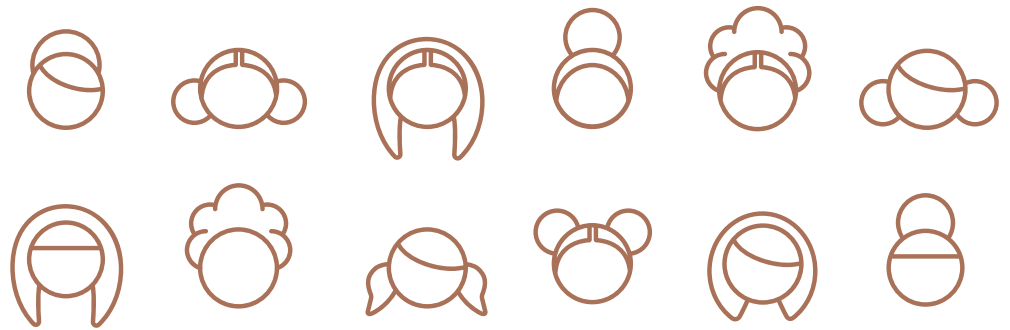




Chocolate Milk®: The Documentary  
COMMUNITY SCREENING PRESS KIT | AUGUST 2019



## **2 Press Release**

Official statement on the 200+ community screenings of Chocolate Milk

## **3 Demographics**

Statistical data relating to the organizations screening the film

## **4 Fact Sheet**

Information on breastfeeding & racial disparities in the black community

## **5 Participating Organizations**

Complete list of participating organizations by region and state

## **6 Film Synopses**

Full, medium and short summaries of the film

## **8 Crew Biographies**

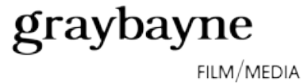
List of key crew names and backgrounds

## **10 10 Most Frequently Asked Questions**

Most frequently asked questions of Elizabeth Bayne during film production

## **14 Media Assets**

Links to past press releases, stills and clips from the film



## **Documentary on Black Breastfeeding to Preview in 200 Communities During National Breastfeeding Month**

**LOS ANGELES - Aug. 15, 2019 - [PRLog](#)** -- graybayne film/media announced today that the company will distribute an early preview of CHOCOLATE MILK: THE DOCUMENTARY, to over 200 communities across the U.S. during August for National Breastfeeding Month. National Breast Feeding Month, started in 2011, is an annual celebration of breastfeeding to raise awareness, change practices and policies, and establish it as a national public health priority.

Elizabeth Bayne, public health advocate and the director of the documentary, initially launched Chocolate Milk as a documentary web series in 2014 to address the low rates of breastfeeding among African American women despite its many long-term health benefits for infants and mothers. Currently, the rates are 64.9% for African American mothers, compared to 85.9% for White and 84.6% for Hispanic mothers.

According to Elizabeth Bayne, the director, "It became clear mothers were not my only audience. The issues were as much about teaching mothers to breastfeed as creating communities of support to include families, health providers, employers and the public."

The series which profiles lactation experts and black mothers received over 400,000 views and screened at dozens of conferences. In 2018 Chocolate Milk caught the attention of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), an independent, private foundation that supports projects for children, and received funding to complete production on a feature-documentary version of the project.

The 90-minute documentary explores breastfeeding through the stories of three women, a first time mother, a third generation midwife, and a WIC lactation educator. Each story depicts the struggle to bring breastfeeding back as a cultural norm in the African American community.

"We have 253 preview screenings of the film scheduled this month in communities all over the country," Bayne commented, "As filmmakers, the goal is for people to see our film, so for Chocolate Milk to be reaching so many audiences already is incredibly humbling. It's more than I could have hoped for."

###

Chocolate Milk: The Documentary (<http://www.chocolatemilkdoc.com>) was made possible with funding from the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation** ([www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org)), the **Center for Cultural Innovation** ([www.cciarts.org](http://www.cciarts.org)) and tax-deductible donations through the **Independent Filmmaker Project** ([www.ifp.org](http://www.ifp.org)).

