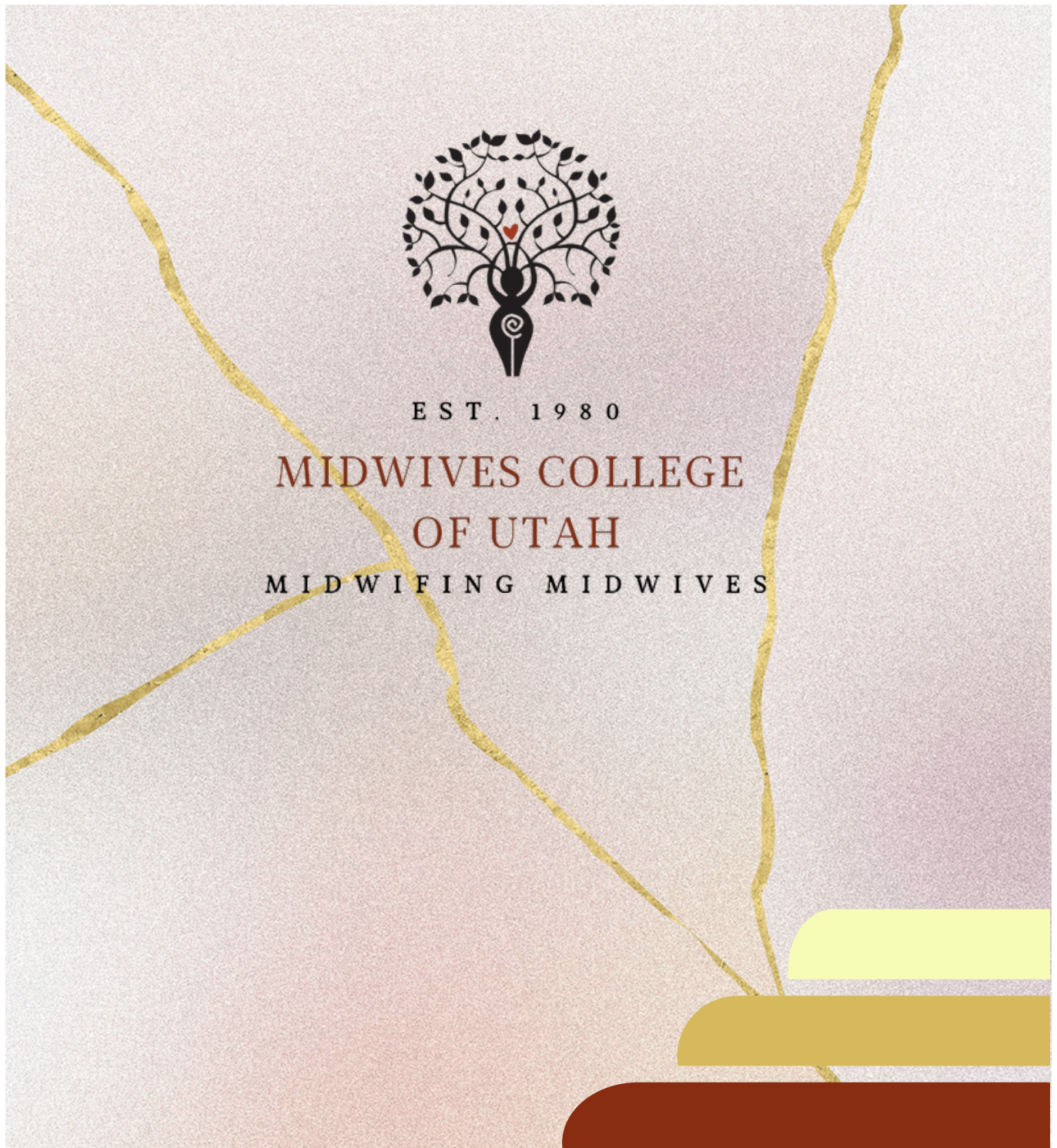


MCU IN REVIEW: A LOOK BACK AT 2021

Official Newsletter for the Midwives College of Utah Community



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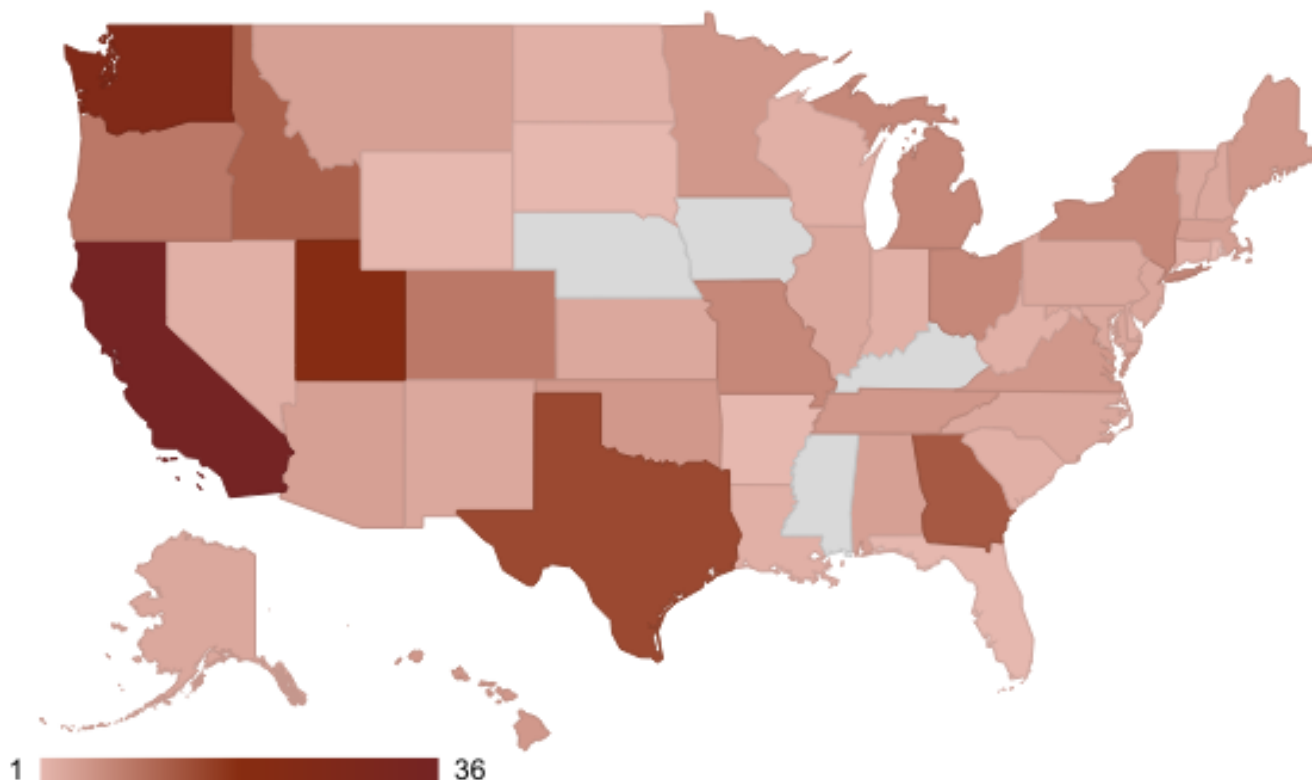


It was the best of times; it was the worst of times...

