

See Us Birth

A Voices for Birth Justice Campaign

2022 - 2023

A collaboration between the Preterm Birth Initiative and Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative

Overview

The **Preterm Birth Initiative** and **Black Women's Health and Livelihood Initiative** are proud to collaborate on See Us Birth, a Voices for Birth Justice art installation. The artwork features poetry, design, and photos of families and individuals who are mothers, fathers, birth partners, children, babies, queer birthing people, providers, doulas, and healers. See Us Birth supports increased visibility, connection and a sense of community for BIPOC and non-gender conforming birthing people, employees and all team-mates at UCSF.

Data Snapshot

Our data has not yet been collected due to unforeseen delays in producing the final artwork, and the extensive process of framing and approving artwork at UCSF. This section will be updated as data is collected.

For the purposes of this report and in alignment with language consistently used by the collaborators, BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color.

Resources

<https://voicesforbirthjustice.org/sub/>

<https://womenshealth.ucsf.edu/coe/ucsf-black-womens-health>

<https://pretermbirthca.ucsf.edu/>

UCSF Wellness and
Community
Campus Life Services



Project Details

Our project photographed, designed, framed and will ultimately display BIPOC families and individuals in hospital hallways. In addition to the existing Voices for Birth Justice campaign photography, this grant allowed us to host two additional photoshoots to add more BIPOC families, queer families, and non-gender conforming birthing people and healers to the campaign. The final artwork is a beautiful combination of photography by Byron Malik, design by Loren Newman, and poetry by Ramona Laughing Brook Webb, who has also contributed a signature poetry piece "See Us Birth."

The QR code on the portraits will lead viewers to the Voices for Birth Justice website, where they can view each individual or family's story to learn more about that person's birth journey. The link will also assess the impact of the artwork on viewers' wellness and provide birth justice resources. Patients, birthing people, and healers will not only feel represented by the portraits, but the images will also shift unconscious biases towards diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism for all who walk by.

Our project team included Judy Young, Ramona Laughing Brook Webb, Solaire Spellman, Giannina Ong, Loren Newman, Selina Lao Mason, and Nancy Elgort.

Project Challenges

The first challenge we encountered was the stringent requirements for artwork that is displayed in the hospital. Although we secured approval from hospital administrators, we became aware of specific vendor requirements for UCSF art printing, framing, and installation after the grant approval. This resulted in not having enough budget for the number of portraits proposed, since the UCSF vendors were more expensive than the general quotes. We attempted to fundraise, but it was difficult to do so. We also encountered unforeseen illness and personal issues on our team that delayed the production of the final artwork; however, we were proud to put the wellness of our team members first.

Lessons Learned

Throughout this project, we learned the importance of thoughtful collaboration when creating artwork from the lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. What we thought would take only a couple rounds of artwork edits turned into over a dozen, with each round allowing us to get deeper into nuances and details that impacted the final result. We thought deeply about photo selection, colors, flourish designs, logos, poetry, size, font, portrait orientation, and the location of all these elements to allow for the greatest accessibility and impact. Creating See Us Birth was more than framing portraits, it was framing queer and BIPOC joy, love, impact, dedication, beauty, and determination.