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QUINTESSENCE FOUNDATION

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World Breastfeeding Week 2020

Happy New Year! Here we are at the beginning of a new decade and time to consider our new year's resolutions both past and current. For 2019, we planned to get our results from the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge out by December 31st but didn't quite make it. Life had some surprises including cardiac surgery for a family member so here we are in January publishing the results. For 2020, we hope with your help to make the Challenge bigger than ever and to publish our final results by November 30th.

It is not too soon to start thinking about World Breastfeeding Week (WBFW) 2020. It seems that we go from January (Happy New Year) to March (spring break) to summer (vacations, hopefully) to fall and WBFW very quickly. In Canada, World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated during the first week of October. In addition, the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge also occurs during the first week of October, often the first Saturday in October.

Checking the WABA website, indicates that the theme for 2020 WBFW has not as yet been posted. There is a notation about World Breastfeeding Week which states "World Breastfeeding Week is a global campaign to raise awareness and galvanize action on themes related to breastfeeding". Yes, that sums it up clearly. Let's all of us consider what we can do in our communities to "raise awareness and galvanize action" on breastfeeding issues.

It seems that in many countries breastfeeding in public, skilled support for breastfeeding mothers and use of pasteurized donor milk/support of mother's milk supply in our NICUs are all issues. More women are aware than human milk is important to child health, but support of direct breastfeeding is not happening. Let's all strive to make a difference in 2020!



Fredericton, NB

Results of the 2019 Breastfeeding Challenge

Congratulations to all the sites and their organizers who took part in the 2019 Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge. Many of you have taken this task on over a number of years & we appreciate your efforts. We are still struggling with our website and are making slow progress. If you neglected to submit your results, please send us your numbers and we will add them to our totals.



Québec City organizers



Quesnel, BC organizers

Number of sites reporting: 133 (of 155)

Number of babies: 2,067

Top Ten Sites with the most participant children

Location	Number of BF children
1. Québec: St-Jean-sur-Richelieu	85
2. BC: Chilliwack	82
3. Ontario: Niagara	74
4. Québec: Longueuil	66
5. Québec: Québec City	61
6. Québec: Montréal (Espace-Famille Villeray)	55
7. Québec: Granby	54
8. Québec: Terrebonne	53
9. BC: Vancouver (BC Women's Hospital)	52
10. BC: Maple Ridge	46

The North American 2019 Ratings:

Category A:

More than 50,000 births/year

Gold: Québec

Silver: Ontario

Bronze: Alberta

Category B Regions:

10,000 to 50,000 births/year

Gold: British Columbia

Silver: Manitoba

Bronze: Saskatchewan

Category C Regions:

less than 10,000 births/year

Gold: New Brunswick

Silver: Newfoundland & Labrador

World Breastfeeding Week 2020 in Photos!



