



WOMB INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Prepared For:
Community

Prepared By:
**Kailene Jones, Grants
Committee Chair & Founding
Board Member**
Reviewed & Approved by
WOMB Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS HIGHLIGHT

"This year, The Womb Initiative took significant steps to strengthen our mission of empowering and enriching the lives of all women by focusing on strategic restructuring and building organizational capacity. We prioritized the development of our Board of Directors, equipping them with the tools and vision necessary to guide the organization toward long-term sustainability. While continuing to provide vital resources like our community-based birth doula course, several gatherings/classes, and piloting the Nursing Nook for breastfeeding support, we also laid the groundwork for future initiatives by enhancing infrastructure and partnerships. These efforts position us to ensure lasting impact for women and families in our region for years to come."

WOMB INITIATIVE

INTRODUCTION

The path to motherhood changes us, and no woman should have to navigate this journey alone.

ABOUT US

We, in the North Country of NH, all know that you wouldn't climb a mountain without a backpack full of resources. We at the WOMB Initiative feel that your perinatal time should be viewed as a journey into and through motherhood, and you shouldn't be empty-handed.

Let us help you by filling your metaphorical backpacks full of resources for your journey. We serve young maidens, new and experienced mothers, and those who are in their wise years.

Our Vision

That pregnancy, labor, birth and the postpartum are honored and respected as pieces of a sacred journey.

You're on a journey like no other, and WOMB Initiative is here to support you throughout the whole process. We're known for holistic information and research that will help you gather vital resources for your journey into and through motherhood.

WHAT WE DO

Our mission is to empower and enrich the lives of all women through information, resources, and community, during the journey into and through every stage of motherhood. We offer education and safe space for women to learn, grow, and heal through the following topics:

- **Pregnancy & Birth**
- **Postpartum & Breastfeeding**
- **General women's health topics (pre-conception, pelvic floor health, fitness, nutrition, stress management, menopause, & more!)**
- **Circles & Gatherings (Mom's Night Out!, Birth Stories, Pregnancy Loss, Breastfeeding Support, etc.)**
- **Community Projects & Collaboration (Nursing Nook & North Country Maternity Network)**
- **Doula Co-op Development (Training & Continuing Education)**



WOMB INITIATIVE HISTORY

OUR HISTORY

The Women of the Mountains Birth Initiative (WOMB) was founded in 2021 by a group of passionate individuals committed to increasing access to personalized, unbiased perinatal information, resources, and emotional support that gently guide women during the journey into and through motherhood. The catalyst to founding WOMB was the feedback from several local mothers who transitioned from hospital care to midwifery care during the pandemic repeatedly stating that the comprehensive information they received about the entire perinatal experience during midwifery care should be delivered to everyone regardless of their place of birth, risk assessment or income.



2010-2021



2022-2023



2023-2024



2024-
BEYOND



Idea Conception & Formal Birth

After more than a decade practicing as one of the only homebirth midwives in the region, Natanya officially gathered several local women to found WOMB as a 501c3 nonprofit in August of 2021.

Growth & Piloting

Through WOMB, Natanya and several other perinatal and holistic practitioners, and volunteers have hosted/offered around 40 gatherings/classes over the first year and a half. Including classes on pregnancy, birth, labor & delivery, and the postpartum, breastfeeding, and much more!

Pivoting & Restructuring

WOMB hosted 22 events and our 1st Annual Board retreat in 2023 as the catalyst to shifting away from having staff and instead building capacity for a well trained/sustainable volunteer board of directors to help create a solid foundation for offering more services into the future.

Rebirth & Bright Future!!

In 2024, WOMB hosted 11 events, including a community-based birth doula course and launched our first Nursing Nook at over 6 community events with the help of a strong volunteer working Board of Directors, Service Credit Union sponsorship, and several other community partners. We look forward to expanding this offering into the future in collaboration with the North Country Maternity Network.

WOMB INITIATIVE



REGIONAL REACH PLACES SERVED

The WOMB Initiative was born out of the growing need of women throughout different points during their pregnancy, labor, birth and postpartum seeking support and information about procedures, choices, and the journey of motherhood.

250+

Women and families reached since inception

Regional Impact

We, in the North Country of NH, all know that you wouldn't climb a mountain without a backpack full of resources. We at the WOMB Initiative feel that your perinatal time should be viewed as a journey into and through motherhood, and you shouldn't be empty-handed.

