

First Week Notes as an Intern at Birthmark Doula Collective

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Does the thought that the organization you work for is extremely amazing/incredible/cool/important/special/remarkable/insert another adjective that describes the greatness of your organization, incessantly run across your mind every ten minutes or so?

Well that has been my experience in my first few weeks, as an intern at Birthmark Doula Collective. I am Kaitlyn Crook, a senior at Tulane University, studying public health and Spanish. This semester, I will be working at Birthmark Doula Collective, mostly remotely, on a few projects alongside my intern supervisor Stephanie Visco and other members of the collective. I am particularly excited about being a committee member for the first annual virtual Black Births Matter Event(s). I think this internship feels so meaningful because it meets at the intersection of my passion, in reproductive justice and maternal, child health, and my skills and abilities that I have learned both in academia and in extracurricular settings. My internship has also felt extremely comfortable, since my interview, because of all the support my intern supervisor and members of the collective have provided; we check-in with each other constantly. I feel that my work matters and is very important to the collective, which is a great feeling. (Side Note: I think that it is so cool, the collective created an email address for me within their G-Suite.)

Before I conclude my first blog post, I want to provide a short summary of Birthmark Doula Collective for context and demonstrate just awesome this organization is. In my coming posts and as I learn more about the collective, I will add more information about Birthmark Doula and its members. Dana Karen and Latona Giwa cofounded Birthmark Doula in 2011 citing a need for, “increased accessibility to doula services to low-income families, supportive structures for professional doula services such as back-up, emotional support, childcare, and continuing education, and organized advocacy to improve the quality of perinatal health services in the region.” In the early years of the Collective, Birthmark provided doula services on a sliding scale, and have expanded to hold educational and advocacy events and programs and serve more families within the New Orleans community. Birthmark values parent-centered care, diversity, reproductive justice, unconditional support, social justice, non-oppressive professionalism, and healthcare justice. The Collective’s mission statement is to, “assist birthing persons and their families in having the most empowering pregnancy, birth, and parenting experiences possible ... provide emotional, physical, and informational support to women and their families throughout the full spectrum of reproductive health and parenting ... collaborate and build relationships with many partners in order to increase access to education, support, and advocacy for pregnant and parenting women in our communities...”

Until my next update

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn Crook