PRESS RELEASE

BABY CAFE USA ANNOUNCES NEW BREASTFEEDING COUNSELOR PROGRAM

Wakefield, MA, April 6, 2016: Baby Cafe USA (BCUSA) is launching a mentoring program for individuals to become trained as breastfeeding counselors in its licensed cafe locations, utilizing the existing framework of multiple levels of support within an individual Café. Applicants successfully completing the program will be certified as Baby Cafe Breastfeeding Counselors (BCBCs) after demonstrating proficiency in basic clinical skills and counseling to the Café facilitator with oversight by the BCUSA Curriculum coordinator. Mothers attending from local communities can gain experience and wisdom supporting others and gradually become trusted resources and potential staff members for Baby Cafés or other community breastfeeding sites.

“Lack of potential mentors and sites offering supervised clinical experience hours, as well as affordability of such opportunities have long been significant barriers to individuals wishing to prepare for IBCLC certification, or pursue further careers counseling mothers. We are very excited to offer this opportunity and see it as a viable community model to increase access to skilled care for all women, particularly in areas with limited access to lactation care.” (Lucia Jenkins, RN, IBCLC, RLC, founder of BCUSA)

BCUSA, established in 2011, is a national network of free breastfeeding drop-ins, offering invaluable support for all stages of breastfeeding in a non-clinical, café-style environment where parents can chat and learn about breastfeeding from skilled practitioners and each other. Mothers who attend Baby Cafe during their breastfeeding journey have reported high satisfaction with the program and
many directly attribute their breastfeeding success to the consistent combination of professional and peer support. There are currently 66 Baby Cafes around the US, in 17 states, supporting over 2000 moms a year.

“We are thrilled to launch this new Baby Café Breastfeeding Counselor program, which will enhance the value of each licensed Baby Café location,” says Christine Staricka, BS, IBCLC, RLC, CCE and Facilitator of Baby Café Bakersfield, California. “Every Baby Café will now have the ability to continuously educate and mentor new volunteers, thereby providing a way to sustain itself. It is our strong hope that many new Baby Cafes will be formed in places where local lactation professionals recognize a need for both the unique breastfeeding support that a Baby Cafe provides as well as a need for training opportunities for local individuals hoping to become IBCLCs and other birth or breastfeeding professionals.”

This low-cost training opportunity is recently designated as a Recognized Mother Support Counsellor Organization by the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners, and will be of great benefit to individuals planning to work toward board-certification as IBCLCs (International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants). Oklahoma’s Baby Café State Coordinator, Danielle Lugrand, CLC, CBE, CD/PCD(DONA) stated that “I am very excited to also point out, that our BCBC program is truly inclusive. We are one of a small group of breastfeeding programs that does not require a successful breastfeeding experience in order to participate. We believe this will remove a major barrier from all women who were not able to receive assistance with their personal breastfeeding issues but have a desire to assist other families professionally.”

All Baby cafes are free, and are open to all those interested in any aspect of breastfeeding – mothers, partners, and supporters. The regular group meetings take place at least once a week in community venues such as churches, community centers, medical centers, WIC offices, and more. Baby Cafe locations are funded in a variety of ways, including grants and in-kind donations.

Baby Café USA became a 501(c)3 in 2011.

To find out about other US Baby Cafés, visit www.babycafeusa.org

For general enquiries, please contact admin@babycafeusa.org
Notes to Editors:

About Baby Café USA

The Baby Café USA organization was started by Lucia Jenkins RN, IBCLC in 2011. The non-profit works to promote the physical and psychological health of mothers and children through education and lactation assistance. The organization’s intention is that all mothers will be able to access the information and support they need to breastfeed without charge. For more information contact Lucia@babycafeusa.org.