



## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL state of the company / april 2008**

BBB Educators,

It is with great excitement and appreciation that I present to you this report reviewing the state of our company from its inception in July 2005 to the present day and some thoughts about what lies ahead for BabyBodyBirth. As you read this, I hope you will be renewed with enthusiasm for our united mission and reinvigorated to continue on our shared path towards changing the cultural climate surrounding women's health for the next generation.

### **Starting Points/Original Vision**

BabyBodyBirth was founded with the goals of building a better CBE organization that:

1. Encouraged and offered opportunities for member involvement
2. Supported its members with excellent teaching and marketing materials
3. Offered professionally designed printed and web-based materials
4. Would appeal to a more widespread, mainstream audience than traditional and existing independent CBE "methods"

### **1. Membership**

BabyBodyBirth currently has 27 members located in 12 states; 8 are fully certified, 19 have yet to complete their training. After the first Training Seminar held in July 2007, it was determined that the best course of action for the company was to focus on completing development of infrastructure, curriculum and all other materials so that all BBB Educators were fully prepared and teaching the same material; once this criteria was progressing, Training Seminars for new educator candidates were planned.

Members have served on the Advisory Board and committees, participated in brainstorming ideas for the curriculum, piloted the 3 core BBB classes and offered key feedback on a wide range of issues related to the development of the company. The babybodybirth\_work yahoo group has served as a central form of communication among the membership.

An organization chart that reflects the reality of our current organizational structure is attached—all members are encouraged to view it with an eye towards deciding where they might like to direct their efforts, should they have the desire for a deeper involvement with BBB. Additionally, the new Forum

on the member website will serve as a place for furthering our communication and providing support to one another as we continue to build a strong BBB presence nationally and locally.

## 2. Quality Materials

- A) **Marketing:** Individual business cards were printed as a part of the June 2006 package. Brochures were identified as a high priority item at the June 2006 meeting. In response, 2 brochures (core class and BODY class) were developed and designed over that summer and printed in September 2006. BODY class flyers for at-home printing were designed and will serve as a template for future flyers. In addition to these items, postcards, and SWAG items have been designed and printed and are available for purchase and use by our Educators. A number of forms of stationary are designed and will be printed when it is financially sound to do so.
- B) **Teaching:** BBB started with the idea of 3 separate classes each geared toward a mainstream population at different phases of pregnancy. Through a great deal of exploration, an authentic BBB voice was developed that would speak to our broad intended audience (see item 4 below.) BBB now has 3 unique classes that consistently exhibit our innovative concepts and are truly appropriate for all women. There are complete lesson plans for our BABY, BODY, and BIRTH classes and a comprehensive Educator Certification Program including the curriculum for the 4 day Training Seminar. The teaching aides are more than 80% complete overall for the 3 core classes with the residual 20% having been conceptualized and/or drafted, contributions would be appreciated. With the final modifications to our website design and security, all up-to-date teaching materials are available online to fully certified BBB Educators. As the remaining teaching materials are completed and final design is integrated into all 3 core classes, the documents will be posted as soon as they are ready for the convenience of BBBEs.

## 3. Design/Website

- A) **Design:** At BBB's inception, a graphic and website designer (David) was retained to create a consistent corporate branding look. The company colors were selected and the logo was developed into 3 forms: full logo, flower alone, and flower with B. A photo shoot was held to produce original photographs used on our website and print materials. A full range of ID applications (letterhead, stationary, business cards, etc.) were designed along with the most critical marketing materials on the wish list. The website look with the basic functionality initially required was debuted in March 2006.

In the second phase of the BBB design project, an internship opportunity was posted at various art colleges in the Philadelphia, New Jersey, and New York metro areas and an art student from Rowan University (Irina) was selected to work on the BABY class materials. She has also helped with printing of new teachers' business cards from our original template. More recently, BBB has entered into a contract with a professional graphic designer in NYC (Jonathan) who is working on

select projects starting with the BIRTH anatomy poster which is also used for at least 3 other activities. Prioritizing materials to be designed using criteria such as usefulness in classes, using templates for similar documents, and choosing materials that may be available to the public for purchase or may increase our marketing efforts will allow for maximizing our financial output on any design costs incurred in the near future. To bolster our cost-efficiency while continuing to move forward on completing our design work, Chava has received training in Photoshop, Publisher, and Adobe Professional and has shown great proficiency in being able to take the design elements from our professionally designed materials and carry them into many other areas (e-mail, website, documents) for a designed, cohesive look in all BBB media.

