

Fetal Alcohol Network New Zealand

Kia ora everyone

Attached is an overview of a discussion among the parents who attended the last FANNZ meeting where the challenges of FASD in adolescence and adulthood were discussed. This followed the visit from Dr Alice Home in March talking about parenting invisible disabilities (such as ADHD and FASD) and the report from the Canadian FASD and mental Health conference that was sent out to you all last month. I hope you find this impromptu discussion insightful and valuable.

The other important thing on the FANNZ meeting agenda was **International FASD Awareness Day which is held each year on the 9th Day of the 9th Month and marked with a moment of reflection at 9:09am all round the world**. New Zealand has marked on 9th September every year since its inception in 1999. You can read more about FASDAY at www.fasday.com including the wonderful range of symbolism and event ideas such as the "Bell Concordance" and the "FASDKnot". FASDAY flyers, information and help with holding an awareness event are all available upon request. An event does not have to be held on the exact day! Every day is FASD awareness Day around here!! **Mark this date in your diaries!**

FANNZ FASDay 2008 will include a ½ day mental health & FASD seminar in Auckland, starting with a BreakFASD at 8.30am. The seminar will be a chance to update on FASD developments within the context of mental health and explore ways to integrate what we know with what we do. An invitation with venue details will be advised soon. If you cant make it then consider what you might be able to do to raise awareness. All ideas be they big or small make a positive difference! Remember that our motto is "Everyone is part of the solution."

A VERY SPECIAL acknowledgement for one of our own champions! I am delighted to announce that on the 17th June 2008, FASD advocate Ms Shirley Winikerei, receive a very special recognition from ZONTA. Shirley has been acknowledged by the ZONTA CLUB of Hamilton, Waikato, as their inaugural "Unsung Hero". Congratulations Shirley from all those who know of and have benefited from your tireless work and tenacious advocacy for families affected by FASD. It is lovely to think you are unsung no more! Well done! If you would like to pass on your congratulations to Shirley phone, 07 8476752 or email fast@xtra.co.nz

Below are a few other exciting updates that have sprung from the actions of other extraordinary people.

Best wishes from Christine Rogan

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Australian FAS researcher honoured

Dr Janet HAMMILL of Queensland has been recognized in the Queen's Birthday Honours list this year for her "service to the community through health services for Indigenous women and children and research into the effects of foetal alcohol syndrome".

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A Justice and FASD Committee has formed in Canada and they have set up an excellent website for Justice System Professionals.

<http://fasdjustice.on.ca/>

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Voice of American **Interview with Vivian and Peter Lourens of South Africa online**

<http://www.youtube.com/user/babybornfree>

It's only four minutes long - take a look.

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New book on living with FASD from one who knows.

<http://www.qctimes.com/articles/2008/06/01/news/local/doc4843277650462105640590.txt>

Quad-City Times, Davenport, Iowa

Sunday, June 01, 2008

Stephen Neafcy spent 43 years of his life thinking he was a loser. He dropped out of high school because he could barely understand a thing he learned. He ended up in trouble with the law because he would steal things that caught his fancy. Inner peace was impossible to find.

Then, in 1996, Neafcy's sister took him to the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Clinic in Seattle, where a doctor diagnosed him with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, or FASD. Neafcy had brain damage. Finally, in middle age, he had an explanation as to why his life had been a living hell for so long. "I was born drunk," said Neafcy, a Bettendorf resident who recently wrote a book on FASD and

how to live with it. "I never knew what I was doing. I couldn't remember anything. It was just like being drunk, when you forget where your keys are."

His book, "***The Long Way to Simple***," offers a lighthearted look at what it's like living with FASD. The breezy read provides practical advice on living with the disorder or taking care of someone who has it. "As FASDers, we always take the long way to get to the simplest thing," he said. "My whole thing is that I wanted to offer hope."

And he has. The book is receiving rave reviews on <http://amazon.com/> but even before he sat down to write it, he so impressed Barbara Neafcy with his knowledge of the disorder and coping skills that she became his wife. She met her husband while on a computer listserv called FASLink.

FASLink offers those afflicted with or affected by FASD a place to share stories and information. Barbara joined the listserv after a school therapist specializing in working with brain-damaged children suggested her daughter may have FASD, a suspicion a doctor later confirmed. We fell in love online," Barbara said. "His heart of gold radiated across the computer."

In his book, Neafcy offers a four-part daily regimen for peace: faith, medication, meditation and music.