

# DEB POLZIN-ROSENBERG RN MArch RA, AIA

21 Church Ave., Peaks Island, Maine | +1 207.358.8058

Plot 2425, Ext.9 | Gaborone, Botswana | +267 77 456 679

debbielrosenberg@gmail.com | deb@betterbirthdesign.com

## EDUCATION

**Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)** Providence, RI  
Master of Architecture (MArch), 2012 - 2015  
Architecture Department Fellowship Awardee, 2012 - 2015  
Graduate Studies Travel Grant Awardee, 2015

**Oregon Health & Science University** Portland, OR  
Registered Nurse (RN), 2005 - 2007  
Women's Health and Midwifery focus

**Whitman College** Walla Walla, WA  
Bachelor of Arts, Magna cum laude, Psychology 1999 - 2003  
Phi Beta Kappa  
Undergraduate Honors Psychology Thesis:  
Polzin (Rosenberg) D. *Doctors, midwives, hospitals and homes: making birth choices for self-efficacy.* 2003.

## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

**The American Institute of Architects (AIA)** No. 38430398  
**National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB)** Certificate No. 103938  
**Passive House Institute US (PHIUS)** Certified Passive House Consultant (CPHC) March 2019 - present  
**Academy of Architecture for Health (AAH)**  
**American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM)**  
**American Association of Birth Centers (AABC)**

## HEALTH DESIGN + RESEARCH

**Licensed Architect** Maine, USA  
National Council of Architectural Registration Boards  
ARC4725

**Fulbright U.S. Scholar to Botswana** Gaborone, Botswana  
Teaching/Research Scholar July 2024 - present  
Visiting professor in the University of Botswana Department of Architecture + Planning, teaching healthcare design and conducting research on design guidelines for childbirth facilities in low-resource settings.

**American Association of Birth Centers (AABC) USA**  
Research Advisor February 2024 - present  
Provided content and research mentorship to qualitative study exploring design guidelines for U.S.-based birth centers.

**Stewardson Keefe LeBrun Travel Grant** AIA New York  
Awardee January - December 2024  
Investigating the relationship between birth, culture, and the built environment in sub-Saharan Africa—Malawi, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Botswana.

**Better Birth Design** Global  
Principal + Founder January 2021 - present  
Transforming childbirth through research and design. Offering evidence-based, high-impact design strategies for better outcomes in childbirth.

**Ariadne Labs** Boston, MA  
Associate Faculty August 2020 - present  
Research collaborator for health systems and innovation research, with focus on childbirth. 2023 Spark Grant Recipient for development of *Design Guidelines for Better Birth*.

**MASS Design Group** Boston, MA + Kigali, Rwanda  
Research + Design Associate November 2015 - July 2018  
Curious, investigative, and dedicated team researcher and designer on a diverse range of health and social impact architecture projects, including:

**Area 25 Maternity and Neonatal Unit.** Lilongwe, Malawi

*Designer.* Designed innovative concept for postnatal, neonatal and obstetric surgical health center in underserved community outside of the capital city of Malawi.

**The Impact of Design on Clinical Care in Childbirth.** Boston, USA

*Lead Researcher.* This project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, investigates the impact of design on clinical decision-making and outcomes in American childbirth facilities. Featured in *Fast Company* (March 9, 2020) and *Review of Systems* podcast (September 12, 2017) and published in:

Galvin, Grace, Avery Plough, **Deb Rosenberg**, Neel Shah, Amie Shao, and Brendan Sullivan. n.d. *Designing Capacity for High Value Healthcare: The Impact of Design on Clinical Care in Childbirth*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. [https://massdesinggroup.org/sites/default/files/file/2017/170223\\_Ariadne%20Report\\_Final.pdf](https://massdesinggroup.org/sites/default/files/file/2017/170223_Ariadne%20Report_Final.pdf).

Plough, Avery, **Deb Polzin-Rosenberg**, Grace Galvin, Amie Shao, Brendan Sullivan, Natalie Henrich, and Neel T. Shah. 2019a. *An Exploratory Study of the Relationship between Facility Design and the Provision of Childbirth Care*. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health* 64 (1): 12–17.

Plough, Avery, **Deb Polzin-Rosenberg**, Grace Galvin, Amie Shao, Brendan Sullivan, Natalie Henrich, and Neel T. Shah. 2019b. *Assessing the Feasibility of Measuring Variation in Facility Design Among American Childbirth Facilities*. *HERD* 12 (2): 30–43.

**University Teaching Hospital of Kigali Emergency Department Charette.** Kigali, Rwanda

*Project Lead + Designer.* Led workshop with ED physicians, nurses and administrative stakeholders to set goals and brainstorm design solutions to most pressing space challenges. Produced assessment report for administrative use and fundraising efforts.

**Munini District Hospital.** Munini, Rwanda

*Designer + CA.* Design revisions and assistance with construction administration for 164-bed district hospital in remote hilltop village in Southern Province of Rwanda.

**Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture (RICA).** Karama, Bugesera District, Rwanda

*Designer.* Member of four-person winning entry to masterplan competition funded by Howard Buffet Foundation for 1200+ hectare agricultural university in Eastern Rwanda, with a mission to educate East Africa's next generation of agricultural sector leaders in best approaches to conservation agriculture in order to reduce food insecurity and encourage sustainable land use. Member of built project design team.

**Sanergy.** Nairobi, Kenya

*Designer.* Worked closely with environmental engineering team to provide masterplan and schematic design for waste treatment and processing facility, including innovative Black Soldier Fly Larvae breeding, rearing and production plant.

**GAIA Vaccine Foundation.** Bamako, Mali

*Project Lead + Designer.* Masterplan and schematic design for USAID/ASHA grant proposal for new Infectious Disease and Primary Care Clinic.

