

BirthMatters

empower prevent plan

We are *growing* places!

IMPACT REPORT

2021/2022





TABLE OF CONTENTS

02	A Word from Leadership
04	Our 2022 Board of Directors
05	The BirthMatters Team
06	Our Mission and Beliefs
07	What We Offer Our Community
08	Why Community Doulas
09	Our Numbers
10	Haley's Story
11	Marqulia's Story
12	Words from the Community
14	Breastfeeding Friendly Businesses
15	Community Doula Week
16	iMatter Data
18	Funding Sources
19	Partnership Highlights
20	Advocacy and Expansion
22	Appreciation

A WORD FROM LEADERSHIP



Dear Friends and Community Members,

As we tirelessly forge a path toward providing emotional and educational support to underserved youth during their reproductive health journeys, we're proud to share our excitement in our tenth anniversary as an independent non-profit organization serving Spartanburg County.

There have been many changes at BirthMatters in the last two years. In 2021 we welcomed Amber Pendergraph-Leak, long-time Lead Doula at BirthMatters, as our new Executive Director. Additionally, our former ED, Molly Chappell-McPhail, transitioned to her new role as the Director of Advocacy and Expansion as BirthMatters looks to increase access to community-based doula services to meet the needs of birthing families across the state.

We are growing places! Spartanburg is where we began our journey and where Amber will continue to focus her expansion efforts while Molly works towards creating BirthMatters affiliate sites throughout South Carolina.

2021-2022 was full of change and excitement, and we are eager to continue that momentum in 2023. BirthMatters currently has a team of four community-based doulas and five contract doulas, with plans to increase our doula numbers to serve more families. We also will be piloting a community breastfeeding support program at no cost to our breastfeeding families.

The future is bright for the young people of Spartanburg and elsewhere in South Carolina. With our dedicated staff, supportive board of directors, and community partners, BirthMatters is excited to broaden its positive impact. We hope you will continue to support us as we serve young birthing families. We are delighted that 2021-2022 afforded us such bountiful opportunities for growth.

The 2021-2022 Annual Report, “We Are Growing Places,” offers our team the opportunity to reflect on our work over the past two years. We know much is yet to be done, and as we continue our work in Spartanburg, we are confident about the lasting impact BirthMatters is making on future generations.

In appreciation,

Amber Pendergraph-Leak



Executive Director

Kelly Littlejohn



Board Chair



OUR 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Kelly Littlejohn
Board Chair



Cierra Fowler
Board Co-Chair



Marsha Moore
Board Secretary



Sherri Franks-Gillison



Rhonda Mingo



Megan DeMoss
Board Treasurer



Sarah Todd



Patrick Cook



Bailey Verreault



Witney Fisher



Carter Johnson



Shenra Cunningham



Alyssa McKenzie



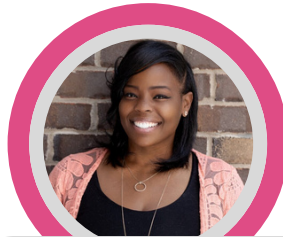
Michelle Johnson



Chuck Cunningham



THE BIRTHMATTERS TEAM



Amber Pendergraph-Leak
Executive Director

community doula

[kuh-myoo-nuh-tee doo-lu]
noun.

A community health worker trained in prenatal health, childbirth education, labor support, lactation counseling, and infant care.

Doula Services



Eboni Williams
Lead Doula

Advocacy & Expansion



Molly Chappell-McPhail
Director



Chelle Jones
Community Health Worker

Contractors



Dominique Vedrine
Therapist



Chelsea Sosa
Director of Marketing & Social Media



April Harrison
Accountant

Contract Doulas



Jamarius Collins
Community Doula



Tiera Norman
Community Doula



Kandice Tillerson
Community Doula



Teresa Leak
Community Doula



LaShawn Smalls
Community Doula



Natasha Foster
Community Doula



Ronna Foster
Community Doula

OUR MISSION & BELIEFS



BirthMatters aims to reduce teen pregnancy through reproductive health education and empowers expectant young adults to raise healthy families through doulas utilizing the community health worker model.

