

# FRIENDS OF MICHIGAN MIDWIVES

educate • promote • support

## From the President

*Melissa Ryba*



If you haven't heard the good news yet—here it is! We have our bill for licensing midwives in the state of Michigan officially introduced! Ed McBroom is our sponsor, a Representative from the Upper Peninsula who has had three of his children born at home, and was born at home himself! Who could be more perfect?

We had a call to action, and asked you, our supporters to contact your legislators as we were looking for co-sponsors for our bill. With your outstanding help, we were able to get 36 co-

sponsors! This is simply amazing. Thank you so much for your support. As we proceed with the next steps, it is important for you to keep watching your email and become a friend of ours on Facebook if you haven't already.

We will need your rallying voices again and again, as this is a long (and confusing) process. If you have any questions about our bill, please do not hesitate to **c o n t a c t m e a t [president@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](mailto:president@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)**. Thank you again for your continued support!

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## Legislative Update

*Deborah Fisch, Michigan Midwives Association (MMA) Liaison*

FoMM and MMA are excited to announce the introduction of HB 5070, a bill to license midwives in Michigan! Our sponsor, Representative Ed McBroom (R-108, Vulcan), is a homebirth dad in the Upper Peninsula. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, following a hugely successful flurry

of consumer calls asking for co-sponsors, Rep. McBroom introduced the bill with 36 co-sponsoring representatives! The bill can be viewed at <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billintroduced/House/htm/2011-HIB-5070.html>, or by searching for the bill number at [www.legislature.mi.gov](http://www.legislature.mi.gov). We are so happy and excited with this progress, even though we know it is just the start of a long road ahead of us.

Next steps: The bill has been referred to the

House Health Policy Committee where it will receive a hearing and, we hope, a vote, so that it may be returned to the House floor. FoMM supporters whose representatives sit on the Committee (*see list at <http://house.michigan.gov/committeeinfo.asp?lstcommittees=health+policy>*) can help by contacting their representatives and expressing their support for the bill.

We have gotten this far because of your support. Many thanks to everyone who came to Lansing on Lobby Days, or called or wrote to legislators. There will be many more opportunities to participate, and we urge you to contact us if you would like to get involved.

Please see our FAQ's regarding licensure at: <http://www.friendsofmichiganmidwives.com/faqs.htm>. Updated questions and answers coming soon!

## Midwife Robin Lim Among CNN's Top 10 Heroes of the Year!

*From "Mother Robin" Delivers for Poor Women in Indonesia, CNN.com*

Hospitals holding babies until payment is made is common in Indonesia. Midwife Robin Lim, "Mother Robin," or "Ibu Robin" as she is called by the locals, is working to change that with her Yayasan Bumi Sehat (Healthy Mother Earth Foundation) health clinics which provide free prenatal care, birthing services and medical aid to anyone who needs it. An uncomplicated hospital delivery costs around \$70, a Cesarian section can cost more than \$700, while the average Indonesian family earns approximately \$8 per day. Three out of five women give birth in South Asia without a skilled birth attendant.

After a series of tragic birth related events among family and friends, Lim decided to become part of the solution. "If I could help even one family prevent the loss of a mother or a child, I would do that. I would dedicate my life to it," and she and her husband moved from Hawaii to "reinvent their lives". Once in Bali, Lim volunteered to help local midwives deliver babies, and ultimately received her formal midwife certification. In 2003, with help from the Balinese community and donations from friends across the globe, Lim and her husband opened the first Yayasan Bumi Sehat clinic.

A short time later, after the tsunami in 2004, a smaller sister clinic was built in Aceh to care for displaced survivors. Combined, the two clinics have facilitated the birth of more than 5,000 babies.

While some donations are offered, Lim says 80% of the families served by the clinics can barely pay anything.

