Life is full of firsts. Firsts are special, memorable and usually the beginning of something new and exciting. For me, 2023 will always feel extraordinary. It was my first year as executive director, a journey that started on my first day at the milk bank in 2010. Back then, I fell in love with the mission but never anticipated how the organization would guide my continued education or career.

If I had to summarize the past 12 months, I could talk about the meetings, emails, Zoom calls, tours, presentations and more meetings and emails. However, it’s the big picture and all of the people in it that are truly impressive. Not only did we help a lot of babies and families, YOU helped a lot of babies and families, too!

Transitioning to a broad leadership role, as I have, provides a unique opportunity to see how it all comes together. We can’t feed babies without mothers who donate their extra milk. We can’t feed babies without staff who ensure the milk is safe. We can’t feed babies, help mothers with breastfeeding, expand our programs, purchase needed equipment or improve systems without dedicated board members, volunteers, employees, funders, community partners, healthcare providers - the list goes on and on.

Our impact in 2023, outlined in this report, speaks volumes about the power of community support and collaboration. We are in this together and I feel privileged to help take the mission forward.

Thank you for being a part of the milk bank family. Here’s to more firsts.

~Shaina
MISSION: We strive to improve the health and survival of infants through breastfeeding advocacy and the safe, equitable provision of pasteurized donor human milk.

VISION: We envision a future when all babies have the opportunity to receive human milk.

MEET OUR TEAM:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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Alondra Criss, MPH, RD, LD
Dara Dallas, MD
Bill Hallgren
Samantha Martinez Berlanga
DONOR PROGRAM SUPERVISOR

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Danyel Jones-Minor
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Samantha Martinez Berlanga
DONOR PROGRAM SUPERVISOR
Nathalie Avila
PASTEURIZATION TECHNICIAN
Allanah Bennett
LAB SYSTEM SPECIALIST
Amy Boyd
GENERAL ADMINISTRATOR
TaKasha Ehiogu
INTERN
Casey Ferguson
DONOR/RECIPIENT COORDINATOR
Lily Gilpin
PASTEURIZATION TECHNICIAN
Liliana Granados
SHIPPING & RECEIVING
Sabrina Hitri
PASTEURIZATION TECHNICIAN

Maggie Kipper
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COORDINATOR
Fabian Licona
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
Jennifer Lifshutz
PASTEURIZATION TECHNICIAN
Pamela Lopez
PASTEURIZATION TECHNICIAN
Judy Maltos-Pesina
PASTEURIZATION TECHNICIAN
Courtney Margotta-Bonham
PROGRAM COORDINATOR
Brittany Nunn
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Tina Passah
PASTEURIZATION TECHNICIAN
Nansy Sanchez-Perez
DONOR COORDINATOR
Guadalupe Silva
SHIPPING & RECEIVING
Jason Simpson
PASTEURIZATION TECHNICIAN
Carver Upton
SHIPPING & RECEIVING
Amy Vickers, MSN, RN, IBCLC
EMERITUS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Suzanne Walling
GENERAL ADMINISTRATOR
Morgan Winkfield
PASTEURIZATION TECHNICIAN

MEETING SUPPORT FACILITATORS
Amanda Alvarez, IBCLC
Karen Bell
Connie Rico, IBCLC
OUR DONORS: MAKING MIRACLES EVERY DAY IN 2023

“I felt the need to donate after my baby was in the NICU and I learned about the struggles that moms of premature babies go through when wanting to breastfeed...I preferred to donate my extra milk rather than keep it in the freezer... I hope it has helped many babies!”

~Donor Michelle

“[Donating] is very special to me. Knowing that I can give a gift to other mothers and fragile babies really means the world because I personally know the struggles of breastfeeding and trying to produce enough milk for my baby.”

~Donor Jennifer

“Donating my extra breastmilk means I get to help another mom who may want to breastfeed but is not able to do so. It means I get to help a baby grow healthy so they can go home to their family.”

~Donor Sharvonne
Establishing a successful breastfeeding routine can be stressful for new and experienced parents alike. Problems like low milk supply, pain and poor latching can usually be resolved with professional help; but that help isn’t always accessible or affordable.

Supporting breastfeeding families equitably is a vital part of the milk bank’s mission. Through a free program called Baby Café, Mothers’ Milk Bank of North Texas continues to advocate for families through the expertise of certified lactation consultants. Families drop in on Tuesdays for individualized support and have the opportunity to meet other families and check their baby’s weight. Spanish sessions and evening virtual sessions are available twice a month.

In 2023, 146 breastfeeding or pregnant participants received help through the program. Lactation consultant, Amanda Alvarez, says, “Now, in our sixth year, we strive to adapt each session to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve. We want the atmosphere to be casual, relaxed and welcoming as we help families reach their breastfeeding goals.”

Amanda adds, “I remember one mother who came to our Baby Café off and on throughout her baby’s first year. She started off with this tiny newborn and what felt like a mountain of questions. Over the course of that year she mastered the deep latch, overcame dips in her milk supply, and survived sleep regressions. She became more confident as the months went by and helped other new parents do the same. Parents like her are an important part of what makes Baby Café so unique. Breastfeeding families need access to qualified care; but they need one another too.”