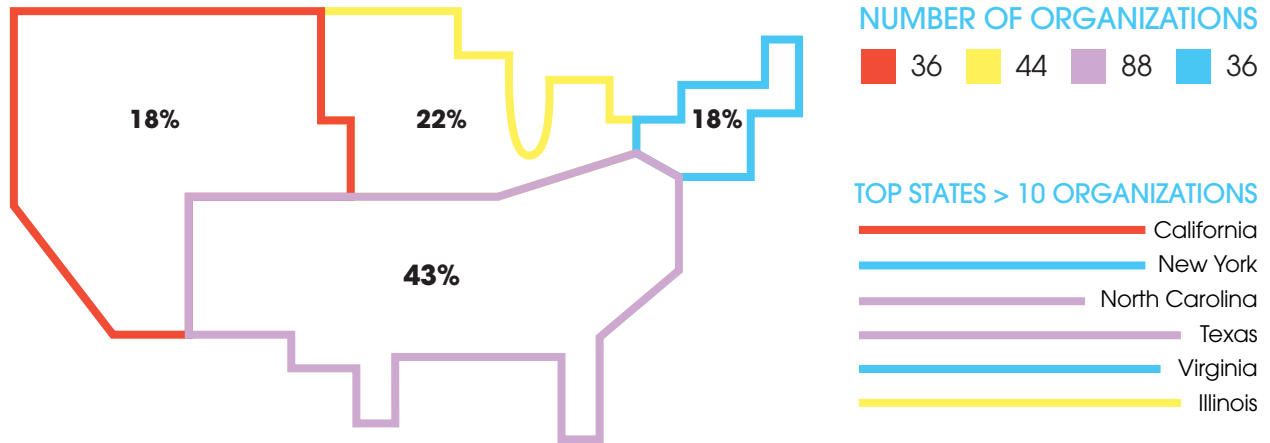
**graybayne film/media** is a full-service production company, specializing in media production and communication strategy for nonprofit and health organizations. With over ten years of public health, community outreach, and visual communications experience, we use storytelling to entertain, educate and inspire. <http://www.graybayne.com>

### **Contact**

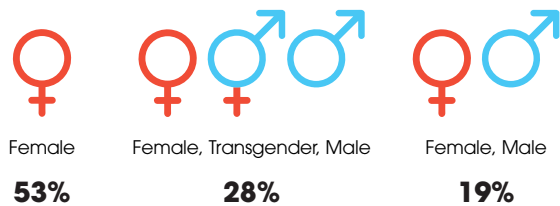
graybayne film/media  
[films@graybayne.com](mailto:films@graybayne.com)

# DEMOGRAPHICS

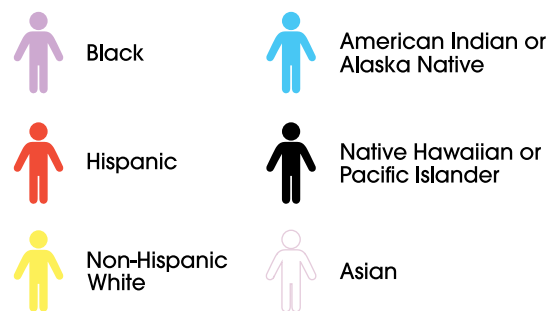
## WHICH REGIONS & STATES ARE SCREENING THE FILM?



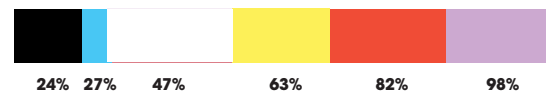
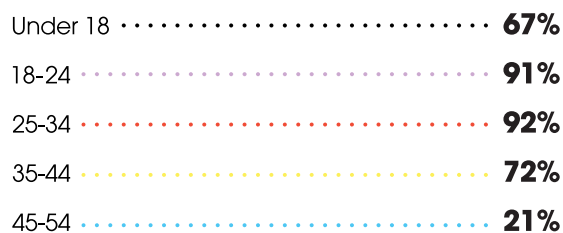
## WHAT GENDER DO THEY SERVE?



## WHAT RACES DO THEY SERVE?



## WHAT AGES DO THEY SERVE?



**63%** OF ORGANIZATIONS SERVE HOUSEHOLDS MAKING LESS THAN \$35,000 ANNUALLY

# FACT SHEET

## BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

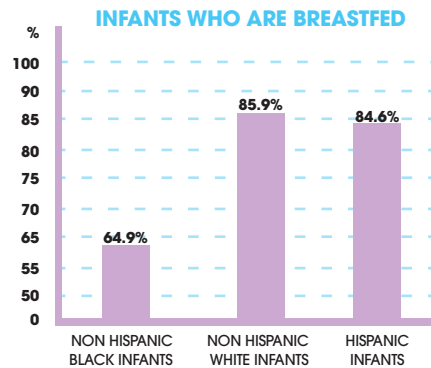


- Reduces chance of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Enhances brain and immune system development
- Reduces risk of asthma, obesity, diabetes, and gastrointestinal infection in infants
- Reduces risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, and ovarian and breast cancer
- Low rates of breastfeeding add more than \$3 billion a year to medical costs for the mother and child in the U.S

