



## Philosophy, Education & Experience

Christy Santoro, CPM &  
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*Below is more information regarding our philosophy of midwifery care, and a summary of each of our education and experience as it relates to midwifery.*

### **What is a midwife?**

Midwife means "with woman". A midwife provides comprehensive care and education for women and their newborns, encompassing their physical and emotional needs and fostering self-determination throughout the childbearing year. Midwives practice in home, birth center and hospital settings. Midwives worldwide have an excellent record of safety with numerous studies associating midwifery care with excellent outcomes. In the five nations with the world's lowest infant mortality and lowest rates of technological intervention, midwives attend 70% of all births without a physician in attendance.

### *The Midwives Model of Care™*

The Midwives Model of Care™ is based on the fact that pregnancy and birth are normal life processes. The Midwives Model of Care™ includes: Monitoring the physical, psychological, and social well-being of the mother throughout the childbearing cycle; providing the mother with individualized education, counseling, and prenatal care; continuous hands-on assistance during labor and delivery, and postpartum support; minimizing technological interventions; and identifying and referring women who require obstetrical attention. The application of this woman-centered model of care has been proven to reduce the incidence of birth injury, trauma, and caesarean section.

A **Direct-Entry Midwife (DEM)**, also often referred to as a lay (which is actually not an appropriate word as it implies no training) or traditional midwife, is a midwife who enters the profession directly, getting her education/training through an apprenticeship or by attending a formal midwifery education program. The North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) has developed a certification process which provides an internationally recognized credential that promotes the Midwives Model of Care. A midwife who has been certified through this process is a **Certified Professional Midwife (CPM)**. ***This is the only midwifery credential that requires experience in an out-of-hospital setting.*** There is also a direct-entry credential created by the American College of Nurse Midwives, called the Certified Midwife (CM) which involves a course of study similar to that of nurse midwives but without the requirement to first become an RN.

A **Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM)** is a midwife who has obtained his/her education & certification by first becoming a Registered Nurse, and then completing a formal course of study approved by the American College of Nurse Midwives, usually a one–two year course, after which one can earn certification as a Nurse Midwife, often by obtaining a Master's Degree in Nursing.

### **We are Direct-Entry Certified Professional Midwives (CPM).**

We have both completed the North American Registry of Midwives certification process. ***As midwives who attend homebirths, we assist in natural childbirth only. We are not doctors and we are not nurses.*** We have chosen to practice independently because we do not accept the definition of Midwifery as the practice of Medicine or Nursing. We believe that Midwifery, Nursing & Medicine are separate disciplines, and that the laws and health care system need to be corrected to reflect midwifery's unique role in providing high quality, cost-effective care for mothers and families. We believe that every woman who chooses should

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have access to the Midwives Model of Care™ in the setting of her choice.

**A parent may choose any place to give birth; to give birth at home is not illegal.** However, the autonomy of parents in making decision for their care as it relates to pregnancy and childbearing is being challenged in a number of court cases around the country, and by the aggressive and protective actions of the the American Medical Association, the professional trade group for physicians<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the legal status of practicing as a Direct-Entry Midwife varies from state-to-state ranging from being designated as illegal and a felony offense, to being legal, licensed and eligible for Medicaid reimbursement. Your midwife will discuss the legal and political climate for the state you are in, how to refer to and/or describe your birthing plans and midwifery care with friends and other interested parties, and answer any questions or address concerns that you may have regarding these issues. We also believe that the laws and political and cultural environment, as well as policies for insurance coverage, will only change to be more supportive of midwifery and birthing rights if parents demand it. We encourage you to get involved with promoting the Midwives Model of Care and homebirth as a vital and central part of the health care system for mothers and babies.

### **Our Philosophy**

We are committed to compassionate, women-centered care in which both midwife and mother are actively engaged in the decision-making process. We believe that pregnancy and birth are healthy and normal events in a woman's life.

As midwives we offer my skills, experience and loving attention as well as our deep trust in and respect for the birth process. We feel that it is an honor and responsibility to nurture and create a safe space for the women we serve during the journey to motherhood. We recognize that in pregnancy, most women experience great physical, emotional, social and spiritual changes, and it is our intention to support women and families in this time of transformation.

We expect that mothers choosing homebirth are willing to take responsibility for their own health and well-being and that of their baby. It is our hope that in doing so, women will discover the power and potential that birth holds, and carry it with them throughout their lives.