**2021 marked another very long year in
a global pandemic brimming with
depressing headlines.**

**While there was a lot to bring us down,
midwives were saving lives and lifting
families up. This is a non-exhaustive
look back at some of the silver linings
and instances worth celebrating.
Before we get into the highlights, let's
take a look at who and where we are.**

**Special thanks to Jean Hiefner for her hard
work on this newsletter and a thank you to
those who submitted content and shared
their stories with us.**



A Map of MCU

of admitted students in 2021

One hundred seventy-one

of graduated students in 2021

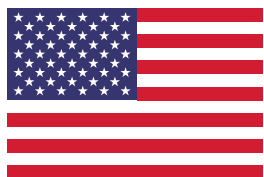
Thirty

States with highest density of MCU students

Washington
California, Utah

of countries populated by MCU students in 2021

Six

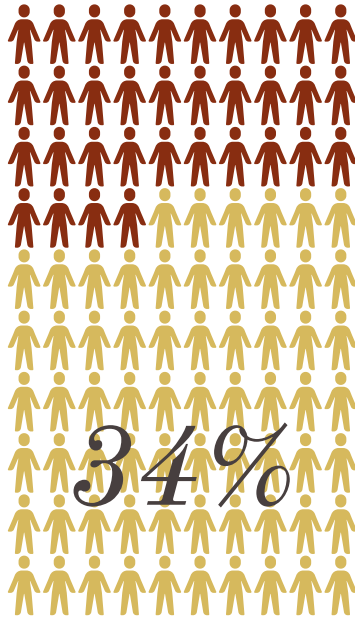


Ages of MCU Students

Under 19



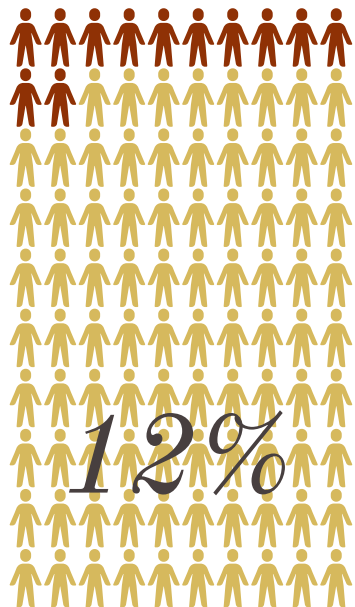
20-29



30-39



40-49



50+



MCU's currently enrolled students span continents and generations. Here is a breakdown of MCU students by age.

MCU's Commitment:

Competent and culturally sensitive midwives improve maternal health outcomes and ultimately improve access to healthcare. As such, Midwives College of Utah (MCU) is committed to the vision that every family deserves a midwife. The MCU curriculum is firmly grounded in the unique and profound power of the Midwives Model of Care™ as a primary pathway for improving outcomes and eliminating inequities for pregnant

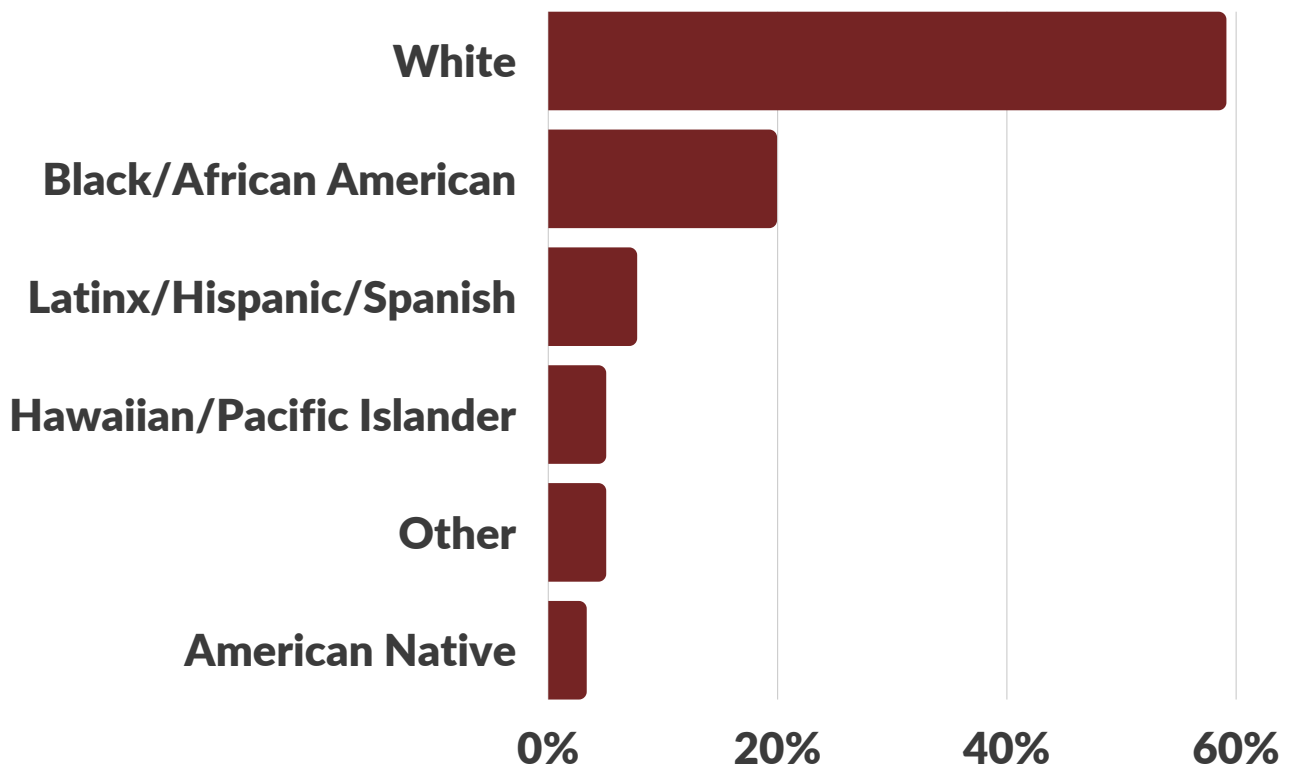
persons and their babies during the childbearing year. In addition to cultivating midwives of technical expertise, MCU's curriculum focuses on cultivating culturally competent midwives with the ability to think outwardly and to be agents of change in their communities. Our graduates are community leaders. They are saving lives, providing options, fighting for change and training future midwives to do the same.



