

PRESS RELEASE

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Princeton Area Community Foundation Fund for Women and Girls Awards \$25,000 to Support Community-Based Doula Program in Trenton



CHSoF NJ community doulas-in-training practice massage and relaxation techniques to ease pain and comfort women during labor and delivery.

Trenton, NJ (January 23, 2020) – The Children's Home Society of New Jersey (CHSoF NJ) is pleased to accept \$25,000 in grant funding from the Princeton Area Community Foundation Fund for Women and Girls. This competitive grant will support CHSoF NJ's bilingual AMAR community doula program in Trenton. AMAR stands for Apoyando Madres, Armando Redes, which translates to "Supporting Mothers, Creating Networks" in English.

New Jersey ranks 45/50 states in maternal death, with pregnancy-related deaths nearly twice the national average. Hispanic women are at heightened risk for birth complications, and the City of Trenton is home to a large number of immigrant and US-born Hispanic women. CHSoF NJ's Spanish-language AMAR community doula program uses an evidence-based model to: improve maternal/child health outcomes; increase peer networks for mothers; improve navigation of the medical system, prenatal and postnatal medical appointments; increase maternal knowledge about birth, newborn care, and breastfeeding; and enhance self-advocacy skills in both mothers and doulas.

Doulas are trained, non-medical birth companions who provide pregnancy and postpartum support. Doula support complements traditional health services, and research shows that doula care decreases complications, low birth weight and preterm deliveries by 50%; and increases breastfeeding rates to over 90%. Doula programs

also lead to immediate and long term cost savings by reducing numbers of cesarean sections, epidurals, and cases of illness and chronic disease. Community doulas are especially effective in improving communication between low-income, diverse women and health care providers.

The AMAR program will provide doula care for 100 low-income pregnant and postpartum Hispanic women and teens in Trenton and their babies to improve maternal and child health outcomes. AMAR's evidence-based model engages immigrant and US born Hispanic women in Trenton with resource connection, education; accompaniment to prenatal care; text/phone support; support during labor and delivery; post-delivery follow-up; and breastfeeding support. To foster peer support, AMAR moms enjoy monthly group socialization events and are invited to other CHSofNJ groups with peer lactation consultants; volunteer mentor moms; parent advisory boards; and more. CHSofNJ's AMAR program is further strengthened by key partnerships and collaborations partners, including with Capital Health for clinical information and observations; Mercer County WIC for breastfeeding support and nutrition benefits; and Central Jersey Family Health Consortium for perinatal mood disorders training. Additionally, CHSofNJ will continue to share experience and knowledge with community doulas in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, Minnesota and Oregon.

Beyond its positive impact on maternal and child health outcomes, the AMAR program will also create new employment opportunities for women in Trenton; CHSofNJ will provide comprehensive training and support for 24 community women over a two-year period, placing them on a path to rewarding, gainful employment in the community.

Evidence-based community doula care is a natural expansion for CHSofNJ's continuum of maternal/child health services. The AMAR program – which provides individual support for pregnant women – is a complement to CHSofNJ's existing group prenatal health education and bilingual pregnancy testing to verify pregnancy and connect women to needed health insurance and healthcare, WIC supplemental nutrition and breastfeeding support, Early Head Start services, and more.

The Fund for Women and Girls, like CHSofNJ, is dedicated to improving the lives of economically vulnerable girls and women in greater Mercer County. CHSofNJ is so grateful for the passion and dedication of the Fund for Women and Girls.

About the Princeton Area Community Foundation Fund for Women and Girls

Founded in 1998, the Fund for Women and Girls of the Princeton Area Community Foundation is a diverse group of philanthropists who give together to organizations that improve the lives of economically vulnerable women and children in greater Mercer County. Last year alone, the Fund made grants of nearly \$200,000 to more than a dozen nonprofits serving women and children in Trenton, Hightstown, and Princeton.

About the Princeton Area Community Foundation

The Princeton Area Community Foundation promotes philanthropy and builds community across Mercer County and central New Jersey. It helps people and companies make effective charitable gifts and awards grants to nonprofits. Since its founding in 1991, the Community Foundation has grown into an organization with more than \$180 million in assets and made grants of more than \$149 million, including \$21 million in 2018.

About The Children's Home Society of New Jersey

The Children's Home Society of New Jersey is a nonprofit child and family serving agency whose mission is to save children's lives and build healthy families. Founded in 1894, the agency protects abused or neglected infants and at-risk children by ensuring stable, permanent, and loving homes for each and every child it serves. All services are confidential and most are free. For more information, visit our website at www.chsofnj.org.