

Testimony from MBC Scholarship Award Recipient

It was another busy night shift on a mother-baby unit, and it seemed like all of my babies were cluster-feeding at the max for extremely frustrated mothers. The challenges all seemed to be the same: exhausted mamas and papas, cracked nipples, painful latches, "no milk" and babies screaming into the still of the night like banshees. I had always said I would pursue a career in lactation one day to help during these critical times. Now 3 years later from my set goal, I was absolutely sure that I needed support and a plan to make it possible. That's when I stumbled across the IBCLC of Color Scholarship opportunity over a search on my phone during my break, and I applied on the spot.

Soon I began to see the great work of the Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition and I was deeply honored to be selected as a 2020 IBCLC of Color Scholar. Having been a birthworker in Baltimore for years, I can't express how many times a client or a colleague has asked for a black IBCLC to meet a need. Could I be that Lactation Consultant? Could I help meet such an important need? And most especially, could I be that IBCLC running to the aid of mamas crying with their babies in the still of the night?

MBC provided state-of-the-art training at a time when my mind was ready to absorb the material. Although daunting, the timing was right and I grasped the education with understanding. I was also encouraged and empowered by both the leadership of MBC and my very own IBCLC mentor, Mayra. Every milestone I reached was met by applause and empowerment to keep going. Because of this tremendous investment, I have reached Certified Breastfeeding Specialist status.

Then the moment I have been dreaming of for 3 years actually happened. MBC registered me for the IBCLC Exam in September 2020 and I actually completed the exam. This accomplishment has been the most reassuring from this whole year 2020. As I await the final results of this exam, I serve as a prenatal breastfeeding educator; a breastfeeding specialist in the community; a site coordinator on a breastfeeding doula project; and as a mentored member of AWHONN's Breastfeeding Evidence-Based Guidelines Team. I have never been more empowered! Thank you MBC, from me and all the mama and babies whom I serve every day.



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