



Being Born: The Doula's Role

Jewel Hernandez

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#A doula is a healthcare professional who offers educational, physical, emotional and practical support to a pregnant woman -- before, during and after the birth of her child. Whether the birth takes place with a doctor in a hospital or birthing center, or at home with a midwife, a doula is always a valuable asset to any birth team. Research confirms that the support of a doula throughout pregnancy optimizes a woman's chances of having a healthier birth experience as well as a healthier newborn.

Into Waiting Hands is a picture book for expectant parents and their young children. It gives a warm and friendly overview of a doula's role, stressing the advantages of a doula's help. When read to younger siblings, it is a source of comfort to those who wonder about all the people involved when mom is "having a baby." This book celebrates birth - as a natural and whole-family experience. Both its text and images present the subject clearly, but in child-appropriate language. It's simple presentation of a doula's role make Waiting Hands an invaluable resource for childbirth educators to use with teenage mothers and with families for whom English is a second language.

This book is unique - fills an important need. No simple picture-book on the subject of doulas is currently in print. Many adult books discuss the work of the doula in detail, there is nothing for children or less sophisticated readers. Unlike most books on childbirth (for children or adults) Waiting Hands acknowledges that birth takes place in a variety of settings with a variety of caregivers - not just in hospitals with doctors, which is a peculiarly deep seated tradition of the United States.

The author is currently practicing as a doula, and has been involved in the birthing community for the past twenty years. She has kept me current with trends and changes over the years through the media, conference attendance, personal study, and in conversations with families in her role of doula and/or midwife. Jewel Hernandez has active participated in 250 births as a doula and midwife assignment.

#Carole Hillsbery has been painting in watercolor for over twenty-five years. Winner of numerous awards, Carole is an art instructor, and a member of the Arizona Watercolor Association, the Transparent Watercolor Society of America, and the Arizona Artist's Guild. Her work can be seen at www.carolehillsbery.com

#Jewel Hernandez is a certified doula (with DONA - Doulas of North America), and a midwifery intern (Nizhoni Institute of Midwifery). She received her bachelor's degree in Studio Art from the College of St. Rose, and was the illustrator for a previous Hohm Press book, Rosie the Shopping Cart Lady. Jewel has been passionate about childbirth since the birth of her first child, twenty-five years ago. To date she has attended over 250 births, and she continues to amazed and awed by the process.

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