

## Background

MamaStrong is a program of New City Cleveland (NCC), a Christian nonprofit dedicated to community empowerment in the Buckeye-Woodhill neighborhood through faith, equity, and justice. MamaStrong is the mom support group of NCC.

## Population

MamaStrong serves moms in Cleveland, particularly within the Buckeye-Woodhill area – a neighborhood battling with adverse social determinants of health due to historical injustices.

## Learning Objectives

- ❖ Promote community empowerment and mutualism over charity
- ❖ Learn about both racial injustices and assets of the Buckeye-Woodhill area
- ❖ Work with community partners to achieve shared goals



**Figure 1—“Community”** At this “community” themed moms’ circle, each woman got the opportunity to hold a ball of yarn, share a statement about herself, and then pass the ball of yarn to anyone else in the circle who could relate. The end result? A web of connectedness



**Figure 2—“Ask the Pediatrician”** Moms gather for a meal and a moms’ circle discussion. This pictures the “ask the pediatrician” night, facilitated by two physicians and a community mom

*MamaStrong means a  
community of mothers  
supporting each other for  
the good and the not so  
good – Veatrice Andres*

## Activities

- ❖ Coordinate intake of referrals from the neighborhood with Executive Director
- ❖ Connect volunteers with appropriate opportunities to serve
- ❖ Match expecting moms with doulas
- ❖ Help launch and maintain a sustainable monthly “moms’ circle”
- ❖ Plan and engage in outreach events to connect with neighborhood moms
- ❖ Communicate and manage information between program participants and volunteers
- ❖ Work on grant research and reporting
- ❖ Invite partners to support the mission and vision of NCC and MamaStrong via donations and sponsorship
- ❖ Represent MamaStrong when networking and building community collaboration

## Deliverables

- ❖ Database of mothers in the community who have connected with MamaStrong
- ❖ MamaStrong intake form
- ❖ Letter draft to City of Cleveland for residents to use in supporting establishment of Birthing Beautiful Communities birthing center in Hough

## Public Health Implications

- ❖ Providing doula support and motherhood care targets issues of maternal and infant mortality in Cleveland
- ❖ These connections bolster socialization and community, a social determinant of health

## Lessons Learned

- ❖ Marginalization ≠absence of ideas, aspirations, assets
- ❖ Steady phone access is a social determinant of health
- ❖ Genuine conversations and intentionality matter

## Acknowledgements

Leah Ross, Executive Director of NCC

- ❖ Has been instrumental in my growth as a community worker in training



**Figure 3—“Casting Cares”** After a time of prayer and meaningful conversations unpacking sources of anxiety, women wrote down worrying thoughts on a sheet of paper, wrapped it around a stone, and threw it into a basin of water, symbolically “casting their cares upon the Lord”