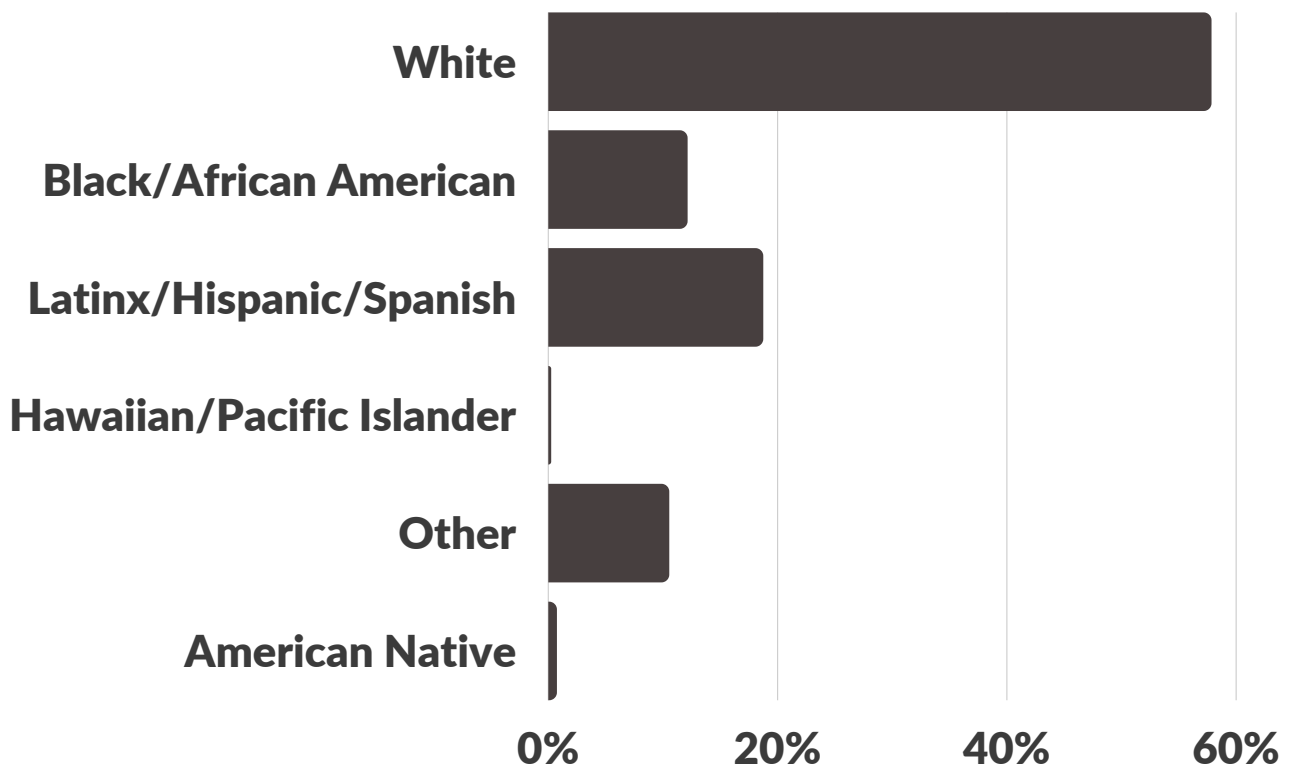
“After a horrible first birth experience at the hospital it was clear that the facility and staff were racist and treated Native Americans poorly. With my second baby I looked into different options and learned about midwifery, I fell in love with the overall care I received, and I want everyone to have the opportunity to experience it. As a midwife I want to help my community eliminate some barriers and to limit the discrimination that they would have to face at the only local hospital in our area.”

Hope Mayotte, MCU Student

Racial Makeup of New Students in 2021



Racial Makeup of the USA in 2020





MIDWIVES COLLEGE OF UTAH

cordially invites you to the



Virtual Graduation Gala

OCT 12, 2021

6:30 PM

benefiting

The Briana Blackwelder Equal
Access Scholarship Fund

Midwives of Excellence



ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN MIDWIFERY

Alakhi McLain
Angelica Tapia Ko
Jeanine M Gleason
Kelsey Dunlap

Michele Nizza
Mercedes Snyder
Teryl Stay

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MIDWIFERY

Andrea Keating
Amanda Latham
Atoosa Benji
Blythe Parker
Chalisse Lowry
Christina Binder
Christina Evans
Crystal Dutra
Deanna Norris
Elizabeth Mendoza
Emme Pack
Halima Afi

Holly Umana
Jessica Collins
Joanna Davis
Katherine Walker
Katlyn Carter
Lori Hedlund
Rachel Twelmeyer
Sarah Hinton
Skaidre Brown
Taylor Stice
Tricia Carlisle

Excellence Awards

Staff Member of Excellence Awardee



Midwife of Excellence Awardee



Students of Excellence Awardees





Aisha Al Hajjar



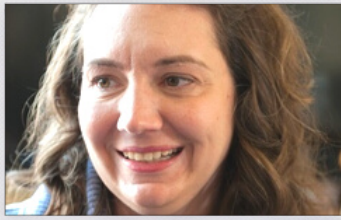
Sharon Bernecki DeJoy



Sandra Blankenship



Sarah Butterfly



Sarah Carter



Ruth Ann Colby Martin



Susi Delaney



Kristin Effland



Lynette Elizalde-Robinson



Cheryl Furer



Gina Gerboth



Nikia Grayson



Ashley Jones



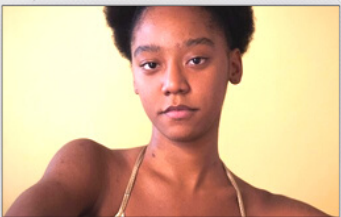
Erin Kaspar-Frett



Arden Kindred



Masha Mesyef



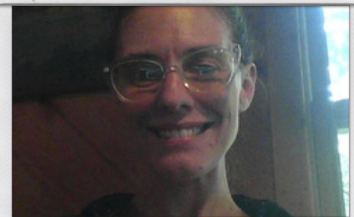
Carmen Mojica



Sonia Ochoa



Jodie Palmer



Audra Post



Aubrey Ridd



Mimi Seriki



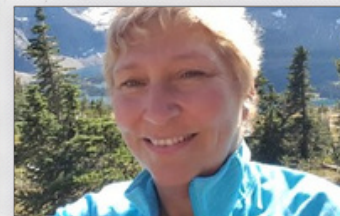
Delphine Silvermoon



Tanya Smith Johnson



Melissa Smith Tourville



Jana Studelska



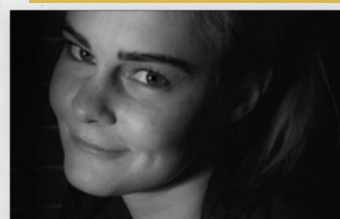
Tamara Taitt



Cassandra Aho



Jennifer Bertagnole



Kaylee Ridd



Marivette Torres



Faculty of Excellence Awardees



GROWING LIST OF MCU GRADS

JULY 1, 2021 ONWARD

ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN MIDWIFERY

Missi Burgess
Averee Chifamba
Felicia McMullen
Rachel Snow

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MIDWIFERY

Amber Adams
Janet Akremi
Bethel Belisle
Charlette Bright
Emily Coates
Olga Gadomskiy
Holly Graff
Melanie Hansen
Angela Hotz
Anne Lara Kuntz
Desiree Leal
Aisling Lynch
Christina May
Kari Riley
Cristy Solomon
Ashleigh Taylor

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MIDWIFERY

Sarah Butterfly



Olga Gadomskiy, BSM - September 2021

"58 classes, 136 credits, 172 weeks, 36 months, over 100 births, 2,200 clinical hours, countless all nighters... 1 degree!"
- Olga Gadomskiy



Halima Afi, BSM - January 2021

In the Beginning

I started my first day at MCU the same day that my youngest kiddo started preschool! We celebrated our first day of school together.

