

Natural Times

Peer Counselor and Doula Newsletter

Sharing the Community-Based Doula Message in Japan

I traveled to Japan in December 2007 to help change opinions and help empower women. I went with Rachel Abramson and traveled with Rieko Kishi to present on the community-based doula model at two different settings. Because Rieko is intelligent in so many ways, she wove all the pieces together, like knitting a baby blanket.

People were so nice in Japan, but different! But they still accepted us and received us well. They really wanted the doula message. They were impressed by the information we brought to them because it was very much needed there. Although different nationalities are doing the same kind of work as community-based doulas, they hadn't yet put a name to it.

I was so impressed by them being impressed by the idea of the doula. It's going to be easier for them to train lay people as doulas if they approach the idea of doula the way CHC did. It's not going to be hard because similar people are doing that very job already.



*Rachel Abramson & Loretha Weisinger
at Todai-ji Temple in Nara, Japan*



*Reiko Kishi, Loretha Weisinger, Rachel Abramson and Miyoko
Nagae at the Mohri Birth Home
(Top L- Director Ms. Taeko Mohri)*

I was very impressed by their midwifery center and nursing school. I thought that they wouldn't recognize women's intelligence in Japan, but you could tell the times are changing because there are a lot of other programs opening up for women, not only nursing school.

Although the three of us traveling together were all from different countries and nationalities, like when you cook a meal, you put in a little of this and a little of that, the three of us made one complete delicious stew. When we made that, everybody wanted some.

By Loretha Weisinger, Doula at Marillac House

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Loretha Weisinger, Rachel Abramson, and Reiko Kishi presenting at the Japanese Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Conference



Reiko Kishi, Loretha Weisinger, Rachel Abramson, and Dr. Masanori Kyogoku at the Kyogoku Children's Clinic, Ashiya City, Japan



Loretha Weisinger, Dr. Takeuch, Rachel Abramson after interview at Medical Publishing



Loretha Weisinger, Reiko Kishi, Rachel Abramson at traditional Japanese dinner with Dr. Masanori Kyogoku and Makiko Akazawa, a school nurse who works with teens

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Chicago Community Health Workers: Connected, United, Passionate for Service

On November 9th 2007, the Chicago-based Community Health Workers (CHW) Local Network hosted its inaugural conference at Westside Technical Institute. The one-day conference, entitled *Sharpening Minds, Providing Tools for Community Health Intervention*, offered holistic and culturally appropriate tools for health care interventions in the four core areas of asthma, diabetes, childhood obesity, and access to services. It brought together over 150 CHWs from the Chicagoland area and surrounding suburbs who provide health care education in a variety of settings including hospitals, clinics, and school-based facilities. The conference also featured a motivational keynote by Sergio Matos, co-founder of the Community Health Worker Network of New York City. This was the first networking and educational conference the network has hosted since becoming an independent network in April 2007, and it provided an opportunity to celebrate progress that has been made in a short period of time.

"I have love and compassion for helping others . . . I have a passion for giving my people knowledge . . . I am understanding and a good listener . . . I have concern for the underserved,



*Keynote speaker Sergio Matos,
Co-Founder of the Community
Health Worker Network of New York City*

helping people makes me feel I am making a difference." These are a few of many sentiments expressed among the conference participants when asked their motivation for working as a health educator in their respective communities. The participants were able to provide much needed feedback about the conference and offer insight into how the network can serve them in the future. Many of the participants

expressed interest in obtaining membership within the network as well as continuing education opportunities.

One of the primary goals of the network is to ensure that CHWs play a vital role in delivering health care in at-risk Chicago neighborhoods. It also seeks to provide continuing education, peer support, and expand the current numbers of individuals who serve in that role. Since becoming independent, the network has successfully completed many of its objectives, including providing office space and supplies for use of CHW leadership and implementing a one-day gathering for CHWs. There are currently 14 active steering committee members, all of whom are intimately involved in the network and serve in many capacities. The network is currently planning for 2008 and hopes to continue to build toward meeting all of their project goals including continuing education through quarterly gatherings and peer support. They are excited about the opportunities to expand, develop, nurture and provide support to other CHWs in the Chicagoland area. *The Chicago CHW Local Network envisions a society in which all of its' residents, regardless of their socioeconomic status, have equal and sufficient access to health care, resources, and education needed to live healthy lives.*



Participants engaged in role plays at CHW conference

By Tara Kato, *Community Health Educator with Westside Health Authority*

Photos by Flint Chaney

Peer Counselor Graduation 2007



Top Row: Cynthia Soto, Mila, Xavier Alexander, Nakiesha McCants, Vanessa Stokes, Delilah Blanton, and Anna Espinoza. Bottom Row: Edith Leyva, Natalie Byrd with Evan, Vanessa Vijil, and Lawanna Willis. Not shown: Melissa Mensing