Belief Statements

- ✓ Teen pregnancy is linked to multiple disparities, including adverse birth outcomes, welfare, and foster care. Investing in youth reproductive health education and prevention services reduces teen pregnancy, promotes the development of healthy families, and strengthens the greater Spartanburg community.
- ✓ Parents and caregivers are valued as their children's primary educators. In addition, community programs, schools, and religious institutions are essential partners in addressing teen pregnancy.
- ✓ Teen pregnancy prevention education programs must be evidence-based and medically accurate, emphasize abstinence, and include information about contraception. Access to quality medical care and highly effective contraception, including condoms, is a fundamental right for all youth.
- ✓ Providing emotional and educational support to underserved young parents throughout their pregnancies and births enables families to make well-informed, intentional choices and to lead healthy lives.





WHAT WE OFFER OUR COMMUNITY



Community-based doulas are a lifeline.

Community-based doula services for birthing people (ages 24 and under) at no cost to them.

Physical, emotional, and educational support during pregnancy, birth, and one year postpartum.

Culturally congruent care and resources provided by certified community health workers.



Teen-friendly, evidence-based reproductive health education services provided by a certified community health worker.

- Individual sessions for teens (ages 16-19) with a community health worker to identify needs and navigate resources
- Group or one-on-one evidence-based education on sexual health, decision-making, and relationships.



WHY COMMUNITY DOULAS



Community-based doulas improve community outcomes.

We are addressing the critical problem of increasing maternal health inequities with community doula care.



Research shows that we can improve birth outcomes and survival rates for both birthing parents and infants with doula support.



We can increase access to doula services and culturally congruent care through community-based doulas.



Investing in community-based doulas can save taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in preventable healthcare expenses.



OUR NUMBERS

Our staff are committed to sharing their voices through service on committees.

10

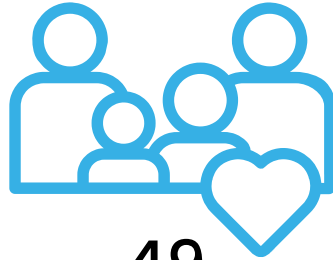
Local Collaboratives

8

State-Level Collaboratives

3

National-Level Collaboratives



49
Births
Attended

26
Volunteers
Served
902 Hours



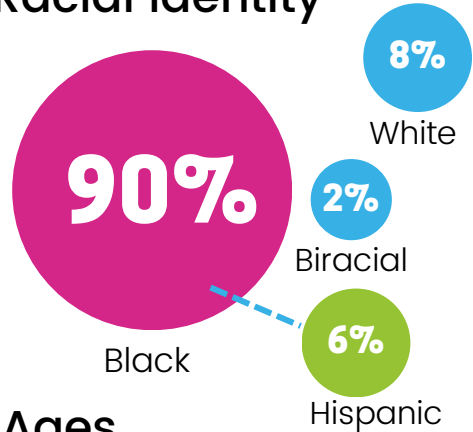
2 COMMUNITY
DOULA TRAININGS

13

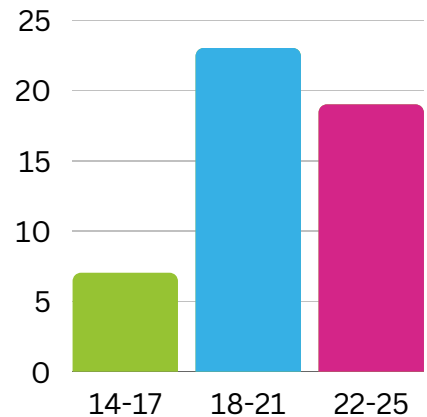
NEW COMMUNITY
DOULAS TRAINED

Who we served

Racial Identity



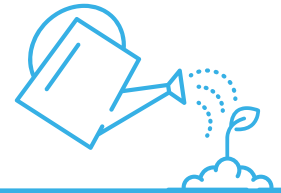
Ages



10 years

of service in
Spartanburg County
as an independent
non-profit
organization.

HALEY'S STORY



When 23-year-old Haley first found out that she was pregnant with her son, Hayden, she was attending Virginia College. She was unsure of her next steps but she knew she needed support, so she reached out to her mentor at school, who referred her to BirthMatter's community doula program.