Jessica Bouck



I wanted to thank my family for all of their unwavering support over the last 10 years. They have kept me going and never once stopped believing in me. I also wanted to thank Jesus who has been my rock and corner stone giving me hope and leading me in my forever calling every step of the way. To Him be the glory and honor for my achievements as well as the many blessings that will come from my practice.

I also would love to give a huge thanks to all of the staff at MCU. They helped me realize the importance of pressing on and never giving up even when it seemed a lost cause. Thanks for not giving up on me or leaving me alone! After 10 years I cannot believe that I get to call myself a midwife! What a huge honor.... I will never carry this title lightly.

Averee Chifamba

Associates in Midwifery Graduate

The End



Community Spotlight:

Tanya Smith Johnson

Written by Kristen Denney MCU Marketing Intern

In the past two years the US has been confronted with a long overdue reckoning with the racism that plagues our country. These racist systems infiltrate all parts of life, making it difficult and nearly impossible for some to reach success and beyond that, thrive. This begins at birth for Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC). Black babies are two times as likely to die during birth as their white counterparts. Black mothers do not receive the same level of care that white mothers receive, especially in hospital settings. Globally, the U.S. is failing our families as the infant mortality rate remains alarmingly high while other western countries have successfully created systems that reduce infant and maternal death rates.

Last year, representative Lauren Underwood sponsored H.R.6142 - the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2020 to help reduce the infant mortality rate among Black Americans. This bill would require the federal government to collect information about Black maternal health care, implement implicit bias training, and issue grants to support Black mothers and families. In Hawaii, a similar bill, SB900, is going through the legislative process. I had the pleasure to sit down

with the bill's creator, Tanya Smith-Johnson, CPM, to discuss this bill and her experiences with birth justice and legislative advocacy.

Tanya is a new Adjunct faculty member at MCU who teaches MDWF 2070 Obstetrical Pharmacology and MDWF 3070 NARM Preparation, practices midwifery, and fights for BIPOC in her home state of Hawaii through her advocacy work. She has helped to birth over 100 babies and has helped educate and empower over 300 families during their pregnancies and births. In addition to her long list of accomplishments, she is kind, warm, and strong-willed.

Her Journey to Midwifery

Tanya began her journey as a medical student hoping to specialize in OB/GYN. She started medical school with a husband deployed in Afghanistan after 9/11 with two children under her care. Trying to get through medical school with two children posed a problem for many reasons-- particularly the lack of resources offered by the school. There were no lactation or breastfeeding rooms, nowhere to store breast milk, and no childcare throughout the school. Her own mistreatment by the school helped her to realize that this is not a system that she wanted to be a part of. She later decided to volunteer at a birthing center and fell in love with midwifery. She felt and saw the support and community and decided to work with a midwife for her fourth birth. This experience was life changing for her and helped her see what she was called to do. A midwife from California took her under her wing and introduced her to proper training and later legislative advocacy.

She was drawn to midwifery because of the connection that she was able to make with people. Tanya focuses on empowerment and

continued from the last page

education first, creating an environment of community and service. Putting options first is of utmost importance to her because “ultimately it's your birth, your body, your baby.” She is an expert in creating safe spaces for mothers and families because she has experienced being in unsafe spaces through her own motherhood as well as in her career as a midwife.

PP Some people, their activism is in the streets and marching, but for many people, this can be your activism. Showing up at these things, having your voice heard, giving your opinion, one way or the other, about various different bills that are impacting your life.”

Legislative Work

Tanya has been a part of legislative advocacy for many years but is just starting to dip her toes into the creation of legislation. When I asked her what creating SB900 has been like for her, she said “it's similar to the birthing process. It was a baby for me. It was lots of energy and work.” She has faced an immense amount of pushback from those who should be in support of this piece of legislation. She added, “There is so much racism built into this process.” Tanya faced opposition from doctors, hospital administration, and maternal health collaboratives in the area. When discussing the bill, she voiced that “this bill isn't controversial, and that all of us [should] want Black, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders here to be taken care of [...] We should want our care providers to understand implicit bias and how it affects [...] the people that they're serving and are treating.” Unfortunately, there are many who do not want to change the status quo.

Tanya also focuses heavily on maintaining space for those in our communities that do not typically have their voices heard. Because her focus has been on community, she has been able to garner lots of community support throughout the legislative process. “It was just [a] classic David and Goliath battle where people feel like they don't have a voice already in maternity care, reproductive care, certain communities, and people aren't seen and heard. And those people actually felt like they had a voice in supporting this bill.” She said about trying to gain popularity for SB900.

Throughout this process she has been greatly impacted by the stories she has been able to hear. She originally created the bill because of her own experience. She has learned through her time as a medical student to midwife that people deserve a level of care that they do not often receive, especially if they are POC (people of color). Many women who may not have been able to appear at hearings to share their stories at another time were able to share their stories because of the virtual hearings due to COVID-19. So many people who did not believe in the political process learned that they can be activists too. She explained to me that “these legislators are people like you, you could be legislators sitting there, making decisions, and these are the people who are making decisions about our lives.” There are so many different types of activism that we can participate in. “Some people, their activism is in the streets and marching, but for many people, this can be your activism. Showing up at these things, having your voice heard, giving your opinion, one way or the other, about various different bills that are impacting your life.”



Although Tanya works hard and spends long hours on her work, she also prioritizes self-care. Scrolling through her Instagram, @tanyasmithjohnson, you'll notice that she frequently posts about spending time with family, taking breaks, and treating herself. She explained to me that “[she] really want[s] to dispel this idea that [she's] like Superwoman.” Tanya did not enter this process as a policy pro, it was actually quite the opposite. She saw a need and had the drive to change the system. She hopes to be an example to all that we can and need to be a part of our government and the law-making process.

CONT'D FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Tanya is passionate about focusing on the humanity within herself so that she can empower others. **“I am human, this stuff gets to me.”** She carries so much on her shoulders, and this does affect her deeply. “I go to bed thinking about this. And I wake up thinking about all the ways in which people are trying to not make this happen. Thinking about all the people affected by whether this becomes a reality or not and sitting with the idea that there are people who are willing to harm or deny the harm of 1000s of people in their experience; that's hard to carry.”

How the System Needs to Change

Tanya has had experience sitting in many different seats. She has seen the birthing process through the eyes of a medical student, a midwife, a legislator, and a mother. In all these roles she has been able to witness the good and the bad of our healthcare system. Because of her own experience, she was inspired to try to enact change to benefit those who need help in her area, but she also recognizes that there needs to be nationwide systemic change. She feels that this change needs to happen on all levels--education, medical treatment and care, and community level care opportunities. She hopes that high school students can learn about midwifery as a career. “Start teaching about midwifery in high school so that people understand that this is a viable option for your own birth someday and as a career.”

