

T O L E D O FREE★PRESS

A tradition for Toledo's future

Play examines sensitive issue of maternity care

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When Playwright Karen Brody began writing, she set out to bring a little honesty to perhaps the most intimate experience any woman can have ... childbirth. The result was "BOLD," an acronym for "Birth on Labor Day". The play, which has toured the country to favorable reviews, will run at the Maumee Indoor Theatre on Sept. 15 at 7 p.m.

"BIRTH" is based on more than 100 interviews Brody conducted with women across America, telling the true childbirth stories of eight different women, all from vastly different age groups and backgrounds.

"Before I wrote 'BIRTH' I was a new mother and couldn't believe how many mothers I met who all had quite horrible birth stories. I thought, how could so many educated women be having bad birth experiences?" Brody said. "So I began to interview a few mothers I knew and then a few more mothers I didn't know and slowly the numbers swelled and I started hearing these stories in my mind in a play format. At first I thought of writing an article about what they were saying, but then the words they used to describe their experiences felt so powerful. I wanted to find a way to honor their words. Hence, a play. I wanted to tell the truth about childbirth in America through storytelling."

The play's Toledo appearance is thanks to organizer/producer Carolyn Self. Self, who is a Holland resident, became involved through the Web site for organizers known as BOLD. BOLD is a global movement to make maternity care mother-friendly, raise awareness about maternity care issues, and validate mothers' birth experiences.

"I wanted to help present women's stories in a non-judgmental way. That's what BOLD is about education through action. That's one of the reasons I chose to cast members of the community instead of professional actors," Self said.

"BIRTH" features Laurie Kodysh, Angie Patchett, Clara Engel, Grace Engel, Karen Sawmiller, Jane Chimahusky, Tamika Cook, Cynthia Stroud and Director Tiffany Taylor.

"I hope audiences walk away thinking they know more about maternity care, and that they see how important it is to put mothers at the center of their birth," Brody said.

Advance tickets for "BIRTH" are \$10 and are available by calling (419) 866-3770 or online at www.brownpapertickets.com Admission is \$12 at the door. There is a small service fee for online orders.

Visit www.birthonlaborday.com for more information.