

MILK LIKE MINE

# COMMUNITY HEALTH GRANT REPORT

2022-2023



**MIBFN**  
Michigan Breastfeeding Network



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# FAST FACTS

## TIMELINE

February 1, 2022 to January 31, 2023

## AWARD AMOUNT

\$40,000

## FUNDING PARTNER

Binda Foundation



# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

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.

Milk Like Mine is a trusted organization within the Battle Creek area and also work on community advocacy to address the larger more systemic issues of health disparities, specifically breastfeeding rates and infant mortality, through a justice lens in birth and breastfeeding with hospitals, employers, and community members. Their responsiveness to the community's needs is consistently grounded in creativity while developing the services offered and provided to the community. The evidence is clear that community-based support is the most effective. As trusted experts in their community, Milk Like Mine has been doing this work for 10 years and their expertise in this work is evident in all that they do.

We are beyond grateful to the Binda Foundation for their continued support and belief in the vision that Black, Indigenous and families of Color in Battle Creek deserve equitable, skilled and timely access to quality birth and breastfeeding support that reflects their ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

"I love working at MLM, it a relaxed setting, it's inviting to be there and for newcomers as well. Everyone is treated with respect and dignity. **Being able to educate, assist, and uplift fathers in our community is something I never thought I'd do but I know that it so important so I'm glad I'm able to.**

Gathering education on breastfeeding and mental health has not only enhanced my knowledge, but improved the way I relate to fathers as they learn why it is so necessary to be informed as they deal with their changing families."



-Mark Williams, Milk Like Mine Team



**"IT HAS BEEN BOTH AN HONOR AND A PLEASURE TO SERVE IN OUR COMMUNITY IN THE CAPACITY THAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT TO ME TO MAKE SURE THAT WE PROVIDE SERVICES TO EVERYONE THAT NEEDS IT AND AS MANY THAT WANT IT; AND DOING SO WITHOUT BARRIERS IS JUST AS IMPORTANT. IT CREATES A SENSE OF SECURITY THAT I NEVER THOUGHT THAT I'D EVER HAVE IN A CAREER TO KNOW THAT BEING PAID FOR THE WORK I DO WILL NOT ONLY BE FAIR, BUT ALSO EQUITABLE."**

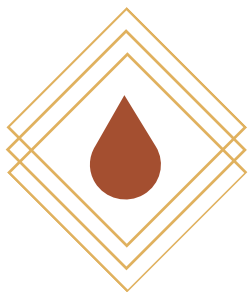
RICKESHIA WILLIAMS, CLS, CLC, BD, CBE,  
MILK LIKE MINE CO-FOUNDER



**SUCCESSSES**

# SUCCESSSES

Milk Like Mine is deeply committed to restoring power to families of color. They believe that reflecting the communities they serve is essential to providing skilled birth and breastfeeding support. This funding helped Milk Like Mine to provide direct birthing and breastfeeding services to Battle Creek families.



## CONDUCTED 20 INDIVIDUAL BREASTFEEDING CONSULTS

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Milk Like Mine staff provided lactation support to 20 families along with care plans, continued follow-up care and referrals.



## HOSTED MONTHLY HOSPITAL BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT CLASSES

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Due to COVID-19 restrictions and policies within the hospital, Bronson Battle Creek referred families to Milk Like Mine's Community Birthing & Breastfeeding Services Center for free and accessible breastfeeding support classes and groups outside of the hospital.



## HELD 52 WEEKLY VIRTUAL BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUPS

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Milk Like Mine facilitated "Holding Space: Breastfeeding and Mental Health Support During A Pandemic" alongside Southeast Michigan IBCLCs of Color (SEMI). In order to increase access to mental health support during the pandemic, families gathered weekly in an interactive, virtual space with a facilitator (Rickeshia from Milk Like Mine), IBCLC, and therapist.









## TEACH MONTHLY HIGH SCHOOL BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT CLASSES

Pregnant teens came to Milk Like Mine's Community Birthing & Breastfeeding Services Center for in-person lactation classes and support.



## FUN FACT:

One of the teens from the high school actually got involved in supporting with Milk Like Mine's social media and other marketing strategies as a way to support the movement and give back thanks to the care she received.



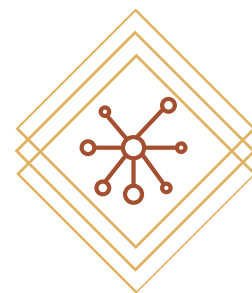
## SECURED MENTORSHIP TO COMPLETE PATHWAY 3 TOWARDS IBCLC CREDENTIAL AND COMPLETED 100 HOURS AS A MENTEE

This project supported Rickeshia with clinical hours needed for training and one-on-one clinical care with clients as part of her process toward becoming the first Black IBCLC in Battle Creek.



## PROVIDED MONTHLY SISTAH 2 SISTAH SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

Milk Like Mine held 12 Sistah 2 Sistah support groups in-person and online via Zoom during this project.



## ENGAGED 5 COMMUNITY PARTNERS FOR COLLABORATION

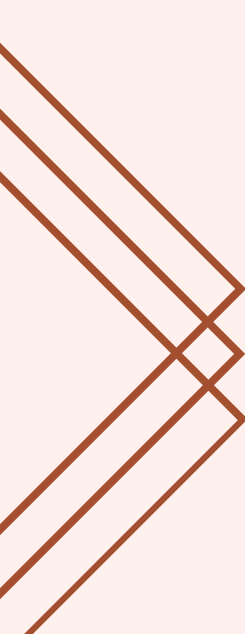
Milk Like Mine engaged with 5 community partners (Bronson Battle Creek, Grace Health, Calhoun County WIC, VA, doulas, midwives, OBs in private practice) to provide referrals and ensure continuity of care across systems.





