



Network News *July 2005, Issue 8*

A Note to Readers

By Beverly Palibroda

By the time you are reading this issue of *Network News*, summer will be well underway. If you are still planning your events, the Saskatchewan Centennial project has sent out an informational brochure in the mail and it is packed with ideas. You can also view a schedule of events at www.sask2005.ca. There is so much going on around our province you are sure to keep busy over the summer months.

I hope each of you is able to enjoy a summer activity, even if it is taking in a beautiful blue sky, a warm prairie breeze, or sitting on the lawn reflecting on your day. Within this issue of *Network News* I have included some tips on how to care for yourself and a brief article based on the book *Letters to Our Children, Letters from Our Children: Living with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Alcohol Related Effects*. I hope you enjoy this month's offerings.



Did You Know???

International FASD Awareness Day

September 9, 2005

Mark this on your calendar:

MACSI 4th Annual Awareness Day Walk. Call the office for details.

Think about planning an event in your community for International FASD Awareness day. Send me a write up and pictures after the event and I can share the results of your event with our readers.

Gentle Teaching Education

A series of Gentle Teaching classes is being offered this fall over a 5 week period. The classes will provide an overview of the principles of Gentle Teaching as well as specific supporting techniques. Contact Tim Jones 222-3958 for further information or registration details.

we CARES Project

The Network has been involved as a sponsor agency in the we CARES Project. This has been a wonderful chance to create educational opportunities utilizing the "train the trainer" model. Community trainers from across the province have been trained and have begun to deliver educational sessions for front line support persons serving adults with FASD. The one day workshops promise to be both informative and interactive. The trainers will use their unique skills to deliver the information within their home communities. The Fall issue of our publication, *Living with FASD*, will include a full report on this project.



Saskatchewan Fetal Alcohol Support Network

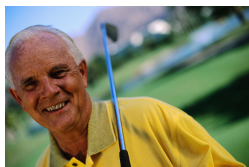
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Saskatoon, SK S7L 7K7

975-0884 Toll free number 1-866-673-FASN (3276)

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How to Care for Yourself: Based on FASD Tip #11

It is summertime and the living is easy. Or is it? Perhaps the busy days, long hot nights, fun activities, and exciting events of summer have begun to take their toll on your family. One of the most important things that any of us can do is to care for ourselves. Here are some tips as taken from the Saskatchewan Fetal Alcohol Support Network's **FASD Tip #11**. Think about these tips and how you can look after yourself to ensure that you face each day the best you can be.

1. All parents have dreams for their kids. It may be hard for parents of children with FASD to deal with disappointment or guilt. A counselor, religious leader or Elder may be able to help you.
2. Think about what helps you to relax and make a real effort to do it every day or at least every week. Have coffee with a friend, take a long bath with the bathroom door locked, call a parent you like, go out with your partner, go to a support group, hire a babysitter or share and swap childcare.
3. Find someone to talk to who understands what it's like living with children with FASD. This could be a family member who is close to you, or another parent of a child with FASD. If you don't know any other parents, call the Saskatchewan Fetal Alcohol Support Network (our number is 1-866-673-3276 or 975-0884). We'll connect you with another parent. It is amazing how many similar experiences parents share.
4. Sometimes, the only place your children can truly 'shine' is in your own home. Let them be at home a lot and don't feel badly about celebrating holidays and birthdays at home where your children feel safe and comfortable.

5. Many children with FASD become very stressed when a family leaves home to go on holidays. It can be hard for them to leave a familiar area and routine or stay in a strange hotel room. It will be good for everyone if your children can stay in their routine.

6. Give your relatives some information to read about FASD. Or, have them call us at the Saskatchewan Fetal Alcohol Support Network.



7. Arrange for a break for you and /or your partner. Hire a mature babysitter who understands your child and educate them about FASD and the importance of routine.

8. Take time to laugh. Rent a funny movie. Think about the funny side of some of the things your kids do.

9. Rest, relax, exercise, walk and try to look at the big picture. You are doing the very best job you can.

10. Think about all the things that you love about your children and all the things you admire.



FASD Tips for Parents and Caregivers

**11 Tip Sheets written by parents of children, youth, and adults affected by FASD.
Downloadable from our website at www.skfasnetwork.ca or call the office at
975-0884 or 1-866-673-FASN (3276)**

The Glory of Expression



Most parents, caregivers, and family members will from time to time take on the awe inspiring task of talking to a person affected by FASD about the experience of having FASD. This can be a challenge, but it can also be a loving gesture that promotes healing and connection. Prenatal alcohol exposure will affect an individual throughout their lifetime. It is important to speak about FASD and not remain silent, thus increasing the shame and confusion surrounding FASD.