"Rock star or prostitute, everyone gets treated (like a) VIP



at Bumi Sehat ... with kindness and respect," she said. "No one gets rich being a midwife. The riches that you experience are the deeper values." Part of these riches, Lim said, is the knowledge that so many people rely on the clinics, two of the few 24-hour businesses in Aceh and Bali. "For expecting couples who don't have a phone to call us for help or for a ride, it's common for them to hop on their motorcycles in the night to get to the clinic, where they know someone will be there waiting. And if they have a special request for me, I'll get a call, I'll get up and I'll go do the delivery." The love and attention is appreciated by the new mothers, who don't have alternatives for safe, accessible care.

Lim says the world has a responsibility to all pregnant women and each new baby. "Each baby, each adult deserves a clean, healthy, loving environment. ... Those things are basic. Those are a human right."

Please see full article at CNN.com

Check out the Bumi Sehat Foundation website at [www.bumisehatbali.org](http://www.bumisehatbali.org) and

[www.robinlimsupport.org](http://www.robinlimsupport.org) to see how to help.

**Please vote for Robin as CNN's Hero of the Year**

[http://heroes.cnn.com/vote\\_en.aspx](http://heroes.cnn.com/vote_en.aspx)

Voting continues until Wednesday, December 7!

### FoMM Mission

#### Statement:

To educate and inform the public about the profession of midwifery and the Midwives Model of Care; to promote and support the profession of midwifery in the state of Michigan; to support local chapters of FoMM in providing hands on services and assistance to the midwives in their area.

**Mark Your Calendars!** - FoMM will be doing our annual online fundraiser this coming February. In honor of Valentine's Day, and since "Midwives Deliver the Sweetest Things" we will be taking donations in honor of your midwife. We will post your donation and the midwife's first name on our Facebook wall (for example: Melissa Ryba donated in honor of Kathi!), as well as send them a valentine for you! What a great way to honor your midwife and support FoMM!

## Birth of Lucan

*Kaitlin Parmenter, Mother*

When I think back to Lucan's birth, it feels as though I have just woken, trying my best to remember each detail of a vivid dream. I can recall scenes, but it's each picture is surrounded by a soft glow, like that of fog or a blurry photograph.

I began to experience contractions in the form of stop and go labor for days.

Each walk I took increased the intensity, but like clockwork, they wound down to extinction after I stepped foot into our home. I couldn't help but feel a bit disappointed by this. Still, I tried to remind myself that my baby and body were on their own timeline and focused on my daughter before our family grew.

It was a warm, calm summer day the day before our son was born.

Eric brought out a blanket for Ella and I to lay on in the shade. We looked up through the barely moving leaves overhead. When Eric took Ella out for a swim in the paddle boat, I closed my eyes and listened to their distant splashes and laughter. I rested my hand on my belly and breathed deep.

A few phone calls were made back and forth between my doula and midwife that day. Just to keep them informed. I must have subconsciously sensed that it would be soon, as I hadn't called either of them before that day when having warm-up contractions.

By early evening - dinner timeish - contractions had become more consistent, while still very manageable. No one would have noticed had I not mentioned them. My midwife suggested I drink a small glass of wine and take a bath to relax. I called my mom, and she came over with two bottles of red and some snacks. She, Eric and Ella sat at the kitchen table laughing and eating while I took my wine into the bathroom.

The bath didn't feel right. It was slowing things down. I got out and paced around the house with a serious look on my face. I didn't want those contractions to peter out!

Ella went down to bed at her usual time of 9:30. My labor continued to march on slowly but surely, gaining in intensity.

This is when I started to get nervous. Some women I talked to had reported their second labors had gone by in record-breaking speed: 2 hours of intense labor once their water broke and things like that. I worried that would happen to me and my midwife wouldn't get here in time.

