



*From the Desk of
Suzanne Arms, Founder-Director Birthing The Future®*

"Whether our families merely cope - or thrive - may be the paramount societal issue of our times!"

Overview of Birth Advocate Training

A 5-day/5-night immersion course, residential retreat, to train passionately concerned individuals and help them become competent, confident, community-based advocates for better birthing. In this course, folks will also learn how to raise money and prosper in their work, making supplemental income, while doing important community-based advocacy.

What is Birthing The Future®? We are a 501c3 non-profit organization that wants to see this society change from one that is based in fear, loneliness and competition to one that is founded upon trust, community, consciousness and cooperation.

We gather the best wisdom from around the world regarding how to bring humans into this world and how best to care for the mother-baby biological system. We synthesize and disseminate wisdom broadly, through our advocates, our various projects and our media.

We also create models that can be adapted to communities everywhere. Training Birth Ambassadors and Birth Advocates is key to our work. The Birth Advocate training offers certificates to those who complete the 5-day training and nine months of project work.

Why is the focus on Birth? Birth sets the course for our lifetime. The mother-baby pair is one biological system, whose experiences and bond, starting at conception, shape each child, woman, family and society. The relationship we humans have with our mother, from in the womb, lays down patterns that shape the architecture of our brain and nervous system. The result shows up most frequently in health issues, problems in family living and other relationship dynamics. You need only look at the rising tide of depression, anxiety, learning disabilities, obesity, self-abuse, addiction and violence to see that something is seriously wrong. What all of these family and social problems share is that their roots lie in the "hard-wiring" of the brain during the "primal period" and the mother-baby bond.

Post-modern societies no longer place value on this primal bond and continually stress it and interfere with it. Our growing level of maternal stress and maternal deprivation inhibits the expansion of consciousness, resiliency and true happiness, which are so needed today.

Shifting consciousness with regard to how we bring humans into this world and care for the mother-baby bond will naturally result in different behaviors and choices at the individual, family and neighborhood levels, and different policies at the community and societal level.

Who is the Birth Advocate training for? Those women and men who want to play a significant part in transforming life on this planet and are passionate about birth. They realize that focusing on better birthing and the mother-baby bond is the wise place to start. These individuals may or may not go on to other professions in the field of birth, but they will find this training valuable for whatever arena they choose to work in. However, the primary purpose is to support them in working individually and together *effectively* in their own community, while also earning some income from this important work. Some trained Birth Advocates will go on to be involved in state, national and even international work, and they will be effective in that as well because of the training they receive and the ongoing relationship of communication and support they have from the tribe/group and from Birthing The Future®.

How many individuals will be in the Birth Advocate training and how many trainer teacher/facilitators will there be at each training? Each retreat will have a limited number of participants – and our trainers are also participants – in order to facilitate the best possible experience for all the participants and the most cohesiveness as a tribe/group, both onsite and out in the world. Most trainings will have no more than 16 people.

How long is the Birth Advocate training? The length of the training is 5 nights and days, to give participants sufficient time for rest and play as well as learning and process work.

Why do the Birth Advocate trainings take place in a retreat setting? Our training not only prepares individuals intellectually and gives them skills, but also engages them in deep personal growth and healing work. Being in a retreat setting has many pluses, the first of which is taking people out of their everyday lives and placing them in a beautiful setting conducive to rest, play and exercise as well as work. It cuts people off from their busy cell-phone and computer life, takes them out of their home and family so they can turn all their attention toward their purpose. Retreat settings also offer the easiest path to building a cohesive “tribe”, and bonding with this group is an essential part of developing into a high-functioning Birth Advocate, which includes letting go of our isolated sense of separateness and high level of stress we are accustomed to living and working in.

The gracious container of the retreat setting is nourishing to the soul. We have found that this extended period of living together in beauty, and having our basic needs cared for on the land and in a sacred manner, is the only way we can do the work of social change with joy and ease.

