

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Update Fall 2002

Office of FAS, Department of Health & Social Services, State of Alaska

FAS Summit 2002

The Office of FAS is in full swing planning FAS Summit 2002: Gathering Resources for Today and Tomorrow, which will be held at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel November 21 and 22. The two day event will include a keynote presentation from Dr. Ed Riley, a noted researcher in the impacts of prenatal alcohol exposure on the brain. Plenary sessions will feature a panel of young adults discussing their personal experiences living with FASD and a second panel with the young adults and the people/caregivers in their lives who have shared in their daily struggles coping with this disability.



A broad and diverse selection of workshops will also be featured this year, including sessions for teachers, caregivers, medical providers, mental health workers, correctional staff and substance abuse providers, to name a few. New this year, Summit attendees will be asked to pre-register for workshop sessions, so all conference participants can be better accommodated!

As is the Summit tradition, registration will include a ticket to the annual Summit luncheon on Friday, November 22. This year the luncheon will feature the premiere of a new FASD prevention video developed and produced right here in Alaska by RuralCAP titled, *The Final Score: Winning Against FAS*. The luncheon will also include the presentation of our annual Excellence in FASD award, to an outstanding Alaskan.

Registration forms were mailed in early September, and include a complete list of all sessions offered. For more information about the summit contact Heidi at the Office of FAS, or visit our website at www.hss.state.ak.us/fas/summit.

Nominations for Annual FASD Award

Nominate someone for their hard work and excellence in the field of FASD awareness, prevention, service and advocacy. This annual award will be presented at the Summit luncheon and will recognize the outstanding efforts of one Alaskan who exemplifies excellence in the field of FASD awareness. The Summit Planning Committee of the Office of FAS is now accepting nominations for this award. Submissions can be made online at www.hss.state.ak.us/fas, or a hard copy form can be obtained by contacting the State Office of FAS.

Secretary Thompson Visits Alaska

In August, Secretary Tommy Thompson, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, visited Alaska to learn more about the health needs of our state.



During his time in Fairbanks former DHSS Commissioner Karen Perdue (left) and Mary Lou Canney, FAS Parent Advocate, (above) met with the Secretary to explain the issues surrounding fetal alcohol syndrome and other alcohol-related birth defects. It was a great opportunity for Alaska's voice to be heard regarding this critical health and social service issue.

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Alaska's Town Hall Meeting on FASD



The SAMHSA FAS Center for Excellence is sponsoring a series of regional U.S. Town Hall Meetings on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), to gain information, understanding and knowledge about the impact of FASD on individuals, families, services providers and service systems across the country. The purpose of the Town Hall Meetings are to gather information on personal experiences, gaps and barriers to services, what is currently working well, and suggestions for new approaches to both prevention and improved service delivery. All testimony received will be summarized and included in a report to the U.S. Congress, which will outline a national strategy on FASD.

On Wednesday, November 20, the FAS Center for Excellence and the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services will co-host the seventh regional meeting, in Anchorage, Alaska. The Town Hall Meeting will be held in conjunction with the Prevention Symposium and the FAS Summit 2002, allowing conference participants to make their voices heard.

Oral testimony will be limited to 5 minutes per person, to allow for as many people to testify as possible. Written testimony can be submitted in place of oral testimony or as a supplement to your 5-minute presentation. Due to time limitations, we will be able to hear oral testimony from no more than approximately 50 individuals, so written testimony is encouraged. In conjunction with the Legislative Information Offices (LIO), we will also have teleconferencing available at all 21 LIO offices across the state, for individuals unable to testify in-person in Anchorage.

Sign-up for testimony will begin at 12:30 P.M. at the Anchorage LIO Office, 716 W. 4th Ave., Suite 200 or at your local LIO office. Testimony will begin at 1:00 P.M. and continue until 6:00 P.M., with a dessert reception to follow at the Hilton Hotel from 6:00 – 8:00 P.M. An advocacy workshop will be held prior to the Town Hall Meeting at the Anchorage LIO Office, from 10:00 A.M. – 12 noon, for anyone wanting help to prepare their testimony and to learn positive advocacy strategies. Please join people from across the state to speak about the needs and vision we have for Alaska's continuing FAS agenda. For more information call (877) 393-2287. ☞

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FAS Community Team Highlights

