



2025 - 2026

IMPACT REPORT



“My parents and teachers have encouraged me to take art lessons because they said I had a talent. I was too nervous to do it until one of my school art projects was picked for the Catholic School Art Walk a couple years ago... [This] was one of my many paintings from art class. I love the different colours and the texture of the picture.”

*Korben C.
CanFASD 2025 Art Contest Winner*

COVER ART

Each year, CanFASD hosts an art contest for Canadians with FASD to celebrate and encourage their creative strengths and talents. This year’s winner was 11-year-old Korben.

Korben is from Edmonton, Alberta. When asked what inspires him, Korben said “I don’t know, I just like art.” His mother says art is something he excels at and that he can be proud of.



Korben C. holding his painting

TOGETHER.

FINDING ANSWERS.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES.

The Canada Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Research Network (CanFASD) is a network of interest-holders from across Canada focused on addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). We are a national and charitable organization that supports research and knowledge exchange initiatives to inform evidence-based policies and practices.

CanFASD’s unique partnership brings together researchers, students, practitioners, policymakers, families, and communities across Canada and internationally to address the complexities of FASD. Our research teams currently lead over 50 major projects in the areas of prevention, diagnosis, intervention, justice, and child welfare.

MISSION

CanFASD supports Canada’s leadership, across all sectors and at all levels, in addressing the extraordinary complexities of FASD.

The Network does this through producing and sustaining national collaborative research, shared with all Canadians, focusing primarily on the critical areas of prevention, intervention and diagnosis.

The work of the Network leads to increasingly effective prevention strategies and practice and improved support for people affected by FASD.

VISION

All Canadians are engaged and united with awareness, evidence and knowledge and are effectively addressing the complexities of FASD.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a national research network, CanFASD acknowledges the harms done to Indigenous Peoples and are committed to learning from the past. We pledge to promote healing and resilience as we move forward in allyship with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in pursuit of reconciliation. We acknowledge the lands that we live and work on as the traditional territories of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.



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TOGETHER



**Our progress is strengthened by
our partnerships.**

*Darren Joslin
Board Chair, CanFASD*

CANADA FASD CONFERENCE 2025

Shaping the Future of FASD: From Evidence to Action

We were thrilled to welcome so many members of our Network to Toronto, Ontario this year for the second biennial Canada FASD Conference.

Hosted by CanFASD and the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership, the goal of this conference is to bring people together. We believe that learning from and sharing diverse perspectives is the best way to spark real-world change. The conference gives people a space to exchange ideas and to build capacity and creativity in the field.

Incredible turnout

We were thrilled to see every province and territory in Canada represented at this year's event – with everyone from policymakers to people with living experience to service providers to researchers and more in attendance. People flew in from all around the world to join us, including the United States, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

This year's program featured two and a half days of rich, engaging content, organized into seven concurrent sessions. Presentations from individuals with living experience were interwoven with talks about research, policy, and practice, helping to ground science and practice in real-life impact.

We were proud to offer 113 presentations from 192 speakers. From sessions on diagnosis, prevention, interventions and more, there was something for everyone. Many attendees said their biggest challenge was deciding which session to attend next!

Bringing diverse voices to the table

We wanted to bring a diverse range of voices to this event, but we understand that cost can be a huge barrier to participating. With the help of our conference partners, sponsors, and CanFASD donors, we supported 26 people to attend through awards and bursaries, including student travel awards, individual travel awards, and the Lived Experience Leadership Fund.

One of these recipients was Dorothy Fenwick from Alberta. Dorothy is a passionate advocate, a research team member, and a person with living experience of FASD. Over the past 18 months, she's played a key role in the IMPACT Study (Integrated Mental Health Partnerships for Advancing Care and Treatment), helping shape research, review materials, and making sure the voices of people with FASD are heard. Dorothy wrote a poem for the first IMPACT meeting about what it means to finally be included. Her words remind us that inclusion isn't just important - it's essential. Thanks to the generous donations to our Lived Experience Leadership Fund, we were able to support Dorothy to attend the Canada FASD Conference as part of the IMPACT team.

The 2025 Canada FASD Conference was the highlight of the year for our organization. This event helped us better understand the landscape of FASD so we can move towards a more FASD-informed future, together. We look forward to welcoming you all to the next Canada FASD Conference, taking place November 2027 in Edmonton, Alberta.



INVITED TO THE TABLE

By Dorothy Fenwick

There is a table, and it is a rather large one. With chairs neatly arranged about it. With name cards properly placed, and pads of paper and pens at the ready. White walls with charts. Computers with data. People with learning.

The people who will sit there are from all walks of life with various ages and experience. Really great people. Important people. Educated people.

These people have degrees, and use fancy words, peppered with statistics and backed with scientific research.

People with knowledge. People with expertise. People with a voice.

I have seen many of these tables from afar, shrouded in mystery and importance. With people standing at podiums and other people having whispered conversations, coupled with wise looks and knowing head nods.

As I have passed by them, I have always wondered, and even hoped, that they will be the magic group that unravels the mystery, and ushers in the utopia of understanding and inclusion.

You see, I have FASD. A whole body syndrome that has and will, affect me for my whole life. For better or for worse, I can never be divorced from it. I know what I know. I have experience. I have insight. I have wisdom.

But I was never invited to the table, UNTIL TODAY.

At last, there was a seat for me, a place to share my thoughts and struggles. My hopes and frustrations. A place where I have a voice and can use my voice to affect change. I have waited long for this. Even prayed for it. But it never came... UNTIL TODAY.

Thank you for the journey that begins today towards greater understanding, united effort and a compassionate foray into the world of FASD. Thank you for letting me have a seat.

