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### 2019-2020 Midwifery Graduates

**Jillian Denny**

**Bethany Loehrke**

**Alysa Merritt**

**Capri Parker**

**Molly Scott**

**Brittany Walker**

### Congratulations, Midwifery Graduates!

This issue of our newsletter typically comes after our June commencement ceremony where we honor our recent graduates. This year we were on track to recognize six Midwifery Program grads. Completing the midwifery program is an enormous accomplishment and rite of passage, requiring great perseverance, sacrifice, and deep love for the work. We feel such sadness that we were not able to celebrate these new midwives in person this year due to local social distancing requirements, and hope we will be able to honor our graduates with a rescheduled ceremony in the near future.

### Info@ is our new, virtual Front Office

*Birthingway's office and library are not accessible in-person at this time due to COVID-19; however, you can always submit questions and paperwork to [info@birthingway.edu](mailto:info@birthingway.edu) or call us at 503-360-3131.*

*Though your destination is not yet clear  
You can trust the promise of this opening;  
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning  
That is at one with your life's desire*

*-Excerpt from "For a New Beginning" by John O'Donahue*





# BLACK LIVES MATTER

**We strongly support the on-going movement to end police brutality, ensure dignity, safety, and respect for all people, and bring justice for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in our communities. We understand that this is not limited to three weeks of protests, but rather, should be a movement for the long run. As Ibram X. Kendi, writes in his book, How to Be an Antiracist: “Like fighting an addiction, being an antiracist requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination.”**

To continue to remain silent while countless lives are lost to structural racism and violence in our communities, in our policing systems, and in our maternal care systems, is to be complicit with white supremacy. We recognize that these issues are not new and that it has taken too long for Birthingway, the birth community, and white folks in general to step up and devote our full energy to ensuring justice and equity are centered in all of our work. We are committed to moving forward in courage and humility. In our efforts to do our own work, we are collecting shared resources for self-education, reflection on our experiences, and action.

If you have additional resources you think should be shared, please send those to [info@birthingway.edu](mailto:info@birthingway.edu).

**View these resources on our website:  
[birthingway.edu/black-lives-matter/](https://birthingway.edu/black-lives-matter/)**



# Birthingway Updates

As the College's programs are winding down, Birthingway has been through many changes already. Add in an international pandemic, and the velocity of change has increased dramatically. Increased communication, more webinars, more meetings, new legal requirements, and a dramatic increase in information has poured out from federal and state agencies, from professional organizations, and from specialty groups, leading to an increase in staff workload.

- We've updated our policies and procedures, both to adapt to the pandemic and to facilitate staff working from home.
- Testing and other services have been adapted, with more virtual assessment and exams.
- We are in the middle of updating our website, although the project is not complete. If you are confused about something, or need information, please contact [info@birthingway.edu](mailto:info@birthingway.edu) or call 503-760-3131.
- Two new webpages are available on our website, one dedicated to information on the COVID pandemic at [birthingway.edu/coronavirus-update](http://birthingway.edu/coronavirus-update) and the other on racial justice and equity at [birthingway.edu/black-lives-matter](http://birthingway.edu/black-lives-matter)
- After many years of having fax capacity, we've disconnected the landline and cannot accept faxes. You can email forms to [info@birthingway.edu](mailto:info@birthingway.edu), or send hard copies to our business address: 4997 SW Normandy Place, Beaverton, OR 97005.
- Our building on Foster Road is still for sale. Our diligent caretaker is keeping the place safe, and enjoying the space. If you know someone who is looking for an awesome business location, with lots of charm and history, please let us know. It is zoned commercial mixed use, which means you can also live in the building.

# Calendar

July 3	Independence Day Closure
July 5	Final Day of Spring 2020 Term
July 6	First Day of Summer 2020 Term <b>Doula Students:</b> Summer 2020 Term Registration Ends <b>Midwifery Students:</b> Final day to submit Course Add Forms and Research Project Registrations
July 13	Summer 2020 Enrollment Confirmation Deadline <b>Midwifery &amp; Doula Students:</b> Final day to submit late term registrations <b>Midwifery Students:</b> Final day to register for credits using financial aid
August 24	<b>Midwifery &amp; Doula Students:</b> Fall Term Registration Begins
August 31	<b>Midwifery Students:</b> Fall Term Registration Ends
September 7	Labor Day Closure
September 13	Final Day of Summer 2020 Term
September 14	First Day of Fall 2020 Term <b>Doula Students:</b> Fall Term Registration Ends
September 21	Fall 2020 Enrollment Confirmation Deadline

## Our Building is for Sale

Birthingway began operating out of the big house on Foster Road in 1999. For twenty years, it served as a container for much learning, warmth, and growth.

We made the difficult decision to move out of this building and put it up for sale at the end of 2019. We have operated with a decentralized administrative structure since the beginning of this year, a choice that has helped us to be more nimble as we navigate the current environment while continuing to serve our students. It also left us well prepared to adjust to social distancing requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in this property, please direct them to [our listing](#).







