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Share Our Spare Convenes Chicago Maternal Health Leaders for Postpartum Mental Health and Policy Panel

Free hybrid event on August 19 marks National Breastfeeding Month and launches the diaper bank's new policy advocacy series

CHICAGO — August 10, 2026 — Share Our Spare (SOS), operator of Chicago's largest diaper bank, will host the first event in its *Baby & Beyond Series: Navigating Postpartum Health & Breastfeeding* on Wednesday, August 19, 2026, beginning at 1:30 p.m. CT at the SOS Sharehouse, 3800 N. Milwaukee Ave. The facilitated panel discussion will examine postpartum mental health and the state and local policy levers that determine whether Chicago mothers can access care — and will send attendees home with concrete tools for reaching their elected officials.

The event launches a new SOS policy advocacy series and is supported by an advocacy grant from the Chicago Foundation for Women. It is timed to National Breastfeeding Month and will be held in a hybrid format, with in-person seating by invitation and virtual registration open to the public.

Jenny LeFlore, founder of Mama Fresh Chicago, will facilitate the conversation. Jess Roe of The Windy City Mama will host the virtual audience.

Panelists include:

- **Ayesha Jaco**, Executive Director, West Side United
- **Dr. Inger Burnett-Zeigler**, Chief Behavioral Health Officer, State of Illinois; author of *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen: The Emotional Lives of Black Women (Amistad, 2021)* and the forthcoming *Birth of a Mother: Racism, Trauma and the Urgent Fight for Black Maternal Health* (Amistad, 2027)
- **Salimah N. Turner, LCSW, CLC**, Therapist, Certified Lactation Counselor, and Owner, S.N. Turner and Associates
- **Michelle Alero Adeniyi**, Director of Maternal & Child Health, Collective Impact, March of Dimes

"Postpartum mental health is not separate from material hardship, it is shaped by it. When a mother is rationing diapers, that is a mental health issue, a public health issue, and a policy issue all at once," said S. Mayumi "Umi" Grigsby, Executive Director of Share Our Spare. "We are bringing these leaders together because the people closest to this crisis should be the ones shaping the response, and because advocacy is something every person in that room and online can do."

Nationally, 62 percent of low-income households and 63 percent of Black households with children in diapers report diaper insecurity, according to the National Diaper Bank Network's 2026 Diaper Check. In Chicago, Black women experience roughly three times the risk of pregnancy-related death compared with non-Black women, and mental and behavioral health conditions rank among the leading contributors.

“Systemic inequities that can increase an expectant mother’s exposure to racism, stress and trauma have a direct impact on her mental health, and in turn, maternal health.” said Dr. Inger Burnett-Zeigler, Chief Behavioral Health Officer for the State of Illinois. “To have healthy moms, babies, and families, it is critical that we not only improve access to mental health care, but also ensure that the neighborhoods in which we exist are designed to promote health and wellness.”

Attendees will receive an advocacy toolkit, and SOS will distribute postpartum care supplies and diapers on site.

“Chicago moms have been telling us the same thing for years: they need postpartum support that is accessible, culturally responsive, and rooted in community,” said Jenny LeFlore, founder of Mama Fresh Chicago. “I’m honored to help create a space where families, advocates, and policymakers can learn from one another and turn those conversations into action.”

Virtual registration is open at **https://shareourspare.org/share-our-spares-baby-beyond-series/**. Registration is required. Members of the media who wish to attend in person or arrange interviews should contact Gina Jagminas at info@shareourspare.org or RSVP here - RSVP - Baby & Beyond Series | August 19 at the Sharehouse

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About Share Our Spare

Share Our Spare is a Chicago nonprofit that provides diapers, wipes, and essential supplies to families with young children through a network of more than 200 community-based partners. In 2025, SOS reached 35,784 children with 2.25 million diapers and 302,000 essential supplies. SOS operates Chicago’s largest diaper bank and is Chicago’s affiliate of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, mailing free books monthly to children across 23 West and South Side zip codes. The organization marks its 15th anniversary in 2026. Learn more at shareourspare.org.

About Mama Fresh Chicago

Mama Fresh Chicago is a community platform founded by Jenny LeFlore and dedicated to helping modern moms feel seen, supported, and connected. Through storytelling, community events, and advocacy, it has become a leading voice for Chicago families, creating spaces where parents can access resources, build relationships, and engage in conversations that matter. LeFlore’s work has been featured by the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Parent, ABC, NBC, WGN, and WBEZ. Learn more at mamafreshchicago.com.

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