## INFORMATIVE STATISTICS

BLACK INFANTS ARE  
**63%**  
LESS LIKELY TO HAVE EVER BEEN  
BREASTFED THAN WHITE INFANTS

MOTHERS AGED 20 TO 29  
ARE 80.4% LESS LIKELY TO  
EVER BREASTFEED THAN MOTHERS  
AGED 30 AND OLDER



## WHY DO MOTHERS STOP BREASTFEEDING EARLY?\*

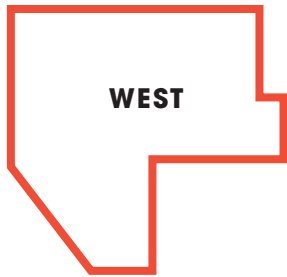
60% of mothers do not breastfeed for as long as they intend to. How long a mother breastfeeds her baby (duration) is influenced by many factors including:

- Issues with lactation and latching
- Concerns about infant nutrition and weight
- Mother's concern about taking medications while breastfeeding
- Unsupportive work policies and lack of parental leave
- Cultural norms and/or lack of family support
- Unsupportive hospital practices and policies

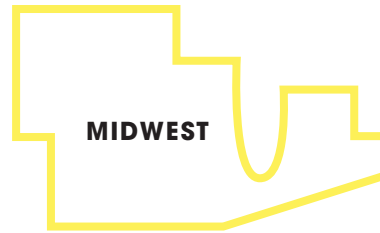
\*source: [cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/facts.html](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/facts.html)

Due to systemic racial inequality in the U.S, these factors have a disproportionate effect on black families.

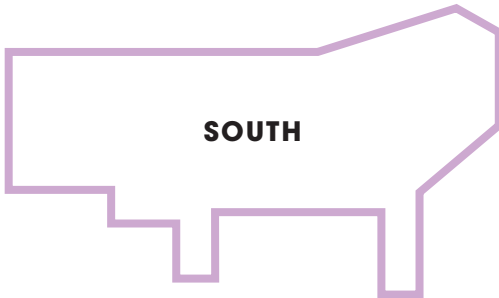
# ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING ACROSS THE U.S.



Black Infant Health Program  
 Breastfeeding Hawaii  
 BreastfeedLA  
 Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition  
 Delta Healthcare  
 Flourishing Families  
 iDREAM for Racial Health Equity  
 Kaiser Permanente Antioch Medical Center  
 Kijiji Sisterhood  
 La Leche League of Steamboat Springs  
 Las Vegas Urban League WIC  
 Mahogany Moms  
 Normalize Breastfeeding  
 Nurturely  
 RiverStone WIC  
 Roots Community Health Center  
 Sacramento Breastfeeding Coalition  
 Solano County Black Infant Health Program  
 South Los Angeles Health Projects LA BioMed WIC  
 Southern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition  
 The National Coalition 100 Black Women  
 Tri County Health Department  
 Washington State WIC Nutrition Program  
 Western Slope Breastfeeding Coalition



Affinia WIC Department  
 African American Breastfeeding Network Inc.  
 Anoka County Public Health Department  
 Black Women's Health Alliance, SBC  
 Clyde Malone Community Center  
 Genesee County Breastfeeding Coalition  
 HealthConnect One  
 Hennepin County Public Health  
 Indiana Breastfeeding Coalition  
 Kalamazoo County Breastfeeding Coalition  
 Kearney Community Breastfeeding Initiative  
 Latch on SA  
 Maternal & Child Health Student Org.  
 Maya Whyte  
 MCDBOH WIC Program  
 McLean County Health Department  
 Michigan Department of Health & Human Services  
 Mother & Child Health Coalition  
 Northern Nevada Breastfeeding Coalition  
 NWCSA Douglas County WIC  
 Peoria City/County Health Department  
 Public Health Madison & Dane County  
 Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency  
 Saline County Health Department  
 Shawnee County Health Department  
 Southeast Michigan IBCLC's of Color  
 St. Bernard Hospital  
 St. Francois County Health Center WIC  
 Uzazi Village  
 Vista Medical Center  
 Well Child Center  
 Wichita Area Breastfeeding Coalition  
 Willow Tree Family Center  
 Wyandotte County WIC Program



