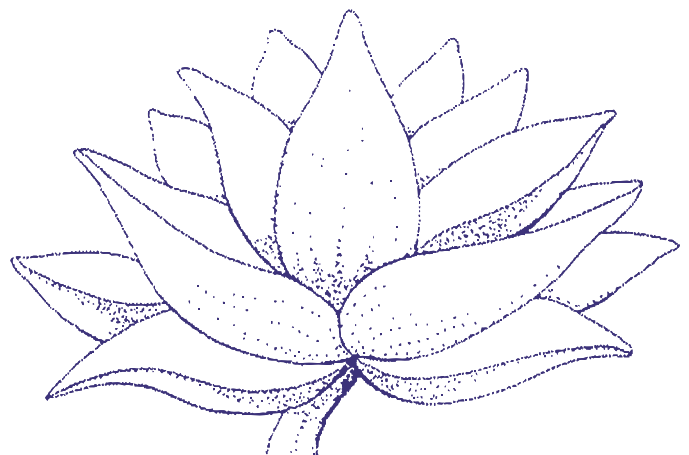
BirthWorks invites you to make a difference by taking a few moments of your time and registering with iGive to donate to BirthWorks International every time you shop at participating businesses.

After you register with iGive, which only takes a few minutes, whenever you make a purchase with a participating business, such as Amazon.com, a portion of your sale will go to BirthWorks. Right now there are over 1,000 participating stores, so sign up now!

Use this direct link to sign up now:
<http://www.igive.com/C61Z1X0>

Give a Gift of BirthWorks

BirthWorks helps women have better birth experiences. If you want to help more women become trained to teach childbirth classes in their communities, you can gift tuition for the childbirth-educator certification program, or for the childbirth-educator and/or doula workshops. Please remember that your gift is tax-deductible. Just click on the "Donations" tab on our website at birthworks.org.



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Teen Pregnancy

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**Submissions Due
for Next Issue:**
February 15, 2017

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