# Pandemic

What if you thought of it  
as the Jews consider the Sabbath –  
the most sacred of times?  
Cease from travel.  
Cease from buying and selling.  
Give up, just for now,  
on trying to make the world  
different than it is.  
Sing. Pray. Touch only those  
to whom you commit your life.  
Center down.

And when your body has become still,  
reach out with your heart.  
Know that we are connected  
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.  
(You could hardly deny it now.)  
Know that our lives  
are in one another's hands.  
(Surely, that has come clear.)  
Do not reach out your hands.  
Reach out your heart.  
Reach out your words.  
Reach out all the tendrils  
of compassion that move, invisibly,  
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love –  
for better or for worse,  
in sickness and in health,  
so long as we all shall live.

Lynn Ungar  
March 11, 2020, Chicago Tribune

## Birthingway and COVID-19

This is a time of unprecedented uncertainty and disruption, with significant repercussions for our daily lives as well as livelihoods. Birthingway, although small and winding down our programs, is committed to continuing to serve our community through this crisis. The College is well positioned for the current “shelter at home” environment. Beginning January 1, 2020, the College implemented a decentralized administrative structure, with our staff working from home and minimal in-person meetings. This will continue indefinitely.

We hold staff and student meetings via phone or online platforms, and we facilitate virtual support groups for enrolled doula and midwifery students on a regular basis. This is an opportunity to check in with our students, answer questions in real time, and to share strategies for coping and thriving. For midwifery students who are planning to graduate soon, we have developed new processes for facilitating LD&D testing and Oral Examinations virtually.

Birthingway was recently granted Emergency Financial Aid Grants through the HEERF CARES Act, which we were able to distribute to 100% of our current midwifery students.

Birthingway has also posted lots of information on our COVID-19 Update page:

[birthingway.edu/coronavirus-update](https://birthingway.edu/coronavirus-update)

Wishing everyone health, safety, and security.



# LABOR AND POSTPARTUM DOULA PROGRAMS

## COVID-19 AND DOULAS

### AND OTHER UPDATES FROM OUR DOULA PROGRAMS

We offered our final Labor Doula and Postpartum Doula workshops in Fall 2019. Although we are no longer offering the initial training workshop, these programs are still active as we admit and support students who have already completed a workshop through the certification process.

As one might imagine, the COVID-19 pandemic has been very disruptive to our student doulas, with most hospitals implementing restrictions limiting birthing people to no more than one support person, and most families deciding to social distance rather than invite a postpartum doula into their home. Despite the circumstances, we do have some doulas who continue to support clients, offering virtual and limited in-person support. For these doulas, we have created detailed safety guidelines. For student doulas who are unable to complete work toward their practicum requirements at this time, we have created a process to take leave which will allow them to pause their progress and return to the program once it is feasible to do so.

### OUR STUDENT DOULAS ARE STILL AVAILABLE!

Please spread the word if you or anyone you know meets our eligibility requirements and might benefit from a student doula! Doulas are currently providing support virtually with limited in-person support.

[Request a Labor Doula](#)

[Request a Postpartum Doula](#)





## WHEN WILL THE MIDWIFERY PROGRAM BEGIN ACCEPTING NEW STUDENTS?

**The short answer is “We don’t know when, and even if, we will be accepting new students.”**

When the decision was made not to admit a new cohort to the Midwifery Program in 2018 due to low application numbers, the hope was that a 2019 cohort would emerge. However, that did not happen, and Birthingway’s Board of Directors decided to close down the current iteration of the Midwifery Program once all of the enrolled students graduated. With only a handful of students remaining, we anticipate that the original version of the Program will be completed in 2022.

Now we are investigating whether a “reboot” of the Midwifery Program is feasible. Nichole, our Academic Coordinator, is lead on this project. She is updating the 2018 Midwifery Program 2.0 proposal, which is a low residency, flipped classroom, competency based program. Students would spend the first two weeks in residence, with the rest of the first year full time but only meeting in person monthly. Full time registration would be encouraged for the final two years, with the pattern of working independently then meeting up monthly continuing. The final two weeks would also be in residence.

The curriculum would meet international standards as well as all MEAC accreditation requirements.

Nichole is looking at different tuition structures, new formats, increased use of Google Classroom tools, and other innovations with the goal of creating an engaging, affordable, and sustainable program accessible to a diverse student population. We are also considering shifting to a certificate only program, rather than offering a degree.

Figuring out how to fund such a program, especially in the topsy-turvy world of pandemic, high unemployment, and economic recession, is a major hurdle. Our goal is an excellent program in keeping with our values, founded on Biodynamic care and strong communication, as well as flexible, streamlined, and affordable.

It’s unclear, given the huge social changes we are experiencing, whether there is sufficient student interest in becoming a midwife, or of continuing midwifery education at Birthingway. If you are interested in knowing more, or would consider attending a new Birthingway Midwifery Program, please let us know by sending an email to [info@birthingway.edu](mailto:info@birthingway.edu) so we can gauge the potential.