Advanced Practice Wellness, LLC  
 Adventist Healthcare  
 BABE Breastfeed Coalition & Carter  
 County Drug Prevention  
 Baltimore City WIC Program  
 Bell County Public Health District  
 WIC Program  
 Birth and Breastfeeding Evidence  
 Based Education and Support (BEBES)  
 Black Breastfeeding Mamas Circle  
 La Leche League Hampton Roads  
 Black Girls' Breastfeeding Club  
 Black Warrior Community Action Team  
 CCNCPHD - WIC  
 Central Shenandoah Health District/VDH/WIC  
 Champaign-Urbana Public Health District  
 County of Fresno, Department of Public Health  
 Babies First  
 D.C Breastfeeding Coalition  
 Dallas Lactation Consultant Association  
 Dallas Area Breastfeeding Alliance  
 Fairfax County Health Department WIC Program  
 Florida Department of Health, Orange County  
 WIC Program  
 Guilford County WIC  
 Henry-Martinsville Health Department  
 Holi Mamma at The Woman's Earth  
 Houston Area Lactation Consultants  
 and Educators Association  
 Human Milk Banking Association of  
 North America  
 JCSU Lactation Consultant Training Program  
 La Leche League Pines and Palmettos  
 La Leche League Western  
 Montgomery County  
 Lincoln Community Health Center WIC  
 LLL of Greater Woodbridge  
 LLL of Jefferson  
 Madison Hospital  
 Mama Sana Vibrant Woman  
 Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition  
 Maryland WIC Program  
 Milk + Honey Co.  
 Mom2Mom Jacksonville  
 Mother's Milk Bank at Austin  
 National Coalition of 100 Black Women  
 Decatur - Dekalb Inc.

NC WIC Region V Peer Counselor Training  
 New Orleans Breastfeeding Center  
 Oklahoma State Department of Health  
 WIC Service  
 Our Brown Baby  
 Pea Pod Nutrition and Lactation Support  
 Pearland WIC  
 Peninsula Health District - WIC  
 Port City Breastfeeding Project  
 Prince William Health District WIC  
 Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere, Inc.  
 Roanoke City Health District WIC Office  
 Roseland Community Hospital WIC Program  
 SC DHEC/WIC  
 Shades of Blue Project International  
 South Carolina Department of Health  
 & Environmental Control WIC  
 Sweet Bee Services  
 Tampa Bay Breastfeeding Task Force  
 Tarrant County Breastfeeding Coalition/TXBC  
 Texas Breastfeeding Coalition  
 Texas Department of State Health Services  
 Region 8  
 The Johns Hopkins Hospital - GYN/OB  
 Breastfeeding Committee  
 The Professional Doulas of Charleston  
 The Wellness Coalition  
 The Young Research Group for Maternal  
 & Child Nutrition: Chicago Region  
 Breastfeeding Taskforce  
 Thomas Jefferson WIC Program  
 Tonya Caniel, IBCLC, CA(DONA), LCCE  
 Tri-County Breastfeeding Coalition  
 Triangle Breastfeeding Alliance  
 Tulsa Health Department  
 Urban League of Detroit & Southeastern  
 Michigan  
 Virginia Department of Health Office  
 of Family Health Services  
 WE Baby Welcome Every Baby  
 Welcome Every Baby/WE BABY  
 West Piedmont WIC - Franklin County Site  
 WIC - Corpus Christi Nueces County  
 Public Health District  
 Wichita Area Breastfeeding Coalition  
 WIC - Brockton, Massachusetts



## NORTHEAST

A.G.F.G Meditation and Healing  
 Albany Medical Center  
 Anjelica Malone  
 Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs  
 BACE and Vital Village Co-Hosting  
 BirthNet  
 Breastfeeding Community Action Coalition  
 Breastfeeding Resource Center  
 Breastfeeding Support Center of WNY  
 Brookdale University Hospital Medical Center  
 Catholic Charities Rockville Centre, WIC Program  
 Central Jersey Family Health Consortium  
 Cortland Community Action Program  
 Denver Public Health  
 Emerging Majority Students Association  
 at the Yale School of Public Health  
 Family Wellness Suite  
 Health Baby Network  
 La Leche League of Greenwich - Stamford  
 La Leche League of Rhode Island  
 Long Island Federally Qualified WIC Program  
 Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition  
 Maternal Infant Services Network  
 Minority Student Organization  
 National Association Black Women  
 in Construction New York  
 New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition  
 NORTH, Inc. - Managers of the Philadelphia  
 WIC Program  
 Northwell Health  
 Northwell Health  
 Northwest Mothers Milk Bank  
 NYC Baby Cafe  
 Optimus Health Care WIC Program  
 Public Health Solutions - Neighborhood WIC  
 Queen and Baby Box and The Birth Co  
 Rockland Count Department of Health WIC  
 Ryan Health  
 Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative  
 St. Bernard Hospital  
 Suffolk County Department of Health Services  
 Office of Minority Health  
 The Brooklyn Hospital Center  
 The City of East Orange WIC Clinic  
 Tri-State Breastfeeding Association  
 WIC - Petersburg, Virginia

