

Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere, Inc. ANNUAL REPORT



2024

REACHING OUR SISTERS EVERYWHERE, INC. (ROSE)



Programs at a Glance

**Community-Based
Breastfeeding Peer
Support Training**



**Lactation Support
Skills Training**



Queen Circle



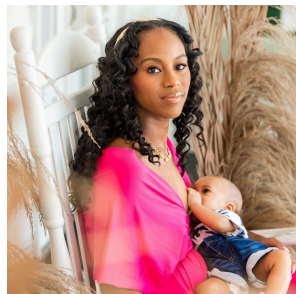
**Technical
Assistance &
Consulting**



**Reaching Our
Brothers
Everywhere**



**Direct
Breastfeeding
Support**



**Community
Engagement Events**



Equity Workshops



President's Message



**Kimarie Bugg,
President and CIO**

"We are the ones we've been waiting for."

Dear ROSE/ROBE Family,

We are completing our 13th year of existence. That is truly a mind-boggling feat. When Mary (Jackson), Betty (Neal), and I met to talk about putting this together, we had no idea we could do what we have all done. We were out here defining ourselves, and Andrea came along and bulldozed over us with her amazing organizational skills and the rest is history. Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere is ordained by the Lord. There is NO way that ordinary people like us could have done this without divine intervention.

This is a topsy-turvy time in the history of this country and this organization. We've come a long way, and there is still a purpose to achieve and work to be done. But let's talk about some of the miracles we have accomplished. Bro. Carl, Dr. G. Bugg, Andrea, Mary and I are all published authors! We have a chapter in the book Breastfeeding and Human Lactation, 7th edition. Every person studying for the IBCLC exam uses that book. The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine put me on a Committee on Understanding Breastfeeding Promotion, Initiation and Support Across the United States: An Analysis! 200 people were interviewed and 20 were chosen- ROSE is at the table. That's a big thing!! We are a sought-after commodity.

We have collaborated with healthcare providers, public health experts, academia and community-based organizations. There are not many organizations like ours that can say that. Keep up the vital work. It is necessary now more than ever. I am intentionally learning more about oligarchs. Our government will be run by billionaires. We and the communities we serve will not be a priority for them. We will need to develop, implement and disseminate innovative ways to do our work. We must change the way we speak about what we do, but we must continue to do what we do. Our ancestors are counting on us to preserve their legacy.

Love and Blessings to you all. We got this!

Kimarie Bugg DNP, MPH, FAAN, IBCLC
President and Chief Institutional Officer
Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere, Inc.

ROBE Program Director's Message



Carl Route, ROBE Director

"This is revolutionary work!"

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on 2024, we are filled with immense gratitude for your unwavering support and commitment to advancing maternal and child health through breastfeeding advocacy and equity. This year has been transformative—marked by milestones achieved, communities impacted, and lives touched. Let me begin by saying a big THANK YOU to all of our stakeholders; funders, sponsors, donors, partners, allies and friends. Because of you and our collaborative efforts together we were able to advance our missions and create better impacts and outcomes for those we serve.

As I reflect on this past year's accomplishments I am inspired to continue on this track where ROBE (1) revisited our capacity to deliver excellent proposals, programs, and presentations, 2) hosted its own Summit and celebrated its 10th year in existence, and 3) managed successful collaborative relationships with local, city and state agencies. There have been a few challenges since we began our work of educating, equipping and empowering men to become a part of the solution for minimizing or even eliminating maternal and child health disparities. ROBE is fortunate to have Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere, Inc. as our biggest supporter and founding organization, which helped us to navigate and overcome any potential issue we've faced.

Because of last year's accomplishments and with your continued support, ROBE is positioned to embark on a great 2025. Our commitment to advancing maternal, child, and community health through breastfeeding advocacy and equity is now stronger than ever. We will continue to build on fruitful and productive partnerships and collaborations from this past year to create even more opportunities to serve on a much broader scale. ROBE will continue to work with local, city, and state agencies to carry the message of "preconception health" to the most underserved communities. We look forward to creating and establishing a framework for a rites of passage program for youth. We at ROBE are profoundly grateful for you, the staff and volunteers who help to make our positive progress possible by bringing their energy and fresh ideas and positioning us to go far into the future. Let's go!

Carl L. Route, Jr., CLC, PPN
ROBE Director
Reaching Our Brothers Everywhere, Inc.

