

École Paul Kane High School

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OPEN HOUSE
March 6
6:30-9:00 pm
Advanced Placement Information
8:00 pm in large gym

French Immersion Information Evening
March 11 at 7:00 pm

Grade 9 French Immersion Day
March 14 9:15 am to 1:15 pm

Sir George Simpson students are automatically registered. Students from other schools please call Mrs. Bowles at 780-459-4405 to register.



12 Cunningham Road
780-459-4405
www.pkhs.spschools.org

Program targets drinking during pregnancy

BY AMY CROFTS
Staff Writer



LISA ROGOZINSKY
Co-ordinator

A new year-long provincial campaign wants people to start talking, specifically about alcohol and pregnancy.

The Prevention Conversation: A Shared Responsibility is part of Alberta's 10-year plan to curb Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

(FASD), permanent birth defects – including cognitive and functional disabilities – that an estimated 360 babies in Alberta are born with each year.

FASD is caused by maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

"The most important thing is that we start talking about alcohol and pregnancy and that people know that it is a delicate conversation," said Lisa Rogozinsky, co-ordinator of the Edmonton and area Fetal Alcohol Network Society.

The society has partnered with the Government of Alberta to educate all Albertans, not just pregnant women and health care professionals, about FASD.

"For the past 15 years, every community has done FASD awareness things, but this is the first time it really is a collaboration with the government and community agencies. It's a co-ordinated effort," said Rogozinsky.

Under the terms of the project, each of 12 fetal alcohol service networks in Alberta has hired a prevention conversation facilitator to go out into the community and talk about alcohol use during pregnancy.

"Our ultimate outcome is to prevent FASD but in order to do that we need to start talking about the issue and start to break down the stigma," said Rogozinsky, stigma that leads to "shaming and blaming."

"Don't blame a woman that is drinking if she is pregnant because that never leads to change ... It's about providing motivation to change in a supportive environment."

Melissa Strike is a mother of five children – some fostered, some adopted – who show signs and symptoms of FASD.

She said the conversation can be hard to approach because moms don't like to admit they drank during pregnancy. FASD is the only birth defect that is 100 per cent preventable.

"I wish the stigma was taken off the birth mom because with that disclosure there is so much more available to support that child, that youth into adulthood."

Strike said most women don't set out to harm their unborn child; they drink not realizing they are pregnant.

But after they come to that realization, it becomes a conscious decision to stop or keep going.

"The difference would be how much support you have around you, what your living situation is like and whether you're currently battling an addiction."

Rogozinsky explained that alcohol consumption during pregnancy is not just prevalent among women with addictions issues.

"The binge drinking rates for career women are on the rise. Eleven per cent of women report drinking throughout pregnancy and with women from the highest income bracket, that stat jumps to 45 per cent," she said.

"That doesn't necessarily correlate that these women are having more children with FASD but they are at a very high risk to drink. If a woman is pregnant and her support system drinks alcohol around her, she's at more of a risk to consume alcohol, whether she has addiction issues or not."

The prevention conversation message aims to target all women of childbearing age, from 18 to 45 years.

Facilitators will aim to work with non-profits such as shelters and crisis centres, as well probation officers, social workers and health care professionals and primary care networks.

Rogozinsky stressed that the conversation, whether between a pregnant woman and a friend, co-worker, counsellor or doctor, needs to be non judgmental.

"It's not about shaming and blaming, it's about encouraging women, once they have the information, to make healthy choices for healthy babies."

Prevention conversation facilitators were trained in December and are now out spreading the word.

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Grenier Place Chiropractic and Massage Wellness Centre

Chiropractic Hours:
Monday-Thursday 9 AM-7 PM;
Friday 9 AM-5 PM;
Saturday 10 AM-1 PM

*Please note - we are closed all long weekend Saturdays

Same day appointments & walk-ins welcome

Wifi access available

#60 200 St. Albert Trail, St. Albert
780.418.0978

Dr. Jamie Smith
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