

FRIENDS OF MICHIGAN MIDWIVES

educate • promote • support

From the President

Melissa Ryba



It has been a year since I have come on board as President of Friends of Michigan Midwives, and the change and growth I have seen is exciting. We now have chapters in Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Ann Arbor, Saginaw, Traverse City, and Detroit. We have over 600 fans on Facebook, and over 200 members of our organization. Midwifery is growing in our state and around the country! "After a gradual decline from 1990 to 2004, a new study published online in *Birth: Issues in Perinatal Care* finds that United States births occurring at home increased by 20 percent between 2004 and 2008." quotes a ScienceDaily.com article on the issue.

Women are educating themselves and taking control of their healthcare by choosing the best provider and setting for them, not just what is standard or typical in their community. FoMM and Michigan Midwives Association has been to Lansing these past few months talking to legislators about midwives and out of hospital birth, and a surprising number of people that we have met have had personal experience with homebirth among their family or friends. What a great trend! Hopefully over the years as our organization keeps growing it will enable even more women to hear about this fantastic option and consider a midwife for their pregnancy. In the meantime, I appreciate YOUR support, and thank YOU for being a part of Friends of Michigan Midwives.

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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.

FoMM Special Event Fundraising!

Saturday, July 23 marks a great day of fundraising for FoMM in Traverse City. **Breathe Owl Breathe** is in concert at **Higher Grounds at 7:00** and is donating a portion of ticket sales to FoMM. Tickets will be sold in advance for \$10 at Oryana or Higher Grounds. Tickets the day of the event will be \$12. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. We will be holding a silent auction during the event with some great items as well!



In addition, **Cherry Republic is donating a portion of their sales** for the day directly to FoMM! If you are in the Traverse City area, please bring a friend and shop Cherry Republic on **July 23**, then head on over for some great music at Higher Grounds! What a great summer event! Thanks to Higher Grounds, Breathe Owl Breathe, and Cherry Republic for your support!

Kalamazoo area supporters are planning an

event for September, so watch your inbox for more information. You can help! They are starting to collect items for a raffle and silent auction for the event to benefit FoMM. If you would like to donate something contact kzoo@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org.

Thank you to everyone who made our **May events such a success!** We celebrated International Day of the Midwife on May 5th in Lansing, with a 5K Walk to Durbin, cookie delivery to legislators in the afternoon, and ended the day with Gifts or Creatures and Rachael and Dominic Davis in concert in the evening at Gone Wired Cafe. On May 15, a great concert featuring Airborn or Aquatic and raffle was held in Kalamazoo. We met some great new friends during these events, and spread the word about midwives and FoMM in the process. Thanks again for everyone's continued support!

FoMM has some great onesie's and tote bags for sale on our website. Visit friendsofmichiganmidwives.org to purchase!



Legislative Update

Melissa Ryba, FoMM President

During the summer, legislators will be in their district offices, and now is a great time for YOU to stop by and tell them about how much you love midwifery. It may seem daunting, but you have probably already practiced speaking about midwifery among your friends and relatives. Have you had to defend why you chose a midwife? Have you had to contain yourself from talking too much on the subject? Then you know how to talk to a legislator about midwifery!

Please contact president@friendsofmichiganmid-wives.org if you are willing to spend a few minutes this summer talking to your local representative. Someone from FoMM or MMA is willing and able to go with you if you would like. Either way, we will go over some main talking points that you should cover, and your enthusiasm will cover the rest! This is a very important and **NEEDED** task to be done! If you have wanted to advocate for midwifery, this is the perfect opportunity. We are making change to improve midwifery in the state of Michigan and need YOUR help. Make your appointment with your representative, **TODAY!**

Birth of Alayna

Kathy Oakes, Mother

About half way into our pregnancy, Ben and I made a major decision. We decided (after MUCH research) that we wanted to have a homebirth. We started looking into Midwives in the Grand Rapids area but we didn't think it was something we could afford. We finally came across a midwife who was willing to work out a payment plan.

Upon meeting Shannon (Pawson)...I KNEW she was who I wanted to be there for the birth! It was like talking to an old friend. All my prenatal appointments were done right here at the house. She included the kids - letting them help

measure my belly and use the fetal monitor to hear Laynie's heart. It was a totally different experience from using an OB.