113 presentations

16 sponsors

592 tickets sold

192 speakers

16 exhibitors

15 posters



Hearing about the important research work being done in this field and the insights of people with lived experience on things that matter to them, this has re-ignited an interest in doing research work on topics that matter to people with lived experience, alongside people with lived experience.

*Anonymous Attendee,
Canada FASD Conference 2025*



Message from the BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Darren Joslin, Board Chair

As I reflect on my first year as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Canada FASD Research Network, I am incredibly proud and humbled to be part of the leadership of this amazing organization. Like many not-for-profit and community-based organizations across Canada, we face the realities of a challenging fiscal environment, with competition for research and operational funding more apparent than ever. Yet, even in the face of these pressures, our Network has achieved meaningful work and significant successes.

This year marked an important leadership transition. I sincerely thank Audrey McFarlane for her dedication as Executive Director and warmly welcome Kathy Unsworth to the role. I also want to recognize the entire CanFASD team—without their commitment and passion, our success would not be possible. Their work sustains the critical research needed to improve the lives of those we serve.

Our progress is strengthened by our partnerships. I would like to acknowledge and thank the six member jurisdictions of the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership, together with the Government of New Brunswick, our members, and our donors for their ongoing support and shared commitment. Your partnership ensures the Network continues to move forward and create meaningful impact from now into the future.

As you will see throughout this report, a highlight of the year was our second Canada FASD Conference, held in October in Toronto. This event brought together nearly 600 representatives from across Canada, along with international delegates. The gathering fostered valuable dialogue, deeper understanding, and a strong sense of camaraderie

among researchers, policymakers, service providers, and individuals with lived experience.

This year also saw the release of a significant national report by the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences on [FASD in Canada](#). While the report reflects important progress and highlights the contributions of CanFASD and our partners, it also makes clear that many of the systemic challenges identified decades ago remain unresolved. The continued gaps in prevention, diagnosis, data, and supports—along with inconsistent policy implementation and insufficient coordination across jurisdictions—underscore the urgent need for decisive, sustained action. FASD must be recognized and prioritized as a national issue, with coordinated leadership, appropriate investment, and a clear commitment to improving outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue shaping the path forward in FASD. Through our strategic priorities, by supporting the work of our partners, and through our ongoing commitment to Bill S-234—legislation seeking a long-overdue national framework for FASD—we remain focused on achieving better outcomes for individuals and families.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our work this year, and for believing in the value of research in shaping a better future for people with FASD. Your dedication and collaboration make our progress possible.

Sincerely,
Darren Joslin

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our work this year, and for believing in the value of research in shaping a better future for people with FASD. Your dedication and collaboration make our progress possible.

Darren Joslin,
Board Chair, CanFASD



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Darren Joslin



Alan Bocking



David Brown



Tammy Roberts



Edgar M. Jimenez



Carol Anne Cheechoo



Howard Sapers



Wenda Bradley



Christian Whalen



Shana Mohr

Message from the

SENIOR RESEARCH LEAD

Dr. Jocelynn Cook



When I reflect on this past year, what stands out most isn't just the work: it is the relationships. It's been another year of people bringing their unique minds and skill sets to the table, of stronger partnerships as we navigate the uncertainty of the political and funding future, and always of the sense that we are continuing to move something important forward together.

Working Together

In 2025 we've continued to make progress in strengthening how research, policy, and practice come together in the field, although sometimes it seemed like a daunting effort. Across prevention, diagnosis, and intervention, there has been a real effort to connect our work more intentionally by sharing ideas, aligning priorities, and finding opportunities to work together across projects. CanFASD's Research Leads, partners, and communities bring their expertise, passion, creativity, and willingness to tackle complex challenges together. It really does feel like a team and, more often than not, a family.

Working together with partners like the Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (CEWH) and the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) has been especially important. These formal partnerships are helping us extend the reach of our work into clinical practice and public health in ways that are practical and impactful.

Engaging with Policy and Systems

We've also spent time engaging with federal partners and policymakers, continuing conversations about diagnostic capacity, data, interventions and prevention. There is clear interest in the work our Network is doing, along with recognition that there is still more to do to create a coordinated national response.

Supporting the National FASD Framework ([Bill S-234](#)) has been an important part of this, and it's encouraging to see continued momentum toward a more unified approach to FASD in Canada.

Understanding the Research Landscape

One of the projects I was particularly excited to work on this year was the analysis of funding for FASD across the Tri-Council agencies. It gave us a clearer picture of where research investments are happening and where they're not.

What stood out is that while there is important work happening across disciplines, it's not always coordinated or sustained. This kind of insight is critical as we think about how to advocate for funding that better reflects the complexity of FASD and supports long-term impact.

Building Tools that Make a Difference

A major focus this year has been our work to build national clinical information hubs for healthcare providers.

In partnership with the CEWH and the SOGC, we developed the [FASD Identification Assessment and Diagnosis Hub](#) and the [Alcohol and Pregnancy Hub](#) to bring together practical tools, guidance, and resources in one place. At its core, this work is about making things easier and better for health care providers and for families. Through this initiative, we are helping to build a more consistent and accessible approach to screening, diagnosis, and care.

What We Heard from the Field

The national needs assessments we conducted this year reinforced something many of us already knew intuitively, but seeing it so clearly laid out was powerful. Providers across the country are deeply committed and knowledgeable. But they are working in systems that are fragmented and often difficult to navigate. Many are not using

standardized screening tools, and confirming prenatal alcohol exposure remains one of the biggest challenges in diagnosis.

We also heard consistently about the need for more culturally safe, trauma-informed approaches, and better coordination of services for families. What this tells us is that systems and tools that bring everything together are urgently needed. We hope that Bill S-234 will provide the resources and direction so that we can shape these systems into something that actually works to support those impacted by FASD.