# FILM SYNOPSES

## LONG SUMMARY OF THE FILM

Countless women in the U.S. struggle with the decision to breastfeed, but none more so than African American mothers who breastfeed at significantly lower rates (64%) compared to whites (80%) and Hispanics (84%). Despite the long-term health benefits such as reduced risk of chronic disease, cancer, asthma and obesity, fewer than one fifth of all black infants are exclusively breastfed for six months or more. *Chocolate Milk: The Documentary* aims to answer the question of “why don’t more black mothers breastfeed” by following the stories of three women living in South Central Los Angeles - new mother Tami, midwife Racha and WIC lactation educator Lydia.

TAMI is a first time mother who wants to breastfeed, but with no family history of breastfeeding and only a basic knowledge of what to expect, she faces a steep learning curve. Tami’s story from pregnancy to post partum unfolds over three years and we observe the barriers to breastfeeding that have become far too common for black women and how she perseveres to reach her breastfeeding goals.

LYDIA is a lactation educator providing support for breastfeeding mothers as an employee at a local Women Infant and Children (WIC) center, a federally funded program that ensures proper nutrition for low-income mothers and their children. Lydia dreams of becoming an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), but new and expensive exam prerequisites make certification difficult for many black women hoping to provide the advanced levels of care so desperately need in their communities.

RACHA is a third generation homebirth midwife, who supports breastfeeding and natural birth as one and the same. Her practice encourages women to trust their bodies and themselves and she takes pride in her ability to provide women with positive and affirming birth experiences. But as the first black birth center in Los Angeles, Racha faces discrimination both in and outside her own community, as well as possible burn out.

By following these women’s stories, Elizabeth Bayne’s *Chocolate Milk* illustrates the reproductive challenges faced by many black mothers in America and the struggle to bring breastfeeding back as a cultural norm.



# FILM SYNOPSES CONT'D

## MEDIUM SUMMARY OF THE FILM

African American mothers breastfeed at significantly lower rates (64.3%) compared to whites (81.5%) and Hispanics (81.9%) in the U.S., despite the long-term health benefits for infants such as reduced risk of chronic disease, cancer, asthma and obesity. *Chocolate Milk: The Documentary* aims to answer the question of “why don’t more black women breastfeed” by following the stories of three women:

TAMI is a first time mother who wants to breastfeed, but with no family history of breastfeeding and only a basic knowledge of what to expect, she faces a steep learning curve.

LYDIA provides support for breastfeeding mothers at a local WIC center, a federally funded program for low-income mothers. Her dream of providing more advanced care as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) is deferred by expensive new exam prerequisites.

RACHA is a third generation homebirth midwife, who supports breastfeeding and natural birth as one and the same, but faces discrimination both in and outside her own community as a the first black birth center in Los Angeles.

This 90-minute documentary encapsulates Elizabeth Bayne’s three year journey to tell these women’s stories. Through candid interviews mixed with cinema veritas footage, *Chocolate Milk* illustrates the reproductive challenges faced by many black mothers in America to receive adequate and equitable reproductive health care.

## SHORT SUMMARY OF THE FILM

*Chocolate Milk: The Documentary* aims to answer the question of “why don’t more black women breastfeed” by following the stories of Tami, a first time mother who wants to breastfeed; Lydia, a lactation educator at a local WIC center; and Racha, a third generation homebirth midwife. Tami has no family history of breastfeeding and only a basic knowledge of what to expect. Lydia dreams of providing the more advanced care so desperately needed by her community, but the prerequisites to becoming a certified lactation consultant are steep without a college degree. Racha must fight to keep her birth center open in the midst of racial discrimination and non-paying clients. From an unfunded experimental project to a fully-funded feature documentary, Elizabeth Bayne fought to convince funders that the stories of black women deserve to be told.