My appointments were never rushed, there

was plenty of time to ask questions and Shannon provided plenty of books and movies on homebirths.

Okay, on to the fun part! The Delivery! 40 weeks + 2 days...this was huge for me as my second was born five weeks early, with a 10 day NICU stay, and my third was born four weeks early!

On April 6 2010, I woke up at about 6:15 with a strong contraction. Two nights prior I had had contractions for about 7 hours, so I didn't think much of this. About 10 minutes later...another one...and another 10 minutes after that. These were stronger than before. I told Ben he may want to wait a little bit before heading to work. These contractions kept coming, and were STRONG. Still about 10 minutes apart. I waited till about 8am to call my midwife. She said to eat breakfast and let her know when I wanted her there. At this point, I still didn't think it was real labor (thought it was another false alarm) so I didn't want to call anyone too early. I went and took a shower and then tried to eat. While I was eating...I had a very INTENSE contraction...and told Ben...call Shannon! I think I'm in labor! Shannon arrived at about 9am followed by Kristi (her assistant). Around 9:30 my friend/doula Lisa arrived. Shannon, Ben and Kristi were downstairs filling the birthing tub and getting everything ready. My contractions started getting even more intense...and then were 3 minutes apart. Lisa and I decided it was time to head downstairs.

One of the most memorable moments I have is when both Alexis (6) and Haylee (5) came up and rubbed my back, hugged me and held my hand. They were great supporters and I was so happy to have them witness this!



Around 10am I decided to get in the tub. Haylee stood close to me and held my hand. Lex was fascinated with what Shannon was doing! She even started to shine a flashlight into the side of the tub to see if Alayna was coming out yet (something she saw Shannon do!). By now the contractions were stronger than anything I had ever felt (remind you, with the last three...I had epidurals!). I think I would have hyperventilated if it weren't for Lisa rubbing my back and breathing with me--reminding me to take SLOW deep, relaxed breathes! Unlike a hospital setting, Shannon kept telling me don't push, relax and let your body open. My amazing husband was right by my side holding my hand, telling me I was doing a great job and that he loved me.

By this point, I had lost track of time. I suddenly felt a "pop"...It sort of freaked me out! I yelled "Something just popped!" I was quickly told, "It's okay, that's just your water breaking". I remember looking up and seeing my sister. Until then, I didn't know she was there yet. I think I was subconsciously waiting for her to get there because at that moment, I knew it was time! I yelled, "Her head's too big!"



Quickly followed Shannon saying "No it's not. It's the perfect size" Shannon told me to reach down...I could feel Alayna's head! One

"push" and it was out...another "push" and she was in my hands and I was pulling her out of the water! I couldn't believe I had done it!!

"Natural childbirth" was something I had been afraid of. I mean, who wants to feel that kind of pain when you can do it pain free??? But I have to tell you, that moment, that I, without the help of a doctor, or pain-numbing medication gave birth to my daughter...it was the most empowering moment of my entire life! I know now that birth is not something that is meant to be feared or numbed. It's meant to be felt with your entire heart and soul! And after 3 hospital births-all with epidurals I can say without a doubt that this one was the easiest birth of all. This birth was truly empowering and it has changed my life. I will never be the same again!

Alayna Faith, born April 6, 2010
6lbs 9oz
19.5 inches long

Board Members & Update - *learn more about new Board Members on page 6*

We have had some changes to our board in recent months. Rachael Johnson has taken over as our treasurer, as we bid farewell and thank you to Vera Davis for her exceptional work for FoMM. Ronessa Butler has rejoined the board after her maternity leave, and is now acting as our Traverse City Regional Coordinator and Membership Chair. We have filled more our regional coordinator positions - welcome to Kathy Oakes, Jaime Mohundro and Melissa Furlette. We

hope that this will allow us to grow and that our efforts to promote midwifery will flourish throughout the state. Melissa Waterstripe, Ashley Oomen, Kelly Drake, Janelle Beeman and Lauren Murphy have all moved on, leaving some open spaces on the board – would you or someone you know be the perfect person to step up? Once again, a big thank you to all of our out-going and current board members for their tireless work.