ROSE Spotlight

Mission Statement

ROSE is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to serve communities through a continued focus on centering the breastfeeding needs of Black families and impacting broader maternal, infant, and family health outcomes across the nation. ROSE works to normalize breastfeeding by providing resources and networking opportunities for individuals and communities. As a national expert and in partnership with communities and key partners, we build equity in maternal, infant, and family health through culturally competent training, education, advocacy, and support.

Vision Statement

Breastfeeding disparities among African American women will be significantly reduced, and 82% of their babies receive breast milk at birth. (see [here](#) [75.4%])

Core Values

Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (ROSE), Inc. seeks to enhance, encourage, support, promote, and protect breastfeeding throughout the USA, by working to reduce the breastfeeding disparities among African American women, and to strengthen the health of their babies and families through, mentoring, training, breastfeeding support groups, social support, outreach, education, legislation, health policies, and social marketing.

ROSE Programs and Initiatives

Breastfriends	Rose Community Transformers	Powerful Petals IBCLC Study Session
Provider Trainings	Racial Equity Trainings	ROSE & ROBE Summit and Forums
African American Breastfeeding Blueprint	Breastfeeding Center of Excellence	Village Innovating Perinatal Support
Direct Services to Families	Reaching Our Brothers Everywhere	Technical Assistants and Consulting
Community-Based Breastfeeding Peer Support Training	Lactation Support Skills Training	Direct Breastfeeding Support
Queen Circle	Direct Breastfeeding Support	Equity Workshops
Community Engagement Events	Conferences and Forms	

ROBE Spotlight

Mission Statement

ROBE seeks to educate, equip, and empower men to impact an increase in breastfeeding rates and a decrease in infant mortality rates within African-American communities.

Key Programs

ROBE
Reaching Our Brothers Everywhere

Presents
BOY, MAN, FATHER+ Talks

Hosted By
Carl Route

Virtually
Every 4th Thursday
6PM - 7PM

REGISTER NOW

"A space where males discuss maternal and infant health related topics."

ROBE BMF+T & HOOP THERAPY COMMUNITY CHECK-IN

2ND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
8PM - 9PM

REGISTER NOW

ROBE
Reaching Our Brothers Everywhere

Fact Sheets for Dads

It's normal to feel a mix of emotions ranging from joy and excitement to nervousness and uncertainty. To help you navigate this new chapter in your life, ROBE has created a fact sheet specifically tailored for first-time fathers.

ROBE
Reaching Our Brothers Everywhere

FACT SHEETS FOR DADS

SAFE SLEEP

- Place every infant on their back when sleeping to reduce the risk of suffocation and other sleep-related causes of infant mortality
- Dress baby lightly to prevent overheating
- Use a firm surface to support the baby from rolling over
- Have the baby share your room, not your bed

HOW TO SUPPORT MOTHER AND BABY

- De-stress the house (complete household chores)
- Clean and prep breastfeeding pump pieces
- Engage in open communication about her recovery needs and desires
- Ensure she has access to food and drinks
- Assist by holding the baby during meal breaks
- Take the baby for walks to socialize and get fresh air
- Attend to the needs of older children, if applicable

BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

- Optimal nutrition for infants, providing essential nutrients, calories, and fluids
- Offers protection against various short and long-term illnesses and diseases in babies
 - Reduces the risk of asthma, obesity, type 1 diabetes, SIDS, ear infections, and stomach bugs
- Convenient for mothers to breastfeed anytime, anywhere, and is cost-effective compared to formula
- Breastfeeding lowers the mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure
- Easily digestible breast milk supports the baby's digestive system

SKIN TO SKIN

- Research on the "Golden Hour" highlights its significance in maximizing parent-child bonding during the first hour of a baby's life
- Aids in regulating the baby's temperature, maintaining a regular heart rate, and stabilizing blood sugar levels
- Promotes the production of breast milk
- Diminishes stress, anxiety, and the risk of postpartum depression
- Boosts parental confidence, particularly for fathers, through the release of hormones like oxytocin, prolactin, and endorphins, fostering emotional bonding and intense feelings of love and protectiveness
- Creates a sense of safety for the baby, reducing crying tendencies