Some trainings will be held outside the U.S. mainland, offering a unique travel and living experience. The ratio of trainees to staff is between 3 and 4 to 1. Trainers will always include Suzanne Arms, lead trainer and founder-director of Birthing The Future®.

Sharing meals and dreamtime, working in a sacred circle format a large part of the time, learning deep listening skills, and engaging in processes heighten awareness, sensitivity and communication skills. All of this, within the retreat setting, expand each participant’s vision, confidence and potential, and forge trust and intimacy within the group. People will leave knowing how to grow true community, how to work in a collaborative (not competitive) spirit, often working in sacred circle, drawing together pregnant women and mothers, prospective and new fathers, grandparents, educators and health-related professions.

What about bringing my nursing baby, toddler or older child? Some trainings will be designed for parents to bring a baby or child – and perhaps bring their partner as well.



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Q&A's from Fellow Potential Advocates

Can you give me the names and phone numbers for some advocates that attended the first training in March 2009? I'd like to find out what others got from the training and how they're using this education in their own communities.

Janis Bush, LCCE, FACCE

808-499-7490

Angela Lambert, Project Manager at Birthing The Future®

970-769-2993

Reesa Jones, activist in Atlanta working to establish a home for pregnant, homeless women

678-663-3143

Sandy Taylor, founder of rainbowchild.com, Grandmothers Circle Coordinator

610-525-4133

*For those of you seriously considering this or a future training and who'd like to view the interviews of advocates from the first training, please contact BTF for a rough cut of the video shot.

Will there be babysitting available at this retreat?

No. But if you would like to bring along a partner/friend to babysit while you're in the training, the cost for lodging/ meals for that second party is \$100 per day.

Is there only one airport into Durango, CO?

Yes, Durango Airport (DRO).

What time does the training start on **July 29th and end on **August 3rd**?**

7/29/10 - 5pm training begins

8/3/10 - 12pm training ends

What does the \$1,690 training fee include?

5 nights of lodging, 3 meals per day, training materials, 5-day intensive fee

Note: transportation costs (airport/car) not included, nor is postage/printing fees

How do I get from the airport to the retreat site?

Birthing The Future® will be responsible for getting each trainee to the site. Birthing The Future® will need to know when your flight arrives on **7/29/10**.

Are CEU's offered?

No, though you will be issued a professional certificate from Birthing The Future® upon completion of requirements to become a certified Birth Advocate (post-training community requirements will be covered in the packet you'll receive at the training).

For those who wish to donate to my training, what are their options?

PayPal (send money to suzanne@suzannearms.com with a note saying who it's for)

Credit Card (call Birthing The Future® at 970-884-4005 or 970-946-6994)

Check (made out to Birthing The Future® with a note in memo line saying who it's for)

**For people who donate one of the above ways, Birthing The Future® will send each person a tax-deductible form on your behalf thanking them.*

Cash paid directly to trainee (you will be responsible for sending out a completed BTF donation form — see last page of this PDF)

Can you tell me what to expect during the actual workshop?

- How to better focus your life to fulfill that which you are passionate about
- Skill-building to enhance security in becoming a community Birth Advocate
- Analytical skills for determining what is going on in your birthing community and what may need to shift
- How to approach, listen and connect deeply to people, including those with different views
- Personal growth and development, i.e. overcoming self-doubts and/or guilt
- How to enhance your ability to make a profound difference in the world
- Discover a deeper and broader sense of how you can be used, encompasses richness and diversity and a lifestyle that works for you
- Cognitively Suzanne and the other trainer(s) will provide an update on current trends in maternity and mother-baby care and share exciting developments around the world and important new research connecting the dots to give us the Big Picture

How would one use this education on an international level?

This training builds interpersonal skills enabling one to feel comfortable building and maintaining relationships, to include those with different worldviews. International issues regarding birth will be covered so that advocates who travel internationally or work via e-mail internationally have a clearer understanding of how other cultures view birth.