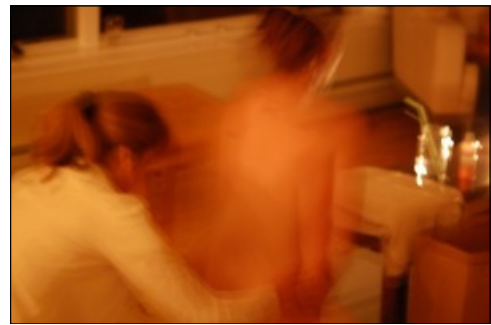
I communicated these thoughts with my mom and Eric who were sitting in the living room while I quietly



labored, balancing on the exercise ball. They agreed that we should wait until things got more serious, but not too long, as our midwife and doula had drives to make (about 30-50 minutes).

Eric finally called L (midwife) and Jessica (doula) at around 11:30 PM. They arrived just after one another at around midnight. Curious as to how I was progressing in comparison to my first birth, I asked L to check me. I was 4-5 cm dilated and 100% effaced! HUGE difference from previous birth.

After a little chit chat, we recognized I was still hours away from birthing, so everyone, (but me) went to sleep. I paced.



Decided to walk up and down the stairs and loop across the kitchen, around the dinner table and back up the stairs. It was a course I made for myself that I followed, pausing intermittently during contractions. 5 cm dilated with Ella after laboring all night long. This news made me feel energized and confident. It also strengthened the intensity of my contractions (L had turned my cervix forward - ouch!).

Finally, I tired myself out. I got in the bath and out to the bed. Tried to lay down but had to get up and kneel, bent over across a pillow during the peak of rushes. Sleep came over me for a short period of time - probably 20 minutes or so - before I felt the urge to get up and walk again. I left Eric in the bed, (he had been resting with me, encouraging and rubbing my back softly - oh and there were candles lit too...nice romantic atmosphere) and went back downstairs. This was around 2 a.m.

Jessica heard me rustling about and got up to watch me pace/offer her support. One moment I distinctly remember is telling her, "if there is one thing that's holding me back from progressing, it's knowing what I am about to go through. I have to give birth to this baby. And it's not going to feel good!"

She smiled and nodded, knowing what I meant. Just then I leaned over the table through a contraction, and when it was over, sighed with relief. I had just gotten my "worst fear" off my chest and was ready to move forward.

We went into the living room where I had a station set up for kneeling over a bench. There was a water-proof covering on the floor and a folded towel on top of the end of the bench where I could rest my head or elbows while kneeling.

I leaned over the bench and Jessica began rubbing my lower back. That woman has magic hands! It felt SO good. I murmured something about being ready for the baby to come and Jessica said gently, "come on baby. Find your way out."

Time to walk again. I tried to stand, but couldn't. It was as if someone was pushing down on me, not allowing me to stand up straight. When I tried again, this time with more force, my water broke! We laughed. Baby was listening!

(Another stark contrast to my first home birth - I was so out of it when my water broke with Ella. Like I was half awake or something. I was aware that it happened but couldn't walk around well at that time - maybe it was the back labor, I don't know!)

I stood up and walked into the bathroom to get cleaned up. When I came out of the bathroom, L was upstairs from her nap on the downstairs couch, and my mom and Eric were awake as well. Jessica was telling them my water had broken as L inspected the fluid on the floor.

The shift in energy and general commotion must have been felt throughout the entire house, for just then, Ella woke up for the first time all night. I heard her through the monitor and went in the bedroom to nurse her back to sleep.

As she began to nurse, a contraction came on hard (my first since water breaking). I couldn't help but vocalize through it, although I tried with all my might to keep quiet. I writhed on the bed trying to cope with the strength of the post-water breaking rushes. Whew, that was the first really tough contraction, but I got through it and successfully made it out of the bedroom without Ella.

But upon re-entering the living room, I had another strong contraction. The kind that brings you to down on all fours.

I vocalized through this one too, which woke Ella up again. She joined us in the living room. Contractions were closer together. Ella wanted to nurse, and I let her. Those were some tough contractions to get through because I had to stay still for her while she nursed.

