

## **Grant Supports Doula Training in Dallas – March 19-22, 2009**

The International Center for Traditional Childbearing (ICTC) will be hosting the last of its national Full Circle Doula trainings currently funded by W.K. Kellogg Foundation. *The grant has enabled more women of color to become Doulas through partial scholarships.* Since the grant was awarded in May 2008, ICTC has surpassed its goal to offer trainings in 5 states over the course of one year and has already trained 49 women as doulas, preparing them to work in communities of color and positively impact infant mortality rates. It is a true accomplishment that ICTC can add three additional trainings by July 2009.

The Full Circle Doula training is designed to help reduce infant mortality and build capacity for better birth outcomes in the black community. In maternal and infant mortality, the U.S. ranks 41st among industrialized nations. And though birth should be a wonderful and safe experience, it is a dismal reality for many women of color. African American women are three times more likely to die in childbirth than a white woman and black infants are two and half times more likely to die before age one, than other races. One of the leading causes of higher black infant mortality is premature birth and low birth weight babies; believed to be caused by social determinants including stress that can be associated with racism, lack of health insurance, minimal emotional support, and lack of cultural competency in the maternal and child health care professions.

“Doulas help reduce infant mortality,” says Shafia M. Monroe, founder and chief executive officer of ICTC. “They also provide health education, emotional support and advocacy. In addition they can be part of the hospital maternity team, serving as a bridge for cultural understanding and community based services,” says Monroe.

ICTC was funded in May of 2008 by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to recruit and train ethnically diverse woman as doulas so that they can help educate, support and provide services to pregnant women and new parents, and improve their own health, in order to reduce health disparities.

A doula is a trained non-medical professional who provides emotional support during pregnancy, labor and the postpartum period. Research confirms that doulas enhance the pregnancy experience for the mother and father, reduce caesarean section, minimize medical intervention and can increase breastfeeding beyond six-weeks.

The Full Circle Doula training is a 24.5-hour training that extends over the course of a weekend. Certification is obtained after meeting all the requirements.

The Full Circle Doula training includes the legacy of the Black midwife, birth traditions, spirituality, evidence-based infant mortality reduction strategies, breastfeeding techniques, comfort measures, postpartum care and entrepreneurial skills.

Monroe says, “Women who have completed the training say that it changed their lives for the better.” Kamala Myree, a massage therapist and trained Doula, said the ICTC training increased her confidence. “This training has empowered me to get out into the world and do the work,” Myree said.

"For many women this training is the gateway for starting on a life-long dream of serving women and being with women in childbirth," said Claudia Booker. Crystal Johnson, mother of two, said the training was an inspiration for her. Johnson said, "The training is inspiring me to be a better mom for my own kids. I will incorporate the training into my own life."

The last run of Full Circle Doula Trainings funded by the Kellogg Foundation grant will be held in Dallas, TX on March 19-22, Portland, OR in April, and Richmond, VA in May 2009.

Trainings are inclusive and open to everyone. To register or learn more about the Full Circle Doula training visit [www.ictcmidwives.org](http://www.ictcmidwives.org) or contact Aqiylah Collins, ICTC Training Coordinator, at [aqiylah@ictcmidwives.org](mailto:aqiylah@ictcmidwives.org) or (503) 460-9324.

Healthy Babies Are Everyone's Business.

## **About International Center for Traditional Childbearing (ICTC)**

The International Center for Traditional Childbearing (ICTC) is a Black infant mortality prevention, breastfeeding promotion and midwife training grassroots organization. Our mission is to improve birth outcomes, increase breastfeeding rates and midwives of color to reduce health disparities in underrepresented communities. ICTC builds capacity through health education, trainings and its annual Black Midwives and Healers Conference, which takes place the third weekend of October. ICTC is a leader in recruiting and training women of color in the Doula profession. ICTC is building capacity so that every woman who desires can provide Doula care in their community. Since 2001 ICTC has trained over 200 doulas, with 80% being of color. Established in 1991 and headquartered in Portland, Oregon we have chapters and members around the globe to improve birth outcomes. To learn more about ICTC visit their website at [www.ictcmidwives.org](http://www.ictcmidwives.org).

## **About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation was established in 1930. The organization supports children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individual and as contributors to the larger community and society. Grants are concentrated in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the southern African countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. For further information, please visit the Foundation's website at [www.wkcf.org](http://www.wkcf.org).