Beyond Canada

It's been exciting to continue contributing to international work, including my role on the NIH International Working Group on Defining FASD. We are about to publish a paper on palpebral fissure norms as a first step toward unified diagnostic criteria that are grounded in evidence.

I'm also very pleased to be a Co-Investigator with the Centre of Research Excellence in FASD in Australia. This collaboration brings together

an incredible group of researchers and creates opportunities to share knowledge, learn from each other, and strengthen global leadership in this field.

Looking Ahead (2026–2027)

Who knows what the future will bring, but we are perfectly positioned to put what we're learning and into practice in meaningful, coordinated ways. The research and knowledge we create can be used to advocate for more strategic investment and more coordinated systems of care.

There is still a lot of work to do. But there is also momentum, and a strong foundation to build on. I continue to feel incredibly fortunate to work in this field and to be part of this Network. The commitment, creativity, and care that people bring to this work is what makes progress possible. Thank you to the Board, to our Research Leads, to our partners, and to the many individuals and families who continue to shape and inform what we do. There is so much more to do together!

Sincerely,
Dr. Jocelynn Cook



CanFASD Research Leads at the 2025 Canada FASD Conference. From left to right: Melissa Tremblay, Ana Hanlon-Dearman, Jacqueline Pei, Nancy Poole, Dorothy Badry, Kaitlyn McLachlan, and Jocelynn Cook. Absent is Mansfield Mela.

MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH Team



Dr. Jacqueline Pei
Intervention Research Lead



Dr. Jocelynn Cook
Senior Research Lead & Database Lead



Dr. Kaitlyn McLachlan
Justice Research Lead



Dr. Nancy Poole
Prevention Research Lead



Dr. Dorothy Badry
Child Welfare Research Lead



Dr. Ana Hanlon-Dearman
Diagnostics Research Co-Lead



Dr. Mansfield Mela
Diagnostics Research Co-Lead



Dr. Melissa Tremblay
Indigenous Advisor



Kathy Unsworth
Executive Director



Audrey McFarlane
Director of Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives



Dr. Kelly D. Harding
Director of Research



Dr. Katherine Flannigan
Director of Research



Dr. Celisse Bibr
National FASD Database Coordinator



Kirsten Morrison
Research Assistant



Edward Swatschek
Manager of Corporate Services & Administration



Victoria Bailey
Communications Manager



Fiona Binns
Communications Coordinator

Update from the **FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

For the Family Advisory Committee (FAC) the biggest milestone of this year was the Canada FASD Conference 2025 where members of the FAC had the opportunity to meet face to face – some for the first time! Members, both past and present, were involved in plenary talks, delivering sessions, moderating sessions, and leading workshops.

The FAC continues to collaborate with CanFASD Research Leads and other FASD researchers on projects including:

- An international response to asking difficult FASD questions
- Caregiver Approaches, Resiliencies, and Experiences (CARE study)
- Advancing human rights for people with FASD and more!

We also put a focus on learning, growing, and sharing our expertise. This year, we invited speakers from across Canada to share their research, inviting feedback as we work towards shaping the future of FASD. FAC members represent caregivers on committees, such as awards committees, conference planning, the FASD Prevention Network Action Team, grant application support and more.

The FAC includes members from across Canada: Alicia Munn (New Brunswick), Danielle Marschall (Alberta), Joyce Fast (co-chair, Manitoba), Lara Frederick (British Columbia), Lea O’Keefe (Northwest Territories), Marna Forsyth (Saskatchewan), and Melissa Dobson (co-chair, Alberta). We acknowledge the contributions of past members including Danette Wright and Pam Belanger for their work on FAC.

FAC members are actively engaged in delivering presentations, training, and activities. As caregivers in our communities, we remain committed to advocating for effective services and supports and striving for a more hopeful future. Despite significant growth in FASD research and access to resources, progress in translating knowledge into consistent policies, practices, and services continues to lag. We hope this year brings the enactment of much needed Parliamentary Bills: Bill S-202 (adding warning labels to alcohol) and Bill S-234 (setting national standards for public awareness, prevention, diagnosis, supports, training and more).

We deeply value the support from CanFASD. We invite everyone reading this to join us in working toward better outcomes for those impacted by FASD.

Update from the **ADULT FASD EXPERT COLLABORATION TEAM**

This year was a productive one for AFECT with the highlight being the Canada FASD Conference in Toronto. Leading up to the conference we made a video explaining who we are and what AFECT is, which was shown on the first day of the conference. As self-advocates we take pride in sharing our individual stories and work that is important to us.

As a group we gave a panel presentation on our advocacy work and how we navigate life with FASD and helped facilitate a session on identifying research priorities for those with living experience and how those priorities can be met. As individuals we gave an additional seven presentations on a range of topics including: employment, the digital world, housing, women’s health, and identity. We made time to network with other conference attendees, making new connections while seeing familiar faces.

As a fully virtual committee we always enjoy the opportunity to see each other in person and build relationships within the FASD community. The conference is a reminder of the support we show for one another and the relationships we have built throughout the years as a committee.

When not planning for the conference, the committee welcomed a number of guests to come speak about current research projects and provide our input into future directions for research collaboration. We heard about work around identity and FASD, experiences in the justice system, and work being done in child welfare sector.

We contributed to some of the changes made to the CanFASD Common Messages Guide last year, giving a much-needed living experience perspective to

FAC at the 2025 Canada FASD Conference. From left to right: Lara Frederick, Melissa Dobson, Joyce Fast, Alicia Munn and Lea O’Keefe. Absent are Danielle Marschall and Marna Forsyth.



