



QUINTESSENCE FOUNDATION

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THE “CHALLENGE” OF BREASTFEEDING

BY: FRANCES JONES

This year marks the 19th year of the *Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge*. Surprisingly, breastfeeding is still a “challenge” for so many women. The internet is full of stories written by distressed moms describing the inappropriateness of the “breast is best” message and how they “failed” at breastfeeding. The message they want to see is “feed your baby however you can.” I don’t know of any knowledgeable, skilled breastfeeding supporter who would disagree that feeding the baby is the number one rule. *(cont..)*



In many of these sad stories there is something key that is missing. Skilled breastfeeding support! “Breast is best” may be a simplistic slogan promoted to support our cultural shift to breastfeeding as normal. Basically, mother’s own milk delivered directly from the source, direct breastfeeding, triumphs any other substitute. But when mothers and babies struggle with breastfeeding the system not only needs to promote breastfeeding, but it needs to protect and SUPPORT breastfeeding. Support of breastfeeding seems to be very patchwork and in many Canadian communities (should I say most?) is insufficient. It is no surprise that mothers “fail” when there is little skilled ongoing help to assist them. Some mothers, no matter what they do, will not be able to breastfeed exclusively or at all and they too need skilled support. Hopefully, 2019 will be the beginning of renewed SUPPORT for breastfeeding - not in the form of slogans but in the form of skilled help.

Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge 2019

We hope all past participants and some new will register this year. We have changed our “rules” in response to site feedback. To take part in the Challenge, organize a “Latch on” between Oct 1 and Oct 7th 2019. Register your site and let’s get the message out together - breastfeeding is important.



Prince George, BC, Breastfeeding Challenge 2018



WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2019

World Breastfeeding Week

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) was formed in 1991 to act on the Innocenti Declaration (1990) to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. As part of its action plan to facilitate and strengthen social mobilisation for breastfeeding, WABA envisioned a global unifying breastfeeding promotion strategy. A day dedicated to breastfeeding was suggested to be marked in the calendar of international events. The idea of a day's celebration was later turned into a week which became known as World Breastfeeding Week (WBFW).

What are the dates of WBFW?

World Breastfeeding Week (WBFW), is celebrated every August 1-7 in many countries to commemorate the Innocenti Declaration. In other countries, due to holidays or national events, WBFW is celebrated during other weeks. In Canada, October 1 to 7th was chosen due to many families travelling and not being available during the summer months. WBFW was first celebrated in 1992. Now it involves over 170 countries and is endorsed by UNICEF, WHO, FAO and IPA.

How is WBFW Coordinated?

Overall coordination of WBFW is done at the WABA Secretariat in Penang, Malaysia, including the selection of the theme and slogan, identifying resource persons for a specific theme and the preparation and dissemination of WBFW materials such as the calendar announcement, posters, action folders and banners. These advocacy materials serve to stimulate action among local groups, governments, UN and other agencies and other issue organisations for their own WBFW activities in their area/country.

What is the 2019 WBFW theme?

Empower Parents. Enable Breastfeeding. Now and for the future.

What does the theme mean?

Although global breastfeeding initiation rates are relatively high, and despite international recommendations, only 40% of all babies under 6 months (in Canada 41%) are exclusively breastfed. Globally, forty-five percent of all babies continue breastfeeding up to 24 months. Additionally, there are large regional and in-country variations in breastfeeding rates.





Quebec City, Quebec, Breastfeeding Challenge 2018

Scaling up optimal breastfeeding according to the recommendations could prevent more than 823,000 child and 20,000 maternal deaths each year. Not breastfeeding is associated with lower intelligence and results in economic losses of about \$302 billion annually. Concerted action is needed in order to achieve the World Health Assembly (WHA) target of at least 50% exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months by 2025. Many barriers to optimal breastfeeding exist, one of the largest being lack of support for parents at work.

Creating a supportive environment which removes barriers to breastfeeding, empowers parents and enables successful breastfeeding. It also requires evidence-based unbiased information and a warm chain of support to create an enabling environment that empowers mothers to breastfeed optimally. Although breastfeeding is the mother's domain, with close support from fathers, partners, families, workplaces and communities, mothers are more likely to reach their breastfeeding goals.

