



quintessence
FOUNDATION

**January
2013**

Success at the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge 2012

2012 marks the eleventh year for the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge. There was plenty of wonderful participation and the message that breastfeeding and donor milk banking is important and needs all of our support was registered in many communities. We appreciate all those who participated in the Quintessence Challenge as without participation we would have no event. This year we had 10 countries take part with 4,035 children participating at 175 sites. Some sites consisted of one or two mothers whereas others were large groups. But numbers do not tell the real story as each mother and child have their own story. In some communities 100% of the breastfeeding mothers attended the Challenge and in others those that attended brought needed support to their fellow breastfeeding women in a less than supportive community.

In many communities around North America and other parts of the world public breastfeeding is still a major hurdle for many women. It seems strange that in the 21st century there is still such a prudish attitude by many towards a child breastfeeding. Breasts are fine to display to sell products or show off cleavage but demonstrating function is not accepted by some people. Times are changing but not fast enough for women to all feel supported in their communities to breastfeed their children whenever and wherever they wish. Hopefully, these winds of change will continue to blow!



Quintessence Challenge in Bucharest Romania

Check out our Quintessence Foundation Website: www.babyfriendly.ca

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Here are the stats for 2012 Global Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge

Most children participating & most sites:

1. Canada
2. Ireland
3. Cyprus
4. China
5. Romania

Largest Sites:

1. Dublin, Ireland
2. Chilliwack, BC Canada
3. Cork, Ireland
4. Nicosia, Cyprus
5. Halifax Nova Scotia Canada

North American Challenge

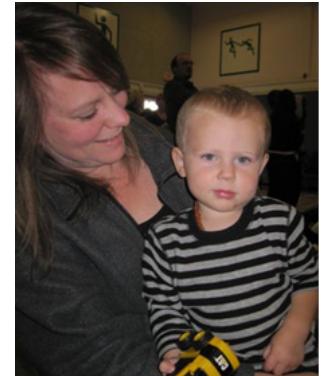
Largest Sites:

1. Chilliwack, BC
2. Halifax Nova Scotia
3. Salon du bebe Lactea et Defi alaiment Quebec
4. Outaouais Region Quebec
5. North Shore: (North & West Vancouver area) BC

We received an interesting newsletter from the Ningbo site in Zhejiang China featuring the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge. We have added it onto our newsletter as we enjoyed reading it and we thought our readers might as well. It has some lovely pictures from the event and discusses breastfeeding challenges in China. Many of us will recognize many of these challenges! Thank you to Zheng Xiang



Lisa Kerr has attended 10 Breastfeeding Challenges in Chilliwack with her children.



Kathleen Theissen has attended 9 Breastfeeding Challenges in Chilliwack with her 3 children over the years

Congratulations to Chilliwack BC on another great Challenge event.

Chilliwack BC Canada: Breastfeeding Support in Action!

Chilliwack is a community of approximately 80,000 people with a birth rate of approximately 1000 babies/year. It is located 100 kilometers from Vancouver British Columbia in Canada. The Chilliwack site was the largest site in North America and the 2nd largest globally! It's amazing what a small group of people can do! Here is their story

It all began in the year 2001 when Quintessence Foundation held the first annual Breastfeeding Challenge and applied to the Guinness Book of World Records. Grace Banks and Sidney Harper enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to raise the profile of breastfeeding. They wanted to do something fun to draw attention to the importance of breastfeeding. They wanted to create a community of support for breastfeeding women. They wanted to take breastfeeding out of a back room somewhere and encourage women to feel confident about breastfeeding anytime, anywhere. That first Breastfeeding Challenge at the Chilliwack Health Unit was attended by 12 breastfeeding women and their babies.