After two contractions, I couldn't take it anymore and asked my mom to take Ella down-stairs (that's what my mom was there for - support for Ella). Ella was NOT happy about that one bit. Up until that point, I had never stopped her from nursing at night, I always put her to sleep that way. That night, I could not and she was devastated over it. She screamed, kicked and cried her little heart out. I could hardly take it.

Jessica and L suggested we move upstairs. Ella's cries were so distracting. I complied.

Warm water was already in the jacuzzi tub and I decided to get in. With the addition of hot water, then cold, I set into a steady rhythm of powerful contractions. My mind and body worked together to get things moving. I was ready to get the show on the road!



Candles were placed on the rim of the tub and Eric, L and Jessica sat behind me in the bathroom on the floor and toilet seat. They watched quietly and waited while I labored, vocalizing and providing my own perineal support.

It felt like hardly any time went by before I felt the urge to push (I was in the tub for about an hour or so). Time went by so fast that I thought I was pushing against nothing...was I really ready to be pushing or was I rushing things because I wanted to soothe Ella? I voiced these concerns with L, who kindly told me that my body wouldn't be pushing if it wasn't ready to. That I knew what I was doing. Her words helped.

She and Jessica mostly stood back and let me do my thing, but at one point I remember her putting her hands on the lower part of my back, providing pressure more than rubbing. Later that morning she told me she felt the baby moving down during my contractions. Amazing!

When my voice began to get higher in pitch, Jessica suggested that I try moving into a new position, perhaps turning around to squat rather than kneel.

During the next break between contractions, I followed her advice, allowing my legs to open up and straighten a bit. My first inclination was to kneel again, but I decided against it - I wanted to take Jessica's advice and see what changing positions would do. It wasn't more than two or three contractions after I had turned around that I felt my baby's head begin to emerge.

This is the part of my birth story when my nose starts to tingle and eyes slowly flood. Those first moments of beginning to birth my son - feeling the soft, squishy top of his head as he crowned. That was our introduction.

His head came out in one big contraction as I provided my own perineal support. Then the contraction ended

and there we were...I was holding his baby head in my hands, feeling his face and ears, resting my palm on the crown of his head. It was so surreal. I kept saying, "oh my god, my baby." I heard, "wow," and "you're doing amazing, Katie," from who, I don't know.

Those seconds seemed to last a lifetime. I was in the moment, but also eagerly waiting for the next contraction to come so I could push him the rest of the way out. When the next rush came, I said, "come on baby! Help me get the baby out. Get ready to grab the baby." Something like that.



L asked Eric if he'd like to catch his baby. "No!" He said. Then, Yes!" They reached their arms down into the water. Eric barely had time to push up his sleeves (which did end up getting a little wet). Together, they placed our baby on my chest. Slippery. Soft. So small! This memory is fuzzy - all that adrenaline pumping clouds things! - but I remember hearing Eric crying. I remember saying, "oh my baby, oh my baby." I felt between the legs, which was a game time decision for me, and made the announcement, "it's a boy!! Eric, you have son!" Eric cried harder. L rubbed his back. Jessica took photos. It was 4:50 a.m.

I asked for Ella and my mom. When she arrived with Ella, Ella got in the tub and nursed immediately, staring wide eyed at her newborn sibling. We were all in awe. Eric announced his name, "everyone, I'd like you to meet Lucan Frederick Walker." Smiles and cheers all around.

Next, we moved into the bedroom to weigh, measure, clean up, take photos and nurse. This is one of the major perks of home birth - that you can get into your own bed to do these things and stay there as long as you want.

As with my first home birth, I was made breakfast in bed and drank orange juice and a cup of coffee. At one

point I was left alone with L and Jessica, along with Lucan wrapped up and sleeping in my arms.

