

Students help make birth safer

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Every two minutes, 60 mothers around the world die for lack of safe birthing supplies. In Louisiana, nine babies out of every 1,000 die in their first year of life. Tulane University students, in partnership with women in communities, are challenging these tragic birth outcomes.



From left, Lauren Dunaway, Anoop Jain and D'Yuanna Allen-Robb are some of the team working with Birthing Project USA to reduce the number of mothers who die in childbirth and babies who die in the first year of life. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

During the last two years, Tulane students have provided professional support to [Birthing Project USA](#) in communities from Mississippi to Malawi, in projects such as demystifying social media, coordinating a global Safe Birth Kit campaign and facilitating the [New Orleans Barber Shop Program](#) for fathers. The Tulane Department of [Global Community Health and Behavioral Sciences](#) has garnered the Harriet Tubman Community Partnership Award from Birthing Project USA in

recognition of its extraordinary collaboration.

“Even though you are a student you can make a difference in the world,” observes Kathryn Hall-Trujillo, founder of the Birthing Project. Hall-Trujillo, familiarly known as “Mama Kat,” is an Ashoka Fellow at Tulane. She founded the project when she realized, 25 years ago, that investing in mothers who were at risk for poor birth outcomes would save babies as well as the larger amount of money spent on sick infants and children.

The project relies on a “sister-friend” approach that empowers women in the community to help expecting mothers care for themselves and their babies by connecting them to local community resources.

The partnership with the Birthing Project represents Tulane University's commitment to service learning, says Katherine Theall, director of the [Mary Amelia Women's Health Education Center](#) and associate professor of global community health and behavioral sciences.

In Louisiana, women face a higher rate of caesarean section deliveries, pre-term births, low birth weight babies and infant mortality than elsewhere in the U.S., so Tulane students have an opportunity to make a concrete difference in neighboring communities.

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