

## Plum Bites



We hope everyone is enjoying the winter season. Whether you bundle up and explore the cold crisp outdoors or hibernate indoors with your family, everyone at Plum wishes you all the best for this blustery (or rainy) season!

### Choice Care in the Comox Valley

*Our featured care provider is Maneesha who works as a massage therapist at Harborview and backs us up for homebirths.*



Maneesha Madan graduated from the West Coast College of Massage Therapy in 1996 and has always had a special interest in women's reproductive health. Her passion for working with pregnant women and babies began while completing her massage therapy training, inspired her to certify as a doula in 2000, and led to her study of Midwifery at the University of British Columbia. After completing three years of midwifery training at UBC, Maneesha returned to her first love of massage at Harbourview Therapeutic Massage in Comox. She also works as a second attendant at home births with Plum Midwifery.

Many women benefit from massage therapy during their child-bearing years. Massage is an effective and safe way to relieve the physical discomforts that often accompany pregnancy, labour and the post-partum period.

Massage therapy can ease headaches, digestive discomfort, swelling, and pain or cramping in the neck, back, pelvis and legs. Massage is also a

### Magnificent Mamas!!

*A spotlight on clients past and present as they reflect on what they do and how midwifery care affected them.*



**Jordan Guignard**

#### On midwifery....

I am lucky to have two rambunctious, strong minded little boys who really fit their skin. I attribute these qualities in part to the way they came into the world. I gave birth with the compassionate guidance of midwives and the support of my best (doula) friend. For me, midwifery care was the obvious choice because I wanted a female caregiver, I ask a lot of questions, and choice is of the utmost importance. Pregnancy is a time of self exploration and transition for parents. Joanne was central in supporting my husband and I grow as a family. Our questions never went unanswered, those answers were not rushed, and our decisions were always respected. We also chose to give birth out of hospital where we felt safe, supported and at home. Most births have elements of empowerment and every birth reveals a women's hidden strengths. Mine showed themselves in our cozy little cabin in Merville while waiting, chatting, rocking, moaning and breathing my son out. Joanne and Marion's smiling faces told you these women truly love what they do. I realized I am supposed to do the same. Lucky for me I had found a midwife and a mentor. Fast forward almost seven years and I love what I do.

#### On her work...

In my work as a doula, I support women's

wonderful way to reduce stress and enhance self-care during a time that can be physically and emotionally challenging.

Maneesha would love to pass on three tips to remember:

- **Massage therapy is a great way to take care of your body during your pregnancy!** At Harbourview Therapeutic Massage we use a unique system of pillows and supports that allows most women to lie comfortably on their stomachs at any point during pregnancy.
- **Babies can benefit from massage too!** Newborns who are colicky or hard to settle often respond remarkably well to Craniosacral Therapy, a gentle and calming technique that can have huge benefits.
- **Don't forget to take care of your body after your baby is born!** As your body goes through the physiological changes back to its pre-pregnancy state, massage therapy helps to align, balance, and soothe you in your transition.

For more information, call Harbourview Therapeutic Massage at 250-339-2233, or visit our website at [www.hvtm.com](http://www.hvtm.com).

decisions, encourage their self exploration and accompany them on their journey to parenthood. Every woman is unique bringing their own knowledge and power to their birth and as doula I strive to provide individualized care. Doulas focus on emotional and physical support during labour which complement the medical care given by midwives. I offer each family prenatal education, continuous labour support and breastfeeding assistance. Every birth I attend I am inspired by something new and marveled by the process.

Jordan works in Courtenay as a pregnancy outreach worker. She is a Breastfeeding Counsellor, Childbirth Educator, and certified DONA doula. She teaches the prenatal breastfeeding and labour and delivery classes offered by VIHA. In the new year, she also plans to offer an intensive breastfeeding class at the new Podlings Natural Resource Centre. In addition to doula services, she offers private prenatal education, breastfeeding counsel, and belly casting. She is an active member of the Comox Valley Doula group which is already planning the next "Bellies, Birth and Babies Fair" . Jordan lives with her sons, now nine and six, and her supportive husband outside Courtenay.

You can contact Jordan at:  
[jordan@rootsdoulacare.com](mailto:jordan@rootsdoulacare.com).

## Birth Stories

*Our clients share their journeys into the realm of parenthood. Where they find their expectations defied and lives forever changed.*



### The Story of Levi.

**His Dad:** Well the pregnancy went quite well for me but I should give my wife Chloe some credit too, since she did most of the work! Since there were no complications during pregnancy, we felt it would alleviate a lot stress and be much more comfortable to have a home birth.