How does one make money as a Birth Advocate?

Keep in mind a community Birth Advocate is a *volunteer* position, those who want to play a significant part in transforming life on this planet and are passionate about birth, realizing focusing on better birthing and the mother-baby bond is a wise place to start. There are ways, however, to earn some income as an advocate, which Suzanne will discuss at the training (film showings, Better Birth Guide, etc).

When are the due dates to have the money in?

\$125 Birthing The Future® 2010 Membership Fee (non-refundable and gets applied to your training fee) -

Due June 15th, 2010

\$200 Retreat deposit fee (non-refundable and gets applied to your training fee) -

Due June 30th, 2010

\$REMAINING BALANCE -

Due July 29th, 2010

Would Suzanne be willing to write a letter to the community on my behalf?

Absolutely (see attached Community Letter Example), though you would be responsible for making copies of the letter and sending out to professionals in the community. Simply let BTF know via e-mail your full background and credentials so this letter truly reflects you as an advocate. BTF will send a PDF copy of the letter to you for printing purposes.

Will there be scholarships available? May I provide a service while at the training in exchange for part of the training fee?

At this time, no. Suzanne would like to urge all potential advocates to get their letters mailed to family, friends and the community. A follow-up phone call may be necessary in some cases. Once a potential advocate has done everything in their power to raise the money, Suzanne might revisit this question on an individual basis.

How do I decide how much to ask for from each person I want to support me?

Once you've prepared your lists (see Community Letter Directions), tally up how many people you have. Add any transportation costs to the training fee and divide by the number of people on your lists. Let's say you budget \$300 for airfare, plan on raising \$2,000. If your lists total 50 people, that's roughly \$40 per person, and most people will give this if not more. Don't let the fear of money get in the way... send out those letters now! One advocate already has an \$800 commitment from a business entity that truly feels this training will help the community. Getting the community to support you in your training is the first step in creating unity for birth-related change.

Note: Postage costs/printing fees need to be built into your training costs and are non-refundable by BTF. E-mailing your fundraising letters to those dear to you has worked very well for other advocates and will help save on postage.

What professionals in the community should I target?

Independent birth educators

Doulas

Midwives

Obs/pediatricians (those who support and promote natural birth, midwives, vbac, the decision not to circumcise, breastfeeding and/or cosleeping)

Family practitioners

Nurse practitioners (some specialize in the care of women, others in babies)

Physician assistants (often trained to respect one's lifestyle and values)

Acupuncturists

Cranio-sacral therapists

Chiropractors

Counselors or therapists (those who treat women with pp depression, for example)

Herbalists

Homeopaths

Infant/baby massage teachers

Yoga instructors

Massage therapists

Naturopaths

LaLeche League

Organic grocers

Cloth diaper services



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How to Write Your Letters to Raise the Money

First, put your budget together: \$1,690 plus transportation costs (i.e. airfare, gas, parking) and postage/printing fees. Then divide that amount by \$35 and see how many people paying an average of \$35 you need to have. That figure is a "low-ball" amount, as some people will pay more and some less.

Secondly, start three lists, as follows:

1. Friends and family or parents you've already served (who may live close by or far away), those who love you and would likely want to support something you are doing that you are passionate about.
2. All the professionals you know in your community who are in some way involved in childbearing, birthing, babies and parenting and who know you and think highly of you... doulas, birth educators, midwives, nurse practitioners and physician assistants, naturopathic and homeopathic physicians, chiropractors, prenatal yoga teachers, infant massage teachers, lactation consultants, WIC (Women, Infant & Children) workers and other public health people providing services to low-income mothers.
3. Other professionals in your community in the same categories as above, whom you don't personally know but have either heard good things about or see from the way they promote themselves that they are likely to care about these issues.