LABOR AND DELIVERY SUPPORT

- Get ready by attending childbirth classes, reading pregnancy literature, and conducting research
- Familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms of labor
- Support her by understanding her birth plan and effectively communicating her preferences
- Assist as directed by healthcare providers during labor
- Provide distractions to keep her focused and relaxed during the labor process

FATHERHOOD: BARRIERS AND MYTHS

- Challenges in Employment (Unemployment, underemployment, lack of time off)
- Parenting in Low-Income Urban Neighborhoods
- Difficulties with the Child's Mother, including strained relationships, lack of contact, and gatekeeping
- Absence of Realistic Role Models - Fathers emotionally detached from their feelings
- Insufficient Community and Support

FATHERHOOD: SOLUTION TO BARRIERS

- Cherish the moments spent with your children and express love towards them
- Establish a meaningful relationship with the mother to provide solid support for the child, working on building trust
- In low-income areas, closely supervise and guide your children, while in high-income areas, educate them on safety and conflict resolution
- Secure employment or a stable career to financially support your child, demonstrating a commitment to their well-being. Allocate time off for your child and actively be present in their lives
- Treat your child the way you wish to be treated, especially if you lack a positive fatherly role model
- Cultivate relationships with other responsible fathers to create a supportive community that fosters mutual assistance

REFERENCES

1. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2016). Safe Sleep Practices to Reduce the Risk of SIDS and Other Sleep-Related Infant Mortality. *Pediatrics*, 137(5), e2016-2018.

2. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2016). Breastfeeding: Benefits for Infants and Mothers. *Pediatrics*, 137(5), e2019-2021.

3. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2016). Breastfeeding: Benefits for Fathers. *Pediatrics*, 137(5), e2022-2024.

4. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2016). Breastfeeding: Benefits for the Community. *Pediatrics*, 137(5), e2025-2027.

5. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2016). Breastfeeding: Benefits for the Environment. *Pediatrics*, 137(5), e2028-2030.

ROSE/ROBE 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

2024 was an impactful year for ROSE and ROBE, marked by significant milestones and collaborations. This list is compiled of 10 major highlights with summaries of ROSE and ROBE's impact via the staff's perspective.



Scholarship Recognition



ROSE received the Rising Tide Equity Scholarship by Lactation Education Resources (LER), a testament to our commitment to advancing equity in maternal and paternal health.

The ROSE team in collaboration with North Carolina A&T Pathway 2 Program played a pivotal role in executing the successful Uplifting Black and Brown Lactation Success (UBBLS) Summit, a hallmark event for both organizations. Dr K Bugg received a Legacy Award.

UBBLS Summit Success



System Proficiency



New team members gained expertise in ROSE systems, to streamline partnerships, financial management tools, and enhancing operational efficiency.

Completing Perinatal Patient Navigator Training at Morehouse School of Medicine and onboarding 3 new team members strengthened team capacity.

Training and Development



Creative and Technical Contributions



Achievements included organization wide implementation of data management tools, including Salesforce documentation, developing replication logic models, publishing impactful work, and presenting key indices.

The ROSE & ROBE team had national reach which includes traveling to Buffalo, NY, and Indianapolis, IN, New Orleans, LA, Cincinnati, OH, Minneapolis, MN, Chicago, IL, Greensboro, NC, Anchorage, AK etc. which provided opportunities to connect with broader audiences.

Expanding Reach



Collaboration with ROBE



Notable initiatives included Hoop Therapy, the 10th Year Celebration, and innovative projects like the Boy Man Fatherhood podcast.

Emphasizing the benefits of breastfeeding and the significance of fatherhood further enriched our programs.

Fatherhood and Breastfeeding



Community Impact



Events like Community Resource Day, Clayton County Women Infant and Children (WIC) Men's Baby Shower, and partnerships with organizations like Morehouse School of Medicine, DeKalb Dept. of Public Health, and Healthy Mothers Healthy Baby demonstrated our community-centric approach.

ROSE and ROBE supported legislative efforts, including Senator Warnock's Maternal Health Fathers Matter Act and the Kira 4 Kira Moms Maternal Health Bill.