I suppose it started the night before at a dinner

## Welcome To The World!!!

The latest Plum Babies...



Visit [our website](#) for photos.

### September 2009

Shay  
Bria  
Elijah  
William  
Cameron  
Nicholas

### October 2009

Sage Ocean  
Levi  
Linnea  
Ryan

### November 2009

Sara  
Patrick

at my mom's house with us laughing around a thanksgiving turkey. "Don't laugh too hard", we said. "It will induce labour!" The next morning Chloe awoke very early with strange cramp-like feelings in her tummy. "I think I'm having contractions!" she moaned. "Well don't have a baby until I get home from work!" I replied as I kissed her goodbye and raced out the door.

Contractions were in full swing when I got home at 4:00 and so we started timing them. After about 2 hours we phoned the midwife on call to let her know we were ready for her. She was unsure as to whether or not we were phoning too early but by the time she got to our home she introduced herself then checked Chloe to realize she was 9cm dilated! We had never met her before because she was new to Plum and she happened to be on call. So I rushed to prepare everything we would need, while the midwife unpacked all her medical supplies. Meanwhile I, with the invaluable help of Thalina and Monique, Chloe's sister and mother, practiced the breathing techniques we learned in prenatal classes a few weeks before. By now Chloe was immobile on the bed in a lot of pain and she was beginning to push involuntarily. Next Chloe's water broke and some meconium was visible in it so the paramedics were called to our house on stand by in case of complications. The 2nd caregiver arrived at this point and she introduced herself to us. Then she turned to the midwife and they introduced themselves to each other. Turns out they had never even met either!

Everything was going well and by now Chloe was pushing with every other contraction and the head was visible! We were all getting very excited! After a few more pushes a baby slipped out and we were all awestruck. "It's a boy!" yelled Thalina!

The baby had his cord cut, mouth suctioned and then was returned to Chloe to cuddle with her. "I feel like a million bucks" she said, and she did, she was beaming with joy.

Being at home was a great way for us to experience a birth. It was relaxed and calming and best of all we were able to spend our first night with our little boy in our own room. Our friends and family were there to huddle around and watch as the baby was weighed and measured, and of course he got passed around a few times! We are especially thankful to the midwives and their expertise which made our home birth possible.

**His Mother:** As much as we don't want to, people usually have expectations about things and I was no exception when it came to my pregnancy, labour and delivery! I had done lots of reading and talking with friends who had given birth before and felt that I knew the ins and outs and what to expect! My own experience however was far from what I could have ever imagined.

I had expected labour to last an eternity and since I was planning a home birth I had plans of using all kinds of things for pain management during contractions such as warm baths and sitting on a birthing ball, listening to soothing

Emily  
Zev  
Isabelle  
Silva  
Frederika  
Fisher  
Hazel  
Zev

#### December 2009

Oliver  
Baby Schnyder  
Baby McKinnon  
Owen  
Jacob Eli  
Baby O'Reilly

#### January 2010

Oscar  
Nick  
Baby Chowdhury  
Flint

We want to feature your beautiful babe!  
Make sure to send us a photo of your little ones! Click [here](#) to email.

## Women's Wisdom

*Natural approaches to common pregnancy concerns*

**Note: Nothing stated in this article should replace a conversation with your midwife or other health care provider if you have concerns about your well being.**



### Are Homebirths safe?

*The following is an excerpt from the HomeBirth Handbook for Midwifery Clients Revised March 2009 and available from all midwifery offices and from the College of Midwives of BC.*

Home birth involves careful screening of women by their midwives to determine suitability and coordination between midwives and other health care providers. Home birth is provided within a broad support system that includes hospitals, physicians and emergency services.

The Home Birth Demonstration Project (HBDP) was incorporated in the Midwives Regulation of the Health Professions Act, which established midwifery as a self-regulated profession in the province. The goal of the project was to evaluate home births with registered midwives in the first two years of regulated midwifery in British Columbia. The HBDP facilitated coordination among maternity care providers to ensure that the necessary support systems for planned home birth were in place. The project also collected and analyzed data from all of the planned home births, including those where transfer to hospital was required, attended by registered

music, massages from my husband. The reality was that I never had a chance to use any of these things because my labour was so fast and intense that I never moved from the position I first laid down in on my bed when hard labour started.

