

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- CAPPAs Sponsorship Announcement.
- OSD Volunteering Information.
- OSD interviews.
- CAPPAs Spotlight: Tiffany Gallo
- Book Review: Fathers at Birth
- DVD Review: Birth as We Know it.
- CAPPAs Newly Certified and Recertified.

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Photographer Patricia Grube.

Jay lovingly supporting Eileen during her VBAC labor. Read her story on page 26.



Eileen's VBAC Journey

By Eileen Moulthrop, with Heidi Gonzales



Doula Patricia Grube supporting Eileen during a contraction. Eileen spent a good part of her labor in the birth tub.

“Patricia inspired me to learn natural childbirth, home, water birth, and midwives. Suddenly, I became invigorated with hope for the birth I desired.”

“I continued doing yoga twice a week and believed in my body’s ability to birth naturally. I had never felt more positive or optimistic in my entire life.”

When I was expecting my son, I wanted a vaginal birth without drugs. I listened to everything my obstetrician had to say and followed all of her instructions. I read books about birth and learned everything I thought I needed to know. However, I didn’t know about midwives or doulas. And, like many others, I believed I had to go to the hospital to have a baby. My un-medicated vaginal birth ended up as a drug-induced labor that resulted in an emergency c-section. In November 2007, I became pregnant for the second time and immediately knew that I wanted to have a vaginal birth after c-section (VBAC). Afraid of switching doctors and starting anew, I saw the same obstetrician. However, I knew this time I had to listen to my body, my heart and my intuition if I wanted to have a vaginal birth.

I continued to see her throughout my pregnancy but I needed a change. I just didn’t know what. While nearing my third trimester, I found

Patricia Grube’s prenatal yoga class at YogaWorks. Patricia, whom was also a childbirth educator and doula, educated and inspired me to learn about natural birth, home birth, water birth, midwives and doulas. Suddenly, I became invigorated with hope for the birth I desired. As I began to research these things, a new world opened up to me. I learned that, first and foremost, I didn’t need an obstetrician to have my baby. I also learned that having a VBAC isn’t as dangerous as it sometimes is portrayed, it is possible to have a VBAC at home, and that water and movement are excellent choices to help labor progress naturally. After several consultations and personal self-exploration, my husband, Jay, and I decided to bring our daughter into the world right inside of our home. The decision to have a home water birth suddenly brought me complete peace.

Soon after we made this decision, we hired Davi Kaur Khalsa to be our midwife. She and her midwife partner, made me feel confident, strong and peaceful. I also trusted their medical knowledge and their experience of birthing babies. Patricia Grube, my yoga instructor, agreed to be my doula. Jay and I felt that between these women, we would have all of the support and encouragement that we needed to have our baby at home. At my next prenatal appointment with my obstetrician, I

told her about my plans to have a VBAC at home. I quickly learned that she was not very supportive of my choice. Unwilling to compromise, I called my midwife and she gave me the number of a doctor she had worked with before. After our consult with him, he agreed that I was a good candidate for a VBAC and home birth. Jay and I were ecstatic. Over the next few weeks, I took Davi’s recommendations about exercise, diet, kegels and perineum massage. I continued doing yoga twice a week and believed in my body’s ability to birth naturally. I had never felt more positive or optimistic in my entire life. Jay and I had never been more in love. I was incredibly happy and my baby was active and healthy. Everything had fallen into place for us.

During the last four weeks, my contractions increased. I experienced them for hours, only for them to cease. Davi checked me a week before my due date and I was 1 cm dilated, 50% effaced and my cervix was soft. That was so exciting to hear because I knew my body was making daily progress. I wasn’t anticipating going into labor before or even on my due date, which was August 7, 2008.

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Eileen's VBAC Journey

By Eileen Moulthrop, with Heidi Gonzales



Eileen laboring in the birth tub. Jay providing loving physical support.

I enjoyed my pregnancy and took every day as if I still had lots of time. Jay's parents arrived on August 4, 2008 as they were going to take care of Dylan while I was in labor.

On August 6, 2008, I woke up very early. Jay was up with me and we had some quiet time before he left for work. I began experiencing some discharge, but had no other signs of impending labor.

