



JOIN THE CIRCLE OF FRIENDS IN THE PREVENTION OF FASD!

Friends Helping A Pregnant Friend Avoid Alcohol

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is completely avoidable if mothers abstain from drinking alcohol while pregnant. It may be difficult for women to avoid alcohol especially if women are young and influenced by their friends who are doing the party thing. However, research from the World Health Organization (Global Status Report on Alcohol, 2004) has shown that it may be a whole lot easier if those friends are caring and supportive.

The Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network (CFAN), in partnership with the Calgary Health Region (CHR), has developed a unique campaign for the Calgary area about friends helping friends avoid alcohol when pregnant. This cheerful, positive campaign is now being expanded to the Rural and Aboriginal Communities. The main population of interest is over 244,000 youth aged 16 to 24 years old.

The main messages are, ***“friends helping friends”***, ***“no alcohol is best when pregnant”*** and ***“friends caring for pregnant friends.”*** The supportive, positive, empowering tone, and the focus on both young women and young men, has made this a lively and fresh approach. The campaign goal is to reduce the number of babies born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) through a social marketing awareness campaign. Materials can be obtained free of charge at the Alberta Children’s Website, <http://child.alberta.ca/home/872.cfm>.

In 2005 the campaign evolved to a Community Development project. Two (2) Community Partners joined the Calgary Health Region (CHR) in this endeavor and they are:

- Foothills Fetal Alcohol Society (FFAS) located in High River, Alberta and serving the rural region of Region 3 (surrounding Calgary). Danna Ormstrup is the Executive Director. *“We welcome the opportunity to engage the youth of rural Alberta to present the Circle of Friends and Circle of Support message to the community”*, said Ms. Ormstrup.

- Gathering Together, Tsuu T'ina located on the Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) reserve immediately west of Calgary and bordering the city limits. Mr. Richard Amaral is the Program Coordinator and his office is located at the Dr. Thomas Murray Health Centre. *"The Circle of Friends message is easy to deliver in the community since our people can relate because it reflects our traditional culture and believes"*, said Mr. Amaral

Currently we are seeking sustainable funding for the two Community Partners. The goal is for each partner to secure a Prevention Coordinator and develop Programs so that they can continue to share the message and incorporate prevention campaigns within their communities.

For further information, please contact:

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