

FASD Awareness Day September 9

Every year in Saskatchewan, babies are born with lifelong disabilities resulting from the effects of alcohol consumed by the mother during pregnancy. Some of the mothers drink a lot; some not as much. Alcohol consumed during pregnancy can cause a broad range of disabilities. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is an umbrella term referring to the range of disabilities caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a combination of mental and physical disabilities present at birth. In the western world, prenatal exposure to alcohol is a leading known cause of cognitive disabilities.

FASD Awareness Day is September 9, a day set aside to raise awareness about FASD. Organizations and agencies from across Canada are planning events in their own communities. We urge health districts, organizations, and local communities to plan events to raise awareness and prevent FASD within their own communities.

Building support and networks in the community are essential to empower individuals. Everyone has a role in addressing FASD. A father needs to know that his support of the mother in her decision to avoid alcohol and other drugs during pregnancy will be stronger if he also stops drinking or using other drugs. His lifestyle and emotional support can affect her behaviour and her level of stress. Families and friends can be encouraged to show support by not drinking in a pregnant woman's presence, offering non-alcoholic drinks and by supporting her choice to stop drinking alcohol before, during pregnancy, and while breastfeeding. Be creative and congratulate yourself for contributing to a healthier community.

Please contact the FASD Program Coordinator at the Prevention Institute at (306) 655-2512 for information and resources or to tell us what your community is doing for FASD Awareness Day. Enclosed is a form to assist you in planning and recording the activities you do. Please complete the form, return it to the Prevention Institute and we will forward information about the activities in Saskatchewan to FASworld Canada, a national organization dedicated to FASD awareness and prevention. FASworld will be issuing a nationwide media release about Canadian communities participating in FASD Awareness Day.



September

Together we can prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

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Background

In late February 1999, a small group of burned-out parents, most of whom had never met face-to-face, began to change the world. Frustrated by the lack of public awareness of FAS by both the public and professionals, and after communicating online internationally for more than two years, they began to wonder:

What if, on the ninth minute of the ninth hour of the ninth day of the ninth month of the year one thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine, we asked the world to remember that during the nine months of pregnancy a woman should not drink alcohol? And, what if we also asked the world to remember those millions of people who will struggle all of their lives, because of prenatal alcohol exposure? At this magic minute in history, could we begin to change the world?

They began to work together using the Internet, and their group grew to include more than 70 volunteer coordinators in eight countries. They were successful in obtaining FAS Day proclamations from numerous cities and towns, and 14 U.S. states.

Source: Bonnie Buxton and Brian Philcox, FASworld Canada, Iceberg, December 2000

In 2000, the Saskatchewan Minister of Health proclaimed September 9 as FAS Awareness Day in Saskatchewan. Each year since, Saskatchewan has continued to proclaim the day. In July 2002, the Government of Saskatchewan passed legislation declaring September 9 FAS Awareness Day. At 9:09 a.m. in each time zone, people around the world will stop for one minute and reflect on this lifelong and preventable disability.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is preventable by avoiding alcohol during pregnancy. The safest decision a woman can make is to completely avoid all kinds of alcohol including beer, wine, and hard liquor during her pregnancy. If a woman is planning a pregnancy, she should decide to stop drinking before becoming pregnant. Women who need assistance to stop drinking during pregnancy and while breastfeeding should be advised to consult with their doctors or should be directed to agencies that can assist them to stop drinking. It is important to remember that many people need professional help in order to stop using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Everyone can be a part of preventing FASD by providing a pregnant woman with a supportive, safe, loving, and alcohol-free environment.

For more information about FASD Awareness Day, contact the Prevention Institute at (306) 655-2512 or your nearest Regional FASD Committee.



Suggestions & Activities

Almost every volunteer has discovered that along with building awareness, FASD Awareness Day also creates important networks and a feeling of self-empowerment in parents, service providers, and community.

The minute of reflection symbolizes the worldwide circle of community that links all of us who care about FASD. On September 9, bells in many time zones mark the "magic minute" at 9:09 a.m., which is called the "FASD Bell Concordance".

There is a purity about bells that reminds us of the innocence of children. As well, bells are historically associated with warnings, alarms, marking important moments, and simply ringing for the joy of connecting with community. FASD Awareness Day is all of these things.

