

Birthing something new

Local doula hopes to bring practice to town



By Caitlyn May
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When Molly Patterson's best friend called her to say she was having a baby, she was excited. When the same friend told her she would be having a home birth, she was excited. When she asked her to be her doula, Patterson asked, "What's a doula?"

Now 13 years later, Patterson is a full-spectrum doula offering services from prenatal to birth to postpartum.

"I've really been doing this my whole life. I just didn't know it was being a doula," she said. She sits in her mother's garden with one leg tucked under her, the other keeping the rhythm of the rocking chair. She's distracted by neighbor cats and squirrels and phone calls from clients in a state she no longer lives in.

"That's common," she says after the second interruption. "They'll call me and text me still, even though I don't live there. You form a connection," she said.

It's the first thing she does when meeting with a potential client; she wants to make sure they're the right fit. She goes over her beliefs in evidence-based birthing, the parents' hopes for the experience and what exactly a doula does.

"They're a support system and an advocate. Doulas are not in the medical scope like a midwife. We don't do any checking. We support mom and dad or partner," Patterson said.

Support can mean anything from helping a family get a home ready for baby--"It's why so many mothers give birth in the hospital because it gives them two days lead time to get things ready!"--to supporting partners and flying from state-to-state if need be.

Patterson's job starts shortly after she's hired. Her package includes a set of appointments but she says she rarely sticks to that. If a client couple wants to have coffee or has a question, Patterson

is available.

"They have to know that I'm the right choice for them and this is their journey. I'm here to help," she said.

That includes during birth. Patterson subscribes to evidenced-based birth (a movement that contends current procedures may not take into account the most recent information). She stresses that she supports whatever decision the parents make, including medical interventions such as pain blockers including an epidural.

"If that's what they want to do, then we go through the pros and cons of that and in the end it's their decision," she said.

And when it's time to go home, Patterson's involvement is the parents' decision as well.

She has left the family after the birth and has stayed on for as long as a few months.

"If they want postpartum help as well then I can do that," she said. "I come in and I cook, I love to cook. I get meals going and I really help dad or partner with what I sometimes call the third trimester for dad. There's really four trimesters and that last one at home is sort of the third one for dad where he says 'I'm a dad, what does that look like?'"

Patterson said she works with families to support a mother whether that be creating checklists or becoming a buffer for relatives.

"Sometimes people don't know how to help. They'll ask mom what she needs and mom doesn't know what she needs. So we work with mom too," she said.

While Patterson is aware of the stereotypes surrounding home or birthing center births, she says the current U.S. rates for mother and infant mortality are enough motivation for her to continue with her practice. Something she hopes to bring here to Cottage Grove.

"I'm working with another doula and we're hoping to start birthing classes here in Cottage Grove so people don't have to drive all the way to Eugene," she said.

Patterson said she takes clients on depending on her current workload but is willing to meet with anyone. Her current rate is \$1,200 including a handful of sessions and the birth.

"It's on the low end for what they get," she said. For more information, contact Patterson at (704) 517-5848.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY DON WILLIAMS

Russ McGuire and Chelsea Armstrong announce the winners of the carousel raffle on September 2 at KNND.

Carousel drawing winners

Friends of the Cottage Grove Carousel continue its efforts to bring a vintage carousel to Cottage Grove's Main St. The project, which is several years in the making, began fundraising efforts earlier this year with a raffle with prizes including a hand-sewn quilt, made from dress material, made by Russ McGuire's mother, Berta Elizabeth Jarrard. It was valued at around \$400, judging from what like items are selling for today, the group said.

The raffle also featured a carousel music box, valued at \$130, and the carousel rocking horse for children, valued at \$189, both of which were donated by Ken Schwieger and Alice Nowicki.

The drawing was held Saturday, Sept 2, 10 a.m., at KNND radio, and was broadcast. Russ McGuire, project engineer for the restoration of the carousel, held the jar, and Chelsea Armstrong, a high school senior, drew the winning tickets.

The blanket was won by Dixie Davis (ticket # 474291). The Carousel music box was won by Patty Hunt (ticket# 474317), and the rocking horse was won by Shawn Allen (ticket 474282)

A total of \$452 was raised from this event. The committee wishes to thank those who supported the restoration project by purchasing a ticket. And, a big thank you to the three donors who supported the fundraising event.

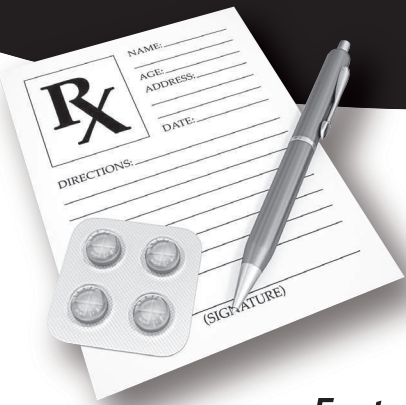
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A free 10-hour financial literacy training will be held for anyone interested at Lane Community College in Cottage Grove. Get answers to many questions such as how can I figure out where all my money is going; how can I cut back on what I spend; why do I need a budget; difference between a credit report and credit score; what are ways to improve my credit score and pay down debts; how can I save on utility bills; and more. This is a four series class with the first class being held Oct. 3 from 6-8:30 p.m. The other classes will be held Oct. 10, 17 and 24. For more information or to register ahead of time, contact Rose Miller at 541-513-7349 or email her at 707rosemillergmail.com



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