The Norton Sound Community Diagnostic Team, based in Nome, is well on its way to providing diagnostic services to the Norton Sound Region of Alaska. Led by coordinator Andrea Longpre-Macht, the team has been actively planning and meeting for over a year now. Because of the available training schedule, the Norton Sound team had a long wait between being selected to be a diagnostic team and attending the actual diagnostic training at the University of Washington. Team members used this time to do prevention, education, outreach and awareness to Nome and across the region. These efforts resulted in the community, along with their parent agency Norton Sound Health Corporation, strongly supporting the diagnostic team's efforts. Since receiving their training in February of 2002, the team has been working hard on developing a diagnostic process that meets the unique needs of their region, and recently held a day long retreat for all team members to help in the team planning. As a part of their commitment to prevention, the team has partnered with Maternal Child and Family Health programs to support pregnant women in their efforts not to drink or use drugs during pregnancy. For more information about the Norton Sound Community Diagnostic Team contact Andrea Longpre-Macht at (907) 443-3344. ☞



Norton Sound Diagnostic Team members take time to pose for a picture during their day-long retreat.

FAS Parent Navigators and Parent Support Grant Activities

The next scheduled training for FAS Parent Navigators will be November 20, 2002. There will be two topics: improving advocacy skills for our work with children experiencing special needs and their families, and expanding parent and family support activities in Alaskan communities through the use of support groups and family camps.

The first workshop will focus on advocacy and helping families tell their stories effectively in various settings (such as the upcoming FAS Town Hall Meeting).

The second workshop will give an overview of two new Guides, developed by Stone Soup Group, to help parents, caregivers and professionals develop local parent support groups and FAS family camps. The Parent Support Group Guide was developed by parent expert Mary Lou Canney, and service provider Maureen Harwood, both associated with the FAS Diagnostic Team in Fairbanks. Pat Cochran, camp coordinator for Volunteers of America, authored the Guide on Developing a FAS Family Camp. The authors will walk participants through the materials contained in the support group and family camp guides. In addition, information on the mini-grant process for communities wishing to host a family camp will be discussed.

The FAS support line, (877) 786-7327, continues to be available for families needing assistance. Stone Soup Group is seeking parent experts interested in providing support to other parents through the support line. There is a small stipend available for parents selected. Please contact Cheri Scott at Stone Soup Group, (907) 561-3701, for further information about this opportunity.

Articles related to the issues of families raising children with FASD are being made available for inclusion in newsletters of programs across the state. If your program would like to include copies of these articles in your newsletter, please contact Stone Soup Group at (907) 561-3701 or cheris@stonesoupgroup.org. ☞

Spotlight on FAS Innovative Grantees



Each quarter the FAS Update highlights three of our FAS Innovative grantees. By sharing information and progress about our grantees we hope to generate partnerships, collaborations and ideas for continuing the state's progress to prevent FASD and to improve lifetime outcomes for individuals with this disability.

Gastineau Human Services

Gastineau Human Services, a non-profit agency providing community-based corrections to adults in Juneau has used Innovative Grant funds to develop a FASD program within their agency. The program includes educating GHS staff and offenders about FASD and providing educational testing and assessment for offenders who may exhibit learning or other functional problems. Once these problems are more clearly identified, program staff work to provide an educational program and services in a modality that works for the client. Finally, GHS can refer a client who is interested in obtaining a medical diagnosis of FASD for a more intensive assessment. Clinical Director Marla Lippard sees a strong need for more identification of FASD in the adult criminal justice population, and would eventually like to see Gastineau Human Service's FASD programs expand. For more information about GHS's program contact Marla Lippard or Janet Forbes at (907) 780-3026.

Copper River Native Association

The Copper River Native Association is an innovative FAS Grantee that uses funds to support the follow-up work of its diagnostic clinic. By staffing Misty Baker, a full time case manager for the project, CRNA is able to provide long-term follow up to young adults (ages 10-18). At any given time, Misty and other members of the team are working with approximately fifty clients, providing services such as advocacy, paperwork assistance, and for some clients, more intensive support. Misty reports that in some cases, she has become the protective payee for her adult clients – allowing her to assist them with the day-to-day activities involved in money management. She is also very involved in helping individuals on her caseload obtain SSI benefits, often helping them through the complicated and time consuming appeal process. Misty and diagnostic team coordinator Gay Wellman also work with the community and tribal court to recruit foster placements as needed, and provide support to make sure that children in custody have visitation with their families, when appropriate. With the beginning of school, Misty is gearing up to start her teenage youth support group, which is a weekly evening group for adolescents in the CRNA program. For more information about Copper River Native Associations FASD projects contact Gay Wellman or Misty Baker at (907) 822-5241.