When it comes to community care, Tanya knows that there is value in creating spaces where people can come together and ask questions, get support, and learn about their different options. In the past, families lived in multigenerational homes and in communities where mothers came together to support one another. Today, families are more isolated, and mothers do not have resources to create communities. Because of this, many mothers do not know that they have options other than hospitals for birthing and care. When people understand their options, they can be empowered to make the best choices for themselves and their families.

Lastly, we need a policy change when it comes to our healthcare system and maternity floors in hospitals. Hospitals see their largest profit from their maternity floors. “So even when you think about the bottom line, and you think about how many people are giving birth, it's a business and we have to get to the point where it's just not business and that mothers matter more than money.” She went on to explain that policy is how we show our people our true values. **“Policy is where we really put our money where our mouth is as a country[.]” Unfortunately, we know that the current status quo does not serve our families as it should.**



TAKE ACTION!

Tanya Smith Johnson Article cont'd

WHAT WE CAN DO TO HELP

Legislation cannot be moved through the system at the hands of one person. Tanya is an expert in strength and resilience, and that usually involves reaching out for help. **She emphasized that there is power when people come together to share their experiences and lend a helping hand.** Here is a list of things we can do to help support healthy legislation and be an ally to the people of color around us.

- Do research on your own and do not rely on the people of color around you to educate you. "Google is your friend too."
- Physically show up to help and protect the POC in your life. "When we talk about what a white ally is, or a white accomplice, and for me, those are the people who have literally shielded me and come in front of me and took some of that heat, and in protecting me in those ways with their words, and in their support, and being on the front line with me."
- Get involved in legislation or other forms of activism in your area. Seek out ways to help change the systems that keep people oppressed. "It's not enough to say you're an ally and just rehashtag someone's stuff or, re-post things, but actually, what are you doing to protect black women, other women of color, and to really have their backs in those ways?"
- Give up your spot at the table for POC. White people take up most of the space in conversations, especially white women. These women may be well intentioned, but when we are trying to create equitable spaces, trading a white man for a white woman is not equity. "[W]hite women sometimes need to give up space and give up seats to women of color and say here, I'm going to move out the way so you can do what you need to do. But also we need white women to stand firm as well. And to have our backs."

Annual Goal: \$50,000+



Briana Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship Fund

Providing tuition relief for midwives serving medically underserved communities

SCHOLARSHIP
RECIPIENTS

28

TO DATE

TUITION RELIEF
PROVIDED

\$160,543.66+

TO DATE

Help us save lives one birth at a time. Visit midwifery.edu/donate today!

Fundraising Efforts

\$5,937.91 raised in 2021

International Day of the Midwife



Midwives Save Lives
T-shirt Fundraiser:
\$1,042 raised

of T-shirts Sold: 61

Facebook Fundraiser:
\$195 raised

Video Views: 1,000

Facebook Birthday Fundraisers:

\$303 raised by Sandi Blankenship
\$110 raised by Darliegh Webb
\$165 raised by Cheryl Furer
\$25 raised by Safia Monroe



Graduation Gala

of graduates: 30

of live attendees: 70

Auction Items Value:
\$797

Donation items
Received: 21 items

Midwife Mode
T-shirt Fundraiser:
\$407 raised



of T-shirts Sold: 34

Total Raised: \$1,195

Giving Tuesday

\$1,400
Raised



Amazon Smile:
\$862.08

as of Nov 2021.

Here's how to donate on Amazon Smile. It's painless.
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CREhmH9jzbR/>

You can help raise money for the Brianna Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship Fund. To create your own Facebook fundraiser, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/fund/MidwivesCollegeofUtah/>

How, Why, and other questions

Since the beginning of human beings, midwives have been stepping up, supporting their communities, and providing care during one of the most significant events in a person's history: birth. Too often, individuals who seek midwifery education do not have access to it. As such, the Briana Blackwelder Equal Access Scholarship Fund exists to help mitigate some of those barriers to midwifery education, and ultimately to midwives in communities that desperately need them. Each year, MCU raises money to support that scholarship fund. Here is a brief look into this year's fundraising efforts:

In 2021 we had two different t-shirt fundraisers. Everyone loves a good shirt, and these were some of our most successful fundraising efforts. Combined, these fundraisers brought in nearly \$1,500 for the scholarship fund. Keep an eye out for more t-shirt fundraisers in 2022 and be sure to share the designs with the other midwives and birth workers in your area.



In combination with the Graduation Gala there was a silent auction. With the support of many generous donors, we were able to gather several items, such as the print featured here, and raised several hundred dollars for the Briana Blackwelder Scholarship Fund.

Thank you so much to everyone who has taken the time to share and donate to the various Facebook Fundraisers we ran over the course of 2021. Your incredibly generosity and willingness to share with others raised over \$1,000. While it may not seem like much, pressing that share button is the best way to spread the word about MCU and our scholarship fund. That simple act has a ripple effect that will be felt for generations to come!



US History of Black Midwives



1600S

Midwives from Africa were abducted, enslaved, and taken to the U.S. These women were forced to serve their white captors during birth. They also helped fellow enslaved women and became the backbone of these societies of enslaved people. They not only brought their immense knowledge, but their skills at rearing children. They supported mothers and babies as the children grew.

1700S

Obstetrics began to develop which brought male doctors to help white upper- and middle-class women give birth. Enslaved women were forced to be used as training tools for these new doctors. Black midwives still worked with both black mothers as well as poor white mothers. They began to be known as "Granny Midwives" because of their in-depth understanding of birthing.



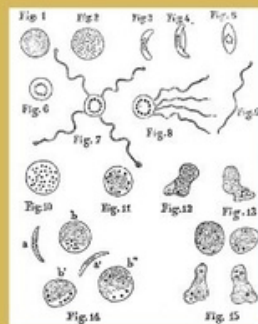
1800S

Laws began to emerge that limited the ability to practice as a midwife begun to appear. These laws varied between states and regions. During this time many obstetricians became certified and began to practice without ever seeing an actual birth.



1900S

The germ theory emerges. This theory was used in part to delegitimize the practice of midwives giving birth at home saying that hospitals are cleaner than homes. "The conventional thought regarding the ignorance, incompetence, unsafety and uncleanliness of midwives of the time cannot be dissociated from race, and [...] blackness."



1910

During this time, there was a push for poor women to stop using midwives and head to hospitals so that doctors could use their births to train.

1914

The "twilight sleep" was introduced. The creators stated that this would save women from the "evils of labor" and that midwives were totally unnecessary.



MCU adds Juneteenth as an official holiday in 2021

Juneteenth, a holiday celebrated on June 19th of each year, was officially added to MCU's calendar as a holiday in 2021.

The oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States, the holiday dates back to 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free.

