

# ROSE & ROBE

2025  
ANNUAL REPORT



**“Normalizing Breastfeeding. Advancing Health Equity.”**



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# PROGRAMS THAT TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES



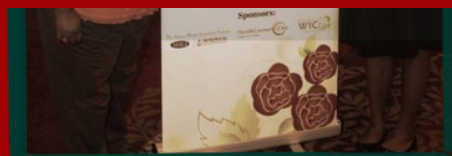
Breastfeeding Summits



ROSE Community Transformers



ROSE Breastfeeding Clubs



Village Innovating Perinatal Services



The DRIP



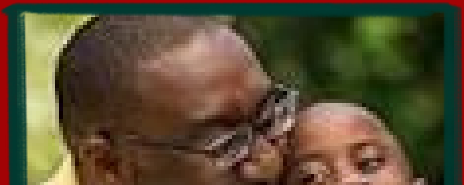
BreastFriends



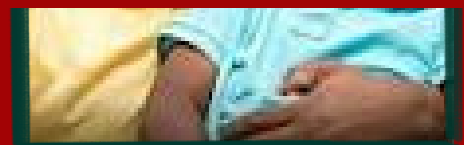
Queen's Circle



NICU Breastfriends



ROBE Programming



# **Messages from Leadership**

# A Message from the Village

## (Leadership Letter)

Dear Community, Partners, and Supporters,

The past year at ROSE has been one of growth, recalibration, and deepened perseverance. In a sociopolitical climate shaped by shifting priorities, constrained resources, and ongoing conversations about equity, our work in Black maternal, infant, and family health has required both clarity and courage. What continues to ground us is a simple but unwavering belief: communities closest to the challenges are also closest to the solutions. This truth guides how we listen, how we lead, and how we show up for families every day.

In 2025, we expanded our impact in ways that felt both purposeful and transformative. We deepened the connection between data, practice, and lived experience through initiatives such as evaluating the long-term outcomes of the Village Innovating Perinatal Support Services (VIPS) program, elevating community voice through the Care for NICU Families project, fostering meaningful collaboration from regional to international breastfeeding conferences, and continuing direct family support through our Drip Breastfeeding Support Group. Our training programs also evolved to more deliberately include doulas, home visitors, and fathers, while strengthening the capacity of peer and professional lactation supporters. These efforts reflect a deeper commitment to sustainability, ensuring that the work continues to live within communities long after initial investments.

This work is only possible because of the strength of our partnerships. From community-based organizations to academic institutions and national collaborators, our partners have amplified both our reach and our impact. Together, we have demonstrated what community-led, culturally grounded work looks like in practice by listening first, building trust, and co-creating solutions that reflect the realities of the families we serve.

At the same time, this year brought challenges that required thoughtful navigation. Funding shifts and evolving national priorities meant making difficult decisions and adapting our approach. Yet, these moments also brought clarity. We were reminded of the importance of flexibility, the value of investing in infrastructure, and the need to protect and sustain the people who power this work. Even in the face of constraint, our commitment to equity did not waver; it deepened.

As we look ahead, we are building toward a future where community-driven solutions are not the exception but the standard. ROSE is uniquely positioned to lead through our integration of data, workforce development, and culturally rooted care models. The urgency of this work remains clear as maternal and infant health disparities persist and, in many cases, widen. We invite you to continue building alongside us, knowing that lasting change requires shared vision, sustained commitment, and collective action.

With gratitude,

Andrea Serano, MPH, CHES, IBCLC, CLC



“ Together, we continue to dismantle systemic barriers and elevate community-led health solutions. ”

# A Message from the Brothers

## (Leadership Letter)

Greetings ROSE/ROBE Family, Friends, Community Partners and Collaborators,

This letter is written to both express my thanks for your continued support of ROSE & ROBE, but also to give you updates from this past year (2025). Ever since Dr. David Satcher, (16th Surgeon General of the US 1998-2002), and his mentee, Dr. Kimarie Bugg, (founder and CEO of Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere, Inc.) had a conversation about breastfeeding, she has been a tireless pioneer, and trailblazing servant in that space.