Cordova Family Resource Center

The Family Resource Center in Cordova is another FASD Innovative Grant recipient, also using funds to educate and support their community. CFRC staff are busy at health fairs across their region offering handouts and other resources. Staff also provided a number of presentations to school based groups like peer helpers. In addition to general outreach and education, staff at the Resource Center also offer one-on-one support to families who have FASD concerns, and work to refer families to appropriate services and support. For more information about Cordova Family Resource Center's FASD project contact Jill Simpson at (907) 424-5674.☺

Alaska's Court System Takes on FAS Prevention

Both national and local data tells us that many children impacted by fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and the mothers who give birth to children with FASD are at some point involved with the state's child protection system and the court system. In Alaska approximately 70% of families who enter DFYS have substance abuse problems as a major issue and over 60% of the children who are diagnosed with FASD in Alaska are living in foster or adoptive homes. Through the efforts of a tireless working group in Anchorage, the Family CARE Court began operation in September, to start addressing this population of mothers and their children.

The new Anchorage-based Family CARE Court will work specifically with families who have an open DFYS case and where the mother has a chronic alcohol problem. The mission of the Family CARE Court is to

"combine intensive judicial supervision and monitoring with immediate and culturally appropriate treatment and the coordinated delivery of assessments and services that promote opportunities to prevent the break up of families while improving the client's recovery, health, parenting, mental health, job skills, education and facilitating safe, sober living/ housing situations."

How they will accomplish this is that the therapeutic court will work with families to bring them back together permanently and link the parent(s) and children to a multitude of needed services along with intense supervision. These are families where substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse and homelessness are constant themes and the children end up being placed in foster care multiple times. This court will get to know each of these families intimately and will advocate, support, reward and sanction them, when appropriate. The team will be there to celebrate their successes and stand on their toes when they back away from their commitments. Because this is a yearlong program, the investment by everyone is deep; it is a nontraditional approach to working with high-risk women and their children. This will provide an opportunity to truly focus on recovery for mom, diagnosis and services for the children, and transition for everyone back to a healthy and functioning family.

Each case will be staffed by a team of service providers representing the many systems that are involved in Child in Need of Aid (CINA) cases and include: a judge, an attorney general, a public defender, a guardian ad litem, a social worker, a contract attorney and a coordinator. This team will remain constant with every case that becomes part of the FCC and will include other members as services begin for each parent.

The project is partially funded through a partnership with the DHSS Office of FAS and the belief that we can impact future generations. This first year is just the beginning of a new approach to working with this population and offers much hope for everyone...especially engendering future generations of physically and emotionally healthy children and families. There has been an ever-growing paradigm shift in the judicial and health care system and the message that has emerged is "we can't do business as usual anymore", the stakes are too high.

For further information about this new therapeutic court contact Muriel Kronowitz, Project Coordinator (907) 264-0523 or by e mail at muriel_kronowitz@admin.state.ak.us.

SB 345— Medicaid funding for School-based Services

The passage of Senate Bill 345 last session provides for a cooperative agreement between the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Education and Early Development and local school districts to obtain and use federal Medicaid funds to provide services to Alaskan children with disabilities, who are eligible to receive school-based special education services.

Under the new legislation, school districts can enroll as Medicaid providers and bill for rehabilitative services provided to Medicaid eligible children, as outlined in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). While the legislation's effective date was July 1, 2002, implementation of this legislation will require a great deal of coordination and joint planning between the departments and the school districts, which is just now beginning. As plans begin to take shape new information will be provided. ☞

**Rick Erdrich,
Melissa Brooks-
Johnson, and
Jennifer Shaw will be
conducting a
workshop at the
2002 FAS Summit to
share how the
S.T.A.R. Program
operates, and how it
benefits students
with learning
disabilities from
prenatal exposure to
alcohol.**

Schoenbar Middle School Builds Impressive FASD Supports for Students

In the winter of 2001, Schoenbar Middle School embarked on a collaborative initiative with the Department of Education & Early Development. Schoenbar was awarded a grant through the FAS Education Program to provide a school-wide FASD training to its staff, to collaborate with the Tongass FAS Diagnostic Team, Gateway Human Services and Ketchikan Indian Corporation in assisting families seeking screening/diagnosis for their children, to hire an aide to provide extra student support, and to explore ways to build support for students with FASD into the school system.