**"I LOVE WORKING AT MLM BECAUSE I GET TO SEE FIRST HAND HOW REWARDING IT IS TO BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME. MOMS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DROP IN FOR LACTATION ASSISTANCE, ASSESSMENT OF BREAST ISSUES AND EVEN TO GET SUPPORT WHEN GOING THROUGH POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION. ONE MOM WHO WAS REFERRED BY THE IBCLC AT THE HOSPITAL SHOWED UP AT MLM ONE DAY WITH ALL 3 ISSUES. SHE CONTINUED TO COME TO MLM OFF AND ON FOR ABOUT A MONTH, SOMETIMES JUST TO TALK AND HAVE SOME 'ME TIME; WHILE WE TOOK TURNS HOLDING THE BABY. EVENTUALLY, SHE SENT US A MESSAGE THANKING US ALONG WITH A PICTURE SHOWING HOW SHE HAD SET HER LIVING ROOM UP TO RESEMBLE THE KIDS ZONE AT MLM. SHE SAID THAT HER AND HER BABY WERE IN A MUCH HAPPIER SPACE."**

CONSUELA HUBBARD,  
MILK LIKE MINE TEAM



"In the beginning of my pregnancy I felt so rushed, I didn't feel heard or seen. I made a post on social media and immediately people tagged Rickeshia. I felt drawn to her even though I had never met her. **Our first conversation I felt so at peace. When I went to meet her, I knew I was in good hands. She attended every appointment, she made sure my midwife heard me!** When it came time to deliver my son, she was out of town and I was terrified. She RACED to Battle Creek to be by my side & she made my first pregnancy an experience that I will forever be grateful for! She is that calmness that is needed in a tragic time! I am so blessed to have had a doula that was so caring every step of the way!! If I ever decide to have another child, please believe she will be my first call! I love her so much, she became family!"

-Rahnie R., Milk Like Mine Client



### CONVENED MONTHLY MILK LIKE MINE COALITION MEETINGS

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Milk Like Mine held monthly coalition meetings where families gathered to share their lived experiences and to discuss systemic challenges that Black and Brown families in Battle Creek encounter.



### SERVE AS A DOULA ALONGSIDE 3 FAMILIES OF COLOR

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Milk Like Mine doulas provided full spectrum support for 3 families inclusive of childbirth education, breastfeeding education, building birth preference lists, visits at the home and at the Community Birthing & Breastfeeding Services Center, transportation to and from doctor appointments, postpartum care, mental health supports, referrals and community resources.







**"I RECEIVED DOULA SERVICES FROM MILK LIKE MINE AND MY DOULA WAS RICKESHIA. I REALLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT A DOULA WAS BUT I KNEW RICKESHIA WAS A GREAT AND CARING PERSON SO I TRIED IT OUT AND IT WAS GREAT BECAUSE I WAS REALLY SCARED AND NERVOUS ABOUT HAVING MY TWIN BOYS. SHE REALLY COMFORTED ME AT MY DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENTS.**

**ANYTIME I CALLED AND NEEDED HER OR HAD QUESTIONS SHE MADE SURE SHE WAS THERE FOR ME EVERY STEP OF THE WAY, ESPECIALLY ON THE BIG DAY WHEN IT WAS TIME. I WAS SO SCARED TO HAVE MY BABY BOYS, I HAD SO MANY QUESTIONS, WHAT IF'S OR JUST WONDERING IF SOMETHING WOULDN'T GO RIGHT BUT I'M GLAD I HAD RICKESHIA THERE AS MY DOULA BECAUSE SHE REALLY MADE IT SO EASY FOR ME."**

**KIANA R., MILK LIKE MINE CLIENT**



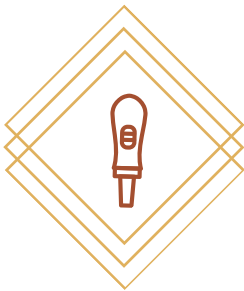
**NEXT STEPS**



# THE WORK CONTINUES

By eliminating access barriers, Milk Like Mine seeks to ensure Black and families of color who are most marginalized in the community are not left behind, and instead, have full circle support, love, and resources that are truly representative and accessible to every family.

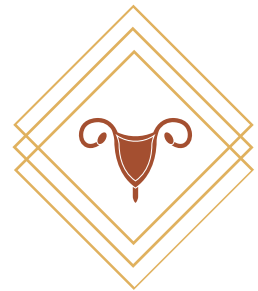
Through additional services, Milk Like Mine intends to meet the needs of families in the Battle Creek community, including:



**PREGNANCY TESTING**



**BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS**



**EARLY PLANNING FOR  
MIDWIFERY CARE**

"I wish I could help more at MLM. **Rickeshia is very passionate about what she does** and puts her heart and soul into helping women in their motherhood journey. I feel blessed to have her as a friend and I love supporting her, her staff, and business any way I can"

-Rosibel Kersjes, Milk Like Mine Team









**"RICKESHIA AND MILK LIKE MINE GO HARD FOR EVERY CLIENT THAT THEY ARE AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO CARE FOR. WHENEVER WE MEET, SHE CANNOT WAIT TO SHARE A STORY ABOUT A BIRTH OR LACTATING CLIENT THAT HAS A BEAUTIFUL HEALING EXPERIENCE BASED UPON THEIR SERVICES RECEIVED BY MLM. LISTENING TO THESE STORIES AND KNOWING THAT WE ARE TRULY MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES AND LEGACIES OF THIS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS IS TRULY HUMBLING. IT'S A TRUE HONOR TO SERVE ALONGSIDE THE ENTIRE TEAM AT MILK LIKE MINE."**

JENNIFER DAY, IBCLC, MIBFN  
COMMUNITY BUILDING MANAGER