

International FASD-awareness day commemorated in Trompsburg

On 9 September people across the globe had the opportunity to join forces in raising awareness and sharing the key Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) prevention message that “No amount of alcohol is safe any time during pregnancy”.

The date of 9 September is a reminder that a woman is ideally pregnant for nine months and should be supported during this entire time by her partner, friends and family to abstain from any alcohol use during this time.

The Foundation for Alcohol Related Research (FARR) in Trompsburg used the week prior to 9 September to raise awareness throughout the area and to call community members to action.

During FASD awareness presentations at Trompsburg Secondary School and PT Sanders Combined School, learners were informed about the importance of the prevention of teenage pregnancy and alcohol use during pregnancy. To demonstrate that we have choices in deciding what to do, nine learners at each school were offered the opportunity to symbolically crush a beer can and choose a non-alcoholic beverage in exchange.

Prevention talks were also presented at Mamello Clinic and before the Shades of Africa concert. Each audience member at the concert received a FASD knot and a lollipop to remind them that a child's potential is minimised when exposed to alcohol during pregnancy.

*By Petro Kleingeld,
FARR Trompsburg Project Coordinator*

The week's events culminated in the one-minute silence, reflecting on people living with FASD, their family and caregivers, as well as one's own responsibility in terms of FASD prevention within the closest circles of family and friends. At 9:09 on 9 September, the silence was broken with the ringing of the ceremonial bell, thereby breaking the silence surrounding FASD and prenatal alcohol use and calling all to action to curb this life-long, irreversible condition in the community. Thereafter the attendees joined the FARR project staff in a march down the main street of Trompsburg.

The reactions of people attending these events indicate that there is an urgency among community members to learn more about the harmful effects of alcohol, as well as FASD.

Thanks to the continuing support of our funder, Aware.org, the FARR project team in Trompsburg will work tirelessly to combat the damage done to unborn babies when their mothers consume alcohol during the crucial first nine months of the child's life.

If you want to learn more about our work in Trompsburg or if you want to join the Stakeholder Engagement Group, please contact the Project Coordinator:
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