Schoenbar identified a series of characteristics in its day-to-day activities that could be challenging for students with FASD including: student having 8 different teachers each day: “busy classrooms” that could be over stimulating and distracting for students with sensory integration problems; large class sizes; too many transitions; and in some cases materials/assignments that were developmentally inappropriate.

Richard Erdrich, Schoenbar’s principal had been working on creating a support system for students struggling academically and appearing at risk for dropout or retention who didn’t qualify for other services, and saw an opportunity to use the FAS grant as a way to create a classroom environment that nurtured learning and a positive school experience for struggling students— including those who may have been prenatally exposed to alcohol. Rick Erdrich and his staff created the S.T.A.R. Program (Students Taking Academics Responsibly). Students in the S.T.A.R. Program flourished, finding they are able to spend ½ of each day in the same classroom with the same teacher (Melissa Brooks-Johnson) and the same teacher aide (Jennifer Shaw), but simultaneously retaining their time and exposure to friends in other classrooms for the other ½ of each day.

Melissa and Jennifer modified their 7th grade classroom with soothing colors, bean bag chairs, incorporated lots of multi-modality and hands-on teaching, accommodated sensory integration concerns by keeping the room simply decorated and by allowing headphones to be worn, and more. These teaching supports are provided in a structured, predictable, organized manner, and with the class size limited to 20, teaching to individual’s unique learning styles is possible. Not only were academic and behavioral improvements realized in a short time frame, but student surveys revealed their perceptions about themselves as learners and about school in general improved markedly. The S.T.A.R. Program’s benefit to Ketchikan’s children has not been overlooked by the School Board or the Ketchikan Indian Corporation. Their endorsement of, and contributions to the Program have insured it will not only be continued in 2003, but that it will be expanded to also serve 20 8th grade students. For more information about this unique program call Todd Brocius at (907) 465-2825. ☺

Thunder Spirit Lodge—A Promising Program for Young Adults with FASD

Recognizing the need for improved services in Alaska for adolescents and young adults with alcohol-related birth defects, Diane Casto and Heidi Brocius traveled to Minnesota to tour and visit Thunder Spirit Lodge (TSL). Founded in 1991, TSL is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to *improve the level of physical and mental health in individuals and families affected by alcohol-related birth defects by providing specialized programming that will empower change in individuals, foster strength in families, and bring new understanding to communities.*

TSL has two locations—one in Minneapolis (Columbia Heights) and one in St. Paul (Frogtown), with programming to meet the needs of youth and young adults with FASD and their families. All services are client-centered, individualized and family-focused. Parents (including biological, adoptive, and foster) are considered active team participants in the development of each service plan. Programs include:

- After-school youth programs
- Summer youth programs
- Family support services
- Screening and diagnostic referrals
- Psychological services
- Advocacy services
- Community/agency training

Programs work on social skills, group interaction, living skills and help preparing for the “real world” through experiential learning—field trips, grocery shopping, cooking, laundry, job training and others. During our visit the kids were on an overnight field trip to Duluth, to experience going to a new city, visiting Duluth’s many gardens (to compliment their summer gardening program) and to work on group interaction skills.