Melissa Ryba, President

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Rachael Davis, Treasurer

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Jennifer Salowitz, Temporary Secretary

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Melissa Ryba, Temporary MMA LCG Liaison

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Open, Events Chair

Open, Fundraising Chair

Janine Tryban, Marketing/PR Chair

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Jennifer Salowitz, Saginaw Regional Coordinator

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Ronessa Butler, Northern Michigan Regional Coordinator & Membership Chair

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Melissa Furlette, Ann Arbor Regional Coordinator

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Kathy Oakes, Grand Rapids Regional Coordinator

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Jaime Mohundro, Lansing Regional Coordinator

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Midwife Spotlight: *Laurie Zoyiopoulos, CPM*

Laurie has been a certified midwife since 1996, though she began practicing midwifery two years prior. Influenced by her own midwife, Patrice Bobier, Laurie set out on her training as an apprentice midwife following the birth of her third baby (in the spring of 1987). The road to becoming a midwife certainly was not easy! It was a 4.5-year-long journey of attending births and passing exams. Laurie attended 127 births by the time she was certified, each of which had to have an Apprentice Evaluation Form completed. She also had to pass an all-day written exam, a skills verification exam, and become certified in CPR and neonatal resuscitation.

Being a midwife means having your life revolve around your career, 24/7. Birth is very spontaneous, and therefore Laurie has to bring her birth supplies and extra clothes with her everywhere she goes. It gets difficult, she says, on her family. She can't be as available to the

ones she loves for last minute fun trips like seeing the Tigers play ball or babysitting her grandchildren. It has also impacted her ability to visit with her daughter who lives in Boulder, Colorado. Midwifery is all encompassing!

Laurie and her husband Jeff have raised three children into adulthood, and oftentimes when they were little, Laurie had to find a special balance in her life to accommodate her children's needs. Laurie says she often would bring pizza and a video home after a



birth and made sure she planned fun activities for the family during times when there weren't as many women due to give birth. It was rough on the family, but Laurie often reminded them that it was easier to deal with spontaneous births that occurred than to have mom gone every day all year round working a full-time, out-of-the-house job.

Infant loss, Laurie states, is the hardest obstacle to overcome. There is no such thing as a zero infant mortality rate, though she truly wishes there were such a thing. After a baby loss a few years ago, Laurie had a hard time continuing and struggled with whether or not she could move forward as a midwife. It was through the support and love of

her husband, her mentor-midwife (Patrice Bobier), and her clients who were depending on her that she put one foot in front of the other and realized she was still needed and still called to midwifery.

Today, Laurie enjoys cooking and baking, reading, going to concerts, playing with her grandchildren, and running the projector at church. When asked about a little known fact about herself, she admits that when she was 15, she snuck into a Bob Seger concert in Mt. Pleasant at the Rose Arena!

We are honored to have the support of Laurie, President of Michigan Midwives Association!

FDA Claims Birth Pools in the US are Unregistered Medical Equipment

Jennifer L. Salowitz

On Wednesday, May 25, 2011, Barbara Harper, on her Facebook page, announced that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had seized all portable birth pools which had been imported into the US and were threatening to destroy them. The reason the FDA cited was a claim that such birth pools were being used as unregistered medical equipment. The next day, Harper updated the situation, stating there is a current deadline for the ruling on the matter set for June 7, 2011. The ruling would decide whether or not to recall all of the current birth pools in stock and either export them out of the country or to destroy them.

On Friday, May 27, 2011, Barbara provided her most recent update, stating that there was a possible extension of the June 7th FDA deadline. She also warned consumers not to panic about the current supply of birth pools, informing everyone that there is approximately a 2 - 3 month supply of birth pools based on the current rate of sales. Ms. Harper advised all consumers to avoid contacting birth pool suppliers with excessive questions and concerns regarding the recent FDA events in order to keep the businesses able to focus on sales. Should anyone have any further questions, concerns, or comments, she offered her own e-mail address: barbara@waterbirth.org. Currently, lawyers, advocates, and experts are weighing in on the matter and are working diligently with the FDA to resolve this conflict. Keep an open eye on this subject as it continues to unfold. Also be sure to read the next issue of "Pathways to Family Wellness Magazine" as Barbara Harper will be writing a feature article regarding this matter.

