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THE MIDWIFERY TIMES

THE MIDWIFERY MENTORING & BELONGING PROGRAM'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

UCSF Class of 2023 and faculty gather for their first in-person skills lab. Photo by: Emily Beck, CNM

MMB Offers New Program Events!

This year we are launching new program events by and for our MMB mentors and mentees!

MMB Real Talk: A Mentor Led Space is an informal sharing and discussion space led by an MMB mentor for MMB mentees. Each month, one mentor will volunteer to discuss a topic of interest such as spiritual or traditional practices, political advocacy, starting your own midwifery practice, self-care and more. All MMB mentors are welcome and highly encouraged to attend as their insights are always valuable to our mentees! Currently, MMB Real Talk is open to MMB mentees and mentors only.

Aspiring Midwives Info Session Panel is an informal sharing and discussion space led by MMB mentees for BIPOC aspiring midwives who are in varying stages of their journeys to becoming a midwife. Mentees will share their growing expertise as student midwives on a myriad of topics identified by aspiring midwives. The info session is open to any aspiring midwife and to all MMB mentees and mentors.

While events are closed to the public, you can listen to the conversations on our new YouTube channel! Stay tuned for more!

For more information about the program, please visit our website at: midwifementoring.ucsf.edu/

MMB Gets Acknowledged for Funding!

We are thrilled to announce that we have been awarded a combined \$850,000 by the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF) and Yellow Chair Foundation (YCF), to expand our Midwifery Mentoring and Belonging Program through 2023!

CHCF is a non-profit independent philanthropy with offices in Oakland and Sacramento. Our program's mission strongly aligns with CHCF's work to improve maternity care and maternal outcomes by, with, and for Black mothers and birthing people in California. This includes expanding the maternal health care workforce to better reflect the diversity of the birthing people it serves, as well as the diversity of provider types that evidence shows yields strong outcomes. YCF is a private grantmaking organization based in San Francisco. YCF's philanthropic giving in maternal health is focused on making birth equitable and just for all by improving maternal health outcomes and the childbirth experience through expanding access to the midwifery model of care and reducing medically unnecessary interventions in hospital settings. CHCF and YCF's financial support directly bolsters our efforts to strengthen social and professional support systems for BIPOC students in California throughout their midwifery education, including preparation for post-graduation transition into the midwifery workforce.

As we grow, funding will reinforce a strong collaboration between the Cal State – Fullerton (CSUF) and UCSF nurse-midwifery programs, to partner on the direction of the MMB program. In addition to strengthening administrative resources, funding will support four key buckets of our work:

Mentor Training

- Development and delivery of a mentor training curriculum and mentor support system that is evidence-based, midwifery-specific, race-conscious, and that responds to the needs of BIPOC midwifery students. Mentors will continue to receive remuneration.

Community Engagement

- Community engagement efforts through social media, organizational collaborations with birth work and related organizations, and planned social events. Funding will continue to support mentor remuneration and establish the "MMB Mentor of the Year" award.

- Additional MMB staff time to meet with education program recruitment services at UCSF and CSUF to improve dissemination of midwifery program information to BIPOC aspiring midwives and develop additional tools to support the application process.

Evaluation & Dissemination

- Collaboration with the ACTIONS team to develop and implement an evaluation plan to identify MMB best practices and predictors of successful mentoring relationships. Findings will be distributed through academic publications and presentations at professional conferences, including the 2022 ACNM Annual Meeting.

Sustainability

- Hiring an external consultant to establish a sustainability plan, outlining a financing model that supports long-term growth and success beyond 2023.

And Just Like That... Our Program and Team are Expanding!

The MMB program has officially expanded to Cal-State Fullerton! We will continue to collaborate with Cal-State Fullerton, in an effort to support a growing numbers of California-based BIPOC midwifery learners who participate as program mentees. The funding we received from the Yellow Chair Foundation and the California Health Care Foundation also supports the staffing of two additional team members who will support the overall goals of the project. Learn more about our newest team members below!



Angela Sojobi, CNM is a member of the MMB leadership team, supporting the mentoring pairs and networking. She is also the director of CSUF's Nurse-Midwifery Education Program. As a certified nurse-midwife, Angela seeks to improve women's health throughout the lifespan with a special emphasis on the prevention of adverse perinatal outcomes and birth equity. She identified the diversification of the midwifery workforce as a fundamental strategy to prevent adverse perinatal outcomes and promote birth equity. As an educator, Angela identified mentorship of BIPOC midwifery students as a fundamental strategy to diversify the midwifery workforce.