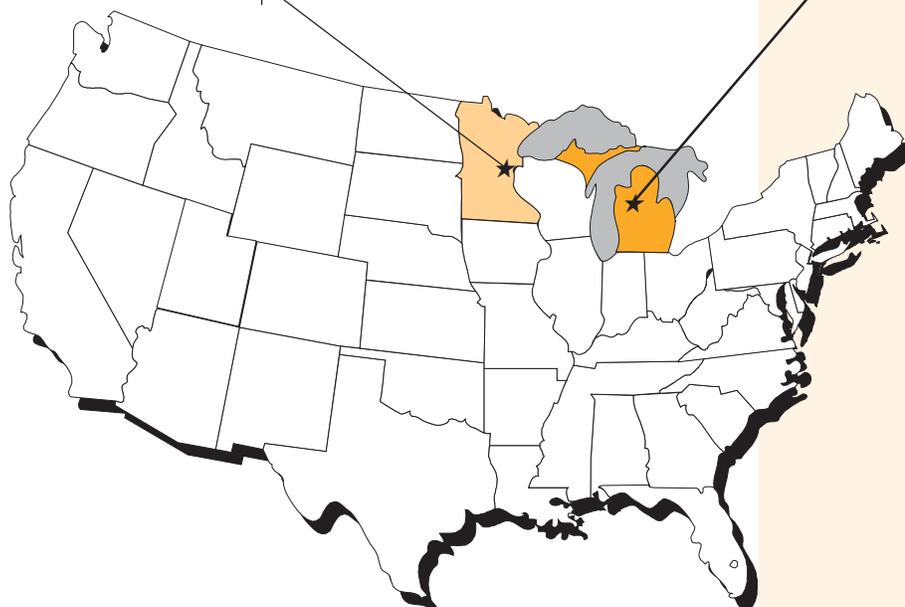
We are very excited about the possibility of replicating the TSL programming in Alaska, and will begin planning for a pilot program to begin next year. You can visit the TSL web site at www.fetalalcoholservices.com.



Seven Alaskan’s traveled to Newaygo, Michigan to attend the first-ever camp organized for and by young adults with FASD. The camp idea was developed by Rob Wybrecht, a young adult with FAS, and his parents, Barbara and Ted.

The goal of the camp was to provide an opportunity for young adults with FASD to come together, attend skill-building workshops and identify areas of service they need to reach their potential. It was a great time for everyone.

From Alaska were Matt Prince and Darren Tall from Bethel; Cheri and Justin Scott from Anchorage; Deb Evensen from Homer; and Don and Misty Ford from Dillingham.



Nike Donates Shoes to Alaskan Boys and Girls Clubs

Nike Shoes has donated \$1 million worth of athletic shoes to Boys and Girls Clubs of America, to be distributed to clubs across the country. Alaska, with over 20 clubs from Barrow to Ketchikan received over 1,700 pairs of shoes that have been sent to each of the clubs in Alaska for youth participating in these programs.

The big challenge was finding a way to transport that many pairs of shoes from the East Coast to Alaska! The DHSS Office of FAS partnered with the Boys and Girls Clubs to assist with the freight charges, in exchange for the opportunity to include an anti-alcohol message in each box of shoes. Peter Anderegg, Publications Specialist, designed the “You booze, you lose” logo that we used for developing pencil bags, pencils, stickers and tattoos. Each pair of Nike shoes included these novelty items, giving a fun, but serious message to Alaskan teens that drinking alcohol is not cool!



Thanks to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Alaska for the great work they do, providing kids with a place for positive, productive and supported activities!

New Books and Videos Added to Lending Library

Listed below are the titles of new videos and books being added to the Office of FAS Resource Library. If you would like to borrow any of the items listed below call Sherrie at (877) 393-2287 or e-mail us at fas@health.state.ak.us.

Videos

- “The F.A.T. City Workshop”
Dr Richard Lavoie leads a group through a series of exercises that cause frustration, anxiety and tension; familiar feelings to children with learning disabilities. Strategies are discussed. (70 minutes)
- “Last One Picked – First One Picked On”
Children with learning disabilities are often socially isolated due to immature, impulsive behaviors. Two versions are available—one for parents and one for teachers. (68 minutes)
- “From Roots to Wings”
Parents and children discuss basic sensory processing differences that affect their everyday lives. (28 minutes)

Books

- *Helping the Child Who Doesn't Fit In*, by Diana Henry and Tammy Wheeler.
In depth look at how non-verbal communication skills contribute to a child's social acceptance. This includes space/touch, speech, gesture, posture, facial expressions and personal appearance. 178 pages.
- *A Handbook to Bring Sensory Integration into the Home*, by Dr's Stephen Nowicki, Jr. and Marshall P. Duke.
Readers discover some of their own sensory needs and strategies, as well as the child's. 37 pages.
- *The Best of Iceberg*, an educational newsletter on FAS. We now have copies of all issues from Vol. 1, no. 1, February 1991 to Vol. 12, no. 2, June 2002.↔

Parents and Caregivers Support Line Available

- ✓ Feeling stressed?
- ✓ Need some advice?
- ✓ Need a list of resources?
- ✓ Just want to talk with someone who “knows” what you are dealing with?

Call the FASD Support Line at **877-786-7327**.

The FASD Support Line is staffed by experienced parents and caregivers of individuals with FASD.

Ready for Sledding? FAS Family Winter Camp Approaching

While it may seem too early to start thinking about snow, FAScinating Families Camp is just around the corner! Volunteers of America (VOA) is once again hosting a winter FAS family camp from December 27 to 30 at Solid Rock Camp in Soldotna. Following last year's overwhelming success, FAS winter camp will once again include skating, sledding, and snowshoeing for the snow-lovers, as well as a variety of indoor crafts, games, workshops and other activities for those wanting warmer activities! To ensure some uninterrupted time for parents to hear guest speakers, network or just relax, specified period of respite childcare will be available throughout the week-end.

Families from across the state are invited to participate, with a limited number of travel scholarships available for families outside of south central Alaska. The registration fee is \$25.00 per family. To avoid winter driving there will be motor coach transportation provided from Anchorage to and from camp. To register or for more information call Pat at (907) 279-9646, Dena at (907)270-9624 or e-mail voa-allstars@voaak.org.



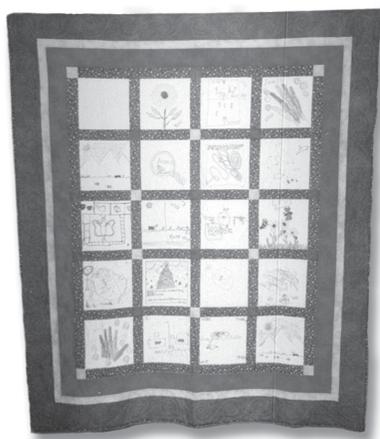
API Develops Capacity to Diagnose FASD

In an effort to build sustainable and integrated capacity for diagnosing fetal alcohol spectrum disorders across Alaska, the Office of FAS sponsored a team of staff from the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) to attend the FAS Diagnostic training at the University of Washington. In September, five staff from API traveled to Seattle to attend the intensive 3-day training in the 4-Digit Diagnostic process, developed by Drs. Sterling Clarren and Susan Astley. The API team includes Dr. Judith Bautista, Staff Psychiatrist; Kathleen Stevens, Nurse Manager; Mark Kraft, Social Worker; Leonard Grijalva, Psychological Associate; and Alanna Montague, Rehabilitative/Activity Therapy Supervisor.

We are excited to have this specialty team join our growing FAS Diagnostic Team Network, and know that many children, youth and adults experience both FASD and mental illness. Developing expertise within our existing diagnostic systems is critical to our overall goal of expanding and sustaining FASD diagnostic services across Alaska.

The First Annual FAS Family Quilt

In September of 2001, the families of the Anchorage FAS Support Group and staff from Volunteers of America (VOA) gathered at Kincaid Park Chalet for a day of fun, food and crafts. Using fabric pens and squares of muslin the kids and staff created pictures of their favorite activities from the FAScinating Families summer camp organized by VOA two months earlier. This camp, the first for families of children with FAS in the Southcentral Alaska region, was funded through an FAS Innovative Community Projects grant from the Alaska State Office of FAS.



Through the generous donation of fabric, time and effort by three highly skilled quilters from Eagle River, Mary Lammers, Sharon Hamlen and Lynn Caswell, the fabric pictures became a colorful quilt that will be raffled off at the upcoming FAS Summit in Anchorage, November 21-22. Proceeds from the raffle will be used to fund future activities of the Anchorage FAS Support Group. The group hopes to make the quilt an annual fundraiser.

The quilt will be on display at the summit, with the drawing of the winning ticket taking place during lunch on the final day of the summit, November 22. You need not be present to win.

Raffle tickets will be available during the summit for \$1.00 each or 6 tickets for \$5.00. For further information, or to purchase tickets before the summit, please contact Carol Hatch, (907) 278-8731.

So Long Kate...

The Office of FAS bids farewell to Kate Heitkamp, Research Analyst, who has been a staff member since May of 2001.

Kate has accepted a new position at the University of Alaska Anchorage, Alaska Comprehensive & Specialized Evaluation Services (ACSES), where she will be involved in a number of exciting projects.

During her time with the Office of FAS Kate was instrumental in the development of the Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs and Behaviors (KABB) survey (an enormous project!), the development of project and grantee data collection forms, HIPAA regulations, and coordination with our third-party evaluation project.

Kate will be missed by all and we wish her the very best of luck in her new position. ☺

FAQ: Does an FASD Diagnosis Guarantee Service Eligibility?

Everyone assumes that having a diagnosis of organic brain damage resulting from prenatal alcohol exposure (FAS, ARND, static encephalopathy, partial FAS, etc.) will result in eligibility for services such as special education, developmental disabilities, social security insurance, vocational rehabilitation, and others. Unfortunately, a diagnosis alone will not provide automatic eligibility for any of these services/resources, but it is the first step towards service eligibility.

Currently, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is not identified as a specific category of disability; instead, it is a medical diagnosis. Eligibility for therapeutic services requires meeting federal, state or district criteria, which involves the use of standardized testing of functioning and functionality. Standardized testing often includes IQ testing as a baseline, and most individuals with FASD have average or above average IQ scores. Unfortunately, their learning, developmental and social functioning is often far below their intelligence.

In addition, standard testing for cognitive, motor, language and emotional functioning often do not “catch” the functioning problems associated with the type of brain damage resulting from prenatal alcohol exposure. In addition, many health, social and educational professionals are not familiar with the broad range of effects associated with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) and so, do not understand the implications an FASD diagnosis may have for the individual’s development.

In the 1996 report from the Institute of Medicine, *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Diagnosis, Epidemiology, Prevention, and Treatment*, it identifies three (3) primary barriers to services for individuals with FASD are identified:

1. FAS is not a recognized diagnostic label in most existing service systems, and therefore does not establish eligibility for affected individuals;
2. The lack of diagnostic status prevents access to existing services, particularly for parents who are not able to “negotiate the system;” and
3. Most alcohol-affected individuals require more than one type of service, and this problem requires that agencies cooperate with each other, which is often very difficult.

While we continue to work toward positive systems change to improve the chances of individuals with FASD being eligible for appropriate services and resources, we know that much progress has already been made through improved diagnostic capacity across the state, training for all services providers about this disability, and improved supports for parents and caregivers to negotiate the multiple service delivery systems.

Even without automatic eligibility for services, having a complete FASD diagnosis, with a thorough central nervous system (CNS) assessment, provides a strong foundation for appropriate and lifelong service eligibility. Often, one piece of the comprehensive diagnosis, such

as an auditory processing problem or a speech and language delay will qualify your child for some level of service. The more a parent knows about their child's diagnosis and the various systems that exist to provide support, the better they can advocate for available and appropriate services. Families struggling to obtain services for a child with an FASD diagnosis can receive advocacy and support from agencies like the Stone Soup Group in Anchorage or the Alaska Disability Law Centers. The more we know and the more we work together, the better our service options will be. ☞

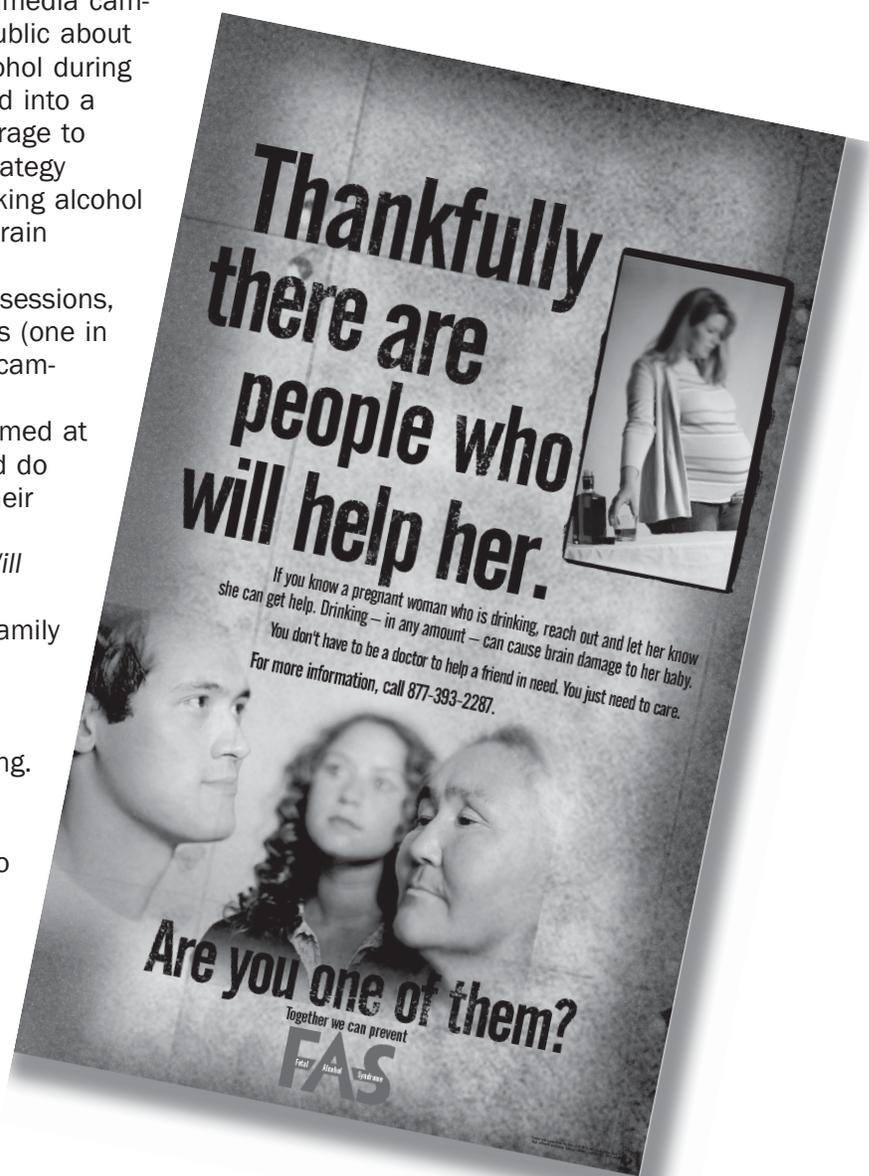
FASD Media Campaign Premieres

On September 9, 2002, in conjunction with International FAS Awareness Day, the Office of FAS premiered its much anticipated statewide educational media campaign. Eight months ago, the Office of FAS began its efforts to develop a statewide multimedia campaign to better educate the Alaskan public about the devastating effects of drinking alcohol during pregnancy. In January 2002 we entered into a contract with Nerland Agency in Anchorage to begin the creative design of a multi-strategy campaign to inform Alaskans that drinking alcohol during pregnancy may cause life-long brain damage to a developing baby.

Through a series of "brainstorming" sessions, grantee meetings and two focus groups (one in Anchorage and one in Dillingham) two campaign themes have been developed:

- *I Have the Power to Prevent FAS* aimed at women who are social drinkers and do not know that alcohol may harm their developing baby; and
- *Thankfully There are People Who Will Help Her...Are You One of Them?* developed to reach the partners, family and friends of women who have a problem with alcohol and are pregnant, helping them find the resources they need to stop drinking.

The campaign includes three radio PSA messages, two 30 second TV spots, two posters/display ads and two informational brochures. For copies of any of these materials or to find out more about the campaign call the office at (877) 393-2287. ☞



Dates to Remember

FAS Update/Fall 2002

October

7-9 Monday-Wednesday: **2002 Alaska Children's Mental Health Conference: Ways to Care: Our Journey Ahead**, Anchorage. (800) 770-1672 or (907) 451-5045.

November

18-20 Monday-Wednesday: **Prevention Symposium 2002. Prevention: Building on the Strengths of Communities**. Anchorage. (907) 564-1200 or www.akeela.org.

20 Wednesday: **Alaska's Town Hall Meeting**, Statewide, LIO offices.

21-22 Thursday-Friday: **FAS Summit 2002: Gathering Resources for Today and Tomorrow**. Anchorage. (877) 393-2287 or www.hss.state.ak.us/fas/summit.

December

3-4 Tuesday-Wednesday: **Alaska Health Summit**. Anchorage. For information contact Wendi Bates at wjbates@gci.net.

February

17-19 **Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference. Present Goals...Future Successes**. Anchorage Sheraton Hotel. Pre and Post conference activities will take place Feb. 15-16 and 20-21. The Coordinators Inc., (907) 646-6000.

20-22 **FAS and Other Drug Related Effects: Doing What Works**. Sponsored by FAS Support Network of British Columbia. Location: Coast Plaza Hotel and Suites, Vancouver, BC, Canada. (604) 822-4965 or interprof@cehs.ubc.ca or www.interprofessional.ubc.ca.



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