



SisterFriend Mentors April Hill, Takecia Griffin and Cynthia Williams.

Nurturing Mothers, Saving Babies

How SisterFriends Detroit, a program of the Detroit Health Department, connects pregnant women with caring mentors and resources

The deepest connections form when someone else cares. SisterFriends Detroit is an initiative provided by the Detroit Health Department that connects caring and compassionate mentors – SisterFriends – to pregnant women (called “Little Sisters”) who live in the city of Detroit. With 13 percent of babies dying in Detroit before their first birthday, mothers need a resource to support them through their pregnancy. The ultimate goal of the program is to reduce the infant mortality rate and also to

connect pregnant women to a person who can provide social support throughout the pregnancy – up to the baby’s first birthday. In addition, program participants are also assigned to a community health worker who can help them troubleshoot any challenges and connect them to the appropriate resources, which includes free transportation to and from prenatal visits and SisterFriends events, easy and simple WIC enrollment, Safe Sleep-Pack and Play class registration, referrals to childbirth and parents classes and more. They also provide guidance

during their pregnancy. To date, SisterFriends Detroit has seen 287 volunteer mentors answer the call. These women have helped their Little Sisters in a variety of ways, from driving them to prenatal care appointments to being on-call during the birth experience. Mentees also have access to trainings, parent classes and Sister Circles, which focus on building important skills. SisterFriends Detroit provides the opportunity for the community to be its own resource – historically, African-American women have

Who can be a SisterFriend?

Any woman who is willing to support an expecting mom throughout the process of carrying a healthy baby to term and one year after the birth of her child.

**SisterFriends
DETROIT**

*For more information about this Detroit Health Department initiative or to sign up as a mentor
Call 313-961-BABY
Or visit sisterfriendsdetroit.com*

always supported each other in meaningful ways, particularly, as it relates to families great and small. This same commitment drives the mentors behind SisterFriends Detroit. Native Detroiter Cynthia Williams, a SisterFriends mentor, says that women – young and older – often have limited access to community resources – SisterFriends Detroit fills this gap, so she became a SisterFriend to make a difference in someone else’s life. “It’s important to lend support to a mom that may be experiencing life’s challenges,” Williams says. “As a SisterFriend, I make the time to ensure my

Little Sister knows I’m there if she needs me. Whether it’s going to a doctor’s appointment or being a listening ear. She knows that I’m there.” These connections are foundational to the program’s success. Takecia Griffin wanted an opportunity to help other moms – that’s why she volunteered. “SisterFriends is for everyone regardless of your socioeconomic status,” Griffin says. “Every woman needs extra support when she’s pregnant and during the baby’s first year of life. I would encourage women in Detroit to become a SisterFriend because it gives us an opportunity to give back. If you have a giving heart and the time, give SisterFriends a try – you won’t regret it.”

April Hill had recently retired from the workforce, but was looking for a way to inspire others. She was soon paired with her Little Sister; the experience was life-changing for both. “When we met, she was in her second trimester and I was able to be a part of her journey throughout her pregnancy and for her delivery,” Hill says, adding: “She is (a) wonderful, intelligent and very independent mom. We’ve been able to share ‘mom stories’ and as a result, the relationship and friendship has been very rewarding. I implore all women in the city of Detroit, if you have time, consider becoming a SisterFriend and create memories that’ll last a life time.”

Any woman willing to support an expecting mom throughout the process of carrying a healthy baby to term can be a SisterFriend. All you have to do is show up and care – and you can really make a significant difference in a family’s life. If you are woman who wants to lend support to pregnant women – join the SisterFriends Detroit movement today.

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–April Hill, SisterFriend Mentor

CRITERIA TO BECOME A SISTERFRIEND:

1

Meet & Greet

Attend a training and meet-and-greet to learn about the SisterFriends Detroit program, resources for pregnant moms, and most importantly – meet the pregnant Little Sister you will be paired with.

2

Baby Bunch

Attend at least four Baby Bunch Educational Sessions with your Little Sister.

3

Be Available

Check in with your Little Sister on a regular basis: a simple text message to offer encouragement would do, or a meeting over tea or coffee.