Abide Women’s Health Services in Dallas has been a valued community partner in the program. Paige Jackson, VP of Clinical Services for the organization, says, “I’m incredibly proud of Abide’s partnership with Mothers’ Milk Bank of North Texas for Baby Café, a program dedicated to providing vital support to breastfeeding families, with a special focus on Black breastfeeding families. Baby Café not only offers a safe space for sharing experiences but also delivers essential education, actively contributing to positive outcomes. Together, we’re nurturing bonds and paving the way for improved health outcomes for both mothers and infants. Each session is a step towards combating disparities and fostering resilience. It’s evident: with the right support, we can rewrite the narrative and save lives.”

For more information about the milk bank’s free lactation support program, visit: www.texasmilkbank.org.
I received helpful information every time I went. The instructors at Baby Café helped me feel heard and seen, and they validated the issues I was having. They even helped debunk some ideas I had going into Baby Café about breastfeeding and supply. I even felt comfortable coming back when I had other breastfeeding issues later in my breastfeeding journey. I have referred some friends to them when discussing breastfeeding difficulties. I will definitely return if I have a second child and struggle with breastfeeding again, or if another issue arises before I complete my breastfeeding journey.

LACTATION CONSULTANT AMANDA ALVAREZ SAYS:

“While I love helping families feel more confident and comfortable feeding their babies, my favorite thing about Baby Café is seeing the parents connect with one another. There is something really incredible about being in a space where you know you will be understood and supported unconditionally. Baby Café is about so much more than breastfeeding support. It’s about helping families thrive.”

MOM WHO ATTENDED BABY CAFÉ SAYS:

“I received helpful information every time I went. The instructors at Baby Café helped me feel heard and seen, and they validated the issues I was having. They even helped debunk some ideas I had going into Baby Café about breastfeeding and supply. I even felt comfortable coming back when I had other breastfeeding issues later in my breastfeeding journey. I have referred some friends to them when discussing breastfeeding difficulties. I will definitely return if I have a second child and struggle with breastfeeding again, or if another issue arises before I complete my breastfeeding journey.”

BREASTFEEDING...HELPING LITTLE TEXANS GROW BIG!

Our 2023 t-shirt fundraiser was another wonderful success.

$2,000 in proceeds benefited Baby Café, our free breastfeeding support program.

We appreciate everyone who celebrated National Breastfeeding Month with us and helped spread the word that breastfeeding is helping little Texans grow big!
Caio was born prematurely, weighing a little over four pounds at birth. He began receiving donor milk in the NICU when his mother, Becky, was unable to produce breastmilk.

He was making great progress until he transitioned to formula. Becky says, “That’s when everything changed, and our world was turned upside down.” Caio was near death. Unable to breathe, he was intubated and transferred by helicopter to a better equipped hospital.

Caio was diagnosed with necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), a devastating gut infection. His team started antibiotics before his tiny intestines perforated. After receiving donor milk again, he progressed enough to be discharged and switched to formula.

Then, it happened again. Caio’s intestines became inflamed and infected, requiring donor milk at home by prescription through the milk bank’s outpatient program. When Becky lost her job, the milk bank’s Milk Money Fund kicked in, covering all milk processing fees.

In 2023, at 12-months old, Caio successfully transitioned off donor milk. Becky says, “He has moved to the toddler room at daycare, is ahead in most milestones and loves playing with our dog Abby and dancing to 70’s and 80’s pop music.”

Becky adds a special message to the moms who donate their extra breastmilk:

“Your gift is a blessing beyond measure. It has saved my son’s life and enabled him to continue to live, thrive and experience life.”
OUR SUPPORTERS IN 2023

FOUNDATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & CORPORATIONS

Abbott Laboratories
The Addy Foundation
Amazon Smile Foundation
Ann & Charles Florsheim Family Foundation
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Baylor Scott & White Health
Costco Wholesale Corporation
DuBose Family Foundation
Dutch Bros
Fash Foundation
Fidelity Giving Marketplace
The Frill Foundation
Harold D. and Eleanor F. Hoopman Charitable Foundation
HCA Healthcare
Higginbotham Community Fund at North Texas Community Foundation
Hoblitzelle Foundation
Kroger Community Rewards
Liberty Mutual
Nancy & John Snyder Fund at North Texas Community Foundation
Network for Good
Newborn Nightingales
Orix Foundation
Progressive Insurance Foundation
Santander Holdings USA
Shell Oil Company Foundation
Thomas M., Helen McKee & John P. Ryan Foundation

