

POURING INTO LOCAL BREASTFEEDING SUPPORTERS AND COMMUNITIES

AUGUST BREASTFEEDING MONTH EVENTS ACROSS MICHIGAN



Across Michigan:

MIBFN Panel Discussion

Indigenous Milk Medicine Week Proclamation

August Breastfeeding Month in Michigan Proclamation

"I LOVE IT HERE. I LOVE HEARING ALL THE UPDATES."

Natosha Irwin, CLC, Local Breastfeeding Supporter

CONGRATULATIONS, DIONNE MOORE-SMITH, MPH, RD, IBCLC!



Dionne Moore-Smith, MPH, RD, IBCLC now serves as the Michigan WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator. **Congratulations, Dionne!**

THIS MONTH'S INSPIRATION: DREAM BIG + BREAK BARRIERS


In just a few months of operating at the Huron Valley Women's Program, Mama's Mobile Milk has already made a powerful impact. **Two parents are actively participating in their milk expression and transport program, with five more expressing interest.** Mama's Mobile Milk is providing life-giving support and creating new possibilities for families.

Learn more and donate to sustain their work at semiibclcofcolor.org.



INDIGENOUS MILK MEDICINE WEEK PROCLAMATION

Sacred Waters submitted an Indigenous Milk Medicine Week proclamation to Governor Whitmer's office for publication. It was not formally approved or proclaimed by the State of Michigan. Now, therefore, **MIBFN and Local Breastfeeding Supporters are honored to proclaim in solidarity here:**



WHEREAS, Michigan honors the 12 federally recognized tribes, and many more tribally recognized tribes, native to this land and acknowledges the people, land, traditions, and customs stolen by colonial systems through government practices of forced separation and forced assimilation; and,

WHEREAS, Michigan acknowledges the grief of Indigenous peoples and joins in mourning the loss of the Indigenous children whose remains were and are being discovered on stolen land and denied their birthright of the perfect first food; and,

WHEREAS, Indigenous breastfeeding is a sovereign right for Indigenous peoples no matter where they reside; and,

WHEREAS, Michigan celebrates doodooshaaboo (milk) and breastfeeding, with Indigenous peoples as a gift from the Creator directly given to women so they may nourish the next seven generations; and,

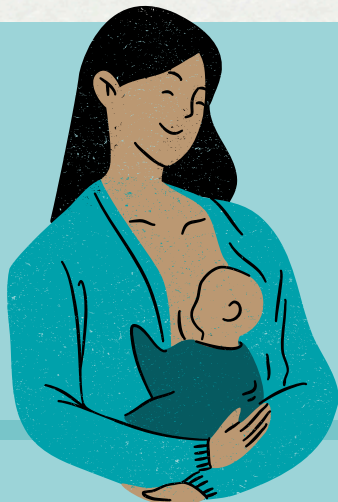

WHEREAS, Michigan acknowledges that doodooshaaboo (milk) and breastfeeding, is also considered a medicine, and is acknowledged by Indigenous peoples as the first medicine children receive to live healthy and strong lives; and,


WHEREAS, during this week we are dedicated to broadening public understanding of the critical impact breastfeeding has on improving the health of infants and mothers within the indigenous community; and,

WHEREAS, Michigan is committed to reducing infant mortality and increasing the health outcomes of mothers and babies during National Breastfeeding Month - and Indigenous maternal mortality is 2 to 3 times the rate of white maternal mortality and Indigenous infant mortality is 3 times greater than white infant mortality with a 73% increased mortality risk if the baby is not breastfed; and,

WHEREAS, to improve health outcomes by providing equitable and culturally appropriate and respectable care for Indigenous families in the prenatal period through postpartum, as well as in lactation support as Indigenous birthing persons are 2 1/2 times less likely to receive prenatal care with 50% receiving zero before birth; and,

WHEREAS, Michigan is committed to creating a safe environment for indigenous mothers and babies in clinical practices due to Indigenous mothers coerced into sterilization and/or contraception immediately after birth which can be detrimental to breastfeeding; and, (continued on next page)