We also believe that we need more midwives in this country and are committed to the apprenticeship model of midwifery training and to working with students in this practice. With your permission and under supervision, a student may participate in your care throughout your pregnancy, birth, and postpartum period.

### **Education, Training and Experience**

#### Christy Santoro, CPM

The first birth I attended was in 1985- it was the birth of my youngest sister, Michelle. I was 11 years old and it was one of the formative experiences of my youth, and the beginning of my calling to becoming a midwife. Being a midwife challenges me to use my heart and hands as well as my head. I love what I do, feel called to the work and feel that it is worth the crazy hours and lifestyle to help create sacred space for women to be born as mothers, men as fathers, and babies to enter their time on this planet in a peaceful, loving way. I sometimes feel like I'm always working and just as often feel like I'm never working. It's a challenging, amazing and beautiful life that I'm living doing this work. For me, midwifery is the center of the wheel that connects most of what i want my life and learning to be about: it is an art and a science, focused on relationships, very personal and intimate with a tangible impact on people's lives as well as very community oriented, holistic, political, spiritual, sacred, countercultural, ancient, women-centered, and physical. Almost anything I want to study, or learn about—be it nutrition, massage, homeopathy, gardening, acupuncture, herbs, or yoga— has an application and connection to my work as a midwife—creating opportunities for lifelong learning that informs and illuminates my practice and that I can share with the mamas and babies I serve.

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In 1995, I earned a degree in Public Health in Health Behavior and Health Education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with a focus on women's health and culturally appropriate health care. I trained as a doula through Doulas of North America (DONA) in 1998. I was a DONA certified doula for 6 years, and practiced as a doula in all birth settings. I also was a founding member of the Philadelphia Alliance for Labor Support (PALS), a volunteer run organization that provides doula training in the Philadelphia region and also coordinates an on-call, no cost doula program for low-income clients at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

I was enrolled in the BSN/MSN Nurse-Midwifery Program at the University of Pennsylvania in 1999 for a year but realized that it was not the appropriate environment for me to learn to practice midwifery in the out-of-hospital setting. I left that program to explore options for a more traditional approach to midwifery training. I completed the Art of Midwifery Level II Seminar Series taught by several direct-entry and CNM midwives in the Philadelphia area before moving to New Mexico for an intensive clinical apprenticeship at the Northern New Mexico Women's Health and Birth Center in Taos (now the Northern New Mexico Midwifery Center). Over 25% of pregnant women in Taos County and surrounding areas give birth in either their home or the birth center! In that time I also completed the requirements for an Associate of Science in Midwifery from the National College of Midwifery, and *received my CPM credential in March 2002. I am licensed as a direct-entry midwife in New Jersey, and have previously been licensed in both New Mexico and California.*

I moved from Taos, NM to Berkeley, California, where I started a small homebirth practice, *Fruits of Labor Midwifery*, with another midwife and was a member of the Bay Area Homebirth Collective. I also worked as a Program Associate for the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility focusing on environmental health, with an emphasis on the effects of environmental exposures during pregnancy and early childhood on children's development.

In the past I have worked as a consultant with the Reproductive Research Unit at the University of Pennsylvania on a variety of studies and programs related to fertility, pregnancy, gynecological health and contraception. Additionally, I have worked as a Nutrition Educator for several nonprofit organizations, with a particular emphasis on the nutritional needs of mothers and children. I also served as a founding member and executive director of the Wise Women's Center, a community based health and wellness center in West Philadelphia that focused on making holistic health care and resources available to women of all income levels and cultural backgrounds. I have a longtime interest in local food, farmers markets, community gardening and whole foods vegetarian cooking that I bring to my work as a midwife. Currently, I work as a consultant for Medical Education Teaching Associates serving as a preceptor for teaching medical and nursing students how to do safe, sensitive and competent breast and pelvic exams. I also consult with the Philadelphia Department of Health as a breastfeeding counselor for women at the City Health Center in my neighborhood.

I am certified in Adult, Child and Infant CPR, Neonatal Resuscitation, and Phlebotomy. I have my Reiki I certificate. I also practice Ashtanga yoga and my yoga practice is a big influence on my work as a midwife (and vice-versa). In 2009 I completed a training to offer Craniosacral Therapy to infants and am happy to incorporate that work into my care as a midwife as well as offer private sessions for both clients and the larger community. I also greatly enjoy international travel and have had the opportunity to work as a midwife abroad and hope to do more in the future.