The next year as the Guinness Book of World Records had turned Quintessence down, the Challenge now called the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge was again embraced in Chilliwack with Grace and Sidney organizing the event again. They appealed to local

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businesses for door prizes and even found support from the mayor, who came and spoke to the group about the importance of breastfeeding, families and community. That year 33 women and babies attended. The following year we had over 50 moms and babies. Every year after that, Chilliwack has participated in the World Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge for a total of 12 events!

Early on, Grace and Sidney saw value in partnering with La Leche League to help with organization of the event as it continued to grow. Michelle Dennill and Lana Hergott ultimately took over the responsibility of running this great event. Many volunteers have also helped.

The annual Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge has grown from a small, intimate event to a gathering of nearly 200 people. 2012 was a record-breaking year as the Chilliwack event placed first in North America and second in the world with over 150 moms and babies breastfeeding. It was truly amazing to have so many breastfeeding moms and babies in one room breastfeeding simultaneously.

There are many reasons that this event draws such huge crowds. Each participant at the Challenge has an opportunity to receive a door prize donated by a local retailer or specialty store. Moms also receive a gift bag full of wonderful baby items and coupons, all Baby Friendly of course! The Chilliwack event also hosts guest speakers every year, including the mayor, to share a story about breastfeeding as it relates to the theme each year. Local media have always been keen to support the challenge and contribute news stories before and after the event. As the organizers have just wrapped up 2012's event, plans for 2013 are already well underway!



Guelph, Ontario: First annual “latch-mob” draws a crowd

By Paige Toxopeus
Pictures by Rachel Thompson

It's the first year Guelph, Ont., has hosted a Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge and organizers are thrilled with the turnout and support from the community.



Thirty-seven moms and their babies, along with dozens of other family members, braved the chill of the wind on Saturday, September 29 to take part in what local media dubbed a “latch-mob.”

“The youngest breastfeeding babe was a couple of weeks (old); the oldest was a preschooler who thought the challenge was to see which child could drink the most milk,” said health promoter and event organizer Peggy Nickels. “He was determined to win!”

The Challenge was organized by WE Breastfeed, a peer support program at the Guelph Community Health Centre. It pairs volunteers who have nursed their own babies for at least six months, with mothers who are currently nursing and need support. Volunteers are required to complete the 18-hour World Health Organization/UNICEF breastfeeding course for peer support. They are able to address commonly experienced breastfeeding challenges, and provide mums with reassurance, resources and encouragement at any point in their breastfeeding journey.

“We try to connect prenatally too,” said Nickels in a Guelph Mercury article promoting the event. “Sometimes all a woman needs is a little encouragement to breastfeed. Then she's off and doing fine on her own.”

WE Breastfeed has 19 volunteers. Many volunteers can offer mums support in their first language. They also have a range of lived experience including teenaged parenting, breastfeeding twins, breastfeeding premature babies and living on a limited income.

Since WE Breastfeed's inception in November 2007, 93 women have been matched with volunteers to receive peer support. Some of those women have gone on to become volunteers themselves. In the media article Nickels said “WE Breastfeed wants women to make an informed choice about breastfeeding. Even though attitudes are changing, women are still told they can't breastfeed in some restaurants and public places. If they don't feel comfortable breastfeeding in public, they are more likely to stop. And often, once a baby gets used to a bottle, it doesn't go back to the breast.”

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Guelph families came out in droves for the “latch-mob,” which was held in front of Guelph’s city hall in the heart of downtown. The local, Grammy-nominated music group The Funky Mamas performed at the challenge.

Nickels said the local media coverage helped increase the event’s impact beyond those who participated in the day.

There was also a diverse turnout from the community for the event which had a fun and celebratory tone.

Maria Casey



Pictures from Guelph, Ontario's first Challenge

Starting Smart: One of the mothers has participated 6 times in the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge. That's a clear message about the importance of breastfeeding!



Westville KwaZulu Natal, South Africa breastfeeds!



Quintessence Challenge in St Francois County Missouri



St Jean-sur-Richelieu Quebec Canada breastfeeds!



Sichuan China breastfeeds

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