On December 11, 2007, CHC celebrated the graduation of the PC Class of 2007. The celebration was held at the Greek Islands on Halsted and was well attended. Many of our graduates brought family and friends. Always there to support new graduates were current peer counselors. In attendance also were board members, old friends and new friends, as well as several agency partners. Charlotte Johnson representing Stroger Hospital, Belinda Sayadian & Mary Monroe representing Mile Square Health Center, Brenda Snyder & LaShon Reese representing The Illinois Department of Human Services. Vanessa Stokes did a wonderful job as

Mistress of Ceremonies and Edith Leyva did the description of the CHC Peer Counselor Program. All of the graduates shared their training experiences. The afternoon was a definite success. The food and ambience were great. We welcome these women into the fold of this network. We thank everyone for coming out to support and welcome these wonderful women.



Delilah Blanton and her son



Vanessa Vijil sharing her training experience

Mile Square Health Center Celebrating Success!



Belinda Sayadian, Breastfeeding Coordinator at Mile Square Health Center.

We want to CONGRATULATE Belinda Sayadian, Mary Monroe, and Mr. Henry Taylor from Mile Square Health Center, for all their hard work in promoting, educating, supporting, and empowering the mothers they serve. They began their breastfeeding peer counselor program in February 2001. When Belinda Sayadian was placed at Mile Square Health Center their breastfeeding initiation rates were at 7%. For the first time ever, they have a 90% initiation rate for the month of November! Currently they have more than half initiating breastfeeding and 17% of them continued to breastfeed at 12 months! Keep up the great work!

In Her Own Words...



My name is Cynthia Soto and I have a 5 month old little baby girl. Her name is Kimimila which means butterfly in Lakota. She is my first baby. When I first heard about the training to become a Peer Counselor for Breastfeeding, I wasn't too sure about it as I was new with it all. In fact, I told Sally Wagoner, from the American Indian Center that I would only attend the training if she was unable

to find another mom willing to do it. I believe someone in our community should get the training but I didn't believe I had enough experience to be this person. Fortunately, the other person backed out and I have gained so much knowledge and experience from the training that I am very grateful for this opportunity. More than you could ever know. It has also afforded me a great support network that I plan on sharing all of it with my community. Because of the training, Sally and I have talked recently about setting up a support group for the young moms and/or new moms in the community to provide assistance with breastfeeding, and the challenges and joys of motherhood.

Pilamayaye! (Thank you!)
Cynthia and Kimimila

Welcome to our sharing corner!

Where we share ideas, tools, references, resources, and suggestions.

Lamaze International has updated The Lamaze Institute for Normal Birth Care Practices Papers. The English versions were revised in 2007. To download the handouts, go to www.lamaze.org

www.breastfeedingmadesimple.com Features tools to help you know if you are depressed, handouts for mothers, books, and helpful organizations and sites.

Remember to replace your old breast model with new breast anatomy. For more information please read the article on "RECENT RESEARCH REVEALS NEW ANATOMY OF THE LACTATING BREAST" by Charlotte Johnson included in this newsletter.

A Doula Retreat

by Hanifah Rios, Doula in Atlanta, Georgia

Work as a Doula is emotionally and physically taxing and at times it may seem like no one cares that you haven't slept in 48 hours...you still have to make up home visits, support newly breastfeeding mothers, complete paper work and let's not forget once you get home....there's dinner to cook, clothes to be washed, homework, and the list can go on. So what do you do to recharge your battery? What do you do to make sure you don't burn out???



L to R: Ponchitta "Perez" Ridley, Hanifah Rios, Erika Ortiz, Katheryn Imes, and Maria Ordaz

On November 16th and 17th, the Atlanta Community-Based Doulas went on our 1st retreat! On the morning of November 16th, we brought our bags to the office, anxiously awaiting the time we would depart to our cabin retreat in Pine Mountain, GA. The excitement was building and we were like a group of kids. Never before did 1hr 30 minutes feel so short and sweet.

Once we reached the mountains, we pulled over to enjoy the beautiful vista and took a few pictures. For one night and a morning, we would leave behind the daily stresses of our work and personal responsibilities, and spend some time building a stronger team and taking care of our physical and emotional needs. The 1st part of our evening, we discussed important measures for heading off burnout, shared the contents of our Doula bags, and swapped comfort measures.

Following are some of the things we discussed that evening. These may already be a part of your mental repertoire, but we found this refresher enlightening and hope you will too!