Kristina Fortes is a member of the MMB leadership team, supporting the implementation of the project at CSUF, assisting with mentor and mentee recruitment and working with UCSF ACTIONS team for evaluation data. She is an Assistant Professor and the Director of Nurse Practitioner Program at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF). She is also an Assistant Clinical Professor in UCSF's Department of Physiological Nursing, and co-investigator on several federally funded grant projects related to representation and equity in nursing.



Jeremy Wong is a Project Policy Analyst in the Department of Family Health Care Nursing. He provides administrative assistance for the MMB program. He has a background in Health Care Administration from CSU East Bay and has a passion for coordinating student events. Jeremy's main tasks are maintaining our project management tool, managing our YouTube Channel, producing data reports for the evaluation team, and overseeing the mentor honorariums payments.



Pamela Dudzik works with the UCSF departments of Family Health Care Nursing and Community Health Systems. She is providing temporary administrative and website support for the MMB program through June 2022. Pamela has a background in project management and a desire to work on projects which assist historically excluded populations.

The Home Stretch... A Chat with Soon-to-be Midwifery Graduates

It's almost that time of the year again! Second year student midwives are in the final stretch as they prepare for graduation this summer. We chatted with two of our mentees, Arielle Bell and Dionne Gonzales, to hear more about how they are preparing for this momentous occasion and what they most look forward to in their post-graduation lives. [Check out our mentee's bios below!](#)



Dionne Gonzales, Student Nurse Midwife
Cal-State Fullerton, Class of 2022

Dionne Gonzales is in her final year of the Master of Science in Nursing program at Cal-State Fullerton. She holds a strong passion for women's health and education and was drawn to the medical field by the magical process of pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period. She has been a labor and delivery nurse for over four years and becoming an advanced practice registered nurse, specializing in women's health, has been close to her heart for several years. She is ecstatic about assisting women during their journey through life and looks forward to educating women on their bodies and the life-changing journey of pregnancy. Her professional goals include bringing attention to disparities in America, creating solutions to America's rising infant and maternal mortality rate, and to empower women by giving them the knowledge, tools, and confidence to take charge of their health and become advocates for themselves. You can reach Dionne by email at dhawkins1223@csu.fullerton.edu.

Arielle Bell, second year midwifery student at UCSF, is a California native, born and raised here in the Bay Area. Arielle holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Health with an emphasis in Community Health from Fresno State and received her nursing degree from UCSF. Her goal as a midwife is to enhance and contribute greatly to the world of community birth particularly within the Black community. She is a firm believer that "birthing while Black can and should be safe!" Her passion stems largely from her own birthing experience as she largely believes all birthing persons should be given the opportunity to make educated decisions and participate in shared decision making rather than coercion. She is a mom to an amazingly vibrant, fun loving, and sassy 4-year-old, daughter Jordyn. In her spare time, she loves sitting by the water, trying new restaurants, creating new recipes, traveling and spending time with her daughter. You can reach Arielle by email at awilliams0490@gmail.com or Instagram at [@blknwhtcoat!](https://www.instagram.com/blknwhtcoat/)



Arielle Bell, Student Nurse Midwife
UCSF, Class of 2022

Let's Get Into It...

With less than 6 months left to go before graduating, what does a typical week look like for you as a student nurse midwife?

Arielle: My weeks are crazy! School wise, some [days] are busy and some [days] are chill. It's a weird balance! Right now, my weeks are filled with at least one L&D shift, a GYN regular shift, and a GYN sub-specialty clinic and/or an antepartum shift. Biweekly, I also participate in Black Centering. In total, I have about 25 – 30 hours of clinic and about 9 hours of didactic work per week. Outside of school, I have a very active daughter who has extracurricular activities about four days per week so I'm always on the go!

Dionne: My typical week is pretty jammed pack. I don't like to think about it too much because it can sometimes be a little overwhelming, so I usually keep moving and worry about how tired I'm going to be later. As a wife, mother, RN, and student, I am always on the go. I usually work 1-2 days a week as a labor and delivery nurse. I also work 1 day a week as an OB nursing clinical instructor. I will do anywhere from 1-3 days a week of clinical hours for school, and then 1 day a week for class lectures. I definitely have times where I am going anywhere from 6-11 days in a row before getting a day off, but nothing worth having comes easy.

How has your clinical experience supported you in preparation for your professional post-graduation practice?