We are committed to helping by filling your metaphorical backpacks full of resources for your journey. We aspire to serve young maidens, new and experienced mothers, and those who are in their wise years.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

WOMB has served women and families from all walks of life across several regions throughout the North Country of NH and Northeast Kingdom of VT, even reaching doula students from Central MA in 2024!

North Country of NH (Coos & Northern Grafton Counties)



Northeast Kingdom of VT (Essex, Orleans, Caledonia)



Other communities



MESSAGE

FROM OUR FOUNDER

“

It is with a heavy heart that I share the official closure of As It Was Midwifery. This was not an easy decision—it has been one of the most difficult and emotional of my life. Serving families across the North Country has been a deep honor, and closing this chapter is filled with both heartbreak and gratitude.

While stepping away from the practice is bittersweet, I take comfort in knowing that a part of As It Was Midwifery will continue to live on. As part of my departure, I've donated the full midwifery library—books, educational DVDs, and birth-related supplies—to The Women of the Mountains Birth Initiative (WOMB). This collection will now be available for North Country families and birth workers to borrow and benefit from for years to come. It's my way of leaving behind a legacy of learning, support, and empowerment for a region I love so deeply.

Although I've recently relocated to Texas to expand my midwifery knowledge and training, I have not left the North Country for good. I'll be back periodically to co-lead WOMB classes and community gatherings and remain committed to supporting projects to enhance midwifery/doula care and education available for families and birth workers across Northern New Hampshire. I'm also proud to remain part of WOMB's mission by being a voting board member and advisor to several committees.

Thank you for allowing me to walk alongside you in some of life's most sacred moments. I can't wait to see what 2025 brings for WOMB and for the beautiful birth community of the North Country.

With deep gratitude

Natanya Champney, NHCM, CPM

Owner of As it Was Midwifery Services
Founder & Voting Board Member of WOMB



WOMB INITIATIVE

BOARD ENRICHMENT & ENGAGEMENT



WOMB's Board of Directors spent 2024 restructuring, training, and building capacity for our future with the help of women from all walks of life.

We are pleased to share an update regarding a transition within the WOMB Initiative. Our founding Executive Director, Natanya Champney, is pursuing a midwifery opportunity in Texas, a meaningful next step in her professional journey.

While WOMB stepped away from managing an Executive Director position for operating year 2024, we are delighted to have welcomed Natanya back as a voting member of our Board of Directors. Her experience and insight will continue to strengthen our organization and guide our mission forward.

01. Strategic Redirection

We are excited to build on the strong foundation Natanya has established. Her ongoing involvement as a Board member ensures her leadership will remain a valued part of WOMB. WOMB is eager to grow, as we welcome and orient, several new board members, including Heather Lefoll as Board Chair to strategically guide us into 2025.

03. Community Collaborations

WOMB strengthened relationships with partners of the North Country Maternity Network, New Hampshire's Perinatal Quality Collaborative, NNEPQIN, Service Credit Union, and The Dartmouth Institute through the Photovoice Project, Birth Doula Course, and Nursing Nook launch.

02. Development 101 Training

WOMB sent founding Board Member, Kailene Jones to learn the basics of finding and securing charitable dollars. This NH Center for Nonprofits sponsored training gave her tools, insights, and confidence to bring to the current Grants Committee Chair position she was appointed to in late Fall 2024.

04. 2nd Annual Board Retreat

In August 2024, the board explored how WOMB can maintain continuity and momentum by establishing a structured onboarding and mentorship process for incoming members, emphasizing the importance of preserving institutional knowledge while welcoming fresh perspectives.



WOMB INITIATIVE PROJECTS

POP-UP NURSING NOOK PILOT

In January 2024, WOMB received an annual sponsorship from Service Credit Union for the purposes of launching our first Nursing Nook! The tent is designed to provide mothers with a private, comfortable, and safe space to nurse or care for their children at community events. This offering, ensures no mother navigates her journey alone and promotes family-friendly environments throughout the North Country of New Hampshire and the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. We have attended several community events most pictured here, Littleton First Friday, Starks 250th Anniversary, The Lancaster Fair, Mind, Body, Spirit Evolution Expo in Concord, Lancaster Old Time Christmas, and Jefferson Town Christmas Festival. WOMB is grateful for SCU's support in maintaining this service for the region, Learn more about joining them in sponsoring our newly branded 2025 nursing nooks below!



