BirthWell Partners’ mission is to improve the health of low-resource mothers and infants in central Alabama by offering free and reduced-cost childbirth education, breastfeeding assistance, and non-medical labor support provided by birth doulas.

Penny Simkin, founder of DONA International, proclaimed 2016 “The Year of the Doula!” It was certainly a busy year for our community doula program. We are grateful to have been able to continue training new doulas and providing services to families in Central Alabama.

Training:
This year we awarded 9 doula training scholarships and trained a total of 33 women in our fall and spring birth doula workshops. In November, we hosted a Spinning Babies Training for area nurses, doulas, chiropractors, and other birth & body workers. This advanced training focused on skills for assisting pregnant women achieve easier births by adding balance, gravity, and movement both prenatally and during labor. In March, doulas from Alabama and Mississippi joined us for a weekend of self-care and learning at our 4th Annual Doula Retreat.

A group of attendees at our Fall 2016 Birth Doula Workshop.

Fall was the perfect time to host our first annual “Earthy Birthy Fair and Family Wellness Expo.” Many families came out to Simon Williamson Clinic to learn more about the variety of vendors offering more “natural” products and services to families, and to tour the Labor & Delivery department at Princeton.
Childbirth Classes:
In the winter, we facilitated childbirth classes at JCCEO Early Head Start. Classes at the Sherman Heights location give parents information about pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding and newborn care, with emphasis on health care decision making and self-advocacy.

Class participants learn to make soft baby carriers out of repurposed t-shirts. Babywearing has numerous benefits for both mother and child!

Doula Services:
The core of our program continues to be providing free and reduced cost doula services to those who can most benefit, but are least likely to afford doula services.

Our volunteer community doulas support their clients one-on-one during pregnancy, labor, birth and the early postpartum period. Prenatally, they help connect clients to area resources and support services. In labor, they offer encouraging words, help labor progress by suggesting position changes, make clients more comfortable by providing massage or counter-pressure during contractions, and more. They also encourage early skin-to-skin contact, assist with breastfeeding, and help mother and baby learn to respond to one another’s cues during the first hours and weeks after birth.

Clients report greater satisfaction with their birth experience, which impacts how they feel during the challenging early weeks and months of parenting. This positive start to mother-infant interactions can provide long lasting benefits to children’s emotional and physical development.

Celebrating our 250th Birth!
### Measurable Results:

In March, Dr. Lydia Thurston (Samford University) and Dr. Stephanie Ostrowski (Auburn University), presented a poster outlining statistical analysis of BirthWell client birth outcomes at the National Academies of Practice meeting in Philadelphia. The analysis compared our clients birthing in 2013-2014 to 2014 Jefferson County Medicaid births (over 90% of BirthWell clients are covered by Medicaid for their birth). Results showed that Medicaid mothers were 1.8X more likely to have c-sections, and 3X more likely to use epidural anesthesia, while BirthWell clients were 10X more likely to initiate breastfeeding. This poster was also shared at the ADPH Office of Women’s Health Conference in August.

We routinely collect birth outcome data showing that on average, compared to Medicaid births in Jefferson County, our clients have a higher average gestational age, higher average birth weight, and higher rate of breastfeeding initiation. Doula support is also associated with fewer unnecessary medical interventions, improving the health of mothers and babies as well as saving health care dollars.

### References:

4. Medicaid Births in Jefferson County 2013. source Greg Townsend (all other payment sources includes insured mothers)
5. Medicaid Births in JeffCo 2014 (Greg Townsend, Dr. Sinsky)
7. Personal Communication from Sylvia Edwards (UAB lactation) 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>National (ref)</th>
<th>State of Alabama</th>
<th>Jefferson County</th>
<th>BWP 2011-17</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number of birth attended</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-Section Rate (%)</td>
<td>32.2 (1)</td>
<td>35.4 (1)</td>
<td>34.6 (3) Medicaid. 33.5 (4) Medicaid 38.5 (4) all other payment sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>average gestational age (weeks)</td>
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<td>38.1 (4) Medicaid. 38.3 (4) all other payment sources</td>
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<td>Average Birth Weight lbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 lb. 12.2 oz (3) Medicaid 6lb.12oz (4) Medicaid 7lb.1.5oz (4) all other payment sources</td>
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<td>Pre-Term Births &lt;37 weeks gestation(%)</td>
<td>9.57 (1)</td>
<td>11.66 (1)</td>
<td>12.3 (4) Medicaid 10.9 (4) all other payment sources</td>
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<td>Low Birth Weight Infants (% for all ages)</td>
<td>8.0 (1)</td>
<td>10.1 (1)</td>
<td>11 (2) 13.6 (4) Medicaid 10.3 (4) all other payment sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding(%)</td>
<td>79.2 (6)</td>
<td>67.6 (6) ever BF</td>
<td>57.1 (5) Medicaid: BF in hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>BF at discharge</td>
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<td>92.4</td>
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<td>Skin to skin (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>84 at UAB (7)</td>
<td>86.79</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Many Thanks to the Organizations and Individuals Who Helped Make Our Work Possible Last Year:

- Alabama Affiliates of ACNM
- Alabama Birth Coalition
- Alabama Oriental Medical Arts
- Babywearing International (B’ham Chapter)
- Nicole Bailey
- Beautiful Braches Doula Services
- BirthWise in Birmingham
- Brookwood Medical Center
- Buck Mulligan’s Public House
- Christina Burt
- The Caring Foundation
- Zenoria Causey
- Deep Roots Apotheke
- Truus Delfos-Broner
- Embody Practice Center
- Faith and William Pautler Family Foundation
- Heather Glaze
- Homewood Friends and Family Chiropractic
- ICAN of Birmingham
- Frances Johnson
- Jill Horton Jones
- Ashley King
- Nathan Lipps
- Matthew Lawson
- Alex McPherson
- Mothers Milk Bank of Alabama
- Ashley Pigford
- Princeton Baptist Medical Center
- Marion Renneker
- Rock n Wrap Fitness
- Ronne and Donald Hess Foundation of behalf of Emily & Bob Levine
- Rachel Schwartz
- Simon Williamson Clinic OB/GYN
- UAB Benevolent Fund
- Viewtopia
- Villager Yoga
- Weaving Alabama
- Martha Williams
- Your Whole Baby of Alabama
- Anonymous donors (you know who you are, even if we don’t)
- including donations through:
- AmazonSmile
- BBVA Compass Employee Giving
- Giving Assistant
- Humble Bundle
- Your Pie

“My doula was invaluable.”

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Dr. Beverly VonDer Pool
Martha R. Williams

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Dalia Abrams
Executive Director of Program Operations

Susan Petrus
Executive Director of Business Operations

Financial Statement of Activities

Revenue
- Contributions $3,800
- Grants $6,800
- Fundraisers/Events $3,396
- Fees for Service $17,697
- Total Revenue $31,693

Program Costs
- Childbirth Classes $204
- Doula Retreat $497
- Doula Services $1,906
- Doula Training $1,770
- Total Program Costs $4,377

Expenses
- Salaries and Benefits $28,986
- Advertising & Promotion $1,959
- Banking Fees, Licenses & Memberships $938
- Computer and Internet $523
- Office Supplies $394
- Staff Development $60
- Travel $29
- Meals $64
- Total Expenses $32,953

www.BirthWellPartners.org