Things moved so fast for me that I when I was in early labour I thought it must be pre-labour, and likewise when active labour started I thought it must just be early labour! From what I had heard, I never imagined I could go into labour and have a baby all in one day, I assumed I would be up all night having contractions, and we'd have the baby the next day. I remember thinking I didn't know how I would ever cope with what was to come!

It all worked in my favor though, because by the time my midwife arrived at my house and examined me, I was already 9 cm dilated! I was already in transition, almost there! My body began to take over and I could feel myself pushing without even trying, the strangest sensation. My water broke and there was meconium present in the fluid. Because I was so far along in my labour and already pushing, it would have been risky to move me to the hospital, so the paramedics were called to my house to wait on standby in case the baby would need any treatment after the birth.

As the contractions were peaking I found the only thing that got me through them was breathing in through my nose and exhaling loudly through my mouth. With this breathing technique I felt in control of the pain and of what was happening to me. It became my ritual and my support people and I did it through each contraction until our baby was born. Luckily, my beautiful baby boy didn't inhale any of the meconium when he was born, and the paramedics weren't needed.

I had expectations about what it would be like giving birth, and in the end it didn't go exactly the way I thought. It's a good idea to be prepared and be flexible, and have faith that it will all work out the way it's supposed to be! Have faith in your body that it will know what to do, because it does and it will amaze you. It was an extraordinary experience for me to have my first baby at home surrounded by family and friends, and I am grateful to the wonderful midwife and nurse who made it possible!



We are proud to offer Catherine Quaglia as a prenatal instructor at Plum. Please sign up for her classes on the following dates:

midwives from January 1, 1998 through December 31, 1999. The project's independent evaluation team conducted an analysis and evaluation of these two years of data, and recommended that home birth services continue to be delivered to a well-screened low-risk population of BC women by registered midwives with training in emergency management, the necessary equipment and supplies, and access to ambulance and hospital back-up services.

While homebirth continues to be an option for low risk midwifery clients, not all women will be comfortable choosing a homebirth, or be good candidates for a home birth. Ongoing evaluation for the presence of risk factors is an important aspect of midwifery care throughout pregnancy, labour and birth. Information gathering is important when choosing place of birth and only then can women and families make an informed decision about place of birth.

Sometimes a woman will choose a home birth but realize in labour she may not be comfortable at home and may choose to go to hospital, likewise a woman may choose a hospital birth but may decide in labour that she wants to stay home. Midwives are prepared for both options and in the end as long as everything is progressing normally and women are in the low risk category it is important for women to have their baby in their chosen place of birth.

After 11 years of regulated midwifery in the province of British Columbia and longer for other provinces in Canada and world wide, homebirth continues to be offered as a safe option for birthing women. Click [here](#) for more info.

Answers to more midwifery questions can be found in our monthly Our Big Earth Feature: "Ask a Midwife". See below for details.

*For more information talk to your midwife or other health care provider.*

## Plum Branches

*Stay tuned for news of how our practice is growing.*

### Midwives!!!

We're pleased to announce that Jessie Shanon joined our practice as of September this year.

We also have a student, Astrid Fritzsche who will be with us until April. Please click on the link below for their biographies.  
[www.plummidwifery.com](http://www.plummidwifery.com)



### New Space

We would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to our clients who put up with the banging and

March 6th and 7th  
May 15th and 16th.

Click the logo above for details.



sawing construction zone that was the Plum Clinic during the fall. We are pleased with the new space.



## Your Questions Please!!!

We're ecstatic to have the opportunity to be a part of the "Our Big Earth" community through our new featured column: "Ask a Midwife". Recently we asked Robin Rivers, the editor of OBE to offer a few words to describe her vision. Here is what she had to say:

"Our Big Earth-Comox Valley is the leading resource for families in the Comox Valley, fostering local community, drawing people to the Valley from around the globe. We do this through creating meaningful connections between people, parents, professionals, businesses and organizations that add to our quality of life in the Comox Valley.

We promote the shared values of environmental sustainability, living green, eating local, supporting quality products and services, promoting kid centered learning and encouraging active engagement in the life of our community - through the arts, recreation, education, volunteerism and more."

Please click on the logo below to find out more.



Thank you to our clients. You are why we love what we do--even at 3 in the morning.

Sincerely,

Joanne Daviau ,Amy Kelly, Emma Gleghill & Jessie Shannon.  
Plum Midwifery

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