

...proudly announces the Physician, Midwife or Nurse Practitioner of the month for January 2023:

Birte Paschen, Registered Midwife



The VJHPS is pleased to announce **Birte Paschen as January's 2023 Medical Staff Member of the Month**. We salute Birte for exemplifying the qualities of an excellent practitioner, and we are pleased to have her as a respected member of our medical staff community since 2016.

Nominator's Comments (Dr. Kathryn MacKinlay):

This month, we have nominated an extraordinary midwife, Birte ("b-ih-r-tuh") Paschen. From a young age, Birte had a passion for languages and decided to become an English and Spanish teacher. Attending the Muenster University in northern Germany, she was offered the opportunity for practicums internationally for elementary students in Kent, England and university students in Monterey, Mexico. While the children were cute, she realized she was better suited to education and care of adults. Midwifery seemed the perfect career choice.

In Germany, midwives are the only profession that assist low-risk births, and midwives are legally required to attend all births, consulting OB/GYN as needed. She completed her studies at the Berlin midwifery school in 2001 and took a celebratory trip to Australia, New Zealand and Thailand. She picked up a Canadian boyfriend along the way!

After working in a high birth volume hospital in Germany until 2004, she and Steve decided long-distance canoeing was no longer for them. BC Midwives had placed an ad in a German midwife magazine, and the stars aligned for Birte to join him in BC. She wrote her BC exams before starting work in Duncan, but the ski hills called to them and they headed for the interior. Revelstoke became home in 2009, where Birte opened the first midwifery clinic and helped welcome around 200 new Revelstokians to the city.

While the family loved Revelstoke, Vernon spoke to them for the ongoing access to skiing and the amazing lifestyle offered here. Her kids are now planted solidly in Vernon, Nika and Oscar speak three languages (German, French and English) and husband Steve is often found shuttling them to the rinks around town.

In terms of passion projects, Birte joined the Safe Motherhood Project in 2014. This Canadian / Guatemalan collaboration (consisting of 3 female care providers from each country) recognized that most indigenous Guatemalan women give birth at home as there are many barriers to delivering in a hospital. Local midwives often lack medical training, instead being placed into the role through cultural appointment. The Safe Motherhood Project offers basic training on prenatal care, role playing of normal births, rudimentary neonatal resuscitation, and indicators of when to encourage the women to move to the hospital. The team is headed back there in March for the first time since COVID and details of their great work can be found at <https://www.safemotherhoodproject.org/>

Around VJH, Birte can be found caring for her grateful patients through long nights of labor, lifting the mood of the hardworking WCHS team with her great stories, and collaborating with the Obstetrics and Pediatrics teams to welcome little bundles of joy. She has stepped up to help teach the Neonatal Resuscitation Program and, If that wasn't enough, she is also on track to become a certified Lactation Consultant.

When she is not "at your cervix" at the hospital, Birte's hobbies are kickboxing, skiing, and saxophone (she is still looking for her big band musical break, if anyone has any connections) and she has recently learned how to play ringette and wakesurf! We are lucky to have such a diversely skilled and passionate person on our amazing WCHS team!! Danke, Birte!!

Congratulations Birte on being our Medical Staff Member of the Month!