Arielle: I'm so nervous about post-graduation me!!! It's weird because I operate in clinic with lots of autonomy but it's so scary to think, "OMG I'm going to be on my own soon!" Overall, I feel really prepared for what is to come. I've done the majority of my rotations at Highland Hospital and within the overall Alameda health systems network. I'm grateful to have had amazing preceptors who have not only taken their time to educate me but to challenge and encourage me to think critically, make management decisions, and really step into the midwife role. I'm also grateful for the lasting connections I have with each of these individuals as future midwifery colleagues and mentors.

Dionne: I have been incredibly blessed when it comes to clinical placement. California State University, Fullerton has done such a fantastic job securing clinical spots for my cohort, especially during this challenging time, mid-pandemic. I am doing my clinical rotations at a Kaiser Permanente facility in Orange County, and I could not ask for a better experience. My preceptor has not only been an incredible teacher, but she is also a trusted mentor. The nurses, midwives, doctors, and other staff have been welcoming and supportive. I am exposed to various clinical scenarios where I can apply what I have learned in class into practice. Our program requires just under 1000 hours to graduate, providing ample opportunity to learn the essential skills of a midwife, including gynecologic, perinatal, menopausal, and general women's health care.

How do you balance your professional and personal life as demands increase in preparation for graduation?

Arielle: Lots and lots of prayer! I also try to remember the value of self-care and what that brings to my life. It's really hard but definitely a conscious effort because this current situation is temporary! I also try to remember that my daughter's life must continue too. I try my best to be intentional about the time set aside for her. Just because I'm in school and giving this a lot of my focus doesn't stop the outside world from continuing. I've gone through a lot these past couple of years and I can say my resilience has truly been tested and I'm still standing. I'd say the best reminder to myself is to remember the "why" and allow your village/support system to support you. Also, my midwifery cohort besties Jordan and Adriana have really been there to help keep me grounded and motivated.

Dionne: That's a tough one. If I'm completely honest, there are probably times when I don't. I know I am gone a lot, and even when I am home, I am often completing an assignment or practicing tying one-handed knots. My family is making such a huge sacrifice by supporting me through this journey, and I could not do it without them. I quickly learned the value of quality time versus quantity of time. I may only have a few hours a day or even a week, but I make sure to be present and have quality time with my family during that time. Sometimes it is as simple as eating dinner together or giving my daughter her bath before bed. Those small moments are the ones I cherish most and motivate me to keep going.

If you could use one word to describe how you're feeling in these last months, what would that word be?

Arielle: Busy! For the past month I've been busy and I'll even add a bit anxious. We have all these things to finish up such as the Cumulative Comprehensive Exam and Comp Paper. It can be a bit overwhelming but I'm definitely determined.

Dionne: There are times when I feel excited that my hard work is about to pay off, and a goal that I have been working towards for the past 10 years is within reach. Other times I am overwhelmed with the amount of work, hours, and skills left to master in such a short amount of time. But if I had to pick just one word, it's focused. So many of the choices I've made in this past decade were made with the goal of becoming a CNM in mind. When you've been working towards something for so long, it is easy to lose focus along the way, especially when life happens. But being focused has gotten me this far and will get me to August.

What are you most looking forward to after the completion of the midwifery education program?

Arielle: Rest! Lol. I'm looking forward to temporarily exploring what life looks like without heavy schedules and timelines. I can't wait to travel and take some much-needed time to myself; I'm really looking forward to new possibilities. I'm also looking forward to seeing where my midwifery journey takes me. I want to get into community birthing as my main practice while also working in [a] hospital. I'm interested in seeing what that looks like for me.

Dionne: Wow, there are so many things. I would love to take a trip with my husband and daughter, maybe go to Disney World or the Disneyland Resort in Hawaii. But what I'll probably appreciate the most is watching TV or playing on my phone without feeling guilty because I should be studying or doing homework, lol.

After completing their respective programs, both Arielle and Dionne will be eligible to sit for the Women's Health Nurse Practitioner and Certified Nurse Midwife national certification exams.

Welcoming UCSF's Newest Midwifery Clinical Faculty!

Amber Bell, CNM graduated from the UCSF midwifery program in 2019. She currently enjoys a clinical practice at SFGH and Highland Hospital. Prior to midwifery school, Amber practiced as an IBCLC and perinatal health educator. She is deeply invested in continuing the work of re- diversifying the midwifery workforce. She has two children, both born at home with the assistance of midwives.

What influenced you to apply for a faculty position at UCSF?