Next you'll want to find out and note alongside each person's name on your three lists, their email address and phone number(s), plus notes about the person (such as details about their work in the field). This part will entail some hours of phone calling. It's well worth it because you are starting to put together a picture of who is doing what in your community. And you'll be using that information in your work as a professional Birth Advocate.

Write a separate letter to each of your lists. Each of your letters needs to be personal in tone, sharing your enthusiasm/passion and your excitement to have been "invited" to be trained as a professional Birth Advocate by Birthing The Future®. In the two letters to folks in your community, you'll want to let them know that, as an advocate, you'll be helping bring more attention to their work.

In each of the letters to your three groups, you will address the person by name, and in the two letters to people working in the field in your community, you will want to start by saying something about the important work he/she is doing (e.g. helping low-income pregnant women and mothers, caring for newborns, teaching infant massage, etc.). You will invite that person to be part of getting you trained, letting them know that, as a trained Birth Advocate, you will be working as an advocate for them, as well as for mothers and babies and families!

In the third letter – to people you do not personally know – let them know at the outset that you don't know them personally but would like to, because of their reputation/involvement in birth and mother-baby issues and care.

In all three of your letters, you'll want to give a brief paragraph about yourself, your evolution as someone passionate about the issues and wanting to be an agent of positive change in your community.

Keep your letters brief and make the paragraphs short. In each letter, you'll want to ask them to please make a tax-deductible donation on your behalf to Birthing The Future®, a 501c3 non-profit. For the people on lists two and three, let them know that you'll be inviting them to a gathering of all those who participated in your training, to hear from you about what you learned, about what a Birth Advocate can do for them, and about how they can be part of the movement to transform birth and mother-baby care in their community. Say that, at this gathering, they'll meet others equally passionate.

Remember: Let everyone know that transforming how we bring human beings into the world will change the kinds of people and the families we create... from coping to thriving is how we put it.

Since you'll want to host an evening or afternoon for these folks who support you, sometime in the first month following your return from the training, start thinking about the date, place and time for this gathering. Someone's home is fine, if it has a large living room that can seat 25 people, on the floor. Not everyone who participates will come to that gathering, but they'll all be pleased to be invited.

Note: Postage costs/printing fees need to be built into your training costs and are non-refundable by BTF. E-mailing your fundraising letters to those dear to you has worked very well for other advocates and will help save on postage.



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Personal Letter Example

Dearest family, friends and loved ones,

As you may or may not know, I have recently been directed onto a new path in my life, one of direction and purpose. I am apprenticing under Suzanne Arms, well-known author and founder-director of **Birthing The Future®**, a 501c3 non-profit organization that educates men, women, families, educators and health professionals about the critical importance of the loving bond between babies and their mother and father. We educate them from pre-conception, to the bringing of these new lives into the world, to caring for this life after it arrives, ensuring healthy growth both emotionally and neurologically to maintain life-long health.

Women today are often scared of the knowns and unknowns of birth, as well as their partners or spouses, who are uneducated in the importance that parenting has on the adult this child will become. At the root of so much depression, anxiety, ADD/ADHD, obesity, addiction and aggression in our society, even in toddlers, is this lack of initial bonding between babies and their parents.

I am very excited and supportive of this organization's cause and purpose, and I'm honored to be a part of such an amazing group working to transform how we think about birth and care for the mother-baby bond, as well as the difference that it makes in creating thriving human beings. We are helping nurture the roots of our society and all are involved.

Birthing The Future® is holding another Birth Advocate training in Durango, Colorado July 29th-August 3rd, 2010. I have been personally selected to fly to Colorado and participate. There are 8 other professional men and women (ages 30-65) also participating, coming from all parts of the country. As the youngest advocate, I am very proud to have been chosen. Post-training, I will be working as a professional Birth Advocate in my own community.