Open and honest communication can help a person with FASD to understand, accept, and love themselves just as they are. Talking with others is just one way of coming to greater understanding of living with FASD; letter writing is another excellent way. In the book, *Letters to Our Children, Letters from Our Children: Living with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Alcohol Related Effects*, parents, family members, and persons with FASD put their thoughts into touching and loving letters, perhaps expressing those words that are not said everyday, but that are important to say. Here are some selections of letters written by parents to their children with FASD.



...everything you do and experience is exciting. It is refreshing to see an 11 year old who can appreciate the wonder of a new baby, the splendor of a mountain or the vibrant colour of the sky at sunset...You are the child who always notices...You help me to see the world as an incredible array of experiences and sensations and for this I am truly grateful to you. (Badry& Lawryk, 2000, 85-86).



Where do I begin? How can I best explain to you how very much you mean to me, in a way that you will understand? Perhaps I should just start from the beginning...

You have taught me about patience, about parenting, and about what is really important in life. It hasn't all been easy going, but the good has outweighed the bad by such a large margin that the tough times haven't seemed that tough. I never cease to be amazed... (Badry& Lawryk, 2000, 98).



Learning to be a good dad to you was a very great challenge...One thing I learned from you was to go slowly and be persistent. It took nearly five years for you to learn to tie your shoes and skates but the pride we both felt in your accomplishment was no different from what it would be for any parent and child. It think this was your first success. (Badry & Lawryk, 2000, 60).



No, you are not a bad person. Yes, you have learned to love others and best of all, you have learned to love yourself...You still have mountains to climb but it will not be alone" (Badry&Lawryk, 2000, 71).

Badry, D.E. & Lawryk, L. Eds. (2000). *Letters to Our Children, Letters from Our Children: Living with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Alcohol Related Effects*. Calgary: Letters to Our Children Project.



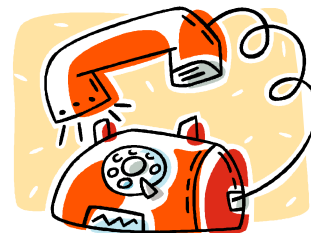
The Saskatchewan Fetal Alcohol Support Network would like to thank new members who have recently joined us and those members who have renewed their memberships. We are steadily growing and with each member we become stronger and are better able to meet our goals. We are reaching communities across great distances and are providing valuable support and information to parents, family members, people with FASD, community members, schools, and professionals.

If you are not a member, but are interested in joining the Network, annual SFASN membership is \$15.00. Membership comes with several benefits. You will receive the publication *Living with FASD* two times per year, receipt of the Network News four times per year, access to print resources, including FASD Tips, and FASD Tips in a pictorial format. We currently have three pictorial tips and have seven scheduled for distribution in December. As The Network grows, we will continue to expand our resources and be better able to meet the needs of people throughout the province.

For more information about becoming a member, please contact the Network by email at fasdnetwork@sasktel.net or by telephone at 975-0884 in Saskatoon or elsewhere use the toll free number 1-866-673-FASN (3276).

We hope to hear from you soon.

The Toll free Warm Line



1-866-673-FASN (3276)

The Network has a toll free warm line that you can call for information or support. This service is available to everyone. If you are requiring mentorship or guidance, you will be matched with a parent mentor. If you need specific answers to your questions, we can help you find the answers you need or connect you with other community agencies for assistance in various areas of life.

The Network maintains up to date print resources on specific aspects of FASD that can be of assistance to parents, family members, support persons, or community members. Call the warm line to request materials.

Community Awareness and Action

Over the past several months the Saskatchewan Fetal Alcohol Support Network, along with Dr. Mavis Olesen, has been offering a series of workshops related to persons with FASD and community based crime prevention. The workshops were funded through the Community Mobilization Program of the National Crime Prevention Strategy and have now been completed. Work is underway in the development of a final report. Watch for this information as details and findings of this project will be included in the upcoming Fall issue of *Living with FASD* and will also be available on our website.

www.skfasnetwork.ca

National Crime Prevention Strategy
"Building Safer Communities"

If you have questions or concerns regarding the contents of *Network News*, or are interested in submitting an article, please contact Beverly at skfasnetwork@sasktel.net or phone 975-0884. Your input is welcomed.