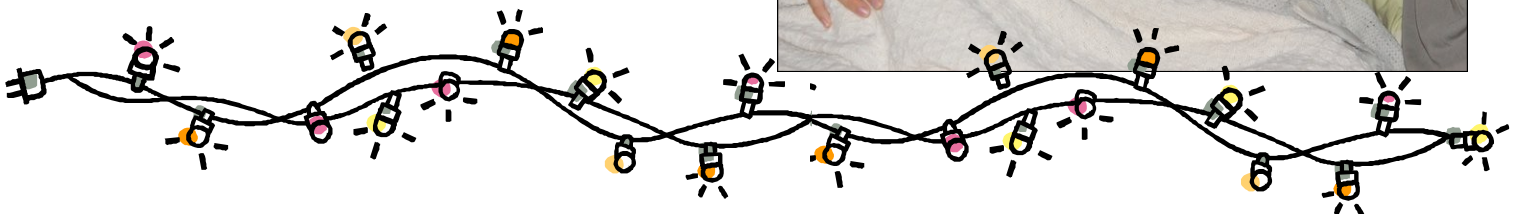
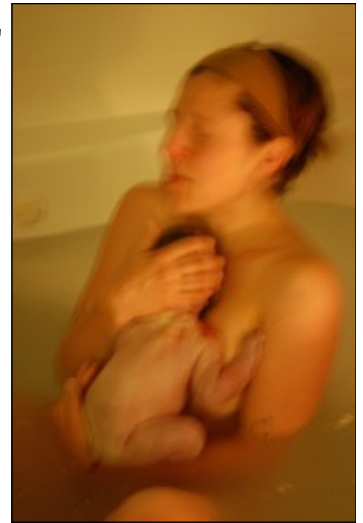
We reminisced over my birth. I was still in shock. I couldn't get over the fact that I had given birth to this baby on my own. I guided him out with my body, into my hands, on my own! No one told me when or how. No one said faster or slower. I did it!

L said I looked triumphant. She said, "I didn't do anything. You did it. I

didn't even need to be here!" But I'm so glad she was. As much pride as I felt giving birth on my own, I loved having my team there supporting me along the way. I love looking back on them in the photos of my mind.

I have given birth at home twice, and both were lovely experiences. The first was on a bed, the second in water, and if you're curious, I preferred the water birth to the two. Not sure if it was due to being in warm water that softened my skin or just the fact that my body had done it before, but it hurt less. Less burning anyway.

**My wish is that every woman could experience feeling triumphant after birth as I did.** There is no better feeling in the world. Giving birth proved I am strong enough to do anything. Strong, yet soft and yielding, like the moment I held Lucan's face in my hands. I got a glimpse into the future - that I'd sneak into his bed in the middle of the night 14 years from now, just to touch the top of his head and recall the first moment we met.



## Midwife Spotlight: Kathi Mulder, CPM

### Helping Natural Birth Become Safe and Sustainable While Training Haitian Midwives By Kristin Kelly



Just before Christmas 2010, Traverse City's own Kathi Mulder, CPM received an email from Mother Health International, pleading for midwives to come help at their Soley Lavi birth center in Haiti. A veteran of the Peace Corps, and owner of the thriving homebirth midwifery practice *Dance of Life*, this request pulled strongly at her heart but the 3-4 week commitment felt logistically impossible. In a serendipitous moment over the holiday break, Kathi's eldest daughter, Tara (who has assisted Kathi in 10 births) expressed the desire to volunteer overseas- "to DO something". Tara read the email, and with an adamant "Let's do it" they filled out the extensive applications needed to enter the program. During her next semester at Brown University, Tara took a class in Haitian Creole which helped ease preparations for the trip.

On May 25, 2011, Kathi and Tara arrived in Port Au Prince with 200 lbs. of supplies between them. They rode a beat up truck along the sole windy, dusty, mountainous road to the birth center in Jacmel, which began as a relief effort after the earthquake 16 months prior. It was established as a Mother Health



Birth Center, a holistic maternal birth clinic in the heart of one of the most under served economically impoverished areas in Haiti, in July 2010. Pacific Domes of Washington state donated the gigantic canvas "Birth Dome". Five or six of its nine platform beds were occupied at any given time. The Birth Dome's goal was to provide a safe place for women to give birth, with the plan to train enough Haitian women to run it on their own. At the moment of arrival, after 20 hours of travel, a frenzy of "Femme

Sage! Femme Sage!" (Midwife!) signaled their immediate need- twins were being born!