Juneteenth is more than just a celebration of the end of slavery, it is a day of rejoicing and a chance to celebrate Black education, culture, and achievement.

cont'd

At MCU one way we choose to commemorate this day is by recognizing the vital influence of Black midwives on the past, present, and future of midwifery in the United States. How will you celebrate?

Today

It is currently estimated that around 2% of the country's 15,000 midwives are black. The fight for birthing rights continues. This is a small piece of a long history of systemic disenfranchisement of black midwives and black birth.



1920

By this time, only about 50% of births were attended by midwives.



1935

Only 15% of births were attended by midwives.



1970S

A resurgence of direct entry midwives began. This means that midwives do not have to be a trained nurse before going into midwifery which allows more women to work in midwifery.

1915

While a multitude of new resources were being developed for birthing, 11/1,100 black mothers died during birth and 181/1,000 black babies died during birth. In comparison, 6/1,000 white mothers died during birth and 100/1,000 white babies died during birth.

1925

The Frontier Nursing Service was formed and served poor and rural communities in Kentucky. Their services began a cultural shift in favor of birthing with a midwife as they trained nurses how to become midwives.

1960S

Fewer than 70 nurse midwives were operating in the US. During this time, new legislation was introduced that made it even harder for black midwives to operate because of various required certifications that were hard to come by for these marginalized women. Traditional black midwifery traditions were perceived as improper and less legitimate because of the class and racial disparities that have existed since the genesis of this country.



Illinois Legalizes Midwifery

In the mid-1960s Illinois stopped certifying midwives, and in 1992 a law was passed that made traditional midwifery illegal. However, on December 14, 2021, Governor JB Pritzker signed Bill HB3401 into law. This bill, which goes into effect October of 2022, gives CPMs a path towards licensure with the state.

Many people hope that the licensure of CPMs will help reduce the mortality rates among Black birthing people in the state. A recent report found that Black people who give birth in the state of Illinois are eight times more likely to suffer a fatality during pregnancy or birth than their white counterparts.

Unfortunately, the bill does not include a provision for Medicaid coverage of licensed midwives, and, since two of every three Black birthers are covered by Medicaid, a large portion of the community will be unlikely to seek midwifery care.

When the bill takes effect in October Illinois will become the 36th state to legalize traditional midwifery. Other states that are currently working on routes towards licensure include Georgia and Nevada. Although both states introduced legislation towards that effect in 2021 neither was successful in getting their bills passed.

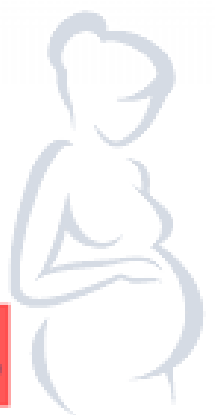
First Momnibus Bill Passed

On November 29, 2021 the first of twelve bills that make up the Momnibus was signed into law by President Joe Biden. The "Protecting Moms Who Served Act" is aimed at studying racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes for pregnant veterans. It also supports maternity care coordination programs for veterans at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities.

The Momnibus was first introduced by Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-Ill.) in March of 2020, but this effort has been a very long time in the making. This collection of twelve different bills hopes to begin addressing America's maternity care crisis, especially as it relates to Black and Native peoples. Other parts of the Momnibus have passed the house, but so far none have become laws.

Some of the goals of this group of legislation include diversifying the perinatal workforce so that all birthing people can easily access culturally congruent care, improving healthcare and support for incarcerated birthing people, and making investments in social determinants of health like housing, transportation, and nutrition. To learn more about the Momnibus visit: <https://blackmaternalhealthcaucus-underwood.house.gov/Momnibus>

**BLACK
MATERNAL
HEALTH
MOMNIBUS**



Academy of Continuing Education



New ACE Courses Announced!

If you're looking for some on demand affordable CEU options, look no further than MCU's Academy of Continuing Education (ACE). Purchase access to a variety of courses including the recently added Vaccination Information for Midwives course, Antihemorrhagic Medications, Medications for Childbearing and our New Mexico series: Pharmacology and IV Therapy. To learn more, visit midwifery.edu/ACE

Out with the old and in with the new

2021 was the year of makeovers at MCU. In addition to debuting a new logo designed by our Marketing Director, we updated both internal and external technology.

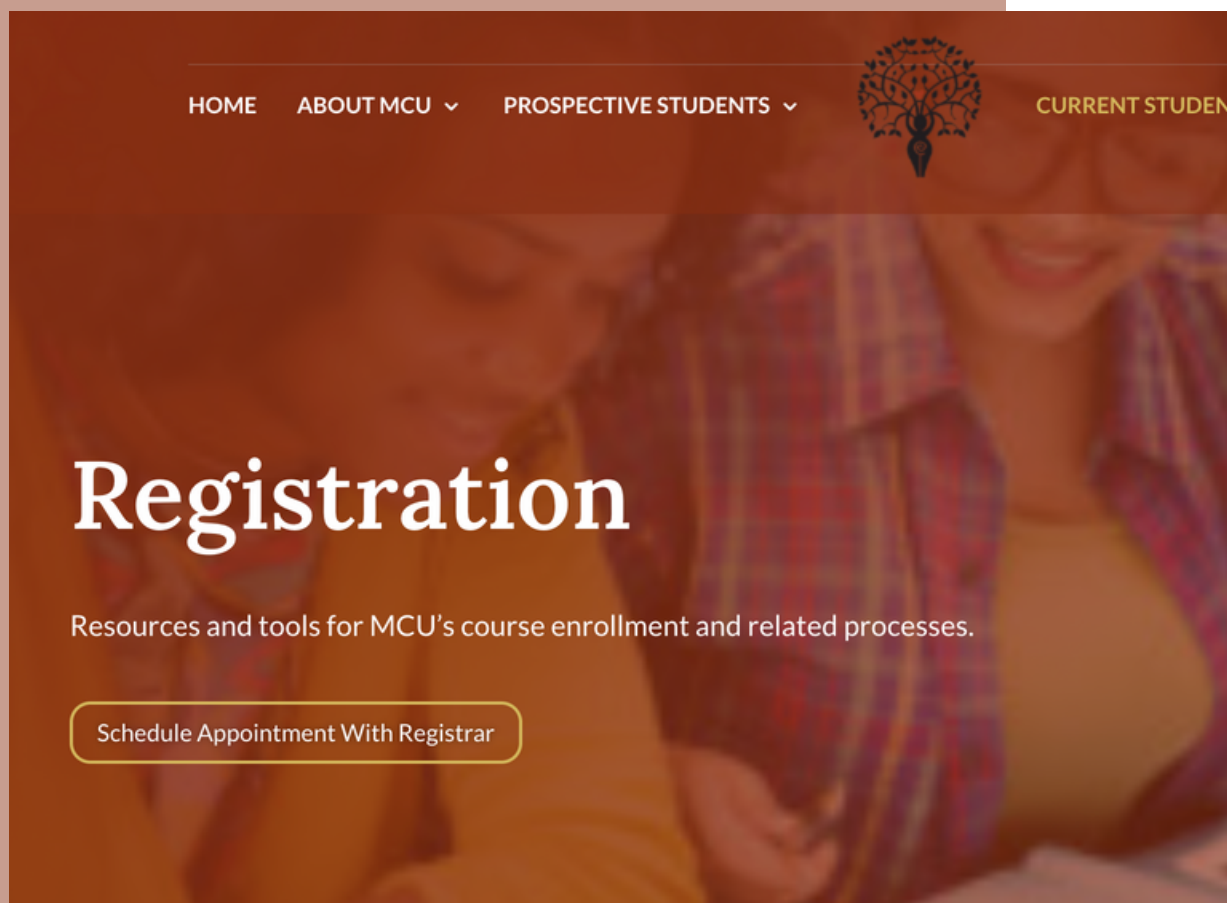
After many years of custom proprietary technology, MCU laid to rest its Student Information System (SIS) and gave our students a brand new experience with Populi.