# CREW BIOS

## KEY PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH THE FILM

**Elizabeth Bayne** (DIRECTOR/PRODUCER). Elizabeth earned her Masters of Public Health from Yale University and MFA in film from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA. An award winning filmmaker and member of Women in Film Los Angeles, BADWest, Film Independent, the Independent Filmmaker Project and the American Public Health Association, Elizabeth is committed to using film to promote health and social issues in underserved communities. Since graduating, she has successfully bridged both worlds to produce content for MIT Media Lab, the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, the LA County Department of Public Health, and A.U.M. Films and Media. She is currently in post-production on two documentaries slated for 2019.

**Sandra Valde-Hansen** (CINEMATOGRAPHER). Sandra is a freelance cinematographer with credits spanning feature films, documentaries, and television. Sandra got her start in documentary, working for an Emmy-award winning documentary cameramen, Tony Foresta, who taught her the beauty of the image is found in simplicity. She attended the American Film Institute's MFA program in Cinematography where she now serves on the faculty. She had the invaluable opportunity to mentor under Stephen Lighthill, ASC, Steven Poster, ASC, Larry Parker, and Alan Caso, ASC. Since graduating from AFI, Sandra has been able to take her passion of cinematography throughout all mediums of storytelling. Sandra shot Gregg Araki's last two features, KABOOM and WHITE BIRD IN A BLIZZARD. Her work has screened at film festivals, including Sundance, South by Southwest (SXSW), and Cannes.

**Kalilah Robinson** (CINEMATOGRAPHER). Kalilah is an award winning cinematographer and filmmaker. Born and raised in Bermuda Kalilah attended Stanford University where she studied Psychology and Film Studies. Robinson worked as a freelance filmmaker on numerous projects ranging from music videos, web series and commercials, to reality TV, documentaries and narrative feature films. In 2010, Robinson founded Somers Isle Productions, an independent production company dedicated to the development of film and television projects about Bermuda's rich cultural heritage. In 2016 Kalilah graduated from The American Film Institute's cinematography masters program. In 2017 she was a Film Independent Project Involve Cinematography Fellow. And in 2017 Robinson's AFI thesis film, LAWMAN, which she shot and co-produced won the ViZio + Dolby Vision Cinematography Award.

**Mark Jonathan Harris** (ADVISOR). Professor Harris is a faculty member of the USC School of Cinematic Arts, an Academy-Award winning documentary filmmaker, journalist and novelist. Among his many documentaries are The Redwoods, a documentary made for the Sierra Club to help establish a redwood National Park which won an Oscar for Best Short Documentary in 1968; The Long Way Home (1997), a film made for the Simon Wiesenthal Center about the period immediately following the Holocaust won the Academy Award for Best Feature Length Documentary (1997); Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport was produced for Warner Bros. and won an Academy Award for Best Feature Length Documentary in 2000 and was also selected for permanent preservation in the National Film Registry in 2014.

**Marta Effinger-Crichlow, Ph.D** (ADVISOR). Professor Effinger-Crichlow is the Chair of the African American Studies Department of the New York City College of Technology. The author of Staging Migrations Toward an American West: From Ida B. Wells to Rhodessa Jones by University Press of Colorado, her other writings are included in African American Lives, Theatre Journal, African

# CREW BIOS CONT'D

## KEY PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH THE FILM

American Review, Footsteps: Children's Magazine, Journal of Black Studies, and the Dictionary of Literary Biography. Effinger-Crichlow is also a dramaturg, playwright, and filmmaker. She served as the project director and co-investigator for CityTech's first ever National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant project entitled Retentions and Transfigurations: The Technological Evolution and Social History of Five New York City Neighborhoods. Effinger-Crichlow is currently an IFP JustFilms Fellow, where she is completing her feature-length documentary Little Sallie Walker. It tells the story of a diverse group of black women and girls who depend upon childhood play to survive girlhood and even womanhood in America.

**Kimberly Seals Allers (ADVISOR).** Ms. Allers is an award-winning journalist, author and a nationally recognized media commentator, consultant and advocate for breastfeeding and infant health. A former senior editor at ESSENCE and writer at FORTUNE magazine, Kimberly is widely considered a leading voice in the counterculture movement in infant feeding. Last year, her online commentaries on the social, structural and racial complexities of maternal and child health issues received over 10 million page views. Kimberly's fifth book, *The Big Let Down—How Medicine, Big Business and Feminism Undermine Breastfeeding*, published by St. Martin's Press, is available everywhere starting January 24th, 2017. She is currently the project director for The First Food Friendly Community Initiative (3FCI), a W.K. Kellogg-funded pilot project in Detroit and Philadelphia and is the former editorial director of The Black Maternal Health Project of Women's eNews. In 2011, Kimberly was named an IATP Food and Community Fellow focused on reframing breastfeeding disparities as a food systems issue.