Throughout the morning, I saw more discharge every time I went to the bathroom. Jay had gone to work, so Dylan and I went to breakfast with his parents. After we ate, we decided to do a dry run to Dylan's school in case they had to take him and that's when the contractions started. By 11:30 am, they were becoming more intense and I called Jay to let him know he should start preparing to come home. Jay came home around 1:30pm and we timed a few contractions. After we put Dylan down for a nap, we took a walk. The contractions were hard to time because I couldn't identify a beginning from an end. They seemed very irregular in length and intensity, but were coming closer together. We called a midwife

friend of ours to explain what was happening. She said it sounded like early labor and that I should get some rest if possible. But, I wasn't tired at all. I was very energetic. We had an appointment scheduled at 5:00pm with Davi, so I figured we would just keep laboring and let her check me at my appointment.

Jay and I walked about an hour, which was 2.5 miles with a stop for frozen yogurt. We headed back home so that I could get some water and use the bathroom. It was such a sunny, beautiful day and I really enjoyed being outside. So, we went back out and walked another two miles. Jay called Davi and she said to come in for our appointment if I wasn't too uncomfortable. I could still talk and walk through them so we headed home to get ready.

Davi confirmed I was in early labor. My contractions were six minutes apart and my body was doing what it was supposed to. I was 1 cm dilated, 50% effaced and my cervix was very soft. The baby was also at a -1 station and the heart tones sounded perfect. Davi suggested that I go home, relax, have dinner and a glass of wine and try to get to bed early and rest. She said to call her around 9pm and give an update unless I needed to call sooner. We kept Patricia updated as well. Davi decided to come by around 7:30pm to check on us. Everything was fine. I continued to see more mucus and my contractions were slowly intensifying. Throughout dinner, I had to keep getting up

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through contractions and walk around. At this point, it was too uncomfortable to stay still during one. After dinner, Jay got Dylan ready for bed and I cleaned up. At 9:30pm, Davi came back to check on us. My cervix was thinner than it had been, but I was still only about one centimeter dilated. Davi left and I decided to get into the shower. I stood there just letting the warm water go down my back and I moved my hips during each contraction. Jay was talking to me and rubbing my back. After I was done, I got out and used my birth ball so I could move my hips around. Davi arrived at 11:00pm to check us out. I was now 3 cm dilated so she decided to stay.

After this point, my labor increased to the point where I couldn't focus on anything other than what my body was going through. Patricia arrived around midnight. I spent some time walking back and forth across the house with Jay's support. I used the exercise ball, but it didn't seem to work for me anymore. I also remember being on all fours on my kitchen floor at times. The only time I was still is when Davi administered the antibiotic drip because I had tested positive for beta strep. I sat on the exercise ball with my arm across my dining room table through incredibly intense contractions and that was the most miserable part of my entire labor. Jay was absolutely amazing through my labor. Whatever position I was in, whatever I was doing, as each wave would shake my body, he would hold me up and help me rock back and forth and love me.

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“The water felt so amazing. It was all the relief I was hoping for and expecting it to be. I was able to relax between contractions.”

“I just kept looking at her and thinking, ‘I know I did all of this, but where did you come from?’ It was just so unbelievable and surreal to me. And, I was also thinking, ‘Wow! It’s over. I did it! Oh my God!’”

Patricia helped me by rubbing aromatherapy oils on my back, hands and arms, and placed wet towels on my neck and head.

I had tunnel vision and was in a labor fog so unless someone was right in my face or touching me, I couldn’t see them or couldn’t hear them.

When I was about 8 cm dilated, Davi asked me if I wanted to get into the birth pool. I tore off my tank top as soon as I could and practically dove in. The water felt so amazing. It was all the relief I was hoping for and expecting it to be. I was able to relax between contractions. I remember Patricia being right there and talking to me, singing to me and massaging my hands while I was in the pool. Her touch and words were so soothing. The baby’s heartbeat was always so strong and steady. I remember Davi saying, “Oh, Eileen, she’s so into this. She’s so ready to be born. She’s doing great.”