Melissa Dobson (FAC) at the 2025 Canada FASD Conference



Maria Beland (AFECT) at the 2025 Canada FASD Conference



AFECT at the 2025 Canada FASD Conference. Top row left to right: Niall Schofield, Maria Beland, Joseph Munn and Lauren Richardson. Bottom row from left to right: Sandra Noel, Jessica Fulmer, and Chris Fillion.

terminology used in research and knowledge translation. We also contributed to a research paper on human rights, which is in the process of being published. Currently we are co-developing a resource to help people navigate talking to their employer about their diagnosis and ways to advocate for yourself in the workplace.

Most recently, some of us met with the new cohort of CanFASD Trainees where we talked about the importance of including living experience voices in research and best practices for including those voices. In our day-to-day lives we share the importance of CanFASD and the work we do as a committee and continue to advocate for more opportunities for people like us.

We are looking forward to another year full of reaching new goals, building relationships and sharing our expertise to help shape the future of FASD.

We invite everyone reading this to join us in working toward better outcomes for those impacted by FASD.

Family Advisory Committee
CanFASD

I hope my donation helps strengthen research efforts, expand education and knowledge mobilization, and improve supports for individuals with FASD and their families. Ultimately, I hope it contributes to greater understanding, reduced stigma, and more inclusive systems of care.

Hannah Denberg
Donor, CanFASD



Shana Mohr presents at the 2025 Canada FASD Conference

MEMBERSHIP

Connection and collaboration are key to addressing the complexities of FASD. Our membership programs bring people, organizations, and governments, together from across the country and internationally that are invested in creating change for FASD. We offer three membership options: individual, affiliate, and jurisdictional.

We are so grateful to all our members for the commitment they show to FASD. As a not-for-profit organization, we rely on community support. Your annual member dues go towards our operational costs to keep our organization running. The webinars we run, awareness campaigns we organize, issue papers we write, resources we create, and advocacy work we do would not be possible without the help of supportive community members like you!

In return, members receive benefits that help them stay up to date with FASD, grow their skills and knowledge, and improve their response to FASD.



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

CanFASD would not be where it is today without the support from our incredible network. We are constantly blown away by the gratitude and enthusiasm of our donors, partners, and volunteers. The generosity of this small but mighty group is helping to shift the landscape of FASD in Canada.

Your belief in our mission to address the complexities of FASD through research helps us create the lasting knowledge, tools, and resources needed to spark real-world change. Thank you for believing in our work and walking with us towards a better future for those impacted by FASD.

113
donations

39
donors

\$13K
raised

A special thank you to our donors Wenda Bradley, Hannah Denberg, Nancy Jane Johnson, Susan R., Ernest, and all of our other anonymous donors that made our achievements this year that much more impactful.

Individual

Stay connected, stay informed, and stay inspired with the latest FASD news, research and resources. With over 300 members (and counting) committed to addressing FASD, our individual membership program is where knowledge meets community.

374
individual
members

Affiliate

Grow your team and strengthen your impact! In January 2026, we launched a membership option for organizations to help build your capacity to support individuals and families with living experience. This membership option helps your team grow the skills they need to drive change.

4
affiliate
members

Jurisdictional

Get trusted expertise for complex policy decisions. Our jurisdictional membership connects governments with the guidance they need to drive meaningful change for FASD across Canada. Right now, we're proud to have Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, and Nunavut participating.

7
jurisdictional
members

The more perspectives and voices we can highlight and bring to the table, the better our research work will be!

*Anonymous Attendee,
Canada FASD Conference 2025*

FINDING ANSWERS

"...I believe in a future where hope persists and everyone affected has the opportunity to thrive, guided by research, evidence-based interventions, love, support, and hope."

*Anonymous Attendee,
Canada FASD Conference 2025*

RESEARCH in Action

From 2025-2026 CanFASD, completed:

58
published
articles

78%
published open
access

82
presentations
& interviews

18
technical
reports

50
research
projects

MAJOR PROJECT Updates

Together.
Finding answers.
Improving outcomes.



FASD Identification, Assessment and Diagnosis Hub



Caregiver Approaches, Resiliencies, and Experiences

FASD IAD Hub

open your photo app



and scan the code

FASD diagnosis plays a critical role in improving outcomes. It opens the door to essential supports across education, employment, housing, and mental health systems. But diagnosis is inconsistent across Canada. The diagnostic process can be long and complex, with consistent information and resources difficult to find.

In partnership with the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada our research team created the FASD Identification, Assessment and Diagnosis Hub (IAD Hub). The Hub is a national, all-in-one resource to help people better understand FASD, navigate diagnosis, and find supports more easily. It gives clinicians, individuals, and families reliable, up-to-date information on FASD diagnosis, assessment, and identification.

The IAD Hub was built with a strong emphasis on culturally safe and trauma-informed care. Its goal is to be a place where clinicians and families alike can find reliable information in an accessible way. The Hub recognizes the diverse experiences of those impacted by prenatal alcohol exposure and aims to meet users wherever they are in their journey.

The Hub was finalized in March 2026 and is available publicly. The team will update the Hub with small changes as users give their feedback to ensure this resource is valuable for everyone.

FASD is a complex disability and caring for someone who has FASD comes with unique challenges and successes. However, there are still many gaps in our understanding of caregiver experiences, and we don't have the complete picture of what it is like to support people with FASD across the lifespan.

