

2021-2022



MILK LIKE MINE
OPERATIONS SUPPORT

- REPORT -



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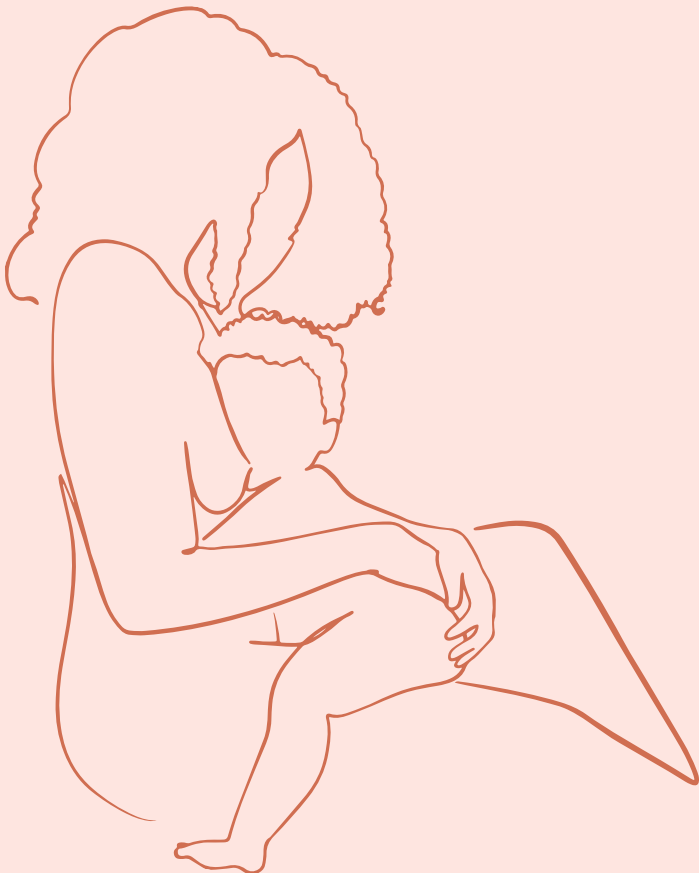
June 1, 2021 to November 30, 2022

AWARD AMOUNT

\$150,000

FUNDING PARTNER

W.K. Kellogg Foundation



“IN MY OWNERSHIP OF MILK LIKE MINE, IT HAS BECOME A FAMILY BUSINESS. I LOVE KNOWING THAT THE GENERATION BEFORE ME (MY MOTHER), MY GENERATION (THROUGH MYSELF AND MY HUSBAND), AND THE NEXT GENERATION (MY SON AND DAUGHTER) WILL ALL BE CONTRIBUTING TO THE HEALTH AND WEALTH OF FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY. IT HAS BEEN SUCH A SHINING BLESSING FOR MY WHOLE FAMILY TO BE ABLE TO OFFER SERVICES FREE OF CHARGE TO OUR COMMUNITY. WE FEEL LIKE WE ARE GIVING BACK IN A WAY THAT MAKES OUR HEARTS FULL AND OUR COMMUNITY BETTER!”

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



INTRODUCTION

We are so incredibly thankful.

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 was formed based on the need for skilled lactation support and birth and postpartum doula support that reflects and represents the Black families who are pushed to the margins of our current systems. 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 incredibly grateful for the trust from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and this operational funding support. Their continued partnership and belief in birth and breastfeeding justice is seen and felt in not just the funds they contribute, but also in their actions. Thank you so much.

“Anna was a caring, supportive, and thoughtful person while being my doula. She made things comfortable and personal from day one until even after delivery. She worked on building a relationship with me and my husband and answered all of our questions to help make this experience enjoyable...She felt more like a sister than a doula. She was there to support us whenever needed.”

-Angela B., Milk Like Mine Client







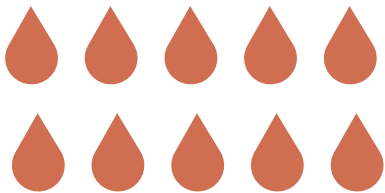
SUCCESSES

SUCCESSSES

Birthing and Breastfeeding Direct Services

As a community-based organization, Milk Like Mine is deeply committed to returning the power to families of color. In order to provide skilled birth and breastfeeding support, they believe that it is essential to reflect the communities they serve. With this funding, Milk Like Mine provided birthing and breastfeeding direct services to families in Calhoun County.

10 Breastfeeding Support Consults



As Milk Like Mine builds trust within the community and increases its capacity to serve, it has demonstrated its commitment to providing skilled lactation support free of charge to families. Milk Like Mine provided skilled lactation support to 10 families free of charge to ensure that financial barriers did not inhibit families from getting the lactation support that they needed. Families received follow-up support which supported them in reaching their individual goals.

2 Families Provided With Doula Support



Milk Like Mine served two families with full spectrum doula support including 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.

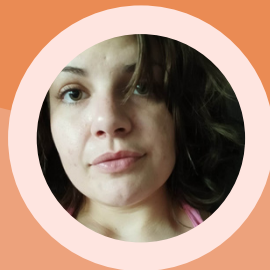
Weekly "Holding Space" Support Groups



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.

