

First NZ bi-cultural home-birth conference

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The National Home Birth Conference will be held at Scotlands, New Plymouth Girls' High School on May 12-14. It promises to be both innovative and exciting as the theme, Conceptions and Creations suggests.

The Maori perspective, te Aitanga Me te Putanga a Tangata a Hinegaro is to be co-ordinated by Janice Wenn, and the welcome given by Nga Puna o te Ora will be followed by the healing presentation of Te Roopu o Tokanui.

Margi Martin, the key speaker, will already have vitalised everyone with early morning exercises to salute the sun. She then expands the theme conceptions and creations to cover not only the birth of the child, but also the birth of new ideas and diverse creativity.

Pauline Scott, an accredited active childbirth teacher is also co-ordinator of the Childbirth Education Network, an organisation which promotes natural active childbirth and lobbies for changes in maternity care for mothers, babies and midwives.

She speaks of the tremendous importance of the environment to the birthing mother. Pauline

will also show slides depicting the history of midwifery and another set of the traditional birth practices of indigenous people.

Alternative pain relief is explored by Joan Donley, nicknamed "the grandmother of domiciliary midwives" and author of the well-known book 'Save the Midwives'.

Stress can cause emotional difficulties. Dr Ruth Schell looks at the stress experienced by a young mother in her efforts to be

Supermum and she and Marilyn Peterson consider the negative effects of bad experiences and how to overcome them.

However birth is only the start of the parenting continuum, and other workshops cover research on non-immunisation, sexual abuse of little children and education for talent. Jenny Johnson, practising domiciliary midwife for Wellington, offers support to mothers when they are intimidated by the 'system'.

The conference will be of

special interest to anyone concerned that women should have choice available at the incredibly important stage of their lives and be empowered and supported so that they can achieve their goals successfully.

On Friday, branch reports will be presented and Sunday is devoted specifically to midwifery and home birth issues.

For further information, contact Jasmin Hales, 35343, or Margaret Hales, 86539.

Domiciliary midwives meet in New Plymouth

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The Domiciliary Midwives Society of New Zealand is holding its annual meeting on Friday, May 12, in the Conference Room of the Community Centre. The morning programme is for practising domiciliary midwives but all midwives are invited to join for lunch and the open agenda afternoon session. There will be a play corner with toys for children.

At the moment there are 75 practising domiciliary midwives in New Zealand and at this meeting they hope to share experiences and plan ahead for extending their own expertise in this field.

Most midwives also support their own College of Midwifery which runs

workshops and lectures throughout the country.

Changes in population, with the subsequent closures of maternity hospitals or units, means that opportunities for mothers hoping for a low-tech birth are lessened. Each area faces a different situation together with different needs.

In South Auckland there are barely sufficient hospital beds available to cover the demand, so low risk mothers are encouraged to consider a home birth as an alternative. In this area the closure of the Waitara maternity annex, because of under-utilisation, is another example of the curtailment of options available to mothers.

Birth is the most profound experience in the relationship between a mother, father and the new baby. Parents prepare carefully for the event, and want to know and feel comfortable with the people who will be with them during the birth experience and to be an integral part of what is happening.

In the home birth setting low key support and expertise are offered by the midwife and doctor, who fit into the home environment and cultural setting which is the natural security and strength of that particular family.

Contact for the annual meeting is Anne Brown, phone 89216NP.