The CARE study is an ongoing research project inspired by caregiver priorities, developed in partnership with CanFASD's researchers and Family Advisory Committee. Using an online survey, we are gathering information from parents and caregivers around the world who are caring for individuals with FASD. The specific goals of this research are to:

1. Learn about the unique experiences, concerns, strengths, and successes of those who care for people with FASD
2. Understand more about individuals with FASD across the lifespan, through the eyes of their caregivers

This project was launched in 2021. As of March 31, 2026, more than 280 caregivers have responded to the survey. The research team is committed to regularly sharing information about the study to make sure those participating learn from the work that is being done, to fill research gaps, and to inform future resources and supports. Since the start of the project, the team has shared biannual research updates, presented findings at numerous conferences and webinars, published a study protocol paper, and created a resource with self-care strategies specifically designed to support caregivers of people with FASD.

Project Impact

as of March 2026

280
caregivers
participated

10
resources &
publications



INDIGENOUS Relations

Establishing a National FASD Indigenous Framework in Canada

The impacts of historical and ongoing colonization shape both the prevalence of FASD and how it is managed among Indigenous children and families. These impacts highlight the limitations of mainstream healthcare approaches along with the importance of Indigenous knowledge and culture to supporting wellbeing across physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual domains. Accordingly, there is a need for a culturally sensitive, community-driven approach to FASD assessment, diagnosis, and support.

Through this community-based participatory research project, we are co-creating a national, strengths-based Indigenous FASD Framework in Canada. Drawing inspiration from the Australian FASD Indigenous Framework, our collaboration involves University of Alberta and CanFASD researchers. Alongside community partners, we have established an advisory circle, are conducting a realist literature review, have surveyed FASD clinics across Canada, and are facilitating sharing sessions with clinicians and individuals with lived experience.

Progress through partnership

This project began with a \$200,000 grant from the One Child Every Child initiative through the University of Calgary. The Yukon Government and Canada Northwest FASD Partnership have also committed matching funds to ensure voices from across the country are integrated into the framework.

Over the past year, we have convened two meetings of our Community Advisory Circle, made up of seven Indigenous women and three allies who bring extensive experience in culturally safe approaches to FASD. Members of our research team also visited communities in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Yukon Territory, and

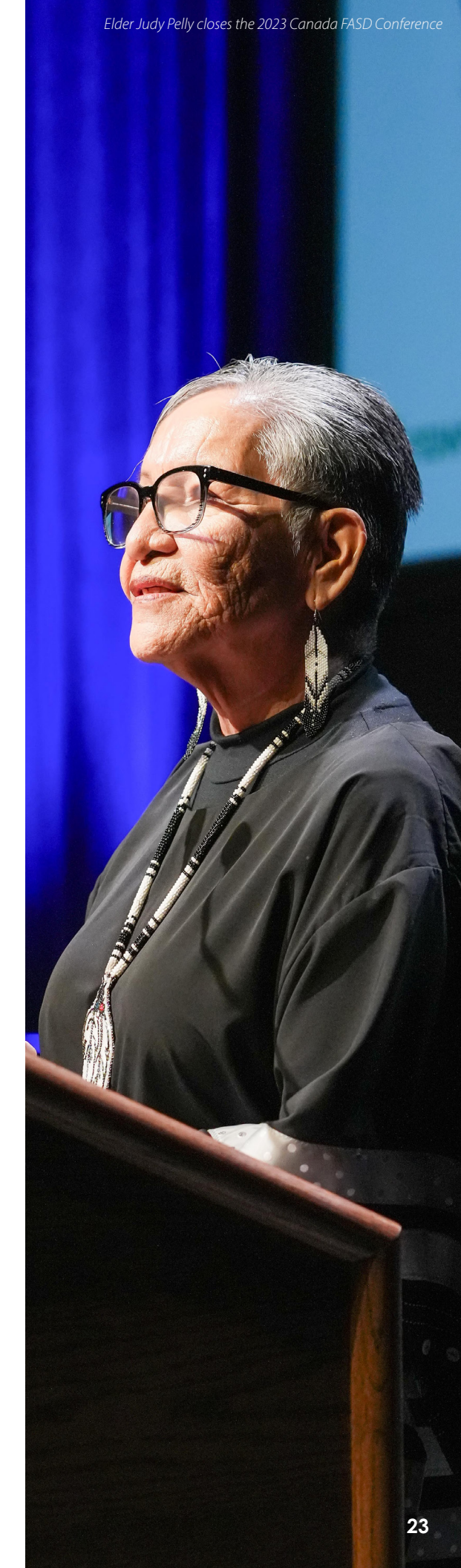
Manitoba to carry out community dialogues with Elders, service providers, and people with living FASD experience. This year, we also surveyed clinics across Canada to understand service provider perspectives on providing culturally safe services to Indigenous children and families.

Emerging insights and key reflections

With 45 respondents, preliminary survey findings from FASD clinics across Canada are helping to shed light on both strengths and significant gaps in culturally safe service delivery for Indigenous individuals and families. While many clinicians emphasized the importance of relational, client-centered care and demonstrated awareness of the impacts of colonization and intergenerational trauma, the integration of Indigenous knowledge, cultural practices, and Indigenous-led approaches remains inconsistent across settings. Some clinics reported efforts such as Elder involvement and culturally relevant programming; others indicated a need for these supports accompanied by limited or no access.

Respondents also spoke to key barriers including long waitlists, geographic and financial challenges, fragmented systems, and ongoing experiences of racism and stigma, alongside reliance on assessment models that may be culturally biased or narrowly focused. Respondents identified a strong need for increased Indigenous leadership, culturally grounded training, sustainable funding, and improved coordination across services.

Moving forward, community dialogues are helping us deepen our understanding and contextualize these findings, while seeking to bring to life a framework that centres Indigenous voices, sovereignty, and knowledge systems.



