What is Circle of Hope?
The Circle of Hope-Birth Mothers Network, (COH-BMN) is a support group for women who have consumed alcohol during pregnancy and/or have a child or children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).

How professionals can help:
If you work with pregnant women who have drank while pregnant, or women with a birth child with FASD, please inform them about the COH-BMN. Let them know that they are not alone.

For the new reader:
You are not alone. If you are a woman who used substances while pregnant, or who has a child with FASD contact the COH-BMN. We will connect you to a Warrior Mom; a mentor who has been down a similar path.

For all of the warrior moms:
To live in tune with the Earth we need to remember that we too are a precious natural resource to be cared for and valued just as we value the trees or the sea. Like them, we live in the rhythms of the seasons and the days.

the journey of a warrior mom
Carol Pines has always been a natural caregiver. With an alcoholic father, however, she didn’t have a traditional childhood and had to grow up fast. After marrying at a very young age, Carol and her husband had two children. Quickly, the marriage started to deteriorate and Carol began drinking to numb her unhappiness. After divorcing when she was 30, Carol once again turned to the coping mechanism she knew – alcohol. All the while, Carol remained highly active and started a new relationship with David. Together, Carol, David and her two children moved into a new house. From the outside, everything looked perfect. Unexpectedly, Carol then became pregnant with Christina. Throughout the pregnancy, Carol continued to drink 2 or 3 drinks a night. No one once told her to stop drinking! When Christina was born, it was clear that something was wrong, she had severe colic and had complications with her legs. For several years, Carol continued to drink and refused to face the fact that Christina had FAS. Finally, David had had enough and left Carol. After hitting rock bottom and going to treatment, Carol began to put her life back in order. Carol found a new community at her church, reconnected with her family and most importantly, started fighting for Christina. Today, Christina is a thriving teenager, who attends a top high school, has many friends and loves to run. Carol has been sober for seven years and she and Christina both have promising futures ahead. Carol serves as the Connecticut state COH-BMN coordinator.

To join the Circle of Hope or to request more information, please contact Kathy Mitchell at the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome mitchell@nofas.org 1- (800)-66-NOFAS www.nofas.org
did you know?

• Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) refer to the range of disorders that can occur when a pregnant woman drinks alcohol while pregnant. The disorders can include physical effects as well as effects on the brain that may result in problems with learning, emotions and behavior.

• Alcohol is the most harmful drug for a developing baby. It is even worse than cigarettes, heroine, cocaine or crack.

• There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink during pregnancy.

• When a pregnant woman drinks, her unborn child gets the same concentration of alcohol as the mother. FASD is preventable by not drinking while pregnant.

• FASD is the leading preventable cause of intellectual disability, birth defects, and a leading known cause of learning disabilities. You can prevent FASD by not drinking while pregnant.

what’s in the news?

Pregnant Women with Health Problems Need Care, Not Jail

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (The College) released a study stating that placing pregnant women in jail or mental health facilities because of substance abuse while pregnant is not only ineffective, but also harmful to that woman’s health.

States have a variety of laws dealing with substance abusing pregnant women. Many states require mandatory reporting of any woman who is using drugs while pregnant and some states criminalize such women. As consequences, these women may lose their housing or even custody of their children. Such laws deter pregnant drug and alcohol users from accessing prenatal services, out of fear that they will be thrown in jail.

Doctors recognize that addictions are disorders that need medical attention. Giving women proper treatment will not only improve their health, but also the health of their child. The College recommends that states eliminate their mandatory reporting laws and instead start treatment programs outside of the legal system that help treat pregnant women with addictions.

Article, Medical News Today
December 21, 2010

rejoice in recovery!

• Play like a child - create stuff and dress-up!

• Immerse yourself in water, play in the snow, lay in the sunshine, and jump in the leaves.

• Open your heart, help others...it is

visit us online
Connect with NOFAS online at www.nofas.org. Go to the COH-BMN section for more stories from birthmothers, articles and essays, and information on both FASD and addictions. Sing up for the NOFAS Weekly Roundup to receive our weekly on-line newsletter.

the COH is here to provide you with:

• Referrals and resources
• Factual information about FASD and addiction
• Support for you and your families

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