I am now raising the funds for this project. The total cost (including airfare, materials, meals, room and board) for this 44 hour intensive is \$1,950. With your help and the participation of others, I will be making a significant difference in the lives of mothers, babies and families in our community! After I finish the program, I will be speaking locally as well as on the road, creating a Better Birth Guide to help women find their way to the best services and products in our community, and holding workshops, film showings and classes that benefit the whole community. As Suzanne often says, "When mothers and babies thrive, *everyone* thrives!"

As you know, I am a very passionate person who has always wanted to make a difference in the world, but I never knew where or how to start. Now I do! That is why I am sending this letter to the people I think want to see me out there in the world, making a difference.

For those of you who live out of town, I'd like you to know that there will be many Birth Advocates trained across the country in the next couple of years, so you will not only be helping our community, but you will be contributing to an important, nationwide movement to make pregnancy easier for women, lower the rate of cesareans, increase breastfeeding, and give mothers, fathers and families more confidence. I would be honored to share with you all that I learn from this training

The training is coming up fast and I need your support. It's a 100% tax-deductible donation because Birthing The Future® is a 501c3 non-profit. A donation of \$25-\$50 is ideal, but anything would be extremely appreciated and a blessing. This retreat will help fuel us all, with a year planned of projects, initiatives and a primary position in the global movement.

I know that being trained as a Birth Advocate, one of many, working together, I can help ignite the changes that our community needs and, in turn, this will branch from community to community to create a healthy, stable, thriving people who will bring more beauty and peace to this world.

Please help me get there! Your support and love can make the work possible. Send your donation(s) and blessings as soon as possible to ensure my ability to book a flight and reserve my place at this life altering event. If you know of anyone or perhaps a business or birth affiliate who would be interested in a tax-deductible donation to this cause, please let me know and also forward this letter along to them with a note from you.

There are three ways to make a donation:

1. PayPal (send money to suzanne@suzannearms.com with a note saying who it's for)
2. Credit Card (call Birthing The Future® at 970-884-4005 or 970-946-6994)
3. Check (made out to Birthing The Future® with a note in memo line saying who it's for)

Once your donation has been received, you will be sent verification of your donation to use for tax purposes.

Thank you in advance for your support, and may all your days be filled with the utmost happiness!



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Community Letter Example from Suzanne

It is with pleasure that I write today, inviting you to join Birthing The Future®'s mission in training professional Birth Advocates across North America. You may know of my work as a writer, speaker, photographer, filmmaker and advocate for mothers and babies since 1973. As founder-director of this non-profit, I am committed to educating and inspiring others about the importance of birthing and helping to transform the way we as a society treat birth and *every* mother-baby pair and their bond.

One of the primary functions as a volunteer Birth Advocate is to start weaving your community together, to unite those isolated individuals, organizations, businesses and services already doing good things for mothers and babies and help everyone create a vision, with goals, objectives and a timeline for positive change about birth and the mother-baby bond.

To truly create thriving human beings, we need to create births that do not traumatize mothers and babies, and policies that foster their bond. This means we must redirect our resources, including money, away from things that hurt them and their bond and toward those things that help.

Our next training is slated for July 29th-August 3rd, 2010 in Durango, Colorado. I have selected and personally invited **Amara Russell** to be a part of this training based on her diverse background and passionate desire to transform birth in your community. I want each Birth Advocate trainee to have the training cost, room and board be paid for by donations within their own community, as that is an important way for the community to show their support and interest in being part of this important movement for change. It will happen when we work together and your Birth Advocate will be promoting your work! A Birth Advocate is committed to moving money and resources in the direction of those professionals who support our vision, which is where you come in.

Amara possesses the passion and energy it's going to take in being a Birth Advocate in the Phoenix area! An innate nurturer, Amara has over 11 years of breastfeeding experience and more than 1,200 hours of formal education in Bodywork, Hypnotherapy and Energy Healing. She has been an instructor of Applied Anatomy, Bodywork, Childbirth Preparation, Energy Healing and women's health, and has written curriculum for three nationally accredited healthcare colleges. As a practitioner, Amara has served hundreds of mothers, babies and families as a Childbirth Educator, Birth Preparation Assistant, Licensed Massage Therapist, Certified Hypnotherapist, Birth and Post-partum Doula and EFT Facilitator in hospital, birth center and home environments.