Haley was hesitant about having a doula or involving anyone she had not met before in her pregnancy and birth experience, but Amber, who was the BirthMatters Lead Doula at the time, shared information with her about what having community-based doula support would look like and gave her the time and space she needed to process the decision. Amber ended up assisted Haley during both of her births and their relationship blossomed.

“Amber was helpful with whatever I brought to her. She educated me and helped me through a lot of adjusting to motherhood when the postpartum period was rough. She has supported me after my births, even changing a diaper or allowing me to take a shower. As a single mom, that was huge.”

When Haley's second baby, Harper, was born, Haley remembers having a lot of back pain. Amber was right there with her to rub her back when she needed it and provide calming support for her during her contractions.

Haley appreciated that Amber was able to show her different techniques and positions that comforted her during the labor, as well as coached her on breathing and relaxation.



Haley says that now that other friends are starting to have children, they come to her for support. Having a community-based doula has helped her feel empowered about childbirth, and she enjoys being able to be there for others. “I have already recommended three of my friends to the BirthMatters community doula program.”

What Haley appreciates the most from her experience with a community-based doula has been the communication and validation that she received from the relationship she built with her doula. “To me, community-based doulas are valuable because they are neutral and unbiased. My doula walked me through my birthing process, taking care of myself and my baby, and I never felt judged.”

MARQULIA'S STORY

Marqulia met her future doula, Amber, at an outreach event when she was pregnant with her third baby, Tamia. She had never heard of a doula before, and she was nervous about the thought of having a stranger come into her life during this vulnerable time. Still, she remembered how difficult the transition to motherhood was with her first two children when she did not have the support she needed. She also liked the idea of having a Black doula, someone who looked like her, with her during her birth. It seemed worth a try.

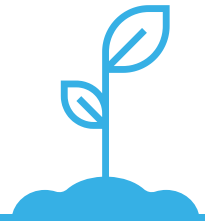
“ Having a doula was the best thing that happened to me at that time. Amber was there for me from the beginning to the end. Not only did she help me through postpartum recovery, but she also helped me to get my life on track. The key was learning self-love and self-care. ”

After her birth, Amber educated Marqulia about her baby's milestones, encouraged her to breastfeed, and was able to refer her to additional services during the postpartum period. “Amber got me the help that I needed,” Marqulia recalls. “Through this experience, I learned to take time out for myself and to take care of my health. I came away with a toolbox that helps me in my day-to-day journey.”

Amber also encouraged Marqulia to continue her education. She has since graduated from cosmetology school and now owns her own business, Quays Majestic Hands Hair Salon. More recently, was invited to speak at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's 50th Annual Legislative Conference, where she shared her story with thousands of people, including legislators, about how having a doula positively impacted her life.



WORDS FROM THE COMMUNITY



"Community-based doulas are an invaluable asset to this community, enabling expectant mothers to be fully prepared to welcome their new baby with confidence, knowing that they have what is needed to support the healthy growth and development of their child."

-Keisha Gray, Mary Black Foundation

"Never knew about doulas and what they do. It's life-changing. My doula educated me, saw me through my pregnancy." -BirthMatters Parent

"My doula was everything."

-BirthMatters Parent



“

"This has been an enjoyable experience. I have learned so much and Amber is an inspiration. The end came too soon. I never knew the power of doulas! I will always cherish our relationship".

”

-BirthMatters Parent

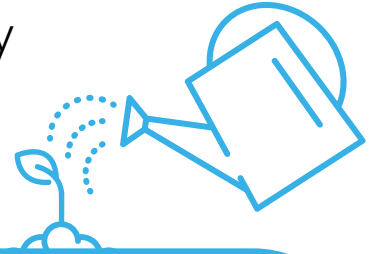
"Community doulas provide invaluable and necessary support for mothers of color."

-Courtney Brown,
Brown University Fellow



"I have nothing but good things to say about my doula and BirthMatters."

-BirthMatters Parent



"Amber is the best!!! She was there even when I wasn't there for myself."

-BirthMatters Parent

"Without [my doula] I would not have found another provider that listened and cared. She stayed on top of things."