Planned activities could include:

- Proclamation of International FASD Awareness Day by your city council or First Nation Council through your Health Director
- Bell Concordance (bell ringing). Ring bells for 1 minute, beginning at 9:09 a.m. Buildings with bells: church, old school, town hall. Bells can also be rung by hand. Communities without bells can use wind chimes, hand bells, musical instruments, and rain sticks. Information about Bell Concordance can be found at <http://www.come-over.to/FASDAY/manual.htm> or www.fasday.com.
- Making FAS Knots (cord, cedar bark). They can be made in a minute, for less than ten cents, and can be used as a fundraiser (\$2-3 each) or given away as promotions. The FAS Knot was designed by Bonnie Buxton and Brian Philcox. Step-by-step photos are available at <http://www.come-over.to/FASDAY/manual.htm>. Groups supporting and using the FAS Knot for promotion or fundraising are asked to notify Bonnie and Brian before the event. You can contact them by phone at (416) 465-7766 or email at fasworldcanada@rogers.com.
- A minute of reflection (silence, prayer, music, bells, wind chimes, and rain sticks)
- Educational seminars for parents, teachers, social workers, and youth
- An information evening
- Bars and restaurants providing free non-alcoholic drinks to pregnant women
- Video presentations
- Poster contests in the community or schools
- A powwow, round dance, or a sweat with traditional pipe ceremony
- A community breakfast at someone's home, at a favourite restaurant, or in a nearby park
- Potluck meal, feast, a light lunch, or a community barbeque
- A rally, walk, and speeches
- Community and school displays
- A candle vigil
- A poster blitz (contact the Prevention Institute)
- Talking/sharing circles, special prayers, and drums
- Making a huge banner and hanging it across a main street

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Contact List

Regional FASD Committees in Saskatchewan:

There are several Regional FASD Committees in Saskatchewan, which were formed to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) within their communities. These committees have representation from various organizations: Addictions, Indian and Metis Organizations, Community Resources and Employment, Corrections, Justice, Health, Parents, Foster Parents, Caregivers, Early Childhood Intervention Program, and Learning. These committees are working with local agencies, promoting collaboration, networking, and working together for a common goal on strategies for prevention of and education about FASD.

Battlefords FASD Committee

Colleen Sabraw

Phone: (306) 446-4545

Email: becip@sasktel.net

Flin Flon/Creighton Regional FASD Committee

Jill Rideout

Phone: (204) 687-8852

Email: liaison@mts.net

Keewatin FASD Support Committee

Louis Roy

Phone: (306) 833-5502

Email: louis.roy@kyrha.sk.ca

La Ronge Area FASD Prevention Team

Alison Ballentyne

Phone: (306) 425-2051

Email: alison.ballentyne@mcrtha.sk.ca

Lloydminster FASD Committee

Carin Chiverton

Phone: (306) 825-5911

Email: carin@midwestfamilyconnections.ca

Meadow Lake Area FASD Committee

Mary Rowland

Phone: (306) 236-1540

Email: mary.r@pnrha.ca

Prince Albert FASD Committee

Dianne Nielsen

Phone: (306) 765-6550

Email: pacada@sasktel.net

Regina FASD Community Network

Dawn Beattie

Phone: (306) 787-1303

Email: dbeattie@dcre.gov.sk.ca

Saskatoon Interagency FASD Committee

Jonina Male

Phone: (306) 934-1667

Email: male@engr.usask.ca

Yorkton FASD Committee

Tamara Dobmeier

Phone: (306) 786-0732

Email: tamara.dobmeier@shr.sk.ca

Websites:

www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca (information and resources)

www.fasday.com (activities on FASD Day)

www.fasworld.com (links, contacts, coming events)

www.come-over.to/FASDAY/ABCDEFGH/ (instructions for a small and simple morning event)

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fasd-etcof/about-e.html (Public Health Agency of Canada)

www.ccsa.ca (Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse)

www.asantecentre.org/FAS_Day.php (planning and promotional materials)

For Information Contact:

Saskatchewan Prevention Institute

1319 Colony Street

Saskatoon, SK • S7N 2Z1

Phone: (306) 655-2512

Fax: (306) 655-2511

www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca

info@preventioninstitute.sk.ca

FASD Support Network of Saskatchewan Inc.

210 - 510 Cynthia Street, Saskatoon, SK S7K 7K7

Phone: (306) 975-0884

Toll Free: 1-866-673-FASN (3276)

Email: fasdnetwork@sasktel.net

Website: www.skfasnetwork.ca

The FASD Support Network of Saskatchewan Inc., is a non-profit parent-run organization that provides information and support for parents/caregivers and professionals.



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Planning



Objective - what are you trying to accomplish?

Strategy - how to achieve objective

Budget

Target Audience - define (general public, educators, service providers, youth)

Partners - engage the community

Activity(ies) and Location

Planning/Timeline for Tasks

Media Promotion

Evaluation/Measurement Criteria

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Reporting

Date: _____

Activities - what did your community do and how successful was it?

Name Community Partners

Number of Participants at Each Event

Name: _____ Address: _____

Organization: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Go to www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca for information about FASD Awareness Day.

Please let us know what you have done in your community on FASD Awareness Day. Fax or email this completed form to:

Lois Crossman, FASD Program Coordinator

Phone: (306) 655-2512

Fax: (306) 655-2511

Email: lcrossman@preventioninstitute.sk.ca



For information contact:

1319 Colony Street • Saskatoon, SK • S7N 2Z1

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