**Jacqueline Wolf (ADVISOR).** Professor Wolf is an Advisor and assistant professor in the history of medicine, Department of Social Medicine, Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine, and adjunct assistant professor, Women's Studies Program, Ohio University. Wolf is the author of *Don't Kill Your Baby: Public Health and the Decline of Breastfeeding in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* and the host of *Health Vision*, a weekly show on contemporary health and medicine airing on the PBS affiliate in Southeast Ohio.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS OF ELIZABETH BAYNE DURING THE MAKING OF CHOCOLATE MILK

## 10 MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1

### WHAT MADE YOU START CHOCOLATE MILK?

Chocolate Milk started out of necessity. I needed a project that allowed me to make a meaningful contribution to public health. This was the precise reason I chose to attend film school after completing my fellowship at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. During that time I had the opportunity to assist on a PSA campaign by The Ad Council that aired on television and radio stations across the country. Seeing how the agency was able to track the impact of these PSA spots by using audience surveys helped me realize that media was the way that I wanted to reach communities.

When I learned about the racial disparities in breastfeeding, I immediately wanted to be of service. The low rates of breastfeeding in the black community is a public health crisis that reflects poor access to adequate and equitable reproductive health care for black women in general. It's a clear issue of reproductive justice. In fact, the maternal mortality crisis and low breastfeeding rates among black women are two sides of the same coin.

My first thought was to produce a PSA campaign, but after reviewing the academic literature, existing outreach efforts and speaking to different mothers, I realized that wasn't the answer. The health community has known for decades that black breastfeeding rates are low. And black mothers already know the benefits of breastfeeding. But there was still a divide. The statistics were misleading health workers to assume that black women didn't want to breastfeed and black women were assuming that they had to figure it out on their own. Chocolate Milk started as a storytelling project, a bridge to understanding and addressing the challenges of breastfeeding in the black community by giving black mothers space to tell their stories in their own voices.

2

### WHY DO BLACK MOTHERS BREASTFEED AT LOWER RATES IN THE U.S.?

That's a tough question, but at the same time it isn't. At the core the reason black women have lower breastfeeding rates in the U.S. (64%) than white (81%) and Hispanic (81.5%) women is racism. Lower breastfeeding rates among black women are at their core a racial healthcare disparity. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) defines racial disparities in health care as "racial or ethnic differences in the quality of health care that are not due to access-related factors or clinical needs, preferences, and appropriateness of intervention." Because low breastfeeding rates affect African American women regardless of income or education, it's clear that it's not due to access, it's due to perception - the perception that black women don't breastfeed.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONT'D

But while health provider assumptions that black women don't breastfeed may keep them from providing adequate breastfeeding support, it may also keep families, employers and the community from supporting them as well. Low expectations from the very people from whom they need the most support may keep black mothers who want to breastfeed from reaching their breastfeeding goals.

3

## HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO DEVELOP CHOCOLATE MILK AND WHAT KEEPS YOU MOTIVATED?

Chocolate Milk has been over five years in the making, starting from when I first read about the issue in an article in *This Nation's Health*, a publication from the American Public Health Association (APHA). There was a story on their front cover in 2013 about the low breastfeeding rates for African American women. Ever since attending public health school, I had been attuned to racial health care disparities and immediately recognized this as one. As I began interviewing the various breastfeeding experts who'd been working in lactation for 10+ years and black mothers who'd overcome the challenges to find breastfeeding success, they all became my motivation. I wanted to support their efforts to re-establish breastfeeding as a cultural norm in the black community and they inspired me to continue developing the project into what eventually became Chocolate Milk.

4

## HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE NAME CHOCOLATE MILK?

The original title of the project was The African American Breastfeeding Project (AABP) which remains on the logo to this day, but I was looking for something more powerful, more playful...and easier to type. Chocolate is a term of endearment for people of darker skin and milk is a fluid secreted by female mammals for the nourishment of their young, so the title is fitting, but there was another reason I chose Chocolate Milk. In grade school chocolate milk was my favorite treat in the lunchroom line, so I gravitated towards the visual of a chocolate milk carton. At the time conventional wisdom said that milk was key to a child's development so I thought grabbing a milk carton in the cafeteria was a healthy choice. The irony is that it's breastmilk from a human, not a cow, that's the true healthy choice for early childhood development. I wanted to play with that idea and the project evolved to become Chocolate Milk.