-BirthMatters Parent



Thank you for bringing the importance of advocating for myself to light! Since you've told me to make sure I let my doctors know how I feel and ask any questions I have. I feel that I understand my doctors more and they understand me as well. Me and my partner really appreciate you!

-BirthMatters Parent



"[Our doula] provided us with the education we need to be the best parents we could be."

-BirthMatters Parent

"My doula discussed a lot of things for me to improve my postpartum health like get rest, eat healthy and those things. She was always there for me. She started discussing postpartum health during pregnancy because she knew I had a hard time with previous birth and postpartum."

-BirthMatters Parent

BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

The Breastfeeding Friendly Business label aims to improve the health of mothers and babies in Spartanburg. By labeling businesses as breastfeeding-friendly, we are letting mothers in the community know that they are welcome to breastfeed their babies at those businesses without fear of judgment or harassment. We hope this effort makes it easier for mothers in Spartanburg to provide their babies with the best nutrition possible while being able to go about their daily lives. In addition, we want to decrease the stigmatization of breastfeeding to create a healthier community.

Each year BirthMatters circulates a survey throughout Spartanburg County asking people who have breastfed in the last two years to nominate businesses in our community. As a result, in 2021 and 2022, eight businesses were deemed breastfeeding-friendly by breastfeeding members of the community.



Spartanburg County Public Libraries



Love & Light Family Chiropractic



Big Air Trampoline Park



The Children's Museum of the Upstate



RJ Rockers



Target



Little River Coffee Bar



Fr8yard

COMMUNITY DOULA WEEK

MARCH 29TH - APRIL 5TH

Acknowledge. Affirm. Advocate.



- The first-ever Community Doula Week was successfully established by BirthMatters in partnership with HealthConnect One on March 29th-April 5th, 2022, as dreamed up by Eboni Williams, one of our community-based doulas. Other community-based doula organizations, allies, supporters, and families across the nation joined our mission to increase public awareness of community-based doula services throughout the U.S. and beyond.
- The Mayor of Spartanburg, Jerome Rice, Jr., accepted BirthMatters' proclamation request and declared March 30th "Spartanburg Community-Based Doula Day."
- During #CDW22 BirthMatters hosted and co-facilitated local and nationwide events, including a doula panel (Community-Based Doula Conversation: Past, Present, & Finding Our Way Forward), an in-person and virtual viewing of A Doula Story, an Instagram Live event and Twitter chat event, engaging hundreds of people across the country.
- BirthMatters also helped others advocate for community-based doula programs around the U.S. by providing an online social media toolkit, including example social media posts and proclamation requests, of which many were successful.

A Look into #CDW22 Social Media Analytics



Instagram

- **1,292** accounts reached (**62.1% increase**)
- **772** non-followers (**110% increase**)
- **12,736** impressions (**44.2% increase**)
- **521** profile views (**83.6% increase**)
- **71** website taps (**317% increase**)
- **97** new followers
- **242** accounts engaged (**40.6% increase**)
- Engaged with **67.5%** more non-followers
- **1,160** content interactions (**71.8% increase**)



Facebook

- **5,560** accounts reached (**17.4% increase**)
- **231** page visits (**6% increase**)
- **30** new page likes (**50% increase**)



IMATTER DATA



**Chelle Jones,
Certified
Community Health Worker**

"Michelle's thoroughness about the lesson and program is very dynamic. She is very clear and explains in great detail. Her pace, energy, and tone display showing support for having a successful life." -Observer



"Chelle helped me feel comfortable talking about topics I had no one else to ask."

