

## INTERLAKE'S FASD AWARENESS DAY 2021 EVENT



This year, the Interlake FASD Committee held a virtual event on September 9, 2021 in recognition of FASD Awareness Day. We were pleased to open our event with a recorded message from the Minister of Families, the Honorable Rochelle Squires. Our participants were then treated to two amazing guest speakers, Lisa Balcean in the morning and Simon LaPlante in the afternoon. Lisa is a parent of a youth with FASD and Simon is a parent of an adult with FASD. Adolescence is a challenging time for most parents who have *neurotypical* children. Parents of youth with FASD often struggle during this developmental shift because their kiddos are wired differently. Lisa and Simon shared frank and authentic stories about their challenges and triumphs, weaving in humor and sometimes tears.

Many themes erupted from each presenter that sparked new insights into parenting. “Hold the line” and “Never give up” were phrases used that should be on t-shirts and chanted as a mantra for parents! We heard that maturation and growth in our youth does happen, but at a different pace than neurotypical kids. In the meantime, much teaching, role playing and planning is needed by all caregivers. It is also important that support and scaffolding continues well into adulthood in areas like finances, health, employment and housing. Parenting is like a roller coaster with many ups and downs – sometimes fun and sometimes terrifying. Taking a harm reduction approach is a realistic and ingenious way to parent our non-neurotypical youth.

We ended each presentation with time for questions and then held a live lottery where participants were gifted with a \$25.00 Walmart card. Lucky winners were Kristy M and Charla D! On behalf of our committee, we wish to thank Lisa and Simon for openly sharing a part of their lives with us. We have so much more to learn from them as they continue on their parenting journey.

BY: Sherisse Picklyk Dear, Chair of the Interlake FASD Committee