It was something I knew I always wanted to do long term. I wanted to be in a faculty position, teaching. And there are multiple reasons for that. One, I feel and know that midwifery faculty needs to be more diverse. It is so important that students need teachers and faculty of color, especially with the focus that UCSF has right now on making sure that midwifery students are more diverse. Also, I remember what it was like as a student going to my clinicals and having a lot of preceptors and teachers that were white and that was really challenging. I feel a strong desire to make sure that in learning midwifery, or that in being a student in the midwifery program, there can be a lot more love and support in the program. That it doesn't have to be as anxiety producing as it was before. I have a strong desire to support students in a way that is cognizant of the fact that students have lives outside of school. And that we are whole beings that bring so much of ourselves to midwifery and to school and to really show up for people in all those pieces. Being in a faculty position also makes you a stronger clinician because you're constantly staying up to date with the newest evidence and you're surrounded by people who are so brilliant and want to share with you, which in turn makes me a better clinician for my community. I was pulled along, and I want to make sure that I'm helping to bring people into these roles too.

What has changed about your midwifery philosophy since practicing as a CNM compared to when you were still a student?

When I went into school I was really focused on birth and really focused on supporting people to have the most beautiful, empowered birth possible. And I still 100% love that and believe that. I do a lot of

"I got really lucky with having a few preceptors that were so committed to me being the strongest midwife I can be. They pushed me so hard to the point where I would come home really drained but also knowing that their intentions for me were to be a strong midwife on the floor once I graduated."



labor sitting and believe that deeply in my soul. I think after going through UCSF and learning from other midwives like Kim Dau, Ana Delgado, Asmara Gebre, Eva Goodfriend-Reaño, and so many other midwives, they've all opened my mind to how much bigger midwifery can be and the framework of reproductive justice, and how midwifery has the power to impact so much more than what is in the birthing room. It can echo into so many big structural things and my mind has opened to the power of midwifery outside of the birth center.

How do you bring that into your teaching?

My goal is to make sure that's woven through everything. Next quarter I'll be teaching [the first year's] first intrapartum class and I will make sure that I'm weaving that through my teachings and always making sure we're looking at the bigger picture. My hope is that it's in all my classes and that we're not super narrow visioned.

What do you think is one of the most valuable aspects for students in a BIPOC midwifery mentorship program?

I think it's so easy to get lost in a big institution like UCSF especially for students of color; for Black, and brown, and all students of color. And getting lost in the sense of 'why am I here? I'm not worthy enough.' It's like imposter syndrome. 'I'm not doing well enough'. All the anxieties that everyone feels but multiplied as students of color. And to have someone remind you of why you are here, of your power, and to help put things in perspective. That's huge. It'll get you through the program.

What advice do you have for BIPOC SNMs just getting started?

Trust the process. Being on the other side of it now, I get it. There are so many points in the program where you feel like 'there's no way'. 'There's no way I'm going to be safe.' 'There's no way this is all going to come together.' It does. And if you feel like it's not, reach out to the people that you trust. Faculty, mentors, or whoever it may be. Make sure you're communicating and either they'll tell you 'You've got this, you're going to be fine' or 'let's get you the resources that you need to make sure you're succeeding.'

What advice do you have for BIPOC SNMs who are graduating?

Take some time to decompress and really absorb all that you just did. Because those are two or for some people three really intense years, or all the years leading up to school. Celebrate that accomplishment. After you've done that and you've passed your boards, once you find your job, find your mentors and keep reaching out to them. I have my mentors and I've been out of school a few years now. I continue reaching out to them when I'm struggling with x or 'this clinical situation happened, can you talk me through this?'. Everyone knows what it's like to be a new grad and it's hard; super hard and people want to support you. So, find your people and continue to reach out to them.

Amber pays tribute to the beloved Rebekah Kaplan, CNM who pushed her to apply for the position because Rebekah knew she would be great at it. The UCSF midwifery program faculty and students are really lucky to have Amber Bell as the newest faculty member!

In the Community

Black Centering @ Zuckerberg San Francisco General Virtual Prenatal Care Group



Maritza Franqui, RN, student nurse midwife and MMB mentee is the creator of *The Midwifery Times*.

If you would like to be a contributor to our quarterly newsletter, email: midwifementoring@ucsf.edu, 'Subject: Newsletter Contributor'.

You can also reach Maritza directly at: maritza.franqui@ucsf.edu.

Black Centering is now enrolling Black-identifying pregnant people with due dates in June and July. Black Centering, a community space celebrating the journeys of Black pregnant people, follows the Centering Healthcare Institutes' CenteringPregnancy group care model with a special focus on the Black experience. Black Centering includes scheduled time for private check-ins and clinical care with nurse-midwife, Asmara Gebre, and group space to share wisdom while navigating pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Centering groups will be held virtually on Thursdays from 9AM -11AM. If you know anyone who might be interested or good fit, please share!

For more information click this [link](#) or scan the QR code below!



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