**Gitwe University.** Gitwe, Rwanda

*Designer.* Health Sciences University and Teaching Hospital Masterplan.

**Nyarugenge District Hospital.** Kigali, Rwanda.

*Designer.* Schematic design, detailed design and construction documents for 75,000SF, 120-bed, urban district hospital for the Rwanda Ministry of Health. Helped develop innovative, culturally-appropriate maternity sequence.

**HermanMiller for Healthcare.** Boston, USA.

*Researcher.* Helped lead the HermanMiller/MASS team in a year-long engagement to reevaluate the furniture company's position in designing clinical furniture that reflects the changing landscape of healthcare. Proposed new framework for understanding processes of care and the impact that furniture can have in optimizing those processes.

**Natural Ventilation and the Hospital.** Boston, USA.

*Intern.* Through critical review of natural ventilation strategies used in global healthcare facilities and U.S. building code standards, investigated barriers to incorporating natural ventilation strategies U.S. healthcare infrastructure.

**CHUK Emergency Department Mobile Chart System Design** Kigali, Rwanda

Designer May 2017

Collaborated with local University of Rwanda Hospital Emergency Department physicians to design a mobile chart rack system for storage and documentation. Fabricated by local craftsmen and with locally available materials.

**Graduate Studies Grant RISD** London, UK and Amsterdam, Netherlands

**Architecture Department Grant Recipient** Summer 2015

Received grant to support travel research comparing birth center architecture, models of maternity care and birth outcomes in the United Kingdom, Amsterdam and the United States.

**MASS|RISD Fighting Ebola Design Charrette** Providence, RI

Facilitator November 2014

Led small group of design and health students and professionals through one-day charrette focusing on improving response to the West African Ebola epidemic.

## OTHER DESIGN

**Juniper Design + Build fka Rachel Conly Design** Peaks Island, ME

Architectural Designer March 2019 - August 2024

High-performance residential architecture, specializing in Passive House and Passive House-ready design.

**Kaplan Thompson Architects** Portland, ME

Project Designer July 2018 - July 2019

**Portland Women's Homeless Shelter** programming and feasibility study

**The Ecology School** Living Building + Community Challenge, creation/management of Living Community Master Plan and materials selection research and coordination

**Restaurant Design** including work with James Beard award-winning chef

**Residential Design** achieving high-performance, Passive House standards

**1X1 Design Collaborative** Central Falls, RI

Founding Partner June 2014 - December 2014

Worked closely with City of Central Falls Planning Department to engage community in visioning activities for city comprehensive plan. Designed lighting and signage proposals for new city gateway initiative.

Designed prototypes for design thinking mobile classroom for local youth design organization. Managed

firm's business and financial organization. Winning entry for Student Display Competition from 2014 Southern New England American Planning Association conference.

## TEACHING + MENTORSHIP

**Kamuzu University of Health Sciences at QECH** Blantyre, Malawi

Design for Childbirth

Lecture given to Departments of Ob/Gyn and Midwifery.

30 May 2024

**University of Botswana Department of Architecture & Planning** Gaborone, Botswana

Guest Critic

November 2023—June 2024

**University of Botswana Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology** Gaborone, Botswana

Design for Childbirth

11 October 2022

Lecture given to department faculty and residents as part of workshop centered on dignified and respectful maternity care.

**Jefferson University College of Architecture & The Built Environment**

Health Infrastructure Design for Malawi, Guest Critic Philadelphia, PA

Spring 2021

**Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) Department of Architecture** Providence, Rhode Island

Architecture Thesis Advisor

Fall 2018

Fall 2020

**Rhode Island School of Design Providence (RISD) Department of Architecture** Providence, Rhode Island

World Architecture History Teaching Assistant

Fall 2013

Provided teaching and learning support through guiding group discussions, assessments and general course assistance to undergraduate and graduate level architecture students in a critical survey of architectural history.

## NURSING

**Registered Nurse** Rhode Island License RN46366 Maine License RN81395

Basic Life Support/CPR/AED

2007 - present

**RISD Health Services** Nurse 2009 - 2012, Providence, RI

**Thundermist Health Center** Nurse 2008 - 2011, Woonsocket, RI

**Women's Health Center of Oregon** Nurse 2007 - 2008, Oregon City, OR

## COMMUNITY WORK

**Malawi Midwifery Center of Excellence** Blantyre, Malawi

May 2024 - Present

Providing pro bono architectural planning and design services to develop midwife-led teaching unit affiliated with Kamuzu University of Health Sciences.

**COVID-19 Design Review**

March 2020

Offered pro bono architectural review and strategies for infection control in Nantucket Community Hospital Emergency Department (Nantucket, MA, USA) affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Rapid Response Outdoor Classroom Initiative** Portland, ME

August 2020

Volunteer design consultant providing COVID-19 outdoor learning site plan proposal for Peaks Island Elementary School with Portland Public School District.

**Peaks Island Elementary School PTO** Peaks Island, Maine

September 2018 - January 2021

**West Side Play Space** Providence, RI

Parent Co-op Member 2012 - 2014

Assisted with formation of indoor community play space for children ages 0 - 5, providing one-time design assistance and ongoing volunteer play monitoring.

**Haystack Mountain School of Crafts** Deer Isle, ME

Resident Participant August 2010

Two-week focused wheel-throwing workshop with ceramic artist Christa Assad.

**Steel Yard Ceramics** Providence, RI

Co-op Resident Artist 2008-2011

Participated in cooperative ceramic residency program, produced wheel-thrown and handbuilt functional ceramic forms and organized local sales of work.

**Urban Greens Food Co-op** Providence, RI

Council Member 2008 - 2011

Promoted, fundraised and organized for an emerging local food co-op on Providence's West side.