Littleton First Friday



Stark Town 250th Anniversary



Lancaster Fair



Mind Body Spirit Expo Concord, NH

"I just wanted to say THANK YOU for the beautiful nursing tent at Lancaster Fair. So grateful for your organization for providing such a beautiful and thoughtful space for parents like me. Thank you for all the work that you do!"-Local Mother



SCAN TO BECOME A SPONSOR!



Jefferson Christmas Festival



WOMB INITIATIVE PROJECTS



Photovoice Community Project

WOMB is proud to be the Community Partner of a community-based research project which is using Photovoice and participatory action research (PAR) to achieve its objectives. Photovoice is a qualitative research process through which people with lived experience of a challenge represent their lives, points of view, and experiences through photographic practice. PAR shifts the focus of knowledge to participants, improving the effectiveness of solutions by incorporating expert, lived perspectives and empowering participants to make change in their communities.



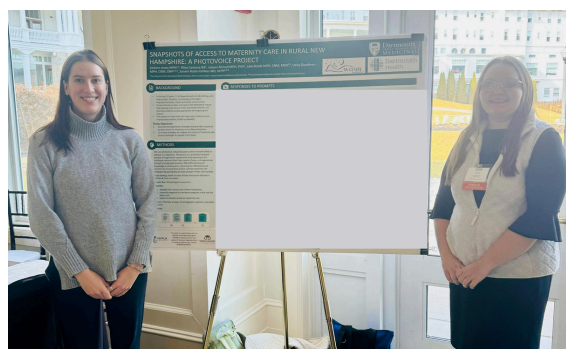
Preliminary Themes

Lack of Support

- "Unavailable supports and services kept me in a sickening cycle peering into the mirror of despair."
- "But no follow up re: my loss and grief. Had church and fam support, but do not know of any other support".
- "No professional support here locally. My biggest support was leaning into research, my own knowledge and advocating myself, confidence in my body and my own intuition".

Need for Education/Information

- "I was never offered the options and information was not disclosed. Withholding services that could have been available to me".
- "Lack of education on why I am being given a certain med; giving other options on birth; pelvic floor exercises". Nobody has told me that being induced has the risk of placental abruption, I looked it up on internet".



Project Funders/Supporters



World Story Exchange

the family
resource center



WOMB INITIATIVE PROJECTS



PHOTOVOICE CONT.

Preliminary Themes

Gaslighting and feeling unheard

- "The struggle was real yet no matter how many times I brought my concerns I was ignored, dismissed, or patronized."
- "Overwhelmed by chaos, confusion, distrust and emotional turmoil, I was left feeling fearful, ignored, and not taken seriously."

Choice

- "Felt I didn't have a choice and only choice was to travel, didn't know that home birth was a choice".
- "Obstruction of choice": To find support of choice in birth after cesarean, I had to de-rail, go off of the tracks of the usual course and leave North Country. The path to avoid a planned cesarean was time consuming, expensive and stressful".

Patient Centered Care

- "Meeting me where I am".
- "While emotional support services were offered, they were inconsistent and streamlined to fit a standardized approach that failed to meet my unique needs and circumstances."

Travel and Distance.

- "Transportation through Medicaid carrying the baby to apts. was hard".
- "Driving to DH for apts is a family trip, whole day dedicated to these apts".
- "So I am thinking will I have enough time to get to the hospital in labor"?
- "Food stamps and other support (daycare), one has to worry about the transportation".

Communication gaps/System issues

- "Communication between docs, felt like in an assembly line, issues accessing patient portal."
- "Referrals and support-you ask for something and it takes forever".

Self-advocacy

- "In the north country you have to swim or sink and have no option but self-advocate".
- "Listen to oneself to advocate our needs and wants to ensure our safety and our baby's safety in arriving to the world is safe".

To request a presentation of final themes and to learn more about using photovoice as a community engagement tool please visit

www.wombinitiative.org/photovoice or contact
Community Research & Engagement Manager,
Kailene Jones, MPH at

kailene@wombinitiative.org or 603-684-8635

WOMB INITIATIVE OFFERINGS

Circles & Gatherings

- FEBRUARY 2024: HEART BONDING: CONNECTING MAMA AND BABY; EDUCATING 3 MOTHERS
- MARCH 2024: COMMUNITY RESOURCE NIGHT IN GROVETON
- MAY & OCTOBER 2024: BIRTHING IN LOVE (NATURAL CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION CLASS) EDUCATING 4 FAMILIES
- JUNE 2024: BIRTH STORIES CIRCLE, CONNECTING WITH 3 MOTHERS

PLACENTA PRINTING & ENCAPSULATION COURSE

Educational Offerings

Instructor: Natanya Champney, NHCM, CPM

In October 2024, several doulas gathered to expand their knowledge of placenta anatomy and skills in printing and encapsulating the magnificent organ of life!



