

## **My First Birth in the United States – Part One**

### **by Christine Holefelder B.S., L.M.T.**

Last month I had the pleasure of attending my first birth in the states. Last year, while teaching in Culiacan, Mexico, I worked on two newborns in a hospital setting. Through the magic of networking, I was connected to an expectant mother in my area. She was interested in the work and thrilled at the idea of having her newborn evaluated and treated. In exchange for allowing me to attend the birth, I offered labor support to Mom as well as care for the baby, Gillespie style! During our first face-to-face meeting, I gave her a copy of *The Brain Score Approach*. We spoke again shortly after she finished reading the book. Her only comment was, “How come this is not being done EVERYWHERE? Everyone should be having this done for their babies!” Clearly, Mom was on board.

As any mother knows, labor is an unpredictable process. I feared I had missed the call somehow as Mom’s due date came and went. Finally the call came, but it was for help with labor induction, as she was getting ever closer to a hospital intervention. We did two pre-labor visits, the second of which also included acupuncture. Instead of the expected pelvic restrictions, I found the sphenoid bone completely motionless on one side of her head. After each session, Mom felt some contractions begin. Before we could make it to the third scheduled session, the call came that they were Birth Center bound.

I arrived at The Birth Center in Bryn Mawr, PA at about 3 AM to find Mom really working hard and having symptoms of back labor. The next 90 minutes were filled with some old labor massage tricks for pain management, and LOTS of sacral/coccyx releases. Holding her left leg and back during each push, I could feel her begin to unwind a bit between contractions. Since the journey of delivering the head is a two-steps forward, one-step back process, I was able to witness the intense pressure that bears down on a newborn’s cranial bones as he/she makes his/her way into the world.

When the top of the baby’s head emerged, the midwife held the temporal bones while applying traction and rotating her clockwise. She then instructed Mom to hold, since the cord was loosely wrapped around the baby’s neck...one point for the cord in the Baby Brain Score. She reached under the chin, lifting the blue cord up out of the path of delivery. After 55 minutes of mom pushing, Baby Girl arrived safely.

After Baby was cleaned and bundled, I was invited back in to do the assessment. “Here it is,” I thought, “my first Baby Brain Score in the US.” I was shocked after what I had just witnessed that her cranium and sacrum were each around 90 seconds...one point for each cycle. They were in synch, open, and the cerebrospinal fluid was flowing nicely. The head shape was mildly asymmetrical...one point for the head shape. The resiliency of life struck me deeply at that moment, and I wondered what reserves in the human potential might be tapped if restrictions in the body were

lifted this early in life. Her Baby Brain Score was 4 out of 8. She indeed needed some work.

Forty-five minutes later, I went in again to do Baby's first treatment. There was a lot of global unwinding and arching. The restrictions I could identify at that time were all down the anterior midline - between the eyes and sinuses, and through the sternum and umbilicus. By session's end, her cycles had climbed to over 120 seconds each, updating her Baby Brain Score to a 6. She was progressing nicely but would need some more work.

I left The Birth Center that morning in awe of everything - birth, babies, and the incredible possibilities of combining new life force energy with the benefits of this work. It is a gift that lets you receive as you give. I feel that it is truly a blessing in my life.