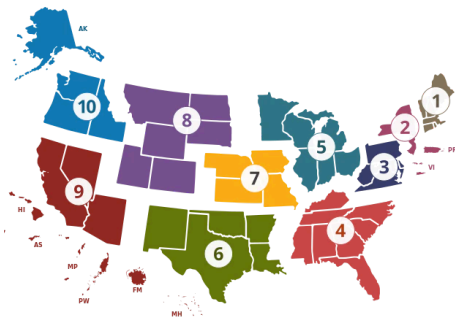
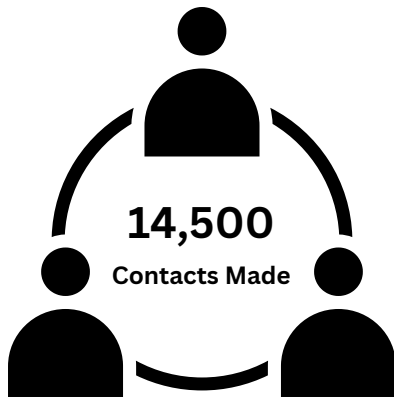
Advocacy and Policy



2024 was a year of growth, learning, and transformative impact, setting the stage for continued success for ROSE and ROBE to support families and eliminate breastfeeding disparities.

ROSE 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

...BY THE NUMBERS...



8 out of 10

Public Health Regions Directly Engaged



157

Trained through Peer Trainings



914

Online Downloads of Saving Tomorrow Today: an African American Breastfeeding Blueprint

...2024 PUBLICATIONS....

> [Breastfeed Med.](#) 2024 Sep;19(9):683-691. doi: 10.1089/bfm.2023.0297. Epub 2024 Jun 28.

Setting the Agenda for Patient-Centered Research in Infant and Young-Child Feeding: Results from the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine and Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere

Ann Kellams¹, Laura Kair², Kimberley Broomfield-Massey³, Kimberly D Harper⁴, Kimarie Bugg⁵, Alison Stuebe⁶

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 38938202 PMCID: PMC11535443 (available on 2025-09-13)

DOI: 10.1089/bfm.2023.0297

Abstract

Background: Breastfeeding is critically important for optimal health of both birthing people and their infants. Shared, patient-centered goals of how health care team members, community groups, and families can help facilitate breastfeeding success are needed, as are ways to define and measure what breastfeeding success looks like from the patient's perspective. **Methods:** The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine and Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere's collaborated in a multi-methods approach to identify breastfeeding priorities most important to parents. **Results:** We identified (1) Key components of a successful breastfeeding journey defined by parents and families, (2) Research priorities that will enable families to achieve breastfeeding. **Conclusion:** Dissemination of these findings can foster research efforts that are codesigned with birthing parents and families and reflect their priorities.

Keywords: academy of breastfeeding medicine; agenda; breastfeeding; human milk; infant feeding; outcomes; patient-centered; research.

[PubMed Disclaimer](#)

> [Am J Perinatol.](#) 2024 Dec 4. doi: 10.1055/a-2463-4327. Online ahead of print.

Integrating Stakeholder Priorities for the Optimization of Care of the Preterm Infant in a Safety-Net NICU

Elizabeth Sewell¹, Miguel Locsin², George Bugg¹, Kimarie Bugg³, Kate McGinnis¹, Mary Jackson³, Nathalie Maitre¹, Sierra Peagler⁴, Dana Robinson⁴, Andrea Serano³, Jessica Roberts¹

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 39631744 DOI: 10.1055/a-2463-4327

Abstract

Objective: This study aimed to engage clinical and community stakeholders to create a prioritization matrix of interventions to reduce neonatal brain injury and improve neurodevelopmental outcomes.

Study design: We collaborated with our community partner to establish a Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG). Faculty performed a literature review to identify neonatal neuroprotective interventions; additional priorities from the LEAG were also included. Project leaders scored and presented intervention bundles for impact. Stakeholder priorities for value/feasibility were obtained via questionnaire. Mean values were incorporated into a prioritization matrix.

Results: Themes from discussions with LEAG members included the role of the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) parent, the experience of trauma, shared decision-making, communication and trust with the health care team, and bias in medical care. Five interventions were placed in the highest priority quadrant of the prioritization matrix: thermoregulation, maternal antepartum steroids, delayed cord clamping, optimized oxygen delivery, and optimized glucose regulation.

Conclusion: It is feasible to incorporate community and parent values into clinically oriented neuroprotective intervention bundles for preterm infants. This clinical-community collaboration is vital to ensure that our project objectives meet the needs and priorities of the population it is intended to serve.