*"Twins born 10 minutes after we arrived in Jacmel - both weighed 3#. They nursed and survived!"*

"The Compound" where midwives stayed, was one-third of an old motel: 3 different rooms with wooden platform beds. Everything aside from sleeping was done outdoors, and though there was one spigot of running water, any abundance of rain disabled the system at times.

Jacmel's one hospital had 2 obstetricians available from 9-5, followed only by an after hours nurse. Laboring mothers were always given pitocin and an episiotomy. In Haiti, though 80% of women deliver at home, it is not necessarily a good thing due to lack of skilled care. Haiti has the highest rates of infant, under-five and maternal mortality in the Western hemisphere. The center turned away no one, and most laboring women walked from the surrounding hills. Kathi reported that women *wanted* to come to the center, it had a good reputation, and all birth at the center were natural births.

Kathi and Tara joined midwife Melinda McClaren from Canada, MHI's onsite coordinator, and 4 committed students. About 35 women were seen per day for prenatals, and were also provided with vitamins, discussed diets and fed meals if needed. One day per week was dubbed "postpartum day", when the center served as a sort of triage for the hospital, where medicine was dispensed and mothers could bring children in for care.

The lifeline for the constant monthly transition of incoming midwives was the center's well-organized charting system. A saddening trend Kathi noticed after reading hundreds of charts was that any mother over 19 had lost at least one baby, while women in their 30's had lost several babies or children.



*"Tara & I with two Haitian student midwives and a new baby who is wearing a hat that I made."*

Kathi formed a close connection with a determined student named Ninotte Lubin. She was the center's administrative assistant, and was writing a book about the center and was passionate about the need to 'keep Haiti as Haiti' - she urged that Haitian women need *Haitian* midwives. Kathi and Ninotte worked together at every opportunity to go over her

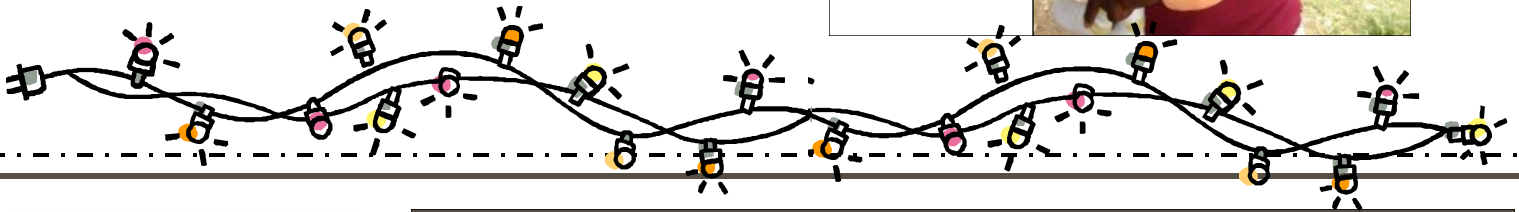
studies. Kathi's goal was to make sure Ninotte knew all her skills and had all her paperwork to completed. In spring, Kathi will meet Ninotte in Florida where she will take her NARM exam. Ninotte hopes to broaden the center's reach and open another facility to serve women in her country.

Kathi says she will most likely return to Haiti. "A part of me is there now. I want to see Haitian women return to safe birth practices guided by trained Haitian midwives."

For more information about Mother Health International and its birth centers in Haiti and Northern Uganda, please visit [www.motherhealthinternational.org](http://www.motherhealthinternational.org)



*Ninotte Lubin - Haitian student midwife whom Kathi is helping to support.*



Please send donations to:  
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 5962 Cedar Ridge Dr  
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Or go online to:  
[friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](http://friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)

## FoMM MEMBERSHIP FORM

FoMM thanks you for your generous donation! All donations will be used for the promotion of the profession of midwifery and midwife friendly legislation.