5

## THERE ARE OTHER FILMS ON BREASTFEEDING AND BIRTH, WHAT MAKES CHOCOLATE MILK DIFFERENT?

I was inspired by films like *A Doula Story* (2005), *The Business of Being Born* (2008) and more recently *The Milky Way* (2015), for which I had the wonderful opportunity to meet the filmmakers and speak with them about their process. Each film has it's own perspective on childbirth and approach to the subject, but the recurring theme is respect for women's bodies, their emotions and their personal choices about when and how to give birth or breastfeed. In this respect, Chocolate Milk follows this spirit.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONT'D

But what's different about my film is that I created three individual portraits of black motherhood from three very different sides of the birth and breastfeeding industry. I wanted to show a variety of experiences, from the new mom who goes it alone, the couple who hires a midwife and the family who qualifies for WIC, in order to show that everyone's breastfeeding journey is different and that there is no one definition of success.

6

## DESIGN SEEMS TO BE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN CHOCOLATE MILK, WHY FOCUS ON THAT?

The reason I studied filmmaking was to learn how to reach communities with a public health message in an entertaining way. The reason I studied filmmaking at a design school, ArtCenter College of Design, was to learn how to use design thinking to optimize the social impact of my work. Branding early on was very important to Chocolate Milk, even when it was just a documentary web series. By designing a brand with bold, yet playful colors, I wanted to convey the tone of the project and build recognition and trust with audiences with each episode I posted. Because of this, when I announced that I was making preview screenings of an early cut of the feature-length documentary available to organizations for free during National Breastfeeding Month, people were willing to sign up without seeing the film in advance because they knew and trusted the brand.

7

## WHO ARE YOUR BIGGEST INFLUENCES IN THE DOCUMENTARY WORLD?

There are so many documentaries and filmmakers whose work I admire, but if I had to choose, I would say Frederick Wiseman, Dawn Porter, and Michael Moore.

8

## WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST BUMMER?

Being turned down repeatedly for funding for years. But it helped me hone my pitch and how I explained the purpose and vision of the film so that when I found funding institutions that were the right fit for Chocolate Milk, they were immediately able to recognize the merit of the project. I can't thank the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) enough for awarding me my first grant, which allowed me to purchase equipment to continue filming, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for awarding me my second grant which allowed me to complete the project.

9

## IF YOU HAD TO DO IT OVER AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

If I had it to do over again, I wouldn't wait so long to ask for help. I produced Chocolate Milk as a documentary web series for three years before I finally asked for funding support. Up until then I was producing, shooting and editing the project by myself in my free time. I learned a lot doing it this way, but in the future, I will definitely reach out for support and build my team sooner.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONT'D

10

## WHERE DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF INDEPENDENT FILM- MAKING?

The future of independent filmmaking is exponential. As long as technology continues to lower the price of entry, more and more people and communities will have the chance to tell their own stories. And to me, that's the beauty of cinema, to be able to experience the world through eyes of people living lives very different from your own and recognize the universality and humanity of every experience.

# MEDIA ASSETS

1

## PAST PRESS RELEASES

Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) and City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) Announce Recipients of the Creative Economic Development Fund

[https://www.cciarts.org/Library/docs/CEDF\\_2017\\_Press\\_Release\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cciarts.org/Library/docs/CEDF_2017_Press_Release_FINAL.pdf)

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Awards Grant for Feature Documentary on Black Breastfeeding

<https://www.prlog.org/12742885-wk-kellogg-foundation-awards-grant-for-feature-documentary-on-black-breastfeeding.html>

Documentary on Black Breastfeeding to Preview in 200 Communities During National Breastfeeding Month

<https://www.prlog.org/12784504-documentary-on-black-breastfeeding-to-preview-in-200-communities-during-national-breastfeeding-month.html>

2

## STILLS FROM THE FILM AND DIRECTOR

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rg04swua70yz9ia/AAB4QNpkSsEnMkDCV0-vkIFba?dl=0>

3

## CLIPS FROM THE FILM

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rg04swua70yz9ia/AAB4QNpkSsEnMkDCV0-vkIFba?dl=0>



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