



Noteworthy: A Conversation with a CABC-Accredited Birth Center



Abigail Lanin Eaves is the Founder and Executive Director of Dar a Luz Birth & Health Center.

This interview was conducted by Karin Braun and written by Sandra Lawrence, CABC Commissioners.

Karin: Thanks for talking with me, Abigail. Let's start by talking about what made you want to go into midwifery and what drove your decision to open the birth center.

Abigail: I have felt this was my calling since I was 11. My brother was an almost nine pound double footling breech and my mother delivered him vaginally which I always thought was amazing; I was always so intrigued by her birth stories. Then when I was 14, my sister had a homebirth in California with a midwife which I didn't know existed until then. That was my "AHA" moment and my entrance into midwifery! An introduction to the birth center model in school, and seeing that CNM's practiced primarily in hospitals while CPM's attended homebirths, I saw there was a need for a middle ground, another option. A birth center fulfills that function.

Karin: Please describe the client population you serve.

Abigail: Our client base is fairly evenly split between first time moms and multiples. The majority of the women are college educated, between 25-39, with about 70% Caucasian. We have around 130 births a year, exclusively in the birth center.

This is the next installment in the series, "Noteworthy: A Conversation with a CABC-Accredited Birth Center"

Dar a Luz Birth & Health Center, located in Los Ranchos, opened in 2011 and obtained CABC accreditation the same year. We caught up with Abigail at the AABC Birth Institute to talk about New Mexico's only licensed accredited birth center.



Karin: What are you most proud of, with regard to Dar a Luz?

Abigail: Our staff. Twenty women followed me to do the hard work of making the birth center a reality—CNM's, RN's, Administrators, and Educators. I am humbled and honored that they are willing to work this hard to give women this option.

Karin: What are the biggest challenges facing the birth center?

Abigail: There is always the challenge of the financial ups and downs that surround birth centers. Beyond that, we would like to add diversity to our staff, and need Spanish speaking staff to better serve our clients.



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Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers

Karin: What do you think is the benefit of a new or student midwife gaining experience in a birth center?

Abigail: Many hospital midwives have lost the understanding of physiological birth. Out of hospital birth provides the opportunity to understand the birth process in a very different way.

Karin: Why do you believe it's important to be CABC-accredited?

Abigail: Accreditation shows payers, the public, and medical colleagues that we are serious about safety and behind the scenes running of a birth center. Accreditation allows for feedback and oversight when changes are implemented. I would build accreditation into the opening of a birth center.

Karin: What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about opening a birth center?

Abigail: Know your clientele and who is utilizing midwives, and be patient, it takes time, even twice as long as you expect. Again, open with CABC accreditation in mind, and as an AABC developing member.

Contact Info

Address:
7708 4th St. NW
Los Ranchos de
Albuquerque, NM 87107

Website:
[https://
daraluzbirthcenter.org/](https://daraluzbirthcenter.org/)

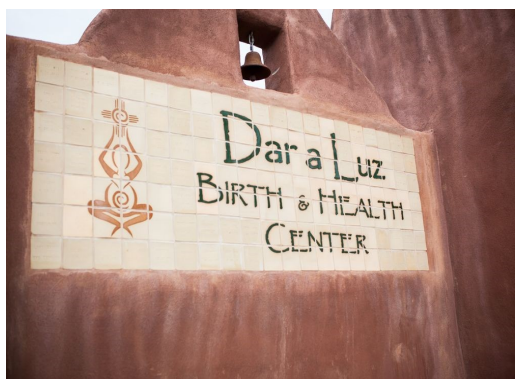
Call or Text:
505-924-2229
(505-924-BABY)

Karin: What is the best thing that happened to the birth center in the past year?

Abigail: A gift of \$250,000 was given by a family whose baby was caught here three years ago. It allowed us to establish a trust for "holding space for the miracle of natural birth". *(Editor's note: What an amazing and beautiful tribute!)*

Karin: What are some exciting things the future holds?

Abigail: We are soon to have baby #1000 at the center, a big milestone! We have a lot of demand for adding a pediatric practice but we don't have the room. We are hoping to expand to offer more services in the future.



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