- \$20 Annual FoMM Membership
- \$50 Family FoMM Membership
- \$150 Lifetime FoMM Membership
- \$150 Professional Membership. Includes listing on FoMM website.
- \$500 Ring of Fire Membership - Circle of Givers whose generous donations are used directly for lobbyist expenses.
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Any donation is welcome and appreciated!

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## FoMM Board Member Biographies

### Jessica English

Jessica English is the mom of two boys and owner of Birth Kalamazoo. Her group offers birth and postpartum doula services, natural birth and breastfeeding classes, in-home lactation consults, a VBAC and Cesarean Support Group and community education. Their goal is to support new families and help shape the birth culture in Southwest Michigan. Jessica is a DONA-certified birth doula and a Lamaze-certified childbirth educator. She works as a midwifery assistant for a local Certified Professional Midwife, and is considering becoming a CPM herself. Trained by DONA International as a birth doula trainer, Jessica plans to begin offering doula trainings in Kalamazoo and around the state in early 2012. Before entering the birth world full time, Jessica spent 15 years working in marketing, public relations and journalism and she hopes to use those skills to promote midwifery in our state. Both her boys were born with midwives, one in the hospital and one at home.



malpractice liability, assurance of access to care, and safeguarding a woman's right to decide what kind of birth is best for her and her family. Deborah is newly sworn in as an attorney in the state of Michigan.

### Kristin Kelly, Secretary

Since Spiritual Midwifery made its way to my lap at 17, I felt as though I was let in on a big, important secret. After the natural hospital birth of my first son in 2008, that secret became a mission: to experience birth as it was intended, uninterrupted. In 2010, my second son was born at home, quickly and peacefully into the hands of our midwife Kathi Mulder, who (among wonderful things too numerous to list) introduced me to FoMM. In between children, I assisted births as a doula, and will soon receive my DONA certificate. Birth work is powerful medicine- I strive to give that strength back to every mother that I am blessed to accompany.



I have a B.A. in Anthropology from Western Michigan University, which I use to figure people out, and a Certified Master Herbalist degree, which I use to help people figure themselves out. My husband is an amazing luthier, and puts on the Hoxeyville Music Festival. When not holed up in the woods with my family, I would mostly rather be knitting, picking berries or baking something. Or eating honey.

### Deborah Fisch, MMA LCG Liaison

Deborah has been interested in childbirth since 1977, when her mother answered all her questions with a copy of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Deborah now lives in Ann Arbor with her husband and their two sons, both born at home. These safe and powerful births inspired her to obtain a law degree so that she might pursue her grand goal of improving childbirth for all women across all settings, through integration of maternity care systems, licensure for skilled birth attendants, examination of the structure of

## Board Members

**Melissa Ryba, President**

[president@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](mailto:president@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)

**Rachael Johnson, Treasurer**

[treasurer@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](mailto:treasurer@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)

**Kristin Kelly, Secretary**

[secretary@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](mailto:secretary@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)

**Deborah Fisch, MMA LCG Liaison**

[deborah@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](mailto:deborah@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)

**Open, Events Chair**

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**Jessica English, Marketing/PR Chair**

[marketing@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](mailto:marketing@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)

**Beth Hawver, Southwest Regional Coordinator**

[kzoo@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](mailto:kzoo@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)

**Cynthia Jackson, Detroit Area Regional Coordinator**

[detroitarea@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](mailto:detroitarea@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)

**Ronessa Butler, Northern Michigan Regional Coordinator  
& Membership Chair**

[upnorth@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](mailto:upnorth@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)

**Melissa Furlette, Ann Arbor Regional Coordinator**

[annarbor@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org](mailto:annarbor@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org)