Your non-profit donation of \$25-\$50 (or more) will make it possible for her to receive this training and will make you a part of the community she is helping to create for change. It's fully tax-deductible since Birthing The Future® is a Colorado 501c3. In exchange for your participation, Amara will hold an event upon her return for the group of you who supported her training, to share what she learned and the projects and initiatives she will be taking on in your area.

There are three ways to make a donation:

1. You can pay by check or money order and mail it to Birthing The Future®, PO Box 1040, Bayfield CO 81122 with a note in the memo line "for Amara's training".
2. You can pay via credit card by calling (970) 884-4005 and Birthing The Future® will deposit this into her training account.
3. You can pay via PayPal by sending to suzanne@suzannearms.com with a note in the memo box "for Amara's training".

**Once your donation has been received, you will be sent verification to use for tax purposes.*

Thank you in advance for your support and for making this training happen for this future advocate!



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Quotes from Previous Attendees

Angela Lambert (age 39), Birth Advocate Trainee (mother of Alex, age 2): This training has literally changed the course of my life! Coming from a very cognitive, financial background, I found myself initially skeptical. I discovered that social change begins with each of us, that beautiful things can and will happen for those of us who dream for a better world. Birth Advocate training has given me a new level of confidence to be a strong, positive voice in our birthing community. Inspired action is very satisfying and extremely productive, and training alongside such great mentors helped me define the bigger picture for my life.

Ashleigh Adams (age 21), Birth Advocate Trainee (mother of Tristan, age 1): Listening and engaging with all my peers/mentors left me feeling whole and ready to reach out to my community. I feel that after attending the Birth Advocate training, all our community needs is a little encouragement to use the tools and resources that are right in front of them to make the shift that our society needs today. And now I know how to initiate it!

Janis Bell Bush, LCCE, FACCE, Birth Advocate Trainee: After teaching gentle, baby-first birthing to more than 6,000 couples since 1977, I could begin to wind down my efforts. But because birth is sacred, magic and eternally heart-warming, I cannot slow down. Attending the BTF Birth Advocate training at age 60 has given me focus for what remains on my mission to replace the Male Medical Model of Birthing with the Women's Wisdom Model of Birth as the universal norm. I will not die with the "secret" that birth is normal: Birthing the Future Advocacy aligns with my current and future dreams to bring peace on earth one birth at a time.

Sandy Taylor, Grandmothers Circle Coordinator, Birth Advocate Trainee: For me the most life changing parts of the Birth Advocate training were the MoneyWorks and Action Acceleration workshops. Since the training, I continue to experience how 'thinking big' (and much, much bigger than I imagined) with a vision of what is possible in my work, lifts me out of the small, getting nowhere cycle I have been in for years. In brainstorming together as a group for each person's project, amazingly, our projects wove together. We found ways to support one another and continue to do so.



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Donation Receipt Form

Dear _____,

On behalf of all of us here at Birthing The Future®, thank you so much for your generous donation of \$_____ towards _____ future advocacy training. Your commitment to helping raise awareness in communities throughout the world about the awesome potential of birth is sincerely appreciated.

Each year Birthing The Future® continues to advance its mission of gathering, synthesizing and disseminating the finest world wisdom about birthing and the care of mothers and babies from pre-conception to the first birthday.

We have seen many lives changed for the better, and with the help of donations from supporters such as you, we will continue our work in teaching families to strive instead of just cope.

Birthing The Future® is a 501c3 Colorado non-profit and your donation is fully tax-deductible. From the bottom of my heart, thank you!

Sincerely,

Suzanne Arms

Suzanne Arms Presents / Birthing The Future

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970-884-4005