



9th Annual International FASD Awareness Day September 9th 2007

Press Release

I write on behalf of the Fetal Alcohol Network New Zealand (FANNZ) to advise you about **International FASD Awareness Day**. The aim of this awareness day is to have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) more widely recognised and prevented. FASD Awareness Day is held on the 9th day of the 9th month every year.

"In one magical minute, we can change the world"

Everyone participating in this Awareness Day is invited to share in a 'Minute of Reflection' at 9:09 am as that time makes its way around the world. In this magical moment - *the ninth minute, of the ninth hour, of the ninth day, of the ninth month* - we want people to hear the message that in the nine months of pregnancy, while breastfeeding or planning to conceive, women should not drink alcohol. In that minute, we also want the world to remember those who are living with fetal alcohol disorders.

We invite Churches to "Disturb the Peace"!!



On FASD Awareness Day bells ring out this important message at 9.09am. This is called **"The FASDay Bell Concordance"**. The bells have ranged from the first mission bell in New Zealand to the historic 56 bell carillon in Cape Town, South Africa, to tiny bells rung by school children, and wind chimes and rain sticks played by first nation Canadians.

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 occasions, and simply pealing for the joy of connecting with the community. FASD Awareness Day is all of these things! We know that church bells ringing on Sunday morning have caused controversy lately in some New Zealand communities. We believe FASD Awareness Day is a very good reason to disturb the peace (after 9.00 am of course!)

Fetal Alcohol Network New Zealand (FANNZ) is affiliated to FASworld www.fasworld.com/ and coordinated by Alcohol Healthwatch, PO Box 99 407, Newmarket. Tel: 09 520 7037, Email: fannz@ahw.co.nz

"Everyone is Part of the Solution"

The 9th year

Developed by families raising affected children, FASD Awareness Day began 9 years ago in 1999, making 2007 special for being the 9th year of the event. New Zealand, being the first country to see the dawn of each new day, has proudly marked FASD Awareness Day since its inception. For lots of FASDay information and inspiration, check out <http://fasday.com/>

FANNZ is supporting a **FASDay 'BreakFASD' on 7th September**, 2nd Floor, 27 Gillies Ave, Newmarket, Auckland beginning at 8.30am. This will be followed by a talk given by Dr Trecia Wouldes of Auckland University School of Medicine about a Health Symposium on FASD in West Australia. **Then on Sunday September 9th a FASDay Gathering will take place at 8.45am** at the Clover Park Community House, 16 A Israel Ave, Otara, Manukau.

The Fetal Alcohol Network NZ (FANNZ) has gone nationwide this year. FANNZ is a group of professionals and families connected through a shared vision to prevent FASD and ensure better support for those who have been affected. Our motto is *"Everyone is part of the solution"*.

We hope you can join in the spirit of the day by bringing it to the attention of communities around New Zealand.

If you would like further information, please contact me on 09-520 7037, or email fannz@ahw.co.nz. Further FASD information is attached.

Kind regards

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Fetal Alcohol Network New Zealand

International FASD Awareness Day 2007 Facts

**“Of all the substances of abuse, including heroine, cocaine and marijuana, alcohol produces by far the most serious neurobehavioural effects in the fetus.”
(Stratton et.al, US Institute of Medicine, 1996)**

Alcohol is a teratogen, a toxic agent that during pregnancy can cause birth defects and brain disorders.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is an umbrella term used to describe a range of adverse effects including Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorders (ARND) and Alcohol Related Birth Defects (ARBD),
(Chudley et al, 2005).

However

A survey of New Zealand midwives reported that 36% of pregnant adult clients and 82% of pregnant teenage clients drank during their pregnancy.
(Mathew et al, 2001).

And

A 2006 study of the awareness of the effect of alcohol use during pregnancy (Parackal et al, 2006) shows that more than 50% of women thought that if a pregnant woman wanted to drink, then some alcohol was safe in pregnancy.

Even though

The New Zealand Ministry of Health Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women (2006) recommend that women who are pregnant, planning pregnancy or who are breastfeeding avoid alcohol. (Ministry of Health 2006).

International prevalence studies estimate that Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (which includes Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) is likely to occur in 1 out of every 100 live births. (May and Gossage, 2001).

Studies show that identifying and supporting the special needs of children affected by FASD early in life is a protective factor for life (Streissguth, 1997).

But

**The number of individuals affected by FASD in
New Zealand remains unknown.**