WOMB INITIATIVE

EVALUATING IMPACT



WOMB BIRTH DOULA COURSE

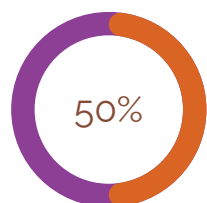
Instructor: Natanya Champney, NHCM, CPM

In August 2023, April 2024, and November 2024, WOMB's Founder hosted three unique community-based 3-day birth doula courses, **educating a total of 15 women** in offering emotional, physical, and informational support to women and their partners throughout pregnancy, birth, & the immediate postpartum. This includes comfort measures, basic information about pregnancy and labor, and partner support. WOMB doulas are trained to know how to offer support of what the mother/partner believe is best for their birth experience and baby. The course also gives participants all the information and resources they need to start their own doula service or seek employment as a doula through an agency. WOMB's post course survey results show profound data on the value and barriers to doula training and practicing. Several doula's continue to be involved as we collectively move forward in supporting the women of the north country together.

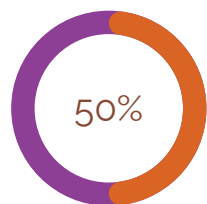
What were your key take aways from this course?

- The true role of a doula is to support a woman in such a way that she taps into her own inner voice, strength and power.
- Disarm with information and kindness.
- Boundaries are essential and to not take anything personally
- How beneficial it is to have a birthing doula present
- Doula services are becoming more widely used in the North Country and there are not enough doulas to go around. We as women need to be of service to other women during a very special time, honoring the clients wishes for her ideal birth.
- I believe it was made clear what the role of the doula is. I feel like there was a thorough introduction of what a doula can offer.
- Being a doula is something you need to love. And it's a doula's job to help create a space for physiological birth to take place.

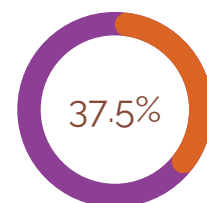
What are your top three barriers to serving as a full-time doula in the North Country?



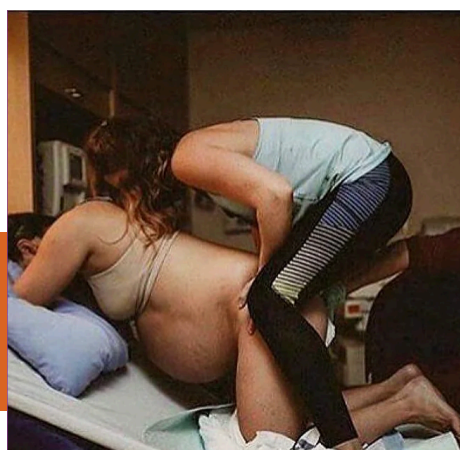
Lack of reliable last minute childcare



Lack of community awareness of doulas & benefits associated



Burden of 24/7 on-call lifestyle & Lack of confidence in engaging with potential clients and their providers



A HEARTFELT FAREWELL

GUIDING HANDS, GRATEFUL HEARTS

Thank you to everyone who stopped by to say their goodbyes at the farewell event in November! Natanya was humbled to tears by the love you all shared with her that weekend. Due to the immense love that overpowered the space, we are reminded of the beautiful community she has built. I am deeply honored to be a part of her community, learning and growing from her wisdom and leadership. I am honored to hold my position on the board, a whole decade after completing my high school senior project about midwifery. Dreams really do come true, and this moment is a testament to the magic of vision, persistence, and community.

Kailene Jones, MPH

Homebirther & Founding Board Member of WOMB



**WE WILL RAFFLE OF THESE MOTHERHOOD
SUPPLIES AT OUR END OF YEAR
GATHERINGS IN 2025!**

**WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU! VISIT
WWW.WOMBINITIATIVE.ORG/EVENTPAGE
FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO RSVP**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Women of the Mountains Birth Initiative is a group of passionate mothers from all walks of life working to support other mothers through pregnancy, postpartum, and beyond as we improve our access to resources, information, and community throughout the entire journey of motherhood.