B) **Website:** After interviewing candidates for a month, a new web designer (Ed) was hired in September 2007. He has been responsive with communication and has demonstrated the wonderful ability to accurately estimate the time and cost to complete projects. He has provided me with full access to the site and after some training by Ed and a client of mine, Chava and I have learned the workings of the site and are able to change/add content to most pages. The website's server was switched and a complete overhaul of function, structure, and text on the sites was performed. A master plan for the website has been conceived and will be instituted in stages based on priorities and finances. The first major part of this plan was completed in April 2008 with the launching of the BBB Member site which allows BBBEs to update their accounts, web pages, schedules, pictures and bios, as well as to download materials from the website and participate in the BBB Member Forum. We will move forward on implementing the remainder of the master website plan (developing a client site, listing local resources, etc.) as time and finances allow.

#### 4. Audience

After initially utilizing the existing terms currently used in childbirth education and attempting to apply them to a more wide-ranging audience, we found that the terms themselves conveyed a perspective that could not do justice to our clients as thinking adults or our broader mission to influence the culture at large. Through this process of realization, we have developed new concepts which are copyrighted and some of which are in the process of being trademarked (Ebb and Flow of Birth, Portraits of Labor, Pregnancy Cycle.) These new concepts have been an integral part of creating new ways of teaching that don't play into a fear-based model that is used on both sides of the birth scene. For example, Portraits of Labor developed out of the need to describe labors without using 'typical' language which has not been useful for women to understand what their labor might be like—but only what a 'typical' labor might be like. The use of customized, particular information instead of generalized and typical has produced a paradigm shift in women who have taken BBB classes to truly be open to whatever birth they experience. Our current lesson plans and teaching materials have all been vetted to reflect this deep philosophical stance.

## **Additional Section Updates (formerly the 'departments' in the '5 year plan')**

### **1. Curriculum**

The focus for the coming year as regards our current 3 classes involves the design and production of client materials. With the solidification of our 3 core classes and completion of the last teaching aides in the coming months, our attention turns to realizing the greater vision that we hold for BBB—developing classes, concepts and material to fill out the scope of the reproductive health cycle, beginning with the onset of menstruation through menopause and all the related issues that one may encounter along the way. Prototypes for these additional content areas will be presented for feedback as they are developed.

### **2. Human Resources/Personnel**

Now that the initial building phase of BabyBodyBirth is complete, a new diagram (see attached) has been developed that more accurately represents how our company operates right now. Chava and I diagramed a corporate structure over a year ago that was termed our '5 year plan' and we have that in our back pocket as it requires a large number of personnel with personal time and company financial resources before it can be realized. Over the last year we tried to work within that framework but we all found it wasn't helpful or representative of what was actually happening, and in fact it misrepresented the work that was being done leaving some feeling frustrated at not being able to do as much as they perceived others were doing and others wondering why it was taking so much time to get things done. Some key changes to note are that the names of people are included on the diagram that have committed to that position. Specific time and work requirements are discussed with an individual prior to them applying for/accepting a position.

Chava and I made the conscious decision in the fall of 2006 to take on full-time unsalaried jobs with BBB. We were already spending any time we had on this company and realized that this step was necessary to make BBB successful and build stage 1 of the company in a reasonable time frame. In 2007 Shari contributed additional work hours as a part-time employee and contributions from a number of other educators have enabled the completion of the initial development of BBB curriculum. The 'Independent Contractor' on the diagram refers to the fact that BBB has no employees currently for 2008. Shari's position had to be terminated for financial reasons — it was beyond our resources to maintain an employee. There were additional expenses in terms of insurances, taxes, and paperwork filing that put having any employees out of reach for BBB currently. Shari plans to obtain a federal EIN # and will be our first choice based on her availability to work on specific paid projects as an independent contractor. The board is defined as an Advisory Board with new roles and responsibilities outlined. More information will be forthcoming and we will hold nominations for this board after the renewal process is complete on May 31<sup>st</sup>—please nominate yourself if you are interested after reviewing the commitment it entails.

2007 brought significant changes including vast improvements to the curriculum and contractor changes for website and graphic design; the arrangement with our initial web and graphic designer David was terminated due to communication difficulties, lack of meeting mutually set deadlines and finally after the short period in August when our website showed only an 'offline' page which appeared to be deliberate. Though we saw the time it took to deal with the issues surrounding David and find replacements as a setback, it was also an invaluable learning process that set us up for better business arrangements and a catalyst to learn more about the technical and technological aspects that enable us to do our work. Our new website has been designed to better serve our needs including personal control over the pages and a security system that allows us to utilize it for internal company purposes.

**Professional Development:** BBB has established a professional development department which will work to handle renewals going forward, the Mentoring program, the Trainer program, and offer general professional development programs to our members. We were able to begin this initiative once Verena Beckstrand made the commitment in November to accept the position of Director of Professional Development. Lisa Whitener has agreed to assist her with the plan that Lisa will eventually take over the Trainer program.

From the time our initial set of lesson plans was created through the establishment of the Mentor program, mentoring has been performed by Chava and me with weekly phone meetings as individual instructors have prepared for a class. There has been on-line and phone assistance by Verena and Emily on certain aspects of classes they developed along with input on our yahoo list from other Educators (Hilary, Shari, and Cathy to name a few) on how they prepared for or taught their classes.