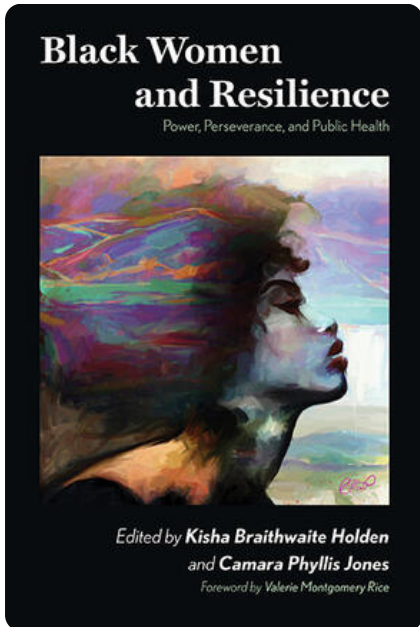
Key points: - Including input from parent advisory groups supports interventions that meet the needs of families... - Collaboration between clinical and community stakeholders can improve neuroprotective and neurodevelopmental strategies... - Incorporation of clinical interventions into a prioritization matrix improves resource utilization... - Five perinatal interventions were ranked highly for impact and feasibility in the prioritization matrix...

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Published Online: 13 September 2024

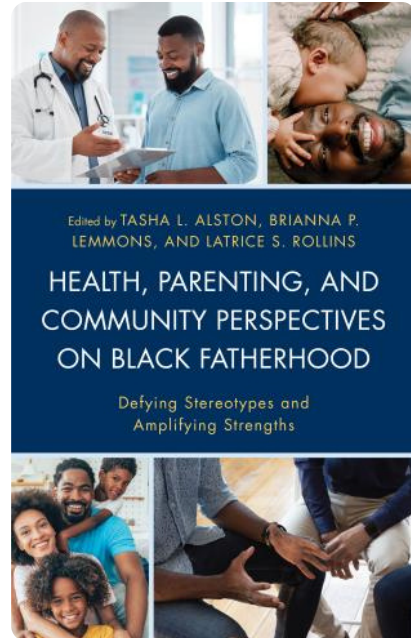
Published Online: 04 December 2024



Ch. 11 Reckoning with Resilience: Black Breastfeeding.

Published in Black Women and Resilience: Power, Perseverance, and Public Health

In Print. 04/01/2024



Health, Parenting, and Community Perspectives on Black Fatherhood

Defying Stereotypes and Amplifying Strengths

In Print. 2024

ROSE 2024 FINANCIAL & ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

MAJOR Contribution List

ENDED IN 2024	STARTED IN 2024	ONGOING
University of North Carolina- MHLIC	University of North Carolina- WIC	University of North Carolina - DREAM TO BELIEVE
Kaiser Permanente Foundation- Metro ATL BF	Kaiser Permanente Foundation - For the Culture, For Health	University of North Carolina - NICU
Caresource ROBE	New McKING Consulting Corporation - ROBE	W.K.Kellogg Foundation
Morehouse School Medicine- Impact	Morehouse School Medicine- Navigator	CHAMPS NATIONAL
McKING Consulting Corporation- ROBE		Morehouse School Medicine- CORAL

LOOKING AHEAD: GOALS FOR 2025

IN 2025, WE AIM TO...

Update the African American Breastfeeding Blueprint

Release the Black Maternal Child Health Risk Index

Engage Doulas and Home Visitors in our Breastfeeding Support Trainings

Serve as national Technical Assistance providers on a number of MCH initiatives

CLOSING REMARKS

As we close out 2024, we at ROSE (Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere) extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has supported our mission to promote health equity, breastfeeding, and maternal care within communities of color. Your unwavering commitment has helped us educate, empower, and uplift countless families.

As we step into 2025, we invite you to continue this journey with us. Whether it's through donating, volunteering, or sharing our work with your network, your support is vital in helping us sustain and grow our impact. Together, we can ensure that every family has access to culturally competent care and the resources they need to thrive.

Let's continue creating change, one family at a time. Visit our website to learn how you can get involved. Thank you for being an integral part of our community!

Thank you,

ROSE Leadership Team

Contact

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ROSE Website: www.breastfeedingrose.org

ROBE Website: www.robeforfamily.org

Facebook: [Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere \(ROSE\)](#)

X (Formerly Twitter): @Support_ROSE

Instagram: @Support_ROSE

LinkedIn: [Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere Inc.](#)