

**MILK LIKE MINE
2021/2022**

**SEEDINGS
GRANT
REPORT**



MIBFN
Michigan Breastfeeding Network

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INTRODUCTION

WE ARE IMMENSELY GRATEFUL.

Milk Like Mine is a coalition that is dedicated to addressing disparities in their community, educating families, and empowering community in order to improve maternal and infant mortality throughout Battle Creek. They provide direct birthing and breastfeeding support to families, facilitate support groups and childbirth education classes, host monthly coalition meetings for networking, and work on community advocacy. Milk Like Mine focuses on providing skilled lactation support to families of color so that support can be offered by providers that reflect the families they serve.

As trusted experts in their community, Milk Like Mine has continued to shift and grow their offerings based on what they see families desire and seek. In light of the ongoing COVID-19, formula recalls, and lead water crises, and response to community need, they now offer virtual support, a program for young parents, all services in Spanish, and mental health support. They have also opened a Milk Like Mine community center in Battle Creek that is open daily and accessible for families to seek lactation support when they need it. Milk Like Mine is listening and responsive, paving the way for the future of birthing and breastfeeding support.

This capacity to grow would not have been possible without the support of United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region. Through their generosity, Milk Like Mine has been able to operationalize their efforts to center families, grow their team and capacity to serve, and focus on sustainability. Thank you so much.

FAST FACTS

TIMELINE

July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

AWARD AMOUNT

\$60,000

FUNDING PARTNER

United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region

INCREASING CAPACITY TO SERVE

THIS FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HELPED TO SUPPORT:



12 MONTHS
Milk Like Mine
building/rent



12 MONTHS
Milk Like Mine
utilities



12 MONTHS
Milk Like Mine
cable/internet



2 MORE STAFF
added to the Milk Like
Mine team

**THIS FUNDING
OPPORTUNITY HAS
SUPPORTED MILK
LIKE MINE IN BEING
ABLE TO PROVIDE
ACCESS FOR
FAMILIES TO COME
TO THEIR OFFICE TO
LABOR AND GET
LACTATION
SUPPORT FOR 10
HOURS PER DAY.**

MILK DROP OF KNOWLEDGE



“I BELIEVE THAT FINANCES SHOULD NEVER BE A BARRIER FOR GOOD CARE. BY REMOVING SOME OF THOSE BARRIERS, WE ARE NOT ONLY ENHANCING OUR COMMUNITIES' EXPERIENCES, BUT WE ARE IMPROVING THEIR LIVES.”

RICKESHIA WILLIAMS, CLS, CLC, BD, CBE, MILK LIKE MINE CO-FOUNDER

IMPROVING ACCESS TO SKILLED SUPPORT

MILK LIKE MINE PIVOTS BASED ON COMMUNITY NEED.

One of the needs that Milk Like Mine identified in their community was a need for a building - a refuge for folks in Battle Creek to seek skilled birthing and breastfeeding support, feel safe, and gather in community. A place they could call their own. A place to belong. A Community Birthing and Breastfeeding Center.

"THE ENERGY INSIDE THEIR SPACE IS EVERYTHING. IT IS BEAUTIFUL, THOUGHTFUL, INSPIRING, CREATIVE, HOPEFUL, DEEPLY SAFE... IT IS A PLACE TO TRULY BELONG. MUCH LIKE BEING AROUND MILK LIKE MINE, IT IS TRANSFORMATIVE."

SHANNON MCKENNEY SHUBERT, MPH, CLC,
MIBFN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



"MILK LIKE MINE IS RESPONSIVE TO THEIR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS, WHICH SETS THE BAR HIGH FOR WHAT BIRTHING AND BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT CAN AND SHOULD LOOK LIKE. AND, IN ORDER TO DO THAT, THEY NEED ADEQUATE FUNDING. THE HEART THAT THEY PUT INTO THIS WORK IS INSPIRING. THEY'RE CHANGING LIVES BY THE HELPING FAMILIES THEY SERVE TO MEET THEIR GOALS."

KAITLYN BOWEN, MS, RD, CLC, MIBFN COMMUNICATIONS AND DATA MANAGER

BUILDING TRUST IN THE COMMUNITY

MILK LIKE MINE IS DEEPLY COMMITTED TO CENTERING FAMILIES OF COLOR.

Milk Like Mine is deeply committed to centering families of color and building trust in the community. They believe that skilled birth and breastfeeding support should reflect the communities they serve. In addition to the two co-founders, Milk Like Mine has added two new members to the team to expand their service offerings. They've grown the Milk Like Mine team over the past year while also working to ensure they reflect and represent the families they serve.

WITH THIS FINANCIAL INVESTMENT SUPPORTING OPERATIONS, MILK LIKE MINE HAD CAPACITY TO EXPAND THEIR TEAM, INCLUDING:



A POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION COUNSELOR

to facilitate Moods Like Mine, the latest addition to the Milk Like Mine programs that is working to break the stigma on the way postpartum depression is looked at, dealt with, and talked about by creating a safe space for one another to cry, talk, embrace, & learn to deal



A HISPANIC LEAD/FACILITATOR

to lead Leche Como La Mia, providing all of Milk Like Mine's services in Spanish via direct service and/or through translation skills



THE WORK CONTINUES

MILK LIKE MINE'S WORK CONTINUES.

Milk Like Mine has demonstrated their commitment to increasing their capacity to serve, improving access to skilled lactation support, and building trust in the community. The work doesn't stop there. Milk Like Mine's team is looking forward to continuing to strengthen their services, growing their team, and sustaining the work to ensure that people-centered, equity-focused birthing and breastfeeding support is available and accessible to families in Battle Creek and beyond.

NEXT STEPS:

STRENGTHENING SERVICES

- Continue to build Leche Como La Mia, Milk Like Mine's Spanish branch, to offer all of Milk Like Mine's services in Spanish
- Grow program offerings for fathers through the Fathers Speak program and a Spilled Milk Facebook Live focused on fatherhood
- Expand mental health support through Moods Like Mine to provide more teaching about perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, including postpartum depression

GROWING THE TEAM

- Train 1-2 people as skilled lactation supporters so they are well-equipped to serve and meet the needs of Milk Like Mine families

SUSTAINING THE WORK

- Working to diversify fundraising efforts to ensure sustainability



"MILK LIKE MINE IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF BREASTFEEDING EDUCATION AND SUPPORT IN BATTLE CREEK. MILK LIKE MINE INFUSES LIFE INTO THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY, AND THIS TYPE OF SUPPORT DESERVES ROBUST FUNDING - THE WORK THEY DO IS INDISPENSABLE FOR FAMILIES, AND THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY. IN MICHIGAN, WE KEEP HEARING RALLYING CRIES AROUND THE MATERNAL AND INFANT MORTALITY RATES OF OUR FAMILIES. UNLIKE LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SYSTEMS, MILK LIKE MINE FAMILIES HAVE ZERO INFANT AND MATERNAL DEATHS DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF LIFE. THIS IS THE STATISTIC WE SHOULD BE STRIVING FOR AND THE CHALLENGE IS TO FUND THE PROGRAMS THAT ARE GETTING AT THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM."

VICKI WOOD, CLC, CLS, MIBFN FUND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