### 3. Communications

- a. Over the last 2 years, Chava and I have been contacted by representatives from corporate Babies 'R' Us on 3 separate occasions for information, advice, or to be included in different projects. We have kept open the lines of communication though they have had numerous changes in personnel even in this short time. The representatives we have spoken to agree with our position regarding successful marketing and 'free classes' and continue to state that it would take a paradigm shift at BRU before the 'higher-ups' would pay for or charge for an education program. We have made our position known to each new representative and will continue to weigh the pros and cons of each venture as it comes along.
- b. BBB exhibited at the MANA conference in Baltimore in 2006 and hosted a 'Happy Hour' for more personal conversation with interested parties. Our presence and new ideas were well-received at the conference as evidenced by the long time people talked with us at our table and the many midwives with requests for teachers in their area. Thank you again to

Helaine for set up, Emily, Cathy, and Jen SK for manning the table, Emily providing amazing catering for the Happy Hour, and Jen SK for packing up. We have a comprehensive calendar with relevant organizations' conference dates, etc. to keep aware of opportunities for marketing and relationship-building and will be prioritizing our attendance based on potential to increase our client referral base and financial feasibility.

- c. BBB exhibited at the Midwifery Today conference in Philadelphia March 26-30, 2008. At our table, we had the opportunity to share some of our innovative concepts and approaches with veterans of the birth world who were universally excited and impressed with the freshness of those ideas and expressed interest in purchasing some of our unique materials such as the nutrition flower.

#### **4. Marketing & Sales**

After much research into various methods, *Constant Contact* was chosen as the medium used to perform a mass e-mailing campaign with Chava learning the ropes and Shari and I able to follow up with adding to the lists, sending out batches of e-mails, and viewing reports. At year's end, almost 5,000 addresses were compiled based on lists of lactation consultants, doulas, generic-certified CBE's (ALACE and ICEA), birth networks, and midwives and all were sent the same e-mail you all received. BBB had an open rate of 38.2% (higher than the 37% average compared with other sites) and a click-thru rate of 31.6% (almost 4 times higher than average!) and only 54 people removed their name from our list. This is the first time hearing of BBB for most of these contacts and we are keeping in mind the marketing principle 'it takes seven points of contact before someone who shows interest in your Web site, knowledge, products, and/or services becomes a paying customer' to guide us in our hopes and expectations. In the first month, eleven direct requests for more information (either via e-mail or phone) and 3 applications were received from this campaign. Two more outreach e-mails are planned this year so as to achieve name recognition and promote any products/services available but not 'spam' people unnecessarily.

#### **5. Research & Publications**

Robyn had developed a proposal for research projects relating to BBB specific ideas; because this is a time intensive program which will take financial and human resources, it is on hold until those resources become available. The master plan for the website includes the ability to offer publication that will be available for download to the general public. Additionally, we are exploring opportunities for presenting some of our innovative work in multiple media.

#### **6. Educators**

This department was conceptualized as a direct voice from the educators to the company leadership. Under the new company structure, the Educator Representative will be elected by the members and serve on the Advisory Board in order to bring concerns to the leadership and report back to the membership, facilitating communication in both directions.

## 7. Operations

- a. **Corporate Structure:** BabyBodyBirth remains an LLC owned by Dawn Weismer. In 2008, Chava Ortner will be added to the current LLC documentation as a partner. A system for proposing work/taking over responsibility areas that will be eligible for compensation in shares will be developed in the coming months and open to those who are active, involved members of BBB. A plan is in place to shift into a multi-owner (3 shareholders or more) shares structure but due to the cost, time and non-immediacy of need for such a change, it will be held over for a future date.
- b. **Legal:** Extensive meetings and communications have taken place with our legal advisors regarding Training and Educator Agreements, issues of copyrighting, trademarking, etc and company structure. All our documents and information are copyrighted and our logo, along with certain unique phrases, are in the process of or will be considered for trademarking. This is an expensive step and the cost/benefit is being weighed for each possible trademark idea.
- c. **Finance:** There are no regular payments to meet this year and each expenditure is being assessed prior to approval by the company managers. A contracted fee for improvements to the website has been agreed upon and will be a considerable amount but won't have to be repeated. Trainings will be confirmed as we have the number of participants necessary to cover the expense. There have been 3 investors in BabyBodyBirth (Dawn Weismer, Wendy Berry (Dawn's sister), and Chava Ortner.) Investments to BBB are treated as loans to be paid back in the future when our ledger is in the black and our income supports the outflow of loan payments.

Thank you for reading this document and being involved in BBB. This report was intended to provide a comprehensive update on the different areas of BBB as a company. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or for clarification. I look forward to the coming year and working with each of you to continue to grow BabyBodyBirth into a household name known as the most recommended prenatal classes.

Dawn Weismer  
Founder and Company Director



# Organization Chart 2008