The new system has many features to allow more efficient administration of the school experience. In addition, MCU's website got a complete refresh. The new design automatically adjusts to the size of the screen accessing the page.



As we focus on midwifing our midwives, MCU implemented many ways to increase access to information. Both the Registrar Department and Financial Aid Department implemented portals to facilitate dissemination of information. Students can now visit midwifery.edu/registration to access important information and portals including the Projected Enrollment Schedule, Tutorials on registering for courses and tools and templates custom made by MCU's Registrar, Laura Park, to ease course enrollment and related processes.

My Financial Aid is a web portal for MCU students to expedite receiving answers to their questions. Accessible under the Current Students menu on midwifery.edu, the My Financial Aid web portal brings you the information you need quickly and efficiently. From answering commonly asked questions to directing students straight to the forms or information they need, sign in to your MCU account and visit the My Financial Aid portal to get the help you need.



Registration portal on midwifery.edu

Noteworthy



INCREASING PEER TO PEER MENTORSHIP

The Admissions Department prioritized increasing student engagement and peer to peer mentorship in 2021. From hiring a student ambassador to cultivating connection in student Facebook groups, 2021 saw an increase in engagement prior to admission.

NEW PRODUCTS IN MCU'S STORE!

MCU added an additional option for supporting the Briana Blackwelder Scholarship Fund and having some school memorabilia. Check out midwifery.edu/shop and visit the Accessories and Drinkware category to get yours today! All items ship on Tuesday only. These items are only \$10! We are working on expanding our swag inventory to increase options and offer extended sizing.

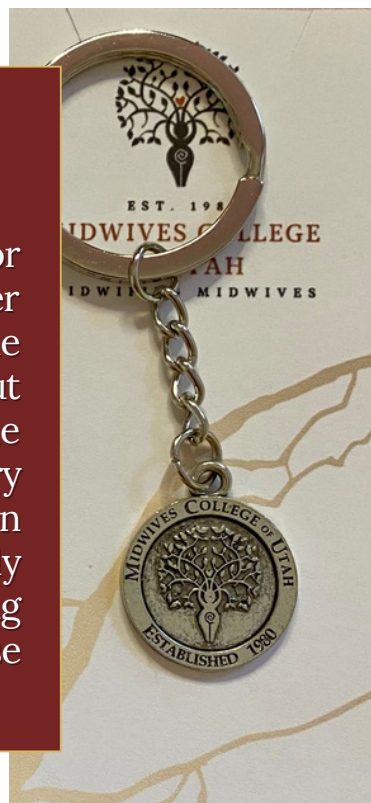




Photo Contest Recap

Jean Hiefner, *Fundraising Fellow*
Photo by Sessy Spira

This year MCU hosted its first ever photo contest. The theme for 2021 was "Midwifery in Focus". Contestants were encouraged to submit photos that focused on the role of the midwife in prenatal care or birth. First place received a gift certificate to Everything Birth.

This year's winner is Sessy Spira of Queen City Birth Work. Sessy began Queen City Birth Work in 2012 and since that time has served the area surrounding Denver, Colorado as a doula, photographer, prenatal body worker, and certified lactation consultant. Most recently, Sessy began studying at MCU to pursue her dream of becoming a midwife.

Sessy's photo highlights another MCU student taking heart tones while a client uses a pump to help stimulate contractions during early labor. This photo does an excellent job of capturing many different facets of midwifery care. While the

general public often perceives midwifery as a bunch of women sitting in a corner knitting while waiting for a baby to be born (and let's be honest, sometimes that is the truth) it is so much more than that. The active monitoring of heart tones and efforts to stimulate labor shown here put the lesser-known aspects of midwifery into sharp focus.

To follow Sessy's journey and see more of her photography you can visit her website at <https://www.queencitybirthwork.com/birth-photos> or follow her company, Queen City Birth Work, on social media.

The work of midwifery can be difficult and most of it is unseen. This year we challenge each of you to bring midwifery into focus in your communities through photos and stories. Let's work together to dispel myths and bring awareness to the integral role of midwifery in our communities.

Warmest Welcomes to...



Cassandra Aho
TA



Jasmine Barnes
Admissions Director



Nicole Croft
Admissions Counselor



Gretchen Davidson
Adjunct Faculty Member



Robin Illian
Adjunct Faculty Member



Asasiya Muhammad
House Mentor

Warmest Welcomes to...



Jennifer Ross
TA and Faculty Support Administrator



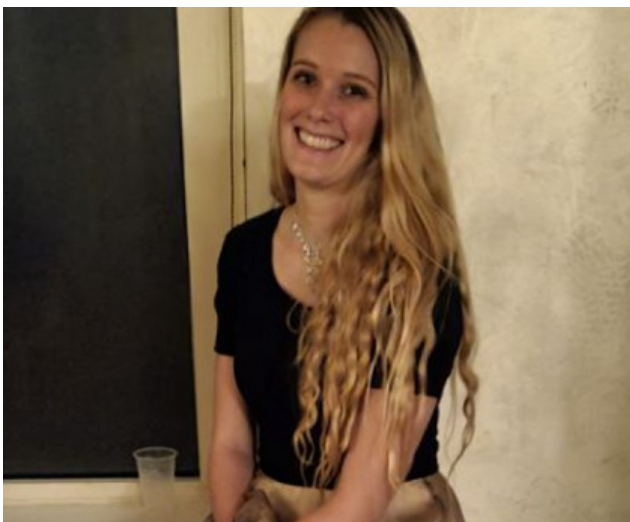
Demetra Seriki
FYE House Mentor



Marivette Torres
TA and Receptionist



Marijke van Roojen
Director of Student Services



Cassie Williams
Office Manager



Sarah Butterfly
House Mentor

Fond Farewells to...



Alan Bellows
Technical Support Administrator



Jennifer Bertagnole
Fundraising Coordinator, TA, Assessment
Assistant & Office Manager



Kim Blue
Staff HR Coordinator & Grant Writer



Allyson Juneau Butler
Admissions Director



Kristin Effland
Core Faculty Member



Arden Kindred
House Mentor
They will stay on as an Adjunct Faculty member

Fond Farewells to...