Honouring Innovation in **RESEARCH & PRACTICE**

FASD Research Award

Dr. Chantel Ritter is the recipient of the 2025 Dr. Sterling Clarren FASD Research Award! This award is named in honour of Dr. Sterling Clarren to celebrate his pioneering contribution and leadership in the field of FASD. It is presented annually in recognition of a completed study that has made a substantial contribution to understanding the complexities of FASD.

Chantel's research explored the strengths and protective factors in youth with FASD involved in the criminal legal system. Her project aimed to reframe how youth with FASD are understood – moving away from the deficit focus that still dominates the field and towards more nuanced understanding that explores capacity instead of challenge. This research explores how strengths-based traits like kindness, perseverance, and loyalty may be leveraged to improve outcomes. It joins a small but growing body of literature that is changing how we see people with FASD – not only for their struggles but for their talent, capacity, and potential. Chantel is one of 13 recipients of this award, which was established in 2015.



Chantel Ritter

FASD Lifetime Achievement Award

New this year, we introduced the Audrey McFarlane FASD Lifetime Achievement Award. This initiative recognizes an individual who has made an outstanding, sustained, and impactful contribution to advancing the field of FASD in Canada, honoring a legacy of excellence in research, policy, service delivery, or advocacy.

Our inaugural recipient and award namesake is Audrey McFarlane. Audrey is a passionate advocate for people impacted by FASD, the founder of the Lakeland Centre for FASD and a former Executive Director of CanFASD. This prestigious award recognizes her legacy of over 30 years of leadership in developing, researching and advocating for support services, policy improvement, diagnostic capacity, and prevention education. Audrey's efforts have improved the lives of countless individuals and their families and have contributed to healthier, safer communities.



Audrey McFarlane

FASD Innovation Award

The Enviros Neurodevelopmental Diagnostic Clinic is the recipient of the Claudette Bradshaw FASD Innovation Award for 2025. Named in honour of the late Mme. Claudette Bradshaw, the FASD Innovation Award recognizes her dedication and impact to the fields of FASD, early childhood education, and homelessness.

Enviros is being recognized specifically for its Transitions to Positive Futures program. This initiative was designed to identify and support youth and women with FASD who are involved in the legal system. It provides FASD assessments; court-informed education and supports; transition planning post-diagnosis; connections to subsequent services; and training for correctional staff and justice professionals.

Transitions to Positive Futures was the first program in Calgary to provide multidisciplinary FASD assessments and wraparound supports directly within correctional settings. We are pleased to recognize Enviros with this award in celebration of this program and of all they are doing to support those with FASD.



Members of the Enviros Neurodevelopmental Diagnostic Clinic

...Canada's FASD community is breaking down barriers and demonstrating leadership by bringing together and respecting the expertise of professionals, researchers, service providers, family members and especially people with FASD.

*Anonymous Attendee,
Canada FASD Conference 2025*



IMPROVING OUTCOMES

Be yourself. We're all making a difference in the world just by being who we are.

*Chris Fillion
AFECT Member, CanFASD*

WORKFORCE & REGULATORY

Development

We offer several online learning courses to improve professional and community understanding of FASD. Our courses are categorized by level of experience, where Level 1 courses provide a basic overview, Level 2 courses provide sector-specific training, and Level 3 courses provide expert training to FASD professionals.

We are proud to have launched two new courses this year: one empowering advocacy skills for people with lived experience and one supporting professionals working in early learning settings.

With these additions, we are now offering eleven different courses on various topics related to FASD. Six of these are available in both French and English.

OUR IMPACT

12,727
total
learners

4,812
new course
enrollments

I want to pay forward the benefits that I have received from CanFASD over the last 20 years of parenting children with poly-substance exposure. The coursework and conferences have been a big help in making me feel less alone and given me resources to give to those who have roles supporting my family.

*Tammy
Donor, CanFASD*



POLICY & PRACTICE

The Importance of Cross-Jurisdiction Collaboration

by the CNFASDP

Connection and collaboration across borders is essential to shaping Canada’s response to FASD. A great example of collaboration in action is one of our key partners: the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership (CNFASP).

The inception of CNFASDP dates back to 1998 when the Governments of Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan agreed to maximize the use of existing expertise and resources to develop joint strategies and initiatives that address FASD prevention and awareness across the prairie provinces. At the time, these governments formed the Prairie Province Partnership on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and each province agreed to take lead responsibility for one year, on a rotating basis.

With the model showing signs of success in just one year, the Partnership was expanded in November 1999 to include the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon. Again, with demonstrated value in working jointly across governments, British Columbia was added to the Partnership in November 2001. In February 2003, to incorporate more inclusive terminology to describe the spectrum of fetal alcohol related disabilities and to

be more internationally recognized, the Partnership’s name changed to the Canada Northwest Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Partnership (CNFASDP).

The Partnership occasionally experiences shifts in membership as priorities change. It is currently represented by the Governments of Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and the Yukon, and welcomes other jurisdictions to join. Right now, the Partnership’s focus is on its [2024-2027 Strategic Priorities](#) which include actions to advance Indigenous Led Work and Supports; FASD Training; Mental Health and Addictions; Supports and Services; FASD Prevention Messaging; and Enhancing Cultural Safety in FASD Diagnostic Clinics. CanFASD works hand in hand with member jurisdictions to advance these priorities.

