

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BirthNet sends an Open Letter to Eve Ensler about *The Vagina Monologues*

BirthNet has sent an open letter to Eve Ensler, creator of *The Vagina Monologues*, applauding her success in bringing issues of violence against women into the public's consciousness.

BirthNet has also respectfully raised concerns to Ms. Ensler about the one narrative in which a birth is described, entitled "I Was in the Room." We have asked Ms. Ensler to either frame the birth experience in "I Was in The Room" with the same feminist analysis she lends the other pieces, or consider including a birth story in *The Vagina Monologues* which depicts this primary function of the vagina as it was designed to work.

We worry that "I Was in the Room", rather than empowering women, feeds the insidious fears that many women carry about their bodies during birth. Young women, in particular, come away from the performance frightened and misled about this trauma to the vagina, which they believe to be normal.

BirthNet wants women to understand that episiotomy, while typical of birth in the US, need not be a normal part of birth. We also hope that the very real violence and trauma some women experience during birth is acknowledged in such an important feminist work.

Several colleges and universities in the area will be hosting performances of this acclaimed and renowned show. Ensler charges no royalty for performances on V-Day, Thursday, February 14th, a day of national recognition of violence against women.

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A complete copy of BirthNet's letter to Ms. Ensler is attached.

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BirthNet educates the public about maternity care in order to improve it. We believe that birth is a normal, natural and profound event in a woman's life; and we encourage women to learn about their rights and options. Our primary programs include education in the classroom (high school or college classes), community forums or workshops, and media outreach. For more information about BirthNet, please contact Carolyn Keefe 518-482-2504 or birthnetalbany@yahoo.com.

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