Quayside Bean Around the World North Vancouver, BC



Quesnel, BC



Québec City, QC



Fredericton, NB



Grand Forks, BC



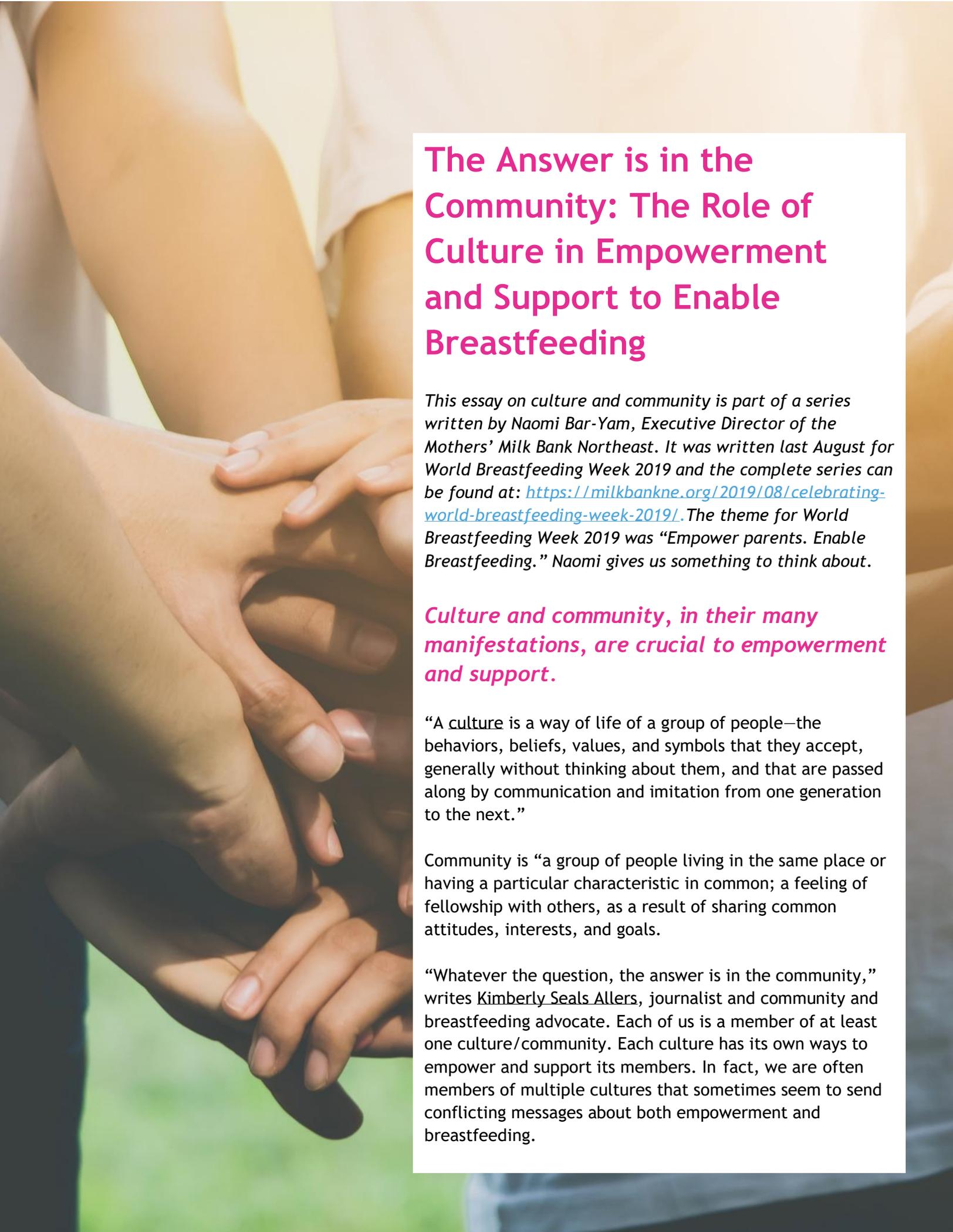
Labrador City, NL



St. Quentin, NB



Prince George, BC



The Answer is in the Community: The Role of Culture in Empowerment and Support to Enable Breastfeeding

This essay on culture and community is part of a series written by Naomi Bar-Yam, Executive Director of the Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast. It was written last August for World Breastfeeding Week 2019 and the complete series can be found at: <https://milkbankne.org/2019/08/celebrating-world-breastfeeding-week-2019/>. The theme for World Breastfeeding Week 2019 was “Empower parents. Enable Breastfeeding.” Naomi gives us something to think about.

Culture and community, in their many manifestations, are crucial to empowerment and support.

“A culture is a way of life of a group of people—the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.”

Community is “a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common; a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.

“Whatever the question, the answer is in the community,” writes Kimberly Seals Allers, journalist and community and breastfeeding advocate. Each of us is a member of at least one culture/community. Each culture has its own ways to empower and support its members. In fact, we are often members of multiple cultures that sometimes seem to send conflicting messages about both empowerment and breastfeeding.

What is/are your culture(s)?

Who are the empowerment players in your culture and community? What is their role in imparting and enabling the values, behaviors, beliefs you hold dear?

- Parents, aunts, uncles
- Grandparents
- Community elders
- Peers, friends, siblings, cousins
- Religious leaders
- Spouse or partner
- Teachers

What are the spaces (physical and virtual) in your culture/community where people come together, where support and empowerment happen?

- At home
- In the neighborhood
- In the workplace
- At your place of worship
- In community centers (institutions, agencies, businesses)
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, online discussions)

What tools does your culture have to empower, support, and protect its members?

- Wisdom and stories handed down to each generation
- Special foods, clothing
- Sacred and universally accepted texts
- Rituals and ceremonies (religious and otherwise)
- Training, encouragement, support, and reward for achievements that reflect the culture's values.

All of these can empower parents and enable breastfeeding. Cultures have unique ways to support new families, including:

- Special foods, massage, baths, prepared by friends, family members, elders to recover from birth, to ease into parenthood, to increase milk supply.
- Time, often for somewhere around 40 days (about six weeks), in which parents are cared for and protected from outside responsibilities, including work and caring for older siblings.
- Special spaces where parents and babies can be together to get to know one another, establish breastfeeding, become a family.

We are also part of North American culture, in which independence is highly valued, often over community support. For example, six weeks of protected time is mostly unheard of. How often are parents asked a couple of weeks after the birth, "How's it going? Is everything back to normal yet?"



Quebec - Nourri-Source La-Presqu'île

In North American culture, “wisdom of elders” takes the form of medical knowledge, practice, and advice. Modern medicine has much to offer; it protects and saves lives. The knowledge and research and the providers who offer it can be empowering and can help to support and enable breastfeeding. However, medicine and North American culture do not have all the answers, or even ask all the right questions. It is one culture, one set of tools, among many available to you.

Breastfeeding is not so much a medical event as it is a personal, family, community, cultural event. Your cultures and your community are an important part of who you are. They offer much wisdom, support, empowerment to enable breastfeeding and so much more in the responsibility and joy of being parents.

We began with definitions of community and culture. In biology, culture is a verb. To culture is “to maintain (usually tissue cells, bacteria, etc.) in conditions suitable for growth.” Over many generations, each of our cultures has also found the best ways to maintain its members in conditions suitable for growth. This includes protecting and supporting parents, empowering and enabling them to care for their newest family members.