The CNFASDP was the catalyst to the CanFASD Research Network and remains an integral partner. In 2004, the Partnership formed the Western/Northern FASD Research Network to address the urgent need for research on FASD and best practice guidelines to inform and guide work on diagnosis, prevention and intervention. The Research

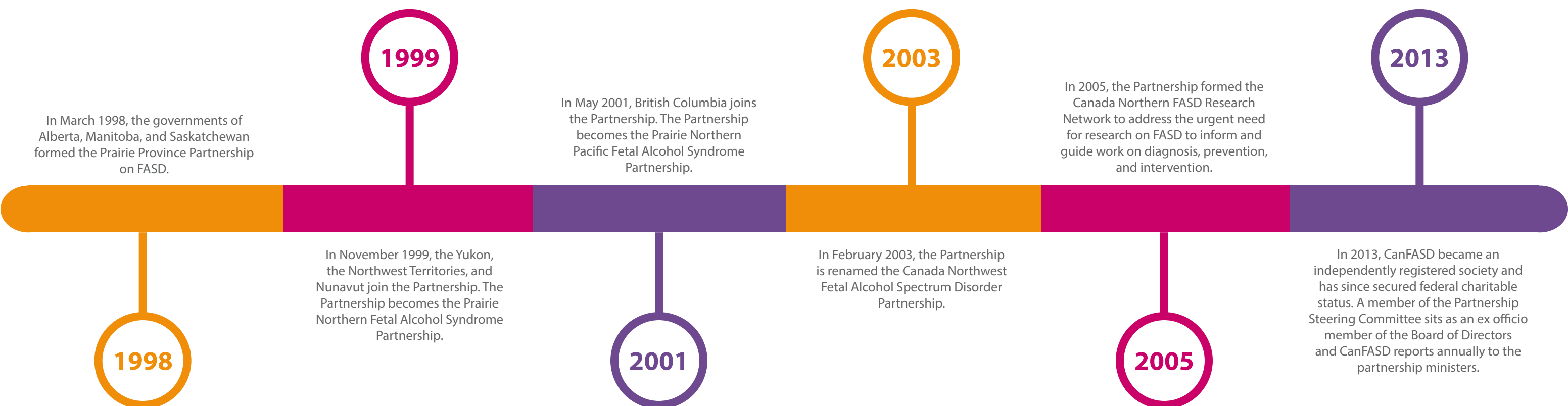
Network quickly evolved to what is now the Canada FASD Research Network - a national Canadian charitable organization whose vision is to support Canada’s leadership in addressing the extraordinary complexities of FASD.

Along with the extensive growth and success of the CanFASD Research Network, the Partnership itself continues to be a valuable asset to its member jurisdictions. Some of the benefits of this membership include:

- Forum for collaboration on FASD initiatives.
- Better access to training and education.
- Direct links to FASD researchers for advice and project specific guidance.
- Timely access to research findings and a direct connection to CanFASD expertise.
- Dialogue on research implications and application of research in practice.
- Influence on FASD research priorities.
- Elevated profile of FASD and FASD research in Canada.
- National impact through integrated leadership, cross-government collaboration, and CanFASD support.

The success of the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership, coupled with increased evidence-based research from CanFASD, tells a story about how government commitment and collaboration can spark coordinated change over time.

Top and bottom: CNFASDP members present at the 2025 Canada FASD Conference. Middle: Attendees explore the CNFASDP booth.



OUTREACH

& Communications

Creating effective and engaging communication and outreach initiatives is a priority for CanFASD. Accurate, timely, and consistent information is essential to increasing awareness of and support for FASD across Canada. We want to make sure our audience has the evidence and information they need in a format they can best understand.

Our most popular tools for public engagement include our online webinar series where we share relevant information; our blog to keep our Network updated; our website where we host tools, research, and resources; and our social media accounts where we engage and connect with our community.

There is much awareness and research in relation to FASD and I am always inspired when I see how far we have come in the past 20 years.

*Anonymous Attendee,
Canada FASD Conference 2025*

OUR IMPACT

BLOG

From April 2025 to March 2026, CanFASD had:

73
blog posts

8,119
visitors

WEBSITE

From April 2025 to March 2026, CanFASD had:

96.3K
visitors

227K
page views

WEBINARS

From April 2025 to March 2026, CanFASD had:

8
webinars

839
registrations

SOCIAL MEDIA

From April 2025 to March 2026, CanFASD had:

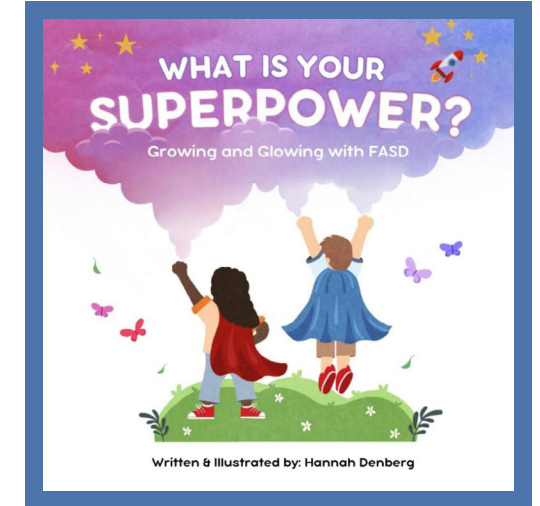
22.3K
followers

604K
impressions

WHAT IS YOUR SUPERPOWER?

One of our biggest challenges when raising awareness of FASD is battling the stigma and stereotypes surrounding this disability. One of our former trainees set out to challenge the stigma surrounding FASD in a unique way: she wrote a children's book!

Hannah Denberg, a Trainee from our 2024 cohort, wrote and illustrated *What is Your Superpower?: Growing and Glowing with FASD*. This book celebrates the strengths and power of people with FASD. While writing, Hannah pulled from her experiences as a researcher in addition to the lived and living experiences of this community. She collaborated with people with FASD and their support persons throughout the writing process to make sure the story reflects diverse perspectives.