INDIVIDUALS

Anonymous
George Abraham
Kristin Allen
Patricia Alridge
Sharnet Arberry
Salma Ayoub
Rosie Balbo
Natalie Burris
Henry Campos
Michelle Caraballo
Thomas Carr
Steve Carter
Anastasia Cavanaugh
Eric Chang
Laurin & Mason Chevaillier
Ross Covillon
Alondra Criss
Cathy Crow
Dara Dallas, MD
Raquel De Fraites
Carolyn A. Dobson
Carlotta & David Endsley
Mary-Fran Filipowicz Leo
Lauren Ford
Christopher & Jennifer Gage
Kailey Gonzalez
Miguel Enrique Campos
Gonzalez
Meghan Gora
Greta & Bill Hallgren
Danielle Hamilton
Kelly Hanes
Shannon Hargrove
Alicia Head
Gina Hill
Katherine Hoefert
Trent Ibarra
Carrie Ives
Melanie Jacks
Kathryn & Benjamin Jacob
Mark E. Jacobs
Prameela Karimi, MD
Linda Kiraly
Gloria Kuykendall

Alicia Landry
Larry D. Lauer
Marisa L. LePak
Brittany Madlem
Nichole Malkowski
The Maxfield Family
Orla McCormack
Melinda McCullough
Winjie & Darryl Miao
Claire & Herd Midkiff
Leia Montgomery
Joe & Nancy Moore
Melissa Morgan
Hunter Nelson
Melissa O’Neill
Billye Paris
Joel & Kathy Parker
Kristen Parker
Sheila Marie Ratcliffe
Mary Ashley Ray
Ashley Robbins
Sarah Romack
Megan Schmidt, MD
Beverly & John Snyder
Erin Hamilton Spence, MD
Adriana & Rene St. Julien
Shaina Starks
Christi Stinson
Susan Sward-Comunelli, MD
Jonathan Taylor
Tara Thomas
Heidi Tomlinson, MD
Amy & Eric Trotter
Genna Tucker
Virgilio Ulloa
Cesar & Samantha Valadez
Abbey Van Booven
David Vrla
Joshua Warner
Sarah Wetzler
Shanequa Williams
Amanda Wood
Emily Young
Sally Zukoski

TRIBUTES

IN HONOR OF

Ruby by Cassy Albrecht
Katie Whitten by Layla Bates
Mary & Andrew Mercier & baby Madelynn by Dr. Stephen & Nancy Benold
Ann Connell by Kendall Connell
Shannon Elizabeth Etter Thompson by Julie & Jeffrey Etter & Stephen Filipowicz
David & Kathy by Mary-Fran Filipowicz Leo
Ramadan by Amna Iftikhar
Fionan by Jennifer and Michael Kellam
Cyrus by Neema Khonsari
Marisa Elle Tenari by Feliciaa Lopez
Nora by the McCranor Family
Caio Crutcher by Carolyn & Bob Philo
Vrishaank & Tejas by Jyati Rawat
Evelyn & Nick Thomson by Courtney Thomson
James DuBose & Tori Adams
DuBose by Floy Wukuya
Grace Chen by Jessica WebsterLove

IN MEMORY OF

Eliana Solis by Maria Avila
Joy by Toyneisha Lomax
John Major Walker by Elise & Ross Richardson
Brooks Wassam by

Stephanie Arnold
Brittney Avila
Trent Bailey
Ashley Costales
Jaime DeWees
Krystal Lee Griffin
Shellby Harbour
Naomi Harper
Trent Havens
Megan Maenius
Ross McDermott
Amy Montgomery
Timothy Simeone
Walter Simeone
Alexandra Skinner
Rebecca Thomas
Lori Wassam
Logan Wassam
& 21 anonymous donations
OUR YEAR IN PICTURES & NUMBERS

GROWTH IN OUNCES SINCE OPENING IN 2004:

83 hospital accounts served in 2023.
154 hours of FREE lactation support provided through Baby Café.


50 milk collection sites/depots.
In 2023, the Access to Donor Milk Act was introduced to both the House and Senate with bipartisan cosponsorship. If enacted, the legislation would be the first federal donor milk policy passed by Congress. The bill would significantly strengthen infrastructure for milk banks and protect infant nutrition security. Use the QR code to voice your support by contacting your legislators:

A TALE OF TWO TREES

The reception room at Mothers’ Milk Bank of North Texas is home to a very special wall memorial, Carmen’s Tree. More than five hundred leaves are engraved with a baby’s name and birthdate. The display serves as a tribute to little lives lost and breastmilk donated in remembrance to help other babies.

By 2023, leaves filled the branches of Carmen’s Tree to capacity, necessitating the addition of a second. After connecting with Chisholm Trail Woodworkers, artists with the nonprofit donated their time and expertise to craft an additional memorial installation.

The outcome is stunning and arches colorfully across the corner of two walls. While the need for more space is bittersweet, the milk bank couldn’t have found better partners to complete the project.

Kevin Pilgrim, president of Chisholm Trail Woodworkers, says, “Many of us were unaware of the mission or the need for a mother’s milk bank. The tree was designed to complement the original and to be built by different crafts people yet look as if only one person built it. The install day ended with folks asking what our next project will be; that was inspiring. The mission, cause and need touched us all. I believe we will have no other project that will affect us as this one did.”

THE ACCESS TO DONOR MILK ACT

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THE PUMP ACT

On April 28, 2023, the PUMP Act (Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers) went into effect. Employers of all sizes are now required by federal law to provide a reasonable amount of break time and a clean, private space for lactating workers to express milk. These accommodations must be provided for up to one year following the birth of the employee’s child.