I am a member of the Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA), the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM), Citizens for Midwifery (CfM), the Midwives Alliance of Pennsylvania (MAP), Garden State Midwifery Guild, Choices in Childbirth (CIC) and the Big Push For Midwives. In the past I have also been a member of the Carolina Association for the Advancement for Midwifery, the New Mexico Midwives Association, the National Association of Childbearing Centers, the American Public Health Association (APHA) and the California Association of Midwives. I served on the Board of Directors of the NACPM from 2002-2003, and was a member of the MANA Conference Registration committee from 2000-2002, and was a lead organizer of the 2006 MANA National Conference. I serve as an abstract reviewer for the Maternal Child Health section of the APHA for their annual meeting.

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In the fall of 2006, I was honored by the Midwives Alliance of North America with the Sapling Award, as a recognition of my role as a young leader in the national midwifery community/movement. In 2006-2007, I represented NACPM in the development of the Women and Infants Services Package (WISP) through a National Working Group of the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood regarding Emergency Preparedness and Response for pregnant women and children. I was a lead organizer in the production of the first edition of Choices in Childbirth's The Philadelphia Guide to a Healthy Birth in 2006-2007, and serve as a consultant to the organizing group on an on-going basis for future editions of the guide. I am also an article contributor and photographer for the Guide.

When I returned to the east coast in the winter of 2003 I began working with *WomanWise* Midwifery, and was invited by WomanWise founder, Karen Webster, CPM to join as a full partner the following year. I worked as a full partner with Karen and WomanWise until June of 2008 when Motherland was born. Karen and I worked together for five years and still assist each other at births and provide backup for each other's practices. I learned a great deal from Karen and her wealth of experience and am so grateful for having had that opportunity as a young midwife. After a few years of working on my own with various other midwives assisting, I am thrilled to be working in partnership with Meredith and learning from her experiences and perspectives as well!

I currently serve as a member of the faculty and a clinical preceptor for both the National College of Midwifery and Birthwise Midwifery School. I also am a founding member and served in 2008 as co-chair of Midwives Alliance of Pennsylvania (MAP), a professional organization for midwives in PA currently focusing on the legal recognition and licensure of CPMs in the state.

In August 2009, I gave birth to my first child, Itzela. After close to 60 hours of labor with no pain medication, and being close to fully dilated for over 24 hours, I decided to transfer to the hospital as the baby was not descending and was in fact ascending any time I tried to push her out. I ended up needing a C-section due to her having an abnormally short cord that wouldn't allow her to be safely born vaginally. It was a challenging and humbling experience to "walk my talk" about the benefits of medical intervention and technology when they are truly needed and the live my belief that I don't see homebirth as the goal for my clients. Although I mourn the homebirth I had dreamed of for so long, ultimately view the birth as a success and triumph as I listened to my body and my baby's needs and we were both healthy. Being a new mom alongside my clients has added a fun, new dimension to my work and I am so grateful to benefit from the community of families I've helped to cultivate!

### **Meredith Klein, CPM**

My call to midwifery came when I was twenty, living in upstate New York, studying sustainable agriculture at Cornell University and teaching at a cooperative school with many homebirth families. It evolved as a merging of my interests and passions in women's health, women's choice issues, and a philosophy of healthcare that includes individualized care and informed choice at its core. It makes sense to me that it evolved right alongside my interests in homegrown food, home-school families...general ideas and lifestyles of sustainability and self-determination.

The integration of complementary modalities such as herbology, massage, and homeopathy was exciting and perfectly appropriate, as well as the acknowledgement of the emotional and spiritual components of healing, and birthing. Living where I did, it also arose as a political issue, as choosing to give birth at home with a professional midwife was not (and is still not) a legal option for families in New York state. Although midwifery and obstetrics are quite different models of care, the fact that my dad is an obstetrician, of course, had a formative influence in my career path. I remember him leaving at all hours of the day and night to deliver babies, often running into former clients and their babies in the grocery store and other public places, and I have fond memories of accompanying him sometimes in the early mornings when he did "rounds" at the hospital... visiting new moms and babies.

