



*A message from the Director of Education
and Chair of the Board*

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER AWARENESS DAY September 9

The Toronto Catholic District School Board will annually recognize September 9th as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day (FASD).

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder describes the array of devastating developmental effects caused when a fetus is exposed to alcohol, including permanent, irreparable brain damage that can lead to difficulties with learning, memory, attention span, impulse control, motor skills, coordination and language. It is a lifelong condition that is often difficult to diagnose and may be undetected. FASD is preventable which is why this day is so important.

The first FASD Awareness Day took place on September 9, 1999 to act as a day where the world would remember that during the nine months of pregnancy a woman should abstain from alcohol. Events are held across the globe to raise awareness about FASD, with bells ringing at 9:09 a.m. to mark the beginning of reflection.

Red Shoes Rock. Everyone in our TCDSB community is encouraged to **wear red shoes** on Monday, September 9th as part of the [Red Shoes Rock campaign](#) for FASD awareness, supported by the Toronto FASD Network.

Through a steadfast commitment to our multi-year strategic goals of *Living Our Catholic Values* and *Fostering Student Achievement and Well-being*, our Board aims to ensure that our staff, parents and students understand the characteristics and effects of FASD. Schools are encouraged to share resources and information

on FASD with their parent communities during this month, which can be found on the board's website at:

<https://www.tcdsb.org/news/othernews/2019/pages/fasd.aspx>.

As a Catholic community, we are called to guide, nurture and challenge others to respect and protect human life, at every stage in life. Let us continue to spread awareness of FASD and prevent the permanent, irreparable damages it can cause.

On September 9th, let us also remember the individuals and families who struggle with FASD and pray that they are supported in a caring and compassionate manner, consistent with our Catholic values.

Sincerely,

Rory McGuckin
Director of Education

Maria Rizzo
Chair of the Board