I spent a while leaning over the side of the pool holding onto the handles. At some point, while in this position, I closed my eyes and saw flashes of bright light that were approximately 8 cm round. I began struggling to remain in control because the contractions were so intense during this time. Doubt was beginning to creep

in and I was thinking that I couldn’t handle it. I didn’t think I was strong enough to be able to handle it. To stop myself from falling into this unproductive state of mind, I began to say out loud, “I CAN do this, I CAN do this, I CAN do this,” and “open, open, open.” All of my supportive women began to say, “You are doing this, Eileen. You are doing this. You’re almost there. You can do it.”

Jay got into the pool with me and I changed positions so Davi could check me. Around 9cm dilated, I heard a pop and saw as well as felt a rush of liquid leave my body. Jay was behind me and he heard the pop and saw the ripple in the pool, too. Having my water break in the pool was an incredible experience. I had been pushing a little with each contraction at that point, but I changed positions and started pushing a little more.

The next time Davi checked my cervix, she asked me if I was ready to have my baby. I was so ready. After pushing and screaming through a few contractions, but not knowing how to bear down, Davi began to coach me. She told me to keep my chin to my chest, pull back on my legs and hold my breath in. She also told me screaming was not productive and even though I knew she was right, I couldn’t seem to control it. After working through a few more contractions and pushing productively, I could tell I was making progress. I could feel the baby moving down. Jay continued to

support me with power and love; he was amazing.

It seemed like forever to me, but I had only pushed about 20 minutes when I had her ready to crown. Rebecca told me to reach down and feel the top of my baby’s head inside of my vagina. When I did, it just made it so much more real that my baby was coming out. She encouraged me to keep my hand on her head with each push so I could feel her crowning and coming out. I could feel her fuzzy hair and it looked almost black to me. I could also feel the ring of fire. I was burning. This made me focus harder and be as productive as possible while pushing. I knew I had to move my baby and get her out to end the burn. It wasn’t long before I had her head all the way through. It is an amazing sight to see your baby’s head sticking out of your vagina. Rebecca quickly moved the cord out of the way as I was ready to push again and with just two more pushes, I had her out.

Davi and Rebecca were both telling me to reach down and pull her out of the water. I could hear them, but I couldn’t make my arms work. I asked Rebecca to help me and she guided my hands around my baby and helped me lift her onto my chest. I was stunned and amazed. I just kept looking at her and thinking, ‘I know I did all of this, but where did you come from?’ It was just so unbelievable and surreal to me. And, I was also thinking, ‘Wow! It’s over. I did it! Oh my God!’



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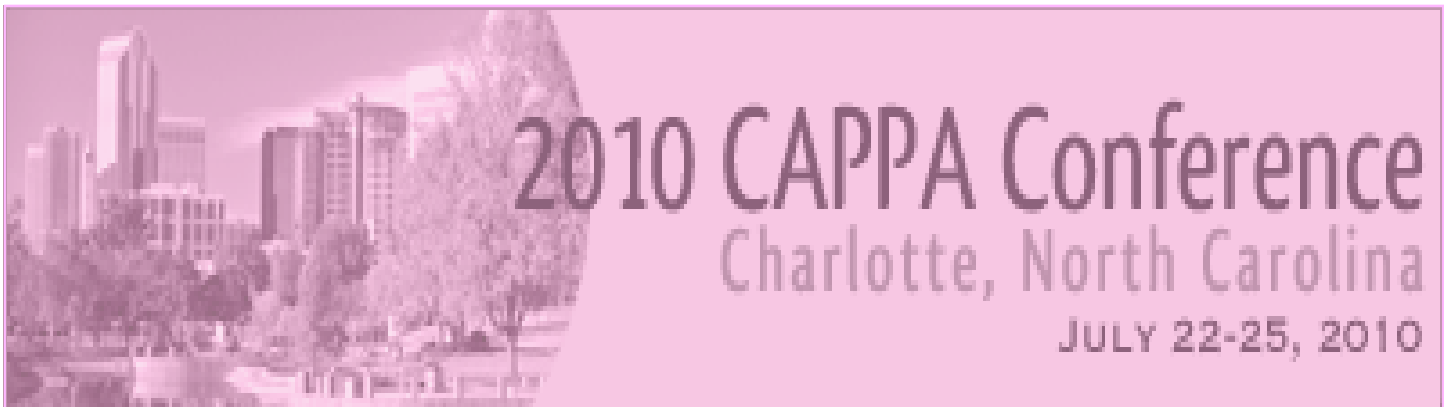
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