

## 1<sup>st</sup> ROSE Baby Café Established in Atlanta, Georgia

Imagine you are a new mom struggling to feel confident breastfeeding. Or a dad and your partner is experiencing pain while breastfeeding. Where do you go for help? Wouldn't it be wonderful if there were a free or insurance-covered, drop-in clinic in your neighborhood with certified lactation staff available to help? Thanks to Baby Café USA (<http://www.babycafeusa.org/>), more and more such places are cropping up.

On January 4, 2016, CHAMPS partner Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (ROSE) opened its first Baby Café in Atlanta, Georgia. ROSE's mission is to reduce the breastfeeding disparities among African-American women "through, mentoring, training, breastfeeding support groups, social support, outreach, education, legislation, health policies, and social marketing" (<http://www.breastfeedingrose.org/main-page/>). Its program vision is vast, including everything from outreach offerings such as breastfeeding clubs to macro-scale efforts such as the Black Breastfeeding Circle, a network of health care providers who meet to discuss best practices to support African-American communities.



*ROSE Baby Café meeting space*

Baby Café is now one more way Atlanta's nationally-based nonprofit will work to fulfill its mission and reach women in its area. According to Tenesha Sellers, BS, CLC, ROSE Community Transformer Training Coordinator and WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, ROSE hopes to use the Baby Café as a way to help women achieve their breastfeeding goals when they leave the hospital, increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates, and empower African-American mothers to have the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding. "I want to inspire and empower people," says Tenesha. "I want someone to look at me and say, 'Because of you I didn't give up.'"

ROSE's Baby Café is held every Monday from 1 to 3 pm EST excluding holidays at the ROSE office, 3250 Rainbow Drive, Decatur, GA, 30034. During this time, anybody can drop-in, no appointment needed, for any kind of help with breastfeeding, free of charge. For example, mothers and their supporters can receive help with a particular problem such as engorgement, ideas for breastfeeding support resources, or a one-on-one assessment and diagnosis by the nurse practitioner and International Board Certified Lactation Consultant on staff, ROSE President and CEO Kimarie Bugg. Other staff members



*Two sisters visit the ROSE Baby Café with their babies*

available to help include 3 Certified Lactation Counselors and additional Community Transformers, mothers who have breastfed or expressed breast milk for at least 6 months and have been trained to help other mothers with breastfeeding. The atmosphere is welcoming, and refreshments are available.

ROSE has been spreading the word about the Baby Café through social media and by posting flyers at local WIC offices, libraries, doctors' offices, and the 5 Baby-Friendly hospitals in Georgia. Tenesha shared the exciting story of a father who saw one of these flyers and thought the Baby Café sounded great; he brought his wife and newborn baby to the Baby Café. As the weeks go by, ROSE is hoping more and more people will hear about the Baby Café and give it a try. Expectant mothers are also encouraged to come and receive education and support; studies have shown that breastfeeding intent during pregnancy is strongly correlated to breastfeeding outcomes. ROSE's Baby Café is licensed by Baby Café USA and as such, follows their policies and guidelines. The nonprofit is hoping to establish more Baby Cafés throughout the state and locally in their area. Their dream is that this will start a movement and that other organizations will also establish Baby Cafés in underserved communities particularly in the South.

CHAMPS shares in this vision. Our Wednesday webinar on April 6, 2016 will be about Baby Cafés and will feature the national director of Baby Café USA, Lucia Jenkins (<http://www.champsbreastfeed.org/webinars.html>).