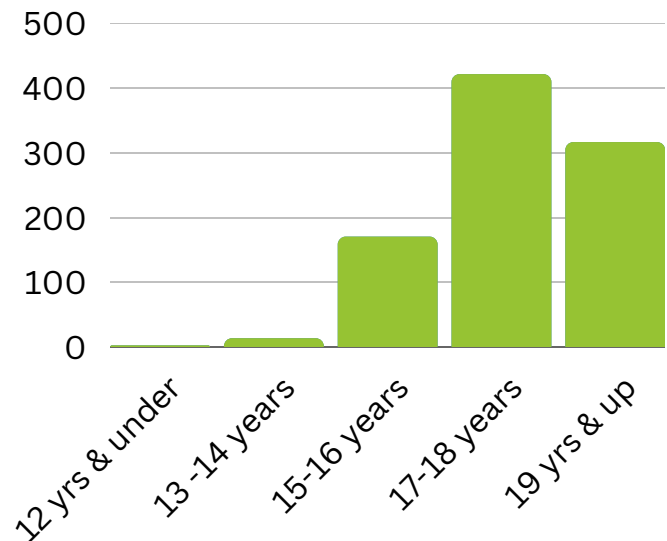
-iMatter Participant

The iMatter program aims to reduce teen pregnancy and empower youth to make healthy choices through teen-friendly, evidence-based reproductive health education services provided by a certified community health worker.

937

YOUTH SERVED

Ages



"She's just a great person, a great person to be around." -iMater Participant

"[Chelle] started teaching us stuff that we really needed to know...especially us teens, because we need to know this stuff before we get older."

-iMater participant

I asked her questions I couldn't ask my grandmother... Miss Chelle just made me feel like I was doing the right thing about asking...It's like she understood what I was feeling. -Survey Respondent

It wasn't just she was just standing there basically giving us information. She really wanted to do this and help us.

-iMater Participant

"Chelle did a great job at engaging the youth. She has good rapport and confidence delivering the SHARP program. -Observer

“

Very positive engagement and participation from students. Michelle encouraged them to understand facts pertaining to Covid and how to protect themselves. Maintained a calm class with no distractions. Very admirable... encouraged students not to feel neglected, unaccepted or have negative vibes with sharing their opinions.

-Observer

”



FUNDING SOURCES

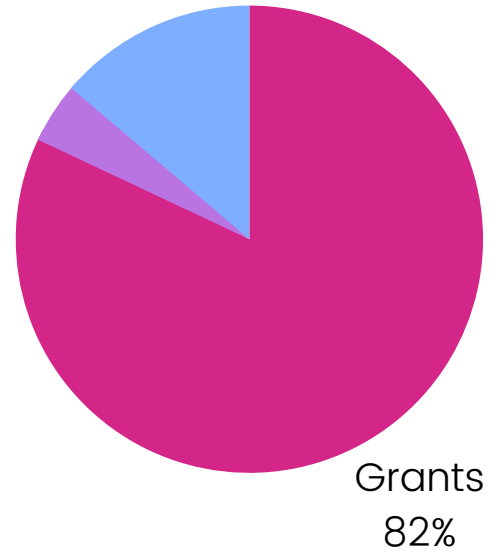


208 Donors

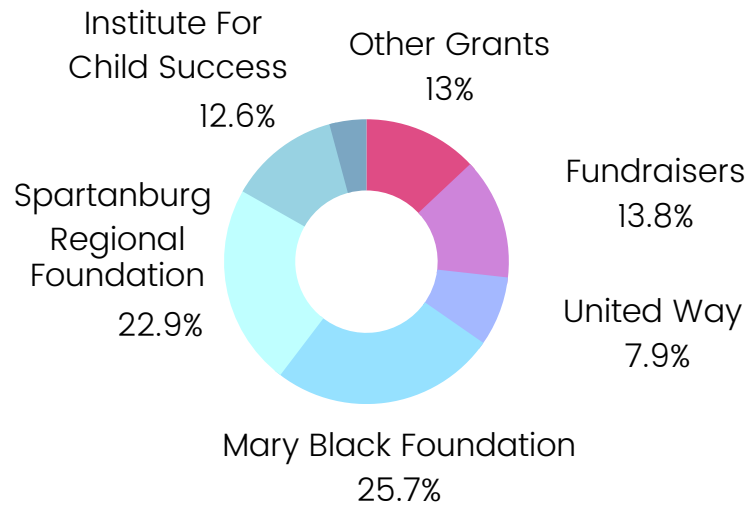
\$62,565.21
in donations

Donors
4.2%

Fundraisers
13.8%

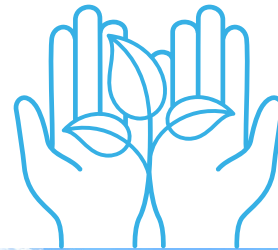


Grant Breakdown



- Pay for Success Grant (Institute For Child Success)- **\$57,783.87**
- Early Childhood Development Grant (Mary Black Foundation)- **\$115,116.00**
- United Way of the Piedmont- **\$35,439.96**
- Spartanburg Regional Foundation (Office of Population Affairs)- **\$102,383.51**