Heather LeFoll, Birth Doula
Board Chair

Mother of 7 and Experienced Labor Doula and Prenatal Mentor
District Supervisor at Northumberland Ocean State Job Lot with 10+ years' experience in customer service, leadership, and administration.
Maidstone, VT



Kailene Jones, MPH

Grants Committee Chair
Founding & Voting Board Member
Mother of 3 and Project Specialist at Public Health Council of the Upper Valley
8+ years' experience in grant writing, project coordination and management
Stark, NH



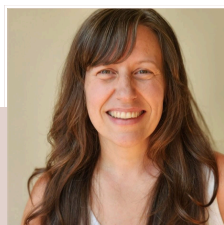
Taylor Imhoff, DONA Birth Doula

Board Secretary/Acting Treasurer
Mother of 3 and DONA International trained Doula
Over 8 years of experience in corporate and adult education and professional development
Bedford, NH



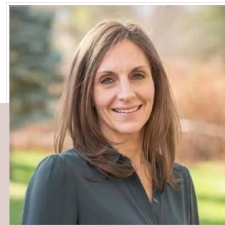
Jessie Ingerson

Voting Board Member
Mother of 1 angel baby, 1 rainbow baby, and two bonus boys,
School Teacher at Heartwood Public Charter School
Jefferson, NH



Natanya Champney, CPM, CM, LM

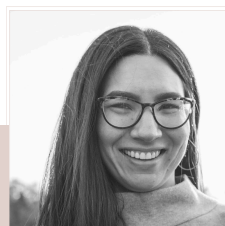
Founder & Voting Board Member
Mother of 3, Certified Professional Midwife
Clinical Director/Midwife at The Addice Birth Center The Woodlands, TX
Former Owner of As it Was Midwifery
Littleton, NH



Dr. Cherie Wilson

Rising Treasurer

Mother of 4. Chiropractor at North Country Chiropractic
Chiropractic care for pregnant moms, babies, children and their families.
Saint Johnsbury, VT



Dr. Erin Samel

Voting Board Member

Mother of 4, Pelvic and orthopedic physical therapist
Berlin, NH

Thank you for your service Past Board Members:

- Wendy Jordan, BS, IBCLC
- Skye Champagne
- Eleana Sussman, BA
- Debbie Mardin, BS
- Heidi Vaughn
- Ashley Winters, M. Ed
- Nikki Wilds
- Allysia Guy-Morrison, MD, RDMS
- Simone Cote
- Meredith Bienvenue
- Sarah Emberly Moekel





Empowering Mothers, Enriching Lives

WOMB is eager to jump into 2025 with big plans to support women and families from all walks of life. If you would like to volunteer with the Board of Directors, Committees, Nursing Nook, Doula Coop, Photovoice, or anything else related to WOMB please email or call us at the information below!

MORE ABOUT US

WOMB is honored to host gatherings on the third Saturday of each month at our central office space on Cottage st. We currently do not have office hours unless otherwise posted online or the nursing nook sign is on the lawn. Please contact the Board of Directors at the information below with any questions or suggestion as we grow into the future!



Phone

877-357-WOMB



Email

info@wombinitiative.org



Website

www.wombinitiative.org



Office Address

**74 Cottage st suite 4
Littleton, NH 03561**

The Women of the Mountains Birth Initiative

Join us for a WOMB gathering/circle/class every 3rd Saturday in 2025!



January 18th - Moms Night Out-GAME NIGHT!

6:30pm-8:30pm

February 15th- Pregnancy/Infant Loss Support Circle

10am-noon

March 15th- Birth Stories Circle

10am-noon

April 19th- Moms Night Out-Brewery Style

6:30pm-8:30pm

May 17th- Breastfeeding Support Circle

10am-noon

June 21st-Sustainable Childrearing Class

10am-noon

July 19th-Moms Night Out- Summer Picnic

6:30pm-8:30pm

August 16th-Birth Stories Circle

10am-noon

September 19th- Photovoice Exhibit, Birth Time Screening, & Building Your Village Panel

4pm-8pm

October 18th-Pelvic Floor Workshop

10am-noon

November 15th- Moms Night Out- Happy Holidays

6:30pm-8:30pm

December 20th- Mother the Mother Blessing Exchange

10am-noon



RSVP at the link below or code to the right.
If you require childcare or transportation to join us,
please email info@wombinitiative.org

RSVP



More offerings & details to be added consistently at

www.wombinitiative.org/eventpage

Location: 74 Cottage St Littleton, NH 03561