Once I awakened to my midwifery calling, there was no turning back. I moved to Eugene, Oregon in 1996 to attend a 3-year training program at the Oregon School of Midwifery. I spent 2 years there, immersed in

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primarily didactic training, while attending a handful of births as a doula and as an assistant in the school-run birth center. Two women in our class had babies over the course of our time together, and these were the first homebirths I excitedly attended. I trained through the Association of Labor Assistants and Childbirth Educators to become a doula, so I could start attending more births in that capacity. Along with a few other students from my school, we started a free doula service, "Constant Companions," for the community. While in Eugene, I had the opportunity to work for Midwifery Today magazine, and to attend the national midwifery conference they held locally. I worked as an assistant in a Montessori classroom for two years while in midwifery school.

Since not all of us could continue on locally with the apprenticeship part of our training, I moved to Austin, Texas to work with MariMikel Penn, a seasoned midwife, at her New Life Birth Center. After nursing school in the 70s, MariMikel became one of the first homebirth midwives in the area, and her birth center was the first licensed out-of-hospital birth center in the state. I worked with her for a year, attending about fifty births, mostly at home. Then I moved on to San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, to intern at Centro para los Adolescentes de San Miguel de Allende (CASA). I spent four and a half months as an intern at their maternity center and working with community educators in the surrounding rural areas. Four Mexican and two American midwives worked at the busy clinic, and I learned so much from their breadth of experience and varying styles of practice. I attended lots of births as an assistant, and towards the end of my stay, as a primary midwife. CASA also ran the first professional midwifery school in Mexico and I both attended and taught a few classes in their new program.

MariMikel Penn invited me to join her practice, which I felt was a special honor, so I returned to Austin to prepare for the North American Registry of Midwives exam in February 2000. After passing my national certification exam, and fulfilling requirements for licensure in Texas, I worked with MariMikel for two more years as a junior partner. It was a great opportunity to have the wealth of her experience as referral and back-up, as I was beginning to 'spread my own wings' as a midwife. Then, in the summer of 2002, Natalie Lake, another local midwife, and I started Full Circle Midwifery. We worked together and with other midwives, attending between forty and fifty homebirths a year. Austin has a rich community of midwives and homebirth families, with about 25 midwives in the metropolitan area. We held regular gatherings, peer reviews, and continuing education opportunities, including a monthly study group with a local homeopath. I also became a breastfeeding educator through the Texas Department of Health. We held an annual 'Gathering of Midwives,' a weekend conference where professional midwives and nurse midwives came to learn and play together, sometimes including camping out and singing by the bonfire. I was a member of the Association of Texas midwives, which included being a preceptor for some of their midwifery students. I also served as a midwife advisor on the board of Texans for Midwifery, a consumer-based midwife advocacy organization that kept us abreast of political action needed in the state.

For the 6 years that we ran Full Circle Midwifery, I also worked part time as a health educator at the People's Community Clinic, a non-profit public health clinic that serves the under-insured members of our community. In the clinic, I saw patients for family planning, prenatal education, and sexually transmitted infection information and testing. I designed a series of childbirth classes in Spanish, and taught them for several years at the clinic. I also went regularly to two local high schools with parenting programs, and taught prenatal education to pregnant teens, as well as sex education and sexual health at a drug rehabilitation facility for teens. It is important to me to stay involved with the public health sector, and I have continued to make this a priority throughout my midwifery career.

I moved to Philadelphia in May 2008, and started attending and assisting at births with Christy Santoro of Motherland Midwifery in August of that year. I was happily able to step in for Christy's maternity leave in the summer of 2009, and since then, we have been evolving a blended practice. I have been learning a lot about birth politics in Pennsylvania, which are quite different from Texas, and have been involved with Midwives Alliance of Pennsylvania (MAP), the organization working toward legal recognition and regulation for midwives in PA. I teach Spanish childbirth classes in Norristown, and have co-facilitated several Centering Pregnancy workshops at Greater Philadelphia Health Action clinics.

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**In Conclusion**

*Regardless of where you choose to give birth, and whom you choose to attend you, you must realize that ultimately you, as parents, are responsible for creating a safe environment for your baby to be born. You must live with the results of any decisions you make regarding your care and your birth. You owe it to yourselves and your baby to make truly informed decisions. Whatever choices you make, it our prayer and purpose that your pregnancy and birth be healthy and joyous.*

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**WE HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION ABOUT MIDWIFERY CARE, AND THE EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTY SANTORO, CPM AND MEREDITH KLEIN, CPM AND HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE OUR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS ADDRESSED.**

Client name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Partner name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> In June 2008, the AMA passed Resolution 205 on Home Deliveries. For the text of the resolutions go to: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/18587.html> and <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/18673.html>