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



"Spartanburg Regional Foundation is proud to work with community partners like BirthMatters. Together, we are promoting health and wellness and improving quality of life for residents of the Upstate. We are grateful for Molly, Amber, and the BirthMatters team."

-Alexis Whitmire, Grant Program Manager
Spartanburg Regional Foundation



BirthMatters, in partnership with Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System Foundation, has recently received a substantial grant from The Duke Endowment that will allow us to expand access to community-based doula services across the state.



BirthMatters is excited to partner with Hello Family to expand our existing community-based doula services to improve birth outcomes and well-being for young children and families in Spartanburg.

"BirthMatters has been a great partner for Hello Family's Pay For Success transaction - it combines strong data on efficacy and a demonstrated ability to close equity gaps in outcomes for moms and young children in the community. BirthMatters has been central to the project and the effort to drive systems change for young families in Spartanburg."

-Bryan Ford Boroughs,
Chief Operating Officer
and General Counsel
Institute for Child Success



ADVOCACY AND EXPANSION



Reflections from Molly Chappell-McPhail, Director of Advocacy and Expansion.

When I started this new role as Director of Advocacy and Expansion, I was overwhelmed by how big the job seemed. I had to give myself permission to not get into the doing part of the job and instead to spend time researching and creating a process. It was a steep learning curve. But, over time, I was refreshed by the challenge and energized to meet it. I am excited to share a few goals from my first year.

A primary focus was to lead a few advocacy initiatives. First, I knew we needed to secure funding to create the S.C. Doula Steering Committee to lead the policy work for doula compensation.

Success: we created a new advocacy initiative in April called Community Doula Week. BirthMatters leads this awareness effort, and it was exciting to see community doulas across the United States participate. This public awareness campaign increased interest in community doulas.

Breastfeeding Month in August offered another advocacy and awareness opportunity. I am always so pleased with how BirthMatters promotes this feeding choice.



Success: Securing funding from The Duke Endowment in partnership with Spartanburg Regional Foundation. This allowed BirthMatters to spearhead the legislative process for doula compensation in South Carolina. We hired Hope Blackley as a legislative consultant to guide the SC Doula Steering Committee (SCDSC). The SCDSC is comprised of 10 members across SC and, starting in November, will meet monthly. The committee's initial work will be to research the fourteen states that have some reimbursement policies in place.

To ensure we increase the community doula workforce in S.C. I created a training for certified community health workers and piloted it in Orangeburg with Family Solutions. In October, BirthMatters also started a community doula training in partnership with MUSC. This training will not be completed until March 2023.

Moving forward and looking ahead to 2023: supporting the statewide Doula Steering Committee in its efforts to ensure the policy for reimbursement will be front and center in my work. We understand from other states that policy work takes 2-3 years. BirthMatters will add another advocacy campaign in 2023. Another goal is to provide at least one community-based doula training in 2023 and celebrate the MUSC community-based doulas' completion of the training.

We know community work is deep and essential to creating sustainable change in systems. I am committed to ensuring community voices are heard and prioritized in community doula work.

Thanks for believing in BirthMatters and trusting me in this new role. Working together in collaboration-change will happen.

M. Crippel - M. H. Hall



APPRECIATION

You matter!



www.birthmatters.org






Thank you for being part of the BirthMatters Community. Without you, our supporters, donors, volunteers, and allies, we could not continue this vital work of empowering young birthing families to raise healthy families.

In appreciation,

The BirthMatters Team



Stay in touch!

-  **864-69-BIRTH**
-  **amber@birth-matters.org**
-  **@birthmatters_sc**
-  **@birthmattersspartanburgsc**
-  **@birthmatters_sc**



*Birth***Matters**
empower prevent plan