Hannah also collaborated with her fellow trainees to come up with the imagery used. For many of them, nature symbolizes the growth and resilience of this community. Throughout this book, Hannah includes drawings of trees, flowers, and beautiful landscapes as a metaphor for the ways people with FASD grow and thrive.

Hannah released her book during FASD Awareness Month in 2024, with 100% of the proceeds being donated to CanFASD. As of March 2026, she has sold 1207 copies, contributing over \$4400 to our organization. We are so grateful for her support and her dedication to raising awareness of FASD in a strengths-based way.



Canada FASD Conference **FILM FESTIVAL**

Stories are incredibly powerful. They help to connect us, inspire us, and remind us that we are not alone. This year, CanFASD launched a world-wide film festival to encourage more stories about FASD. The festival was open to short films that explored FASD in a positive, strengths-based way.

The first year of our festival was a major success. We had 114 submissions total, with 23 related to FASD. Five of these films were shortlisted for an award and screened at the Canada FASD Conference in Toronto:

- **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and My Search for Compassion** – Michael Champlin
- **Cue to Shine** – Eddie Bunkowsky
- **An Update from the Man: A Decade on with FASD** – Reinier deSmit
- **Titoki: A Camp for People with FASD** – FASD-Can
- **Clearing the Clouds** – Melissa Dobson

The event was hosted by Myles Himmelreich. We were thrilled to have many of the filmmakers in attendance to collect their award.

Each of these short films tells a different story, but together they share a common message: FASD is not just about challenges – it's about strengths, creativity, insight, and possibility. These films invite viewers to listen more closely, question assumptions, and see people with FASD as whole, capable individuals.



*It was an excellent experience
- sometimes we can focus
on deficits so it is great to see
strengths in action.*

*Anonymous Attendee,
Canada FASD Film Festival*

Snapshots from the 2025 Canada FASD Conference Film Festival

FASD AWARENESS MONTH

Every year in September, organizations and communities across Canada and around the world celebrate FASD Awareness Month. The goal of this event is to improve awareness and understanding of FASD and to celebrate the strengths and successes of individuals with FASD.

This year, we continued our Canada Rocks Red campaign, where Canadian monuments and landmarks lit up red to help us raise awareness of FASD. We had participation from every province and territory. A total of 74 locations joined in, including the Calgary Tower in Alberta, Science World in Vancouver, the CN Tower in Toronto, and the Moncton Museum in New Brunswick.

Our FASD Month themes are always grounded in research and evidence, with the goal of reducing stigma and increasing understanding of FASD. The 2025 theme, Everyone Plays a Part: Take Action, encouraged people to see FASD not as an individual issue, but as something that matters to the whole community. The theme highlighted the shared responsibility of governments, organizations, communities, and individuals to take action in creating a society that supports people with FASD while also supporting healthy pregnancies.

74
locations

13
provinces
& territories

1,335
resource
downloads



Nunavut Legislative Assembly lit up red for FASD Month 2025

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK for FASD

Steps to a National FASD Framework

**October
2022**

An act respecting a National Framework for FASD (Bill S-253) is introduced into the Senate.

Second reading of Bill S-253.

**November
2022**

**June
2023**

Bill S-253 is referred to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology.

Government prorogued. All bills in progress are cancelled.

**March
2025**

**September
2025**

An act respecting a Framework for FASD (now Bill S-234) reintroduced.

Second reading of Bill S-234.

Bill S-234 is referred to the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology.

**November
2025**

This year we have seen a resurgence in the movement to introduce a National Framework for FASD in Canada. A National FASD Framework would make it law that the Minister of Health must create a plan to improve FASD diagnosis and capacity; support for people with FASD and their families; and prevention of alcohol use in pregnancy.

FASD is one of Canada's most common neurodevelopmental disabilities. Its prevalence and its complexities warrant a coordinated approach to diagnosis and support at a federal level. As Senator Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia said in speech to introduce a National Framework to the Senate of Canada, "Given the complexity of this issue and the breadth of its effects, the existing patchwork of provincial and territorial approaches is simply not enough..."

For the last five years, CanFASD has been advocating for the development and implementation of a National FASD Framework in Canada. We got close with the introduction of Bill S-253 in October 2022. But ultimately, we ended our last fiscal year with Parliament being prorogued, meaning all bills in progress – including Bill S-253 – were cancelled.

However, this year, we started to see more movement on a federal response to FASD. Our champion, Senator Ravalia, reintroduced the bill into the Senate during FASD Month. The [National Framework on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Act](#) is now Bill S-234. It quickly was referred to committee, where we are awaiting review. Many members of our Network have submitted briefs, sharing why a coordinated strategy for FASD in Canada is essential. We are hopeful that our advocacy will translate into more awareness and support for FASD at a federal level.

FINANCIAL

Snapshot

CANADA FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER RESEARCH NETWORK
Balance Sheet
March 31, 2026 with comparative figures for March 31, 2025

	2025	2026
Assets		
Current assets:		
Cash	\$ 206,597.07	\$ 396,813.78
Investments	167,072.92	121,432.35
Accounts receivable	56,630.14	72,271.32
HST/GST receivable	12,331.16	61,529.90
Prepaid expenses	27,805.93	16,339.18
	470,437.22	668,386.53
Capital assets	669.98	0.00
Intangible assets	103,444.87	88,200.99
	574,552.07	756,587.52
Liabilities and Net Assets:		
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 56,363.87	\$ 93,576.04
Deferred capital contributions	105,967.75	88,201.00
Deferred contributions	198,466.78	287,655.38
	360,798.40	469,432.42
Net assets	213,753.67	287,155.10
	\$ 574,552.07	\$ 756,587.52





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This report uses stock imagery posed by models, unless otherwise specified