- **Set Boundaries.** Let your clients know your limitations early.
- **Get your Rest!** You will feel more energized if you get a good night's rest.
- **Learn to Relax.** Put on some relaxing music, read a book, take a bath.
- **Tend to your Mind.** Meditate, read uplifting quotes, or daily affirmations.
- **Eat properly.** Pack healthy snacks and have bottles of water in your bag.
- **Exercise more.** Break a sweat. Go for a walk. Ride a bike. Take the stairs.
- **Don't stress over the small stuff.** Don't let the small stuff grow.
- **Pay attention to your spiritual life.** Slow down. Listen to your inner voice.
- **Remember to have "me" time.** Don't feel guilty about needing your space.

(Note from editor: for more wonderful and detailed suggestions, e-mail Brenda Reyes at breyes@chicagohealthconnection.org for the complete article written by Hanifah Rios)

Recent Research Reveals New Anatomy of the Lactating Breast

Breastfeeding research is being conducted everyday to help improve the support available to breastfeeding women in the way of new products and new techniques. Much of this research is funded by breast pump companies such as Medela and Ameda. One recent study of the lactating breast was conducted by Professor Peter Hartmann, Dr. Donna Geddes and their team, working in collaboration with Medela at the University of Western Australia's Human Lactation Research Group. This research investigated the lactating breast using sophisticated ultrasound technology.

This recent research revealed the following information:

1. **The milk ducts** (*tubes that carry the milk from the milk producing cells to the nipple*) branch closer to the nipple.
2. **Lactiferous sinuses** (*wider milk ducts under the areola where milk collects*) **DO NOT EXIST.**
3. **Glandular** (*milk producing*) tissue is found closer to the nipple.
4. **Subcutaneous** (*just beneath the skin*) fat is minimal at the base of the nipple.
5. **There are fewer milk ducts than originally thought.**

When educating and supporting mothers, it is important to know that this new information does not change the technique for achieving a proper latch. Babies must have a wide open mouth and take a big mouthful of breast tissue (areola-brown area). It does make it more important than ever to help mothers understand how their own bodies work. Each mother's breasts are different and mothers need to discover where they need to place their fingers when hand expressing. This new information also needs to be shared with women who are considering breast surgery, since there are not as many milk ducts as originally thought. The proper fit of the breast pump shield is also very important since the wrong size will not allow for proper stimulation or milk flow.

More information about this research and pictures of the new breast anatomy can be found at www.medela.com, Anatomy of the Lactating Breast.

Charlotte Johnson, RNC, MS, IBCLC
Breastfeeding Coordinator, John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County

Calendar Events

January 29 or 31

Peer Counselor Enrichment. For more information please call Brenda Reyes at 312-243-4772 ext. 230.

February 8-10, 2008

Birth Doula Training at Chicago Health Connection. This training is DONA approved and meets the requirements for DONA certification. The cost is \$395 and space is limited. For more information, call Wandy at (312) 243-4772 ext. 227.

March 14, 2008

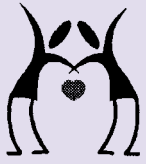
Networking with Hospitals and Community Agencies at Stoger Hospital from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. For more information call Brenda Reyes at 312-243-4772.

April 5, 2008

"Following Our Instincts" Conference at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, speakers and topics include: Susan Ludington, PhD, CNM, FAAN & Christina Smillie, MD, FAAP, IBCLC, FABM, Sensory Aspects of Kangaroo Care: Why it helps with Breastfeeding, Kangaroo Care for the Full-Term Infants: Breastfeeding Outcomes, Baby-Lead Breastfeeding, The Mother-Baby Dance: The Right Brain Communication. Registration Starts February 1, 2008. (Form will be available online.) For more information go to:

www.conference@chicagoareaBFC.org
or e-mail Kathy_m_baker@comcast.net

Sister to Sister Announcements



Congratulations to Rachel Abramson and Loretha Weisinger for spreading the Community Based-Doula message in Japan!

Congratulations to Christine Biegler on the birth of her baby Ella Jane Louise born on August 13, 2007, weighing 6 lbs. 6 oz. and 20 inches long. She is breastfeeding successfully.

We are interested in hearing from you.

We would like to invite you to write an article for our newsletter. It doesn't need to be perfect and we can help edit it.

Please submit your article by **May 16, 2008**.

You can write about the following:

- Your training experience
- Your breastfeeding experience
- Your experience as a Community Health Worker (Doula, Peer Counselor, CHW)
- A birth you attended
- A family or work accomplishment
- A book or film review
- A poem
- A recipe
- Information or resources for Doulas/Peer Counselors/CHW
- Organizational news or accomplishments

Please send it via mail, e-mail, or fax to:

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