Not only did she expand her work at ROSE, working with women, but formed another program to work with men, ROBE. ROBE's mission is to educate, equip, and empower men to impact an increase in breastfeeding rates and a decrease in infant mortality rates in the African-American community. This is where I come in as a long-time (over 30 years) Certified Master Trainer and Family Life Coach, to solidify this mission. We do this by collaborating with other male-serving, community-based agencies, bringing in new and fresh young talent with lived experiences and innovative program ideas, making sure to include all those who have a willingness to serve in this exciting ecosystem of maternal child and community health.

Every year for the past few years, ROBE has consistently collaborated with, participated in, and sat on panels to increase visibility, while creating new programming and enhancing existing programs to recruit new talent. While ROBE has reached its zenith, we are still shooting for the stars. The subject matter experts at ROSE have given us a solid platform and foundation on which to build, and we don't take that for granted. The footprint they have provided is a large one, and we get much credibility from walking therein. With your continued support, you can look forward to hearing much more from ROBE, as we continue to build and positively impact the communities where we serve.

Yours in Service,

ROBE Executive Director  
Carl L. Route, Jr.



“Empowering fathers, strengthening families, and building communities where every brother is supported, seen, and equipped to nurture the next generation.”

# Organization Overview

# ROOTED IN PURPOSE

(MISSION, VISION, ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW)

## Mission Statements

**ROSE, inc.**, is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to serve communities, through a continued focus on centering the breastfeeding needs of Black families and impacting broader maternal, infant, and family health outcomes across the nation. (See [website](#) for full mission)

**ROBE, inc.**, seeks to educate, equip, and empower men to impact an increase in breastfeeding rates and a decrease in infant mortality rates within African-American communities.



## This Work Matters

ROSE and ROBE work to improve maternal and infant health through community-centered education, advocacy, and support. By strengthening culturally responsive care and empowering families and providers, we help address persistent disparities in perinatal health.

**2025**

**Key Milestones**

**&**

**Highlights**

# KEY MILESTONES & HIGHLIGHTS

*Responsible investment in community health and equity.*

**In 2025, ROSE was named one of over 80 global awardees of the Action for Women's Health initiative – a recognition that expands the organization's capacity to scale women's health solutions and support equitable access to care. This platform connects ROSE with an international cohort of changemakers focused on innovative and equitable health systems.**



Over 4,000 organizations applied from 119 countries, with 80+ selected through rigorous review, including many historically excluded from major funding. This award strengthens ROSE's work to normalize breastfeeding, promote equity, and expand access to essential health resources. [See here for more.](#)

# THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT (YEAR AT A GLANCE)

## ROSE 2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

...BY THE NUMBERS...

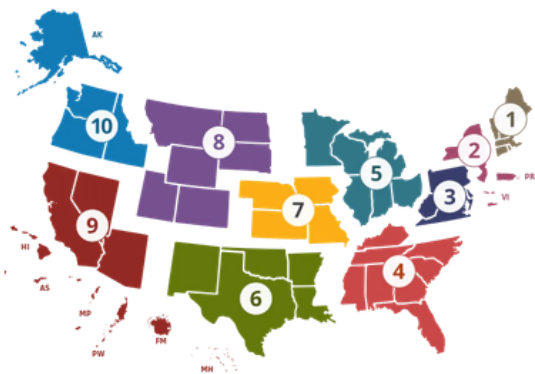


### 15.6K

Contacts Made

### 539

Total Activities



### 5 out of 10

Public Health  
Regions Directly  
Engaged



### 122

Trained through Peer  
Trainings



### 947

Online  
Downloads of  
Saving Tomorrow  
Today: an African  
American  
Breastfeeding  
Blueprint



# THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

(2024 & 2025 COMPARISON)

Metric	2024	2025
Contacts Made	<i>14.5K</i>	<i>15.6K</i>
Total Activities	<i>336</i>	<i>539</i>
Public Health Regions directly engaged	<i>8 out of 10</i>	<i>5 out 10</i>
Number of people trained through peer trainings	<i>157</i>	<i>122</i>
# of online downloads	<i>914</i>	<i>947</i>

# LEADERSHIP GROWTH

## Meet Our New Leadership



**Andrea Serano**

*ROSE Executive Director*



**Carl Route**

*ROBE Executive Director*



**Paula Bugg-  
Wrenn**

*Chief Operating Officer*

# ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

## **Leadership & Organizational Growth**

In 2025, Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (ROSE) and Reaching Our Brothers Everywhere (ROBE) proudly began a bold new chapter in advancing maternal and family health equity. This strategic leadership transformation will:

### **Strengthen Our Vision**

By creating a holistic ecosystem of care for families and communities.

