



## CALL FOR BIRTH STORIES

**Organic Mothers** was founded by Alison and Daniel Doyle in the Spring of 2010 after an inspirational experience with a loving and warm birth team for the home-birth of their first child, Sophia. Although their experience was fortunate in their encounters with natural birth professionals, they saw a strong need for more readily available information and resources on empowering childbirth education, as well as supportive doctors, doulas, and midwives. In January of 2010, Alison enrolled in her first childbirth education certification program. And just kept going. Yet even with all the various childbirth education models and programs available, Alison frequently found herself relying most heavily on personal birth stories, both her own and others she's experienced as a birth assistant, when guiding expectant couples through their own preparations. Her experiences watching couples listening intently to other couples' stories was the inspiration for this project. The profound power of storytelling and personal experience is largely underestimated and, instead, should be celebrated.

Colleen Elmer is a Master's student in applied cultural anthropology (with an emphasis on medical anthropology) at Mississippi State University. Though not a mother yet herself, Colleen has always been immensely interested in the world of pregnancy and childbirth, and she finds it appalling that with our current medical system, many women have little control over or knowledge about the process. Colleen is adamant that the public perception of midwifery, natural birth, and out-of-hospital birth be changed, and that medical practitioners become more directly responsive to maternal and infant care, so that alternative options like these become more accepted both in and out of hospital settings and so that women may take more control over their own reproduction. Colleen is currently interning with Alison at Organic Mothers in order to learn more about natural birth and to work toward women's greater autonomy concerning childbirth.

**Mississippi Birth Stories** will be a collection of birth stories that have occurred around the state to be used primarily as a resource guide for families preparing for childbirth. This project is dependent upon you! We are looking to collect the birth stories of Mississippi women who have experienced the highs and lows of childbirth (with any kind of caregiver and in any birth location) and ultimately compile them into a collection to which the public will have access. In addition to being an excellent resource for expecting mothers, this collection will help familiarize the public with an event many see as strange and scary, build confidence and strength in Mississippi women, and encourage a shift in public opinion.

We understand that some women may only feel comfortable submitting their stories anonymously, in which case we will (or you may) substitute a pseudonym for any and all participants.



While we prefer electronic submissions to the email address provided, you may send a hard copy if you prefer. Participants are encouraged to send/attach photographs if any are available (if sent, please identify individuals in photos unless you wish to remain anonymous). Please include the following submission form with your story. If you have any questions, feel free to email or call.

Email address: [organicmothers@gmail.com](mailto:organicmothers@gmail.com)

Mailing address: 402 Lake Valley Drive, Starkville, MS 39759

Phone number: 1-228-218-2780





## SUBMISSION FORM

Mother's/Parent's Name(s)\*: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Please specify if pseudonym

### Pregnancy history:

Number of pregnancies: \_\_\_\_\_

Locations of pregnancies (hospital, clinic, home): \_\_\_\_\_

Type & Name (Optional) of Caregiver

(obstetrician, family practitioner, midwife, nurse-midwife): \_\_\_\_\_

If you've experienced an intervention-heavy birth, a natural birth, or both we want to hear from you! While writing the narrative for your birth story (in whatever format you're most comfortable with; via email, on this form, sent as a separate attachment, or through snail mail), we'd like you to address the following questions: What was your knowledge of childbirth and level of confidence in your ability to deliver prior to pregnancy/birth? Is there something that you didn't know beforehand that you wish you had? What was the most positive part of your experience? What was the most negative or unsatisfactory part of your experience? What surprised you? What advice would you give a woman who's pregnant for the first time? Were you ultimately satisfied with your experience?

Many women who are considering birth for the first time will read this compilation, and it will be helpful and informative for them to hear your take on these points. We're happy to take birth stories that have already been written (for example, in a blog) or new recollections put down on paper for the first time. Your story may be as long or short as you prefer.

**Release:** I hereby grant permission to Organic Mothers and those acting pursuant to its authority to edit and share this content in print and via electronic media. The author will be shown any and all edits made to the document before it is made public in order to approve or disapprove said edits. The author acknowledges that not all stories may make it into the final compilation.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit stories no later than October 31, 2012