“A COUPLE MONTHS AGO, I STARTED FEELING THE SIGNS OF MASTITIS, BUT IT HAD BEEN 3 YEARS SINCE I STOPPED BREASTFEEDING... I CONTACTED RICKESHIA AT MILK LIKE MINE, WHO WAS THE LACTATION COUNSELOR THAT MADE MY BREASTFEEDING JOURNEY POSSIBLE TO BEGIN WITH. SHE GOT ME IN IMMEDIATELY, RULED OUT PREGNANCY, AND AFTER MY EXAM, HELPED ME COMMUNICATE WITH MY OB/GYN TEAM WHAT WAS GOING ON WITH MY BREASTS. PRIOR TO THIS, I HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET ANYONE TO TAKE MY EXTENDED LACTATION SERIOUSLY. THANKS TO MILK LIKE MINE AND THE SERVICES THEY PROVIDE, EVEN THOSE WITH COMPLEX LACTATION AND BIRTH STORIES CAN GET THE HELP THEY NEED WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING ABLE TO AFFORD CARE.”

WISDOM R., MILK LIKE MINE CLIENT



Sustainability

With this operations funding support, Milk Like Mine continued to develop their services, grow their team, ensure families have access to people-centered, equity-focused birthing and breastfeeding support, and much more.

Held Weekly Staff Meetings



The Milk Like Mine staff met consistently at the Community Birthing & Breastfeeding Services Center for networking, updates, accountability, relationship building and to debrief client visits to receive support and advice.

Secured an IBCLC mentor



Rickeshia identified and secured an IBCLC mentor and began working towards her IBCLC credential. She met the requirements for lactation-specific training via continuing education opportunities and served in the community for diverse experiences in working alongside families with diverse complex lactation challenges.

Opened Community Center



Milk Like Mine secured a lease and established an in-person space on the bus line in Battle Creek to provide open access to Milk Like Mine services from 11am-8pm Monday to Friday.

COMMUNITY BIRTHING & BREASTFEEDING SERVICES CENTER

Due at large to this project, Milk Like Mine was able to secure a new location for the Community Birthing & Breastfeeding Services Center which provided the necessary space for Milk Like Mine's growing team and service models.

Families are able to labor in the space, build community with other pregnant people, co-work and have appointments all in the safe space that Milk Like Mine has created for the community. Additionally, the space is open to staff and community members with or without their children to be in community with one another.

This funding opportunity supported, lease payments, utilities, internet, and additional fees.



“It's been amazing to watch MLM grow and provide amazing support and resources for our community. Supporting their work and collaborating is exciting and invigorating. Rickeshia has made such a welcoming environment for all the staff, volunteers and community members that walk through the doors.”

-Karen G., Community Partner

Hired Two Staff



The founders of Milk Like Mine were able to transition to full-time staff to oversee the programs by providing operational support, direct service support (doula, lactation, education), and by building the sustainability of the organization.

Trained Two Team Members



Milk Like Mine trained two team members to provide operations support - one to lead on social marketing strategy and implementation and another to lead on scheduling clients for lactation consultations, doula appointments and childbirth and breastfeeding classes.

Expanded Services



Milk Like Mine increased their team of birth and postpartum doulas along with additional lactation supporters to assist with breastfeeding services. This has supported the vision for the Community Birthing & Breastfeeding Services Center and grown the number of families who seek to work with Milk Like Mine.

Engaged Breastfeeding Supporters



Milk Like Mine launched the "Spilled Milk" series on Facebook during this funding period. The series brought together families and lactation professionals across Michigan during Black Breastfeeding Week for an episode focused on the weaning process called "The 6th Trimester." This episode had over 200 breastfeeding supporters view and engage with this conversation.



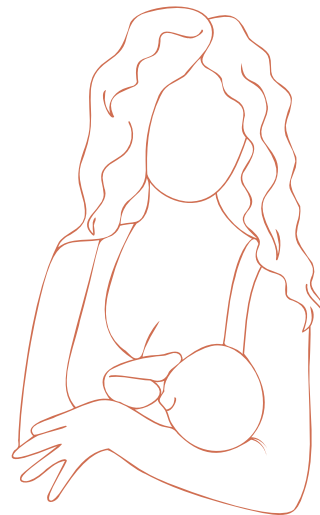
NEXT STEPS

THE WORK CONTINUES

We are continuing to grow based on community need.

Looking ahead, Milk Like Mine seeks to eliminate access barriers while ensuring that Black and families of color who are most marginalized in the community are not falling through gaps of care, and rather, have full circle support, love, and resources that are truly representative and accessible.

Milk Like Mine plans to further meet the needs of families in the Battle Creek community by layering in additional services offered to families, including:



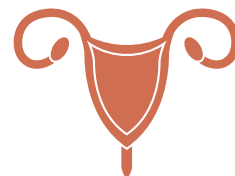
Pregnancy Testing



Blood Pressure Checks



Early Planning for Midwifery Care



"I love being part of Milk Like Mine. I love learning all of the things that they bring to the table, plus more. Milk Like Mine is something that we have been missing for a while in the community. Everyone is so welcoming, nice, and supportive."

-Sierra S., Milk Like Mine Client



“MILK LIKE MINE HAS CONTINUED TO SHOW THEMSELVES AS TRUE LEADERS IN THE WORK OF BIRTH AND BREASTFEEDING JUSTICE AS A MOVEMENT. THE WORK THEY DO TODAY IS ACTUALLY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF GENERATIONS TO COME. THEY ARE TRULY DOING LEGACY WORK EVERY SINGLE DAY. THEIR VISION, ADAPTABILITY, CAPACITY AND HEART IS A PURE JOY. IT’S BEEN AN HONOR TO SERVE ALONGSIDE THEM ON A DAILY BASIS THROUGHOUT THIS PROJECT. OUR TEAMS ARE TRULY FAMILY!”

**JENNIFER DAY, IBCLC, MIBFN
COMMUNITY BUILDING MANAGER**