Barbara Harper is a world-renowned waterbirth activist who founded Waterbirth International in 1988. Presently, she has lectured in 43 countries worldwide, advocating for safe birth choices, most notably the choice to birth in water.

Harper is also the author of 'Gentle Birth Choices,' a book first published in 1994. In 2009, Waterbirth International stopped renting and selling birth pools and began solely working towards education and advocacy. Today, birth pools can be rented or purchased through birth pool suppliers such as Waterbirth Solutions, a business run by Marla Althouse.

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FoMM Board Member Biographies

Melissa Furlette

I am Melissa Furlette. I am an Ann Arbor native who studied at DePaul University in Chicago. I began my birth activism during a college class which traced the history of birth in the United States. After learning about the medicalization of birth and misappropriation of power over women's bodies, I became very interested in giving power back to women.

Since I stumbled upon that class in 2006, I have become a birth and postpartum doula, and am deciding whether I will complete my NARM certification to become a Certified Professional Midwife, or head to nursing school to become a Certified Nurse Midwife. I do not have any babies of my own (yet) and I currently live in Ann Arbor with my partner, Erica.



unimpressively, for a home birth midwife in my area, and was unsuccessful, even though I later found out Linda Healey lived just a short drive away from our home at that time. I went with a CNM in a hospital setting. While that was a better and more personable and caring environment than my first, I craved for more. On April 4, 2010, I got my wish, after 3 days of labor, I gave birth to my third child by candlelight in my own bed on Easter morning. I felt a fire in my soul! I felt a calling. I knew, one day, I would be a midwife.

I am currently in pursuit of my doula certification which is the first of many steps I am taking in becoming a CPM one day!

I am involved in FoMM to have a more active position in what I've been doing for a few years now which is advocating for something my heart truly believes in. I am honored to be part of such a noble cause, taking birth back, reclaiming the strength of a woman, and giving us all the option for a better birth and a safer birth.

Rachael Johnson

My name is Rachael Johnson and I have been married for almost 6 years to my middle school sweet heart Mike. We have 2 beautiful kids. Lorelei, 3.5, born at Borgess with a midwife and an epidural. Michael, 8 months, born at home with a midwife. I became interested in a woman's right to chose the place and caregiver for her birth when pregnant with my first. I have always been drawn to midwives and have been very lucky to encounter some amazing ones on my journey. I was born and raised in the Washington DC are and I moved to Michigan about 4.5 years ago when my husband took a job with the Federal Government in Battle Creek. I don't plan on remaining here long-term but would love to be part of a legacy of change for mothers yet to be.



Kathy Oakes

My name is Kathy Oakes. I am a homeschooling mother of 4 (Alexis 8, Haylee 7, Logan 3 and Alayna 15 months old). Married to my best friend Ben whom I have know over 21 years! We live in the cute little town of Rockford, MI.



I am currently attending Childbirth International where I am working on my Doula Certification and my Breastfeeding Counselor Certification. I am also a Birth Photographer. Half way thru my last pregnancy my husband and I changed course and decided to have a homebirth. It sparked a fire inside me and has changed my life! I am so proud to now be a part of such a fabulous organization like FoMM! I look forward to helping educate people about homebirths and in the importance of Midwives and licensure in the state of Michigan!

Jaime Mohundro

I am a devoted mother to three of the most rad kids on the planet! I grew up in Charlotte, but now our family of five resides in Eaton Rapids way out in the country where we are in the process of creating ourselves a sustainable living space. I homeschool my 7 1/2 year old daughter and my 3 1/2 year old son while my 14 1/2 month old daughter tries to keep up!

I have never had a medicated birth and always felt a strongly about that, but couldn't explain then why. It wasn't until planning my second child's conception that I discovered all of the overwhelming data that a natural birth--and even home birth--provides a safe, peaceful and empowering experience, and possibly a healthier choice for the kind of pregnancies I have ("uneventful"). I searched, quite

