



DAILY RECORD / JASON PLOTKIN

Shannon McCunnell, an infant massage therapist, demonstrates her technique. McCunnell owns Blessed Beginnings Parent Education & Doula Services.

Blessed Beginnings owner says many don't know What's a Doula do?

Name: Shannon McDunnell CLE, CIMI, CCCE, LLLL, CD

Age: 24

Birthplace: Baltimore

Title: Owner

Company: Blessed Beginnings Parent Education & Doula Services, serving York, Harrisburg, Hanover and Lancaster

Contact: 858-0180 or singing-tree@prodigy.net

Time with company: 1½ years

What do you do? I work as a labor Doula, as well as teach expectant and new parents infant massage, child-birth education, and breast-feeding education classes. I also make belly casts/molds for pregnant women so that they can have a memento of their pregnant selves.

What is it that people don't understand about your job? Many people do

not know what a Doula is or what they do. A Doula is a woman who is trained to provide comfort, resources and support to a woman and her partner throughout her pregnancy, labor/delivery and the postpartum period that begins immediately thereafter. Many people do not know the many benefits of having a Doula, such as fewer instances of Cesarean sections, postpartum depression and medical interventions.

What is the most rewarding part of your job? The most rewarding part of my job is when I see a woman realize that she is stronger than she thought she was, and then to see how her partner responds to her with utter amazement and love. It is an honor to watch a family be born and to know that in some small way I helped to ease the transition for a couple.

What was the most difficult thing you had to learn at your job? That it

takes time and perseverance to build a business, when people may not even know what it is you do and why your service is valuable to them.

How do you spend a typical day? Since I am on-call 24 hours a day, I'm never sure what a day might be like. Sometimes I have phone calls at 2 a.m. from a client to say she's in labor and to come now. Other times, I may get a phone call for breast-feeding help. Sometimes I may be called and asked to do some research for a client. Other days, I simply teach my classes.

What is your most memorable work experience? I can't pick just one. Each birth I attend is different and special, I will never forget any of them.

My Job runs weekly, focusing on a county resident with an interesting job. If you have suggestions for an article, call Joli Harrington, a Daily Record correspondent, at 846-4588.