### **Elevate Our Team**

New leadership brings expertise in community health, policy, and organizational development

### **Expand Our Impact**

Leadership transition accelerates projects and expands partnerships.



# 2025 ROSE PUBLICATIONS

(SEE FULL LIST ON ROSE WEBSITE)



Sewell, E., Locsin, M., **Bugg, G., Bugg, K.**, McGinnis, K., **Jackson, M.**, Maitre, N., Peagler, S., Robinson, D., **Serano, A.**, & Roberts, J. (2025). Integrating Stakeholder Priorities for the Optimization of Care of the Preterm Infant in a Safety-Net NICU. *American Journal of Perinatology*, 42(9), 1152–1161. <https://doi.org/10.1055/a-2463-4327>

**This study aimed to involve clinical and community stakeholders to improve neurodevelopmental outcomes and lessen infant brain injury. Clinical-community collaboration is essential.**

## Other Publications

Smith MO, Price J, Baker Jr R, **Neely H**, Alfandari D, **Bugg K**, Sibeko L and Arcaro KF (2026) Immune response in breastmilk of Black women to SARS-CoV-2 infection and vaccination against COVID-19. *Front. Nutr.* 12:1703784. [doi: 10.3389/fnut.2025.1703784](https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2025.1703784)

Hernandez-Spalding K, Farinu O, Clarke L, Lewis T, Suarez A, **Bugg K**, Strickland K, Molleti A, Maxy S, Hernandez-Green N. Centering Birthing Experiences of Women of Color: Protocol for a Qualitative Maternal Near Miss Study. *JMIR Res Protoc.* 2025 Mar 27;14:e58410. [doi: 10.2196/58410](https://doi.org/10.2196/58410). PMID: 40146199; PMCID: PMC11986380.



# BREAK

# **Voices of Impact**

# VOICES OF IMPACT

(COMMUNITY STORIES & TESTIMONIALS)

*Stories from the families, partners, and advocates at the heart of this work.*

*Being part of ROSE/ROBE programming helped us feel seen, supported, and confident in breastfeeding and parenting.*

*The Resource Fair connected my family with services we didn't even know existed.*

*Working with ROSE & ROBE has deepened our collective impact. Their community-centered approach truly shifts systems.*

*ROBE's fatherhood engagement work has transformed how we involve partners in maternal and infant care.*

*ROBE empowers fathers to actively support their families, strengthening maternal and infant health in our community.*



# **ROSE Partners in Progress**

# ROSE PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

## (PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS)

*Working together to strengthen maternal and infant health systems.*



### Supporters

- Boston Medical Center  
CHAMPS/CHEER
- Cincinnati Children's Hospital  
Medical Center
- University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill (UNC)
- Women Infant and Children's  
(WIC's) Maternal Health Center
- Kaiser Permanente Foundation
- Veritas Management Group
- Morehouse School of Medicine  
(MSM)
- McKing Foundation
- W.K.Kellogg Foundation (WKKF)
- Pivotal Ventures
- Breastfeeding Public Health  
Partnership

### Partnerships

- North Carolina A&T  
University (NCAT)
- United States Breastfeeding  
Committee (USBC)
- American Public Health  
Association (APHA)
- GA Public Health  
Association (GPHA)
- Center for Black Women's  
Wellness (CBWW)
- Academy Of Breastfeeding  
Medicine (ABM)
- National Academy of  
Science, Engineering, and  
Medicine (NASEM)



**To 2026... And  
Beyond!**

# GROWING THE MOVEMENT

(LOOKING AHEAD: GOALS FOR 2026)

*Expanding impact and strengthening the future of community-led care.*



## Strategic Priorities

Key priorities include advancing breastfeeding equity, expanding father engagement through ROBE initiatives, and strengthening partnerships with healthcare providers, community organizations, and public health leaders.