WHEREAS, Michigan is committed to creating a safe environment for indigenous mothers and babies in clinical practices due to Indigenous mothers coerced into sterilization and/or contraception immediately after birth which can be detrimental to breastfeeding; and,

WHEREAS, Indigenous breastfeeding is vital to counter the inequity and injustice experienced by Indigenous families and their ability to practice their traditions in accordance with their ancestral and tribal communities; and,

WHEREAS, Michigan celebrates the diversity and encourages visibility of Indigenous Breastfeeding experiences; and,

WHEREAS, inherited trauma has had a significant effect on bonding and traditional parenting in Indigenous households: an Indigenous baby who is not breastfed is held 50% less in their lifetime while breastfeeding promotes bonding between infant and mother; and,

WHEREAS, Indigenous birth workers and breastfeeding supporters provide families with support and education to reclaim their right to breastfeed their children freely for however long they desire; and,

WHEREAS, Michigan acknowledges the importance of Tribal-led data collection to monitor and improve Indigenous maternal and infant health outcomes, ensuring oversight and benefit remain within the community; and,

WHEREAS, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Indigenous birthing parents have experienced increased perinatal mood disorders and isolation; traditional healing approaches such as ceremonies, community gatherings, and connection to land play a critical role in maternal mental wellness; and,

WHEREAS, connecting environmental health to breastfeeding, acknowledging that clean water, air, and access to traditional foods are essential to the health of nursing parents and babies and advocating support for Tribal-led climate resilience initiatives; and,

WHEREAS, decolonizing parenting and feeding traditions promotes food sovereignty, body sovereignty, and healing of generations; and,

WHEREAS, diabetes is the 4th leading cause of death amongst Indigenous people with 1/3 of the population being affected by diabetes in their lifetime and breastfeeding is a prevention against diabetes; and,

WHEREAS, Indigenous Breastfeeding is an act of defiance, resistance, and beauty we should support and protect at every level of society; and,

WHEREAS, reactivating Indigenous birthrights will undoubtedly build a strong foundation for Michigan and Tribal Nations to build healthier communities for the next seven generations; and,

WHEREAS, in the face of colonization and binary gender systems that erased traditional roles, 2-Spirit and gender-diverse relatives have always existed as sacred caregivers, life-givers, and protectors; Michigan reaffirms their right to lactate, parent, and be celebrated in all expressions of their identity; and, (continued on next page)





WHEREAS, Being on Turtle Island, and therein Indigenous peoples lived, traveled, and traded before arbitrary borders were imposed, our foods and medicines were exchanged and used to help each other, we continue this support today to all of our relatives including those displaced from their homelands by need, fear, or violence. and,

WHEREAS, Indigenous communities in Michigan and globally continue to heal from historical and ongoing patterns of violence, displacement, and cultural erasure; and in 2025, we uplift the shared struggle of all peoples fighting for bodily autonomy, ancestral belonging, and the right to raise children in peace;

NOW, THEREFORE, WE join together with Sacred Waters Birthworker Collective, Lindsey McGahey ILC IFSD BE, Sage Kaake Hegdal ILC IFSD, Dr. Angie Sanchez ILC IFSD, Kelsey Wabanimkee ILC IFSD, Postartum Healing Lodge, Nourishing Nations, Nookomis Doula, Joann LeBlanc, Flower Moon Families, Elizabeth Montez Giras IBCLC, Miigwech INC., Sage and Rebozos, Samantha Gann IFSD ILC, Pamela Valdez IFSD, Kelli m. Jackson IFSD, Kaela Wabanimkee - Harris, Dbik Anakwad Kwe, Nizhóni Sol Birthwork, Indigenous Medicinal Birth Lodge, Jailyn Shelifoe IFSD IBC, Wrapped in Love Doula and Lactation Support, Mama's Mobile Milk, LactPower, Family Whey Contemporary, Lactation Lighthouse and Michigan Breastfeeding Network, to hereby proclaim August 5-11, 2025 as Indigenous Milk Medicine Week across Michigan.



***“WHEN WE GET TOGETHER
IN COLLECTIVES, THE
IMPACT IS INCREDIBLE.”***

Ájené Robinson-Figueroa, MA, Local Breastfeeding Supporter