Cheryl Furer

Director of Student Services

She will stay on as an Adjunct Faculty Member



Fortune Glasse-Cotten

Admissions Counselor



Asasiya Muhammad

House Mentor



Tanya Smith Johnson

Adjunct Faculty Member



Mel Smith Tourville

Core Faculty Member

On behalf of the MCU Board of Directors, administration, students, faculty, and staff, thank you for your years of service to Midwives College of Utah and all you have done to inspire and support Midwives of Excellence.

thank you!

RECOGNITIONS

ALL OF THE MCU STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

Midwifery is a work of love and sacrifice. This truth has probably never been felt as keenly as it has during the midst of this pandemic. We know that many of you have shown up to support others even as you have needed support. The year 2021 brought us all challenges, heartaches, and frustrations. The fact that you made it through the year and are still here to read this is worthy of recognition.

GRADUATES

Sarah Butterfly, MSM, completed the thesis for her Master of Science in Midwifery with Midwives College of Utah. A culmination of 2 years of research and 21 interviews with community based midwives, Sarah's thesis "sought to elucidate how US community midwives' personal and professional experiences with trauma affect their ability to provide trauma-informed care". You can email Sarah at sarah.butterfly@midwifery.edu to request a copy of the full manuscript.

MCU alumna **Faisa Farole** was featured in an article in the Seattle Times on the case for midwives. In the article, Farole discusses her work with Somali immigrants and the need for access to midwifery care.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/pacific-nw-magazine/the-case-for-midwives-washington-leads-the-nation-in-midwifery-care-giving-women-another-childbirth-option/>



MCU grad, **Blythe Parker**, was highlighted in her local paper for opening San Juan Midwifery in December of 2020. In addition to providing homebirth services, Parker hopes to provide holistic prenatal and postpartum care to islanders who choose to give birth off island and may have trouble getting back to the mainland for visits.

<https://www.sanjuanjournal.com/life/midwifery-experiences-a-rebirth-san-juans-welcomes-a-new-midwife/>



RECOGNITIONS

FACULTY

Kristin Effland and **Megan Koontz** published a review in the *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health* titled, "Increasing Access to Medications and Devices for the Care of Low-Risk Childbearing Families: An Analysis of Existing Law and Strategies for Advocacy". They also published a commentary in *Birth* titled "Medication access and midwifery integration: An example of community midwifery advocacy for access in Washington State, USA". These pieces are a critical part of the discussion around medication access for community midwives that is happening around the nation.

In October, MCU faculty member, **Dr. Nikia Grayson, CNM**, spoke at TEDxMemphis on the history of black midwives in America and how black midwives can help heal our broken maternal health care system.

You can view her TED talk here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lySoSBa3bt0>



Adjunct Faculty and House Mentor **Demetra Mimi Seriki** published an article highlighting the passing of the Colorado Momnibus bill to address inequities among the birthing people of Colorado. Some highlights of the bill include expanded Medicaid coverage postpartum and a higher standard of care for incarcerated people during the perinatal period.

<https://www.westword.com/news/colorado-birth-equity-bill-package-op-ed-11993260>

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies of Hawaii, where alumna **Tanya Smith Johnson, CPM**, works, was featured for their work in expanding midwifery care to low income families. They have purchased and renovated a touring bus so that prenatal and postpartum care can be taken directly to the clients who need it most.

<https://www.directrelief.org/2021/06/in-oahu-midwives-provide-vital-care-along-with-food-cribs-and-social-services/>



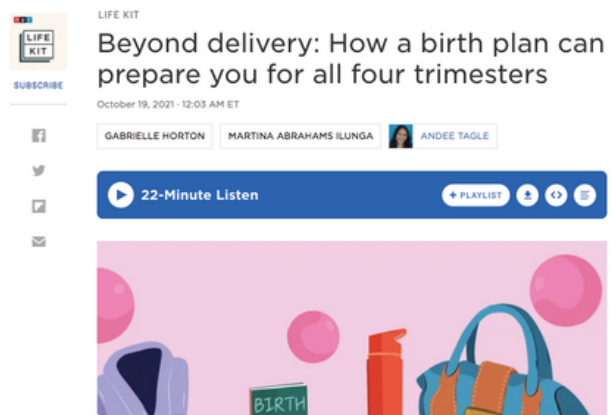
RECOGNITIONS

FACULTY

MCU faculty member, **Carmen Mojica**, spoke at the international conference BAME Birthing With Colour Annual Conference in November.

Tanya Smith Johnson, CPM was also interviewed for NPR's Life Kit podcast. In this episode she shares essentials for a birth plan and how to get loved ones involved in its creation. This is a great resource for birth workers and anyone who is currently pregnant. Listen to the podcast or read the article at the link below.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/10/14/1046148256/birth-plans-pregnancy-how-to>

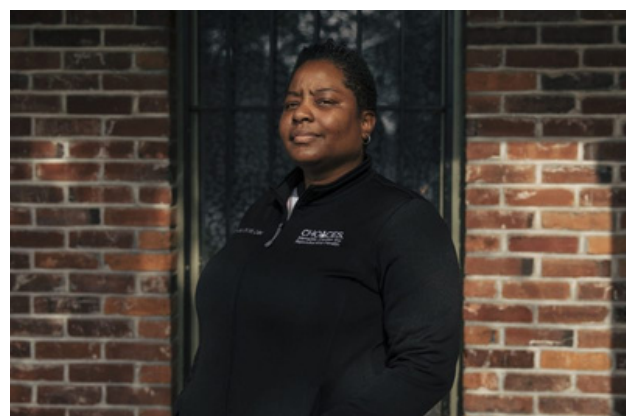


Aisha Al Hajjar, MSM, LM, CPM, was busy in 2021. She published three new books, AMANI Quick Guide for Fathers, Refocus: Positive Parenting Concepts, and Secrets from the Labor Room. Her organization, AMANI Birth also moved training for childbirth educators and doulas online. In addition to this, they created an on-demand version of the AMANI Birth class for expectant parents called the Blessed Start course.

<https://amanibirth.online/>

Dr. Nikia Grayson, CNM, faculty member at MCU, was one of six honoree's for MLK50's "Unsung, Unbowed, Unstoppable" series. The article details Dr. Grayson's journey to midwifery and the work she is doing at CHOICES, the first and only non-hospital birthing center in Memphis, and the first non-profit clinic in the nation to provide both abortions and birthing care.

<https://bit.ly/32ERzo8>



STUDENTS

Jenna Cruz-Gallegos was awarded a scholarship from Melanated Midwives for 2021-2022.

MCU IN REVIEW IS FOR YOU!

Share your stories, your updates and your ideas with **marketing@midwifery.edu** to include in the next edition of our newsletter. The newsletter is designed to inform and inspire our community. Are you a seasoned student or recent grad with thoughts about your experiences or are you working on a project, internship, speaking engagement we can pat you on the back for? MCU is interested in what's going on with you. Send your updates to **marketing@midwifery.edu**

or use this form:

<https://forms.gle/GmXTrzQjkgJB4Wtg8>



EST. 1980

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OF UTAH**

MIDWIFING MIDWIVES