## Program Expansion

ROSE and ROBE will expand programs that strengthen community support networks, including Community Transformer trainings, peer support programs such as Breastfeeding Clubs and BreastFriends mentorship, and initiatives that increase access to perinatal support for families.

## Upcoming Initiatives

ROSE and ROBE will convene leaders, providers, and families through collaborative events and trainings. A major milestone will be the ROSE & ROBE 15th Anniversary Breastfeeding and Birth Justice Summit, in New Orleans, LA, August 25th -29th, 2026.

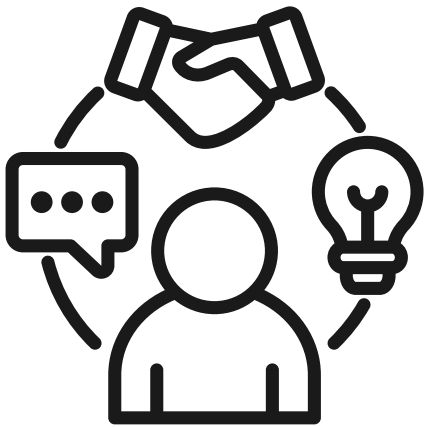
<https://breastfeedingrose.org/rose-summit-2026/>



# GATHERING THE VILLAGE

## (EVENTS & CONVENINGS)

*Creating spaces where collaboration and learning thrive.*



ROSE BreastFriends program has continued to create meaningful impact by strengthening peer support networks within the community.

Signature Community Events  
ROSE & ROBE hosted the 2nd Annual Community Resource Fair, connecting families and partners with resources, fellowship, and community support.



**EMBRACE  
EQUITY**

Spotlighting Equity with UBBLs  
ROSE participated in UBBLs (Greensboro, NC), promoting breastfeeding equity and sharing strategies with providers and community champions.

# JOIN THE VILLAGE

(CALL TO ACTION)

*Ways to support and engage in the mission.*



## Donations

[https://www.paypal.com/donate/?cmd=s-xclick&hosted\\_button\\_id=TBYGBWXFGZSLN](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?cmd=s-xclick&hosted_button_id=TBYGBWXFGZSLN)



## Partnerships

Interested in partnering with ROSE email  
[Breastfeedingrose@gmail.com](mailto:Breastfeedingrose@gmail.com)



## Event Participation

Interested in participating in a ROSE event or program visit [Breastfeedingrose.org](http://Breastfeedingrose.org)



## Advocacy

Interested in our advocacy efforts email  
[Breastfeedingrose@gmail.com](mailto:Breastfeedingrose@gmail.com)

**Together  
We  
Rise**

# TOGETHER WE RISE

*Collective care creates healthier families and stronger communities.*

Across 2025, both organizations strengthened their community footprint, centering culturally responsive approaches to:

- Increase awareness of breastfeeding support in African-American communities
- Train community members and professionals
- Engage fathers and male partners in lactation advocacy
- Shift narratives around maternal and infant health equity

As we move forward, we invite you to continue this journey with us—through partnership, advocacy, volunteering, or sharing our work with others.



# CONTACT US

## Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere, Inc.

**Mailing Address:** 3035 Stone Mountain Street,  
#1076, Lithonia, GA 30058

**Phone:** (404) 719-4297

**ROSE Website:** [www.breastfeedingrose.org](http://www.breastfeedingrose.org)

**Facebook:** [Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere \(ROSE\)](#)

**X:** @Support\_ROSE

**Instagram:** @Support\_ROSE

**LinkedIn:** [Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere Inc.](#)

**ROBE Website:** [www.robeforfamily.org](http://www.robeforfamily.org)



*ROBE Website*

For further information, please reach  
out to us at  
[breastfeedingrose@gmail.com](mailto:breastfeedingrose@gmail.com)



*ROSE Website*