Check out the WABA's additional information at <https://worldbreastfeedingweek.org/>

Results from the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge 2018

Global Challenge

Countries taking part: Canada, Cyprus, Ireland and Russia

The North American 2018 ratings:

Location	Number of BF children
1. Chilliwack BC	125
2. Défi Allaitement Mauricie - Center Commercial Les Rivières, Québec	89
3. St-Jean-sur-Richelieu- Défi Allaitement Salon Parents & Infants Lactéa, Québec	87
4. Défi Allaitement Québec - Ville de Québec, Québec	80
5. Place Rosemère, Québec	68
6. Saint-Hyacinthe, Québec	64
7. Défi allaitment Nourisource Haute-Yamaska Ganby, Québec	64
8. Salon de la Famille- Vaudreuil-Soulanges, Québec	55
9. IWK Health Centre, Halifax, Nova Scotia	55
10. BC Women’s Hospital, Vancouver, BC	50

Category A:
 more than 50,000 births/year
 Gold: Quebec
 Silver: Ontario
 Bronze: Alberta

Category B Regions:
 10,000 to 50,000 births/year
 Gold: British Columbia
 Silver: Saskatchewan
 Bronze: Manitoba

Category C Regions:
 less than 10,000 births/year
 Gold: Nunavut
 Silver: North West Territories
 Bronze: New Brunswick

Breastfeeding Challenge 2018 in Nunavut

Chesterfield Inlet

In Chesterfield Inlet, the Breastfeeding Challenge event all are welcome. There was a “latch on” and a charade game that focused on breastfeeding and oral health words, a breastfeeding benefit box and a game of bingo (on oral health and Vitamin “D”.) An elder came and talked about the benefits of breastfeeding, vitamin D and the differences between breast and bottle feeding. Both pregnant and new moms attended and were amazed to hear the stories of breastfed and bottle fed babies - how much money and time they would save! Everything worked well and we plan to hold the event again this year!

Taken from notes from Lillian Autut.

Gjoa Haven

In Gjoa Haven the Breastfeeding Challenge event was a big success. After the introduction, a young mother shared her breastfeeding story followed by an older mother. The public health nurse gave a talk promoting breastfeeding and healthy snacks were provided. Everyone played breastfeeding bingo, name games and generally had fun! Breastfeeding tear sheets and other handouts were given out as well as prizes. Gjoa Haven plans to have a site in 2019.

Taken from the notes from Rebecca and Elizabeth.



Breastfeeding Challenge at Gjoa Haven (top and bottom)



Breastfeeding Challenge 2018 in North Vancouver

BY: VERA BERARD

Thank you all that came out to VCH North Shore Breastfeeding Celebration at Lionsgate Hospital HOpe Center on Saturday 29 September, 2018. It was one of our smaller, more intimate events that was made joyous, as the province released the international breastfeeding symbol to be used by all municipalities. Under [Janice Sampson](#)'s (LC) leadership, we started using this symbol a decade ago at our annual breastfeeding celebrations and inviting civic and maternity leaders as dignitaries. It was wonderful listening to councilor and mayoral candidate [Linda Buchanan](#) read North Vancouver City 1-7 October declaration of breastfeeding week on behalf of mayor Darrell Massutto and to hear her inform the audience that signage welcoming babies to breastfeed will soon be displayed in the city's public places. No longer does our committee need to wear the symbol and provide it as a dignitary gift to create awareness.

Johanne Roy, community health nurse welcomed everyone. [Don Strom](#) played background music and engaged the audience in a singing a few children's songs. Elder Christine blessed the event beautifully and touchingly gifted her ceremonial parenting cloak to Marianne Brophy. Family doctor, Julia Hlynsky and midwives, [Colleen Fulton](#) and [Gillian Welsh](#) participated and helped give out door prizes community businesses had generously donated that Alyssa Barrie, La Leche leader and lactation consultants helped collect. Photo credits go to [Jazzmin Toria](#), midwife office assistant. We again enjoyed the participation of our remote sites Lionsgate maternity unit and Bowen Island family place. I post this in gratitude and celebration of everyone's efforts to support infants that breastfeed and their parents.



Staff at North Vancouver Lionsgate Hospital, Breastfeeding Challenge 2018, with the “right” messages!

Breastfeeding Challenge 2018 in Fleur de Lys, Quebec

Breastfeeding challenge was again held at Fleur de Lys at 11am on September 29th, 2018. The main event's objectives are:

1. Provide quality information to mothers about breastfeeding and the support offered by the community (clinics, self-help groups).
2. Submit a breastfeeding major promotional activity with the public.
3. Promote breastfeeding and existing support.
4. Supporting breastