

# Healthy Brains for Children

## September 2009 Newsletter

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#### FROM THE DIRECTOR



*Jody Allen Crowe, Executive Director of Healthy Brains for Children enjoying fishing on Rainy Lake.*

The past couple of months have been very exciting as Healthy Brains for Children has become more relevant in the prevention of prenatal exposure to alcohol across the state and elsewhere. I will attempt to give you a glimpse of what is happening.

As I traveled and spoke to service clubs, I was amazed at how the singular message of stopping prenatal exposure to alcohol resonated with the business leaders and community leaders in the service clubs. Repeatedly, I was told the message I was delivering to their community was powerful. I found I was not providing them with something they could do in their communities to prevent prenatal exposure to alcohol.

#### CHAPTER INITIATIVE

In a conversation with an Exchange Club member from Waseca, MN, I started thinking about an organizational structure that would provide community members the support to start a prevention movement in their community that would not be a single project, but rather, a community based initiative that would result in a long term positive drop in prenatal exposure to alcohol. Thus, the Healthy Brains for Children Chapter Initiative was born.

This initiative is modeled after MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). Our goal is to have each community in the state and nations (and world) start a chapter of Healthy Brains for Children run by community members and supported by service clubs in their communities, with technical, accounting, and consulting support from the parent organization.

Each chapter will be responsible for petitioning their school boards to mandate and/or strengthen prevention curriculum as well as asking to start a student chapter of Healthy Brains for Children. Our intent is to train the students to teach upper elementary students about the dangers of drinking when pregnant. Other responsibilities include linking with other events across the world, such as FASday, Pregnant Pause, and doing community awareness such as fair booths, etc. When possible, larger incentive-based prevention projects will be pursued.

#### CROW WING COUNTY FAIR

In early August, I spent five days at the Crow Wing County Fair in Brainerd, MN. It was during this time, I realized the chapter initiative had a real opportunity to succeed. Already, a psychologist, Bryan Stenland, and a businessman, Bill Thomas, had agreed to begin the process to start the first chapter in Grand Rapids, MN, my hometown. At the fair, over 50 people in the Brainerd Lakes area signed up to receive information from Healthy Brains for Children as a chapter starts up in the Brainerd Lakes area.



*Bill Thomas and his daughter, Mandy, from Grand Rapids, MN help set up the first ever Healthy Brains for Children fair booth at the Crow Wing County Fair in August, 2009.*

Several people from other areas provided me with contact information to keep informed as the chapter initiative expanded. I made contact with people from all across the state and as far away as Montana. (Thanks for visiting the booth, Charlie!) It was here that I connected with Bob and Annette Magstadt, resulting in our new website [www.healthybrainsforchildren.org](http://www.healthybrainsforchildren.org). Thanks so much, Bob.

## **BRAINERD PROJECT**

Co-founder and HBC Board President, Peter Johnson, has worked hard to gain support from the Brainerd Sunrise and Brainerd Noon Rotary to start an awareness project in the Brainerd Lakes area. He wrote a grant application to the Rotary District grant committee for a matching grant. In September, Peter was able to announce to both Rotary Clubs that their \$3000 per club commitment was matched by the District Rotary grant committee for a total of \$12,000. In March, a significant awareness project will be launched in the Brainerd Lakes area. As this project moves ahead, more information will be provided. Congratulations Peter!

## **KIWANIS INITIATIVE**

Chris Kellet-Sawdey, a member of the Baxter, MN, Kiwanis, stopped by the fair booth ten minutes before closing on the last day of the fair and told me the message of Healthy Brains for Children fit the #1 priority

of Kiwanis, which is prenatal through five years old. When she found out I lived in North Mankato, she said she would connect me with someone she knew in Mankato. With that, the fair was over and I headed home. Within a couple of weeks, I met with Dr. Stewart Ross; the Kiwanis member Chris had introduced me to through email. In the hour we visited, I became increasingly amazed at the possibilities available through Kiwanis. Dr. Ross had, within a couple of weeks of us meeting, been elected to the Kiwanis International Board. He now has my book and has expressed great interest in the international possibilities of prevention of prenatal exposure to alcohol. I will be presenting to his club in mid-October.

## **GRAND RAPIDS, MN**

I spoke to my hometown Rotary, Grand Rapids, MN on August 13. The club wrote an article in the local newspaper announcing the presentation and opened the meeting to the public. KAWE interviewed me about my research and the book. An estimated sixty people attended the presentation. The presentation was well received and many Rotarians expressed interest in supporting a chapter in Grand Rapids.

As of this date, the first chapter of Healthy Brains for Children will be submitting their application to the HBC board at the next board meeting. This will be the very first charter to be issued by Healthy Brains for Children. The Grand Rapids Chapter will be approaching the local Rotarians and Kiwanis clubs to sponsor their organizational start-up.

## **CULDESAC, IDAHO**

In late August, I was contracted to train the staff of Culdesac Schools in Culdesac, Idaho. The principal of Culdesac School is Jon Hussman, one of our founding board members. Culdesac partners with a neighboring school district and I had the opportunity to train the staff from both schools.

The training was well received and teachers from the Culdesac High School committed to starting a chapter of Healthy Brains for Children in their community.

Recently, Culdesac Schools was identified as the first school in Idaho to become a Virtual School, thanks in large part to the vision of Jon Hussman.

## **MEDIA EXPOSURE**

In early September, the Mille Lacs Messenger did a front page article on my research and the book. You can find it on our webpage.

In July, two Brainerd Rotarians brought me to Brainerd to film three shows. Two of the shows were Lakeland Public Television Currents hosted by Ray Gildow. The first was titled "America's Greatest Brain Drain", the second, "The Fatal Link." The two "Currents" shows are linked to our website.

The third show is a local public access one hour show hosted by Ray Gildow. This show will run often in the Brainerd Lakes area.

## **INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MN**

In September, I presented to the Rotary Club in International Falls. A past president of the Minnesota Psychiatric Society, Dr. Jeff Hardwig, was at the presentation and came to a dinner that evening hosted by the people who invited me to come to the Falls.

We had an encouraging, thoughtful conversation, resulting in an invitation to me to speak at the spring convention held by the Society. Dr. Hardwig is responsible for scheduling speakers and trainers for the Society. Additionally, members of the Rotary Club expressed great interest in bringing me back to their community to speak to the schools. Several expressed interest in starting a chapter of Healthy Brains for Children.

## **MINNESOTA POWER**

I spoke at a safety training at the Little Falls, MN Minnesota Power site. The presentation was well received and the leadership expressed interest in bringing me to a regional conference in Duluth to speak to MP employees from across the region.

## **MOFAS**

On Sept. 15th, I met with the Executive Director of the Minnesota Organization for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS). MOFAS is an affiliate of the National Organization of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS).

My meeting on Sept. 15 indicated to me the impact our organization already is having within the FAS world. I have been asked to meet with MOFAS board members and employees of their organization to see how we can work together on this important issue.

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Remember to check out our new website

[www.healthybrainsforchildren.org](http://www.healthybrainsforchildren.org)

## **SPECIAL THANKS TO**

Ivan and Sarah DenOuden, owners of ServiceMaster of Waseca and Mankato, MN, for the donation that will provide us the funding to become a 501 (c) 3 tax exempt organization!

Bill Thomas, Guardian Home Health Care of Grand Rapids, MN, for the banner for the fair booth.

Resource Sentinel for sending out a press release announcing my move to full time Executive Director for Healthy Brains for Children, Inc.

## **OTHER**

Other meetings and events have been occurring over the past couple of months that may become exciting new initiatives. Thank you to the people who have visited with me over the past month about possibilities for the future.

## ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDING

I have grant applications in-process to fund my position so I can continue to do this full time. I urge you to help our organization grow by finding opportunities

to bring me to your community to speak to your schools and service clubs. If you need to find out the cost of bringing me to speak in your community, you can contact me and I will sent you my speaking fee schedule.

Thursday, Sept. 17, 2009 is a day to remember for Healthy Brains for Children. On this day, the founding board of Healthy Brains for Children Grand Rapids Chapter, Incorporated, met to initiate the process of becoming the first chapter of Healthy Brains for Children!

**Be the change agent in your community. Contact me to find you how YOU can start a chapter of Healthy Brains for Children in YOUR community!**

Healthy Brains for Children will send you The Fatal Link when you donate \$20 or more. Send your tax deductible donation to:

