

## ARISE Black MIDWIFE

By Taiwo “Tia” Ajao, NBMA Mentee & Fellow 2021

In July 2019, the late Mama Claudia Booker of Birthing Hands Midwifery and Birth Services gathered a mixed group of black birth workers in Washington, DC for a deeply engaging birth assistant training for her midwifery company. That weekend, in what I like to call *The Outpouring*, she gave to us the Gems of her service as a Homebirth Midwife. Then, she celebrated the completion of her treatment with us: a group of wide-eyed, fiery souls dreaming to be as she. Little did we know that her investment in us would be ours to keep forever, freely and with no charge.

Mama Claudia was the only black homebirth midwife who would travel to serve Baltimore, Maryland, where I live; and when she transitioned, there was a true cry in our local birth community as the pandemic threatened us all: *“Are there any black homebirth midwives in all of Baltimore?”* And the deathening silence resounded: *No! No, not one!* That was the season during which I knew that I had received a Legacy for Destiny. So after beginning a midwifery program in September 2020, eight rising black midwives and I, with the support of about a dozen Guiding Midwives, held a live/virtual pinning and commitment ceremony planned by my organization, [Hello Baby Events](#), a health communications firm that I run in Baltimore.

There is something peculiar and deeply unique about the Rising Black Midwife. Their origins are strong and their passion unusually groundbreaking. Midwifery is not a basic job choice to them—no, it's typically a calling that rises from their soul. Unfortunately however, the plight of the Black Midwife is never truly straightforward or direct! The obstacles we face arise as if to prevent us from attaining this goal! No matter our native land, our kind, our tribe or tongue, the truth remains that we don't have the same access, and becoming midwives will empower us to be pillars of hope for our community.

Arise Black Midwife is a commitment ceremony that came from this concept. It is a single affair where aspiring midwives commit to their personal journeys to the field in a meaningful way, while being guided by the altruistic blessings of current black midwives who have risen through their experiences. Much like the African American tradition of fostering unity and sisterhood through sacred community, the intention of this event is to

revive Hope and insinuate Vision towards Midwifery as an Act of Faith. So many Black peoples find it difficult to see beyond the limitations before us. Our collective participation with others leads to a deeper camaraderie that we may not find within our educational institutions.

The special part of this commitment event is that it is very personal, as each of us are walking a unique journey. This opportunity is open to all genres of midwifery, from the student rejoicing for claiming their imminent goal, to the person quietly struggling to even consider beginning! We are the hope for now and for the future.

Rising Midwives will register to participate and make a financial contribution toward event activities. Guiding Midwives will give of their time to guide the event activities, such as through words of guidance, ceremonial proclamations, acknowledgments of the rising midwives, etc.



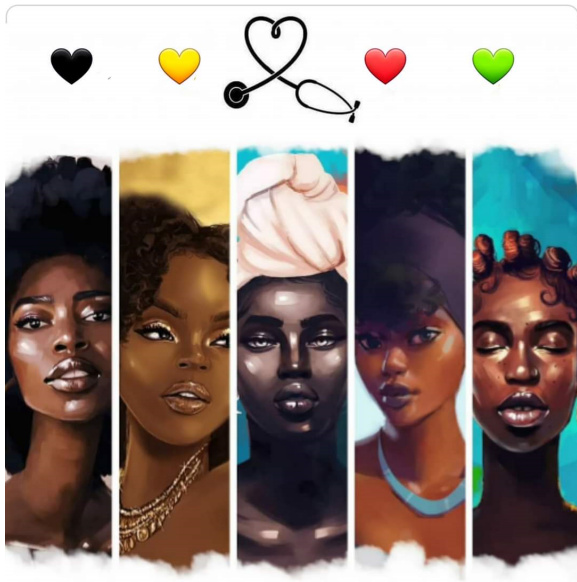
2020 Live Participants honoring each Rising Midwife during A Special Candle Lighting Ceremony

Photo: DrAjao.com Artistry: Brandi Carrington


Arise Black Midwife is now recruiting for the 2022 Commitment Event. We welcome both live and virtual participation. Please contact Hello Baby Events at [info@hellobabyevents.com](mailto:info@hellobabyevents.com) or [HelloBabyEvents.com](https://HelloBabyEvents.com) for participation and collaboration.



Taiwo “Tia” Ajao



ARISE BLACK MIDWIFE|**2021** Rising Student Pinning Ceremony

A black stethoscope is arranged to form a heart shape. The chest piece is on the left, the tubing curves upwards and around to the right, and the ear pieces are at the bottom right, completing the heart outline.

**ARISE BIPOC MIDWIFE: 2021** Rising Student Pinning Ceremony