



open arms
PERINATAL SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Open Arms Wins Seattle Human Services Coalition Award for Innovative Program Award Recognizes Open Arms' Groundbreaking Birth Doula Programs

Open Arms Perinatal Services has received the 2010 Seattle Human Services Coalition Human Services Award for Innovative Program. The Coalition chose to recognize Open Arms for its "response to an existing need in a new way, its ability to build upon an outstanding program model, its creativity in leveraging resources, and its positive program results."

"We are touched and deeply honored by this recognition of our doula program," said Sheila Capestany, Open Arms' Executive Director. "Our doulas play a crucial role in helping to eliminate disparities, and to ensuring that all women in our community receive the information and care they deserve when starting a new family."

Open Arms has provided birth doula services to women and their families in the Puget Sound area since 1997. We offer services to pregnant women who would otherwise find themselves alone or with little support. Open Arms provides an array of services according to the needs of women and their families, including prenatal support and parenting education, continuous emotional and physical support throughout labor and delivery, and assistance in the first six weeks after delivery. We are committed to providing services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, providing bilingual and bicultural doulas when possible. All of our doulas receive training in cultural competence, communication, and advocacy.

Open Arms' doula programs address social change by working to reduce disparities in health outcomes for low-income women, refugees, and immigrants.

By removing barriers to service, increasing awareness and personal advocacy, providing education about pregnancy, birth options, breastfeeding and positive early parenting, and reducing medical interventions and the costs of perinatal care, Open Arms programs are able to fill in the gaps and give families a healthy start.

The Innovative Program Award recognizes programs that successfully initiate services in a particularly innovative manner. The program must demonstrate: response to an emerging or existing need in a new way; ability to build upon an outstanding program design, model or start up; positive program results; and creativity in leveraging resource. Previous winners of this award include OneAmerica, the Fremont Public Association (now Solid Ground), the Center for Career Alternatives; and the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging.

The award will be presented at a ceremony to be held Thursday, June 3rd at Seattle City Hall. Mayor Mike McGinn will be among those in attendance at the awards ceremony.

Open Arms Perinatal Services embraces a world that cherishes birthing women, their babies, families and communities. Our mission is to provide services that support, educate, respect, honor and empower women and their families throughout the childbearing year. More information about Open Arms is available at www.openarmsps.org.

The Seattle Human Services Coalition is a multi-racial, multi-cultural group of human service providers and concerned community members committed to helping Seattle-King County residents meet their basic human needs. Our work is organized through thirteen member coalitions each representing an area of service within the community such as hunger intervention, domestic violence prevention, early education, community healthcare and homelessness to name only a few. More information about the awards can be found at <http://shscoalition.org/awards.php>.