

"The mothers are taking care to make a good life for their children."  
Dorene Day

Ashland Birth Center,  
Ashland, WI

*Written by Savita Jones*

2021 was a demanding year but full of creativity and new opportunities. As a small business, providing maternity and newborn health care services, we are grateful for our ability to adapt in a timely manner. The Ashland Birth Center worked directly within our community, and surrounding communities, to meet new challenges. Expecting a baby is considered one of the most special moments a person can experience. The toll of the pandemic, sickness, and loss of family members, created stress and anxiety for pregnant people. Our business was charged with being a place of comfort and trust. There is evidence that mothers who experience significant stress during pregnancy have poorer outcomes and their babies are slower to meet milestones. The more health care providers involve family members in pregnancy, and support the individual, the more they become attached to their baby and their family's ongoing health. With this in mind, we found the extra stamina, during difficult times, to greet all pregnant people who entered with understanding and careful attention. Our patient appointments lasted an hour instead of the typical 15-30 minutes; even if not billable. We provided availability to our team 24/7. We provided a safe place to receive maternity and newborn care, out of hospital, with midwives. In 2021 we recognized how important it is not to take for granted our ability to receive health care. As hospitals were filled with sickness, lacking hospital beds, short staffed, and unable to welcome visitors, we were able to adapt quickly and provide safe and appropriate care

**Weweni ganawenimigowaad  
Gidabinoojiminaanig ini omaamaayiwaan**



*Phoebe Hyde Photography, Red Cliff, Wisconsin*

The number of people we served grew in 2021; it was our best year. This has brought about an excited opportunity for us to take new steps in addressing our community's unique health care needs and our long term sustainability as a valued business. We are centrally located in a rural region; the second poorest county in our state. We have several Native American communities that access our services and our provider networks. Meeting the needs of typically underserved people is a commitment we have always shown. Pictured are Ashland Birth Center's Indigenous midwife students, and a few mothers, whom we highlighted for their cultural approach to breastfeeding. Our full scope prenatal care, labor, delivery and postpartum services are based on a prevention model; with close attention to cultural preferences. The Ashland Birth Center is integrated into its community and provides a service that attracts people to travel here. The highlight of 2021 are the simple things that brought great joy and moments we offered to improve health outcomes for pregnant people. We recently learned our facility is for sale and we are short of having the financial ability to purchase it. Just over three hundred babies have been born here since we opened. As I stay late, to take every effort, the community is coming together to keep us here with donations. If Ashland Birth Center won money we would use it to purchase the facility our community has grown to love and need.