



A LETTER FROM THE VILLAGE

She Found Her Place in the Village

*One mother's account of a long labor, and the doula
who showed up for all of it.*

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Let me start by saying this: I truly believe in having a village, and this experience reminded me why.

When we decided to add a doula to our birth support team, I honestly wasn't sure how everything would work. I work with moms and babies myself, I'm big on advocacy, and I'm continuing my own journey in the doula and lactation space. So naturally, I wondered: *are we going to step on each other's toes?*

But that wasn't our experience at all.

She came in and became part of our team. The village my daughter and I needed.

Listen... this was a LONG labor. We were officially **Team No Sleep!** But she showed up. She made sure she was attentive, along with stretching and moving her own body throughout this time.

She walked the halls repeatedly. She helped with stretching, movement, the peanut ball, and different positions to encourage progression. She stayed engaged, encouraged, prayed with us, and had conversations with us throughout the entire process.

What I appreciated was that we worked together. I'm usually the person in that role, so it felt good to enjoy this journey with Autisha's support.

I could advocate and ask questions to stick with my daughter's birth plan. She could focus on her role. We could bounce thoughts off each other, talk through what was happening, and support the same person without being in each other's way. (*Lol... I hope I wasn't in the way!*)



And let me tell you about the little things...

If she stepped away to grab herself something to drink, she'd ask if we needed anything. And of course, me being me, I'm checking on her too: *“Did you eat? Are you drinking something?”*

She received my offers well. She explained she doesn't eat during these moments. I understood.

*That's when I realized we weren't just in the same room.
We had become a village in the moment.*

There were times when I was exhausted and she gave me that look like, “*I got her.*”

And I trusted her. I sat down. I closed my eyes. I rested.

For someone like me, who is used to being the one taking care of everybody else, that meant A LOT. I actually listened.

Even after the birth, when I reached the point where I had to leave and get some rest, she stayed. She continued to show up, and even returned to offer more support.

I am truly grateful for the role she played in this birth experience.

She didn't take my place.

She didn't try to become the whole village.

*She simply found her place **IN** the village — and she showed up in it.*

That's what a good doula can do. I thank GOD for the connection.

Thank you for walking with us, praying with us, losing sleep with us, and most importantly, for helping me know that when I needed to sit down for a minute... **you had my daughter.** I was able to enjoy the journey with her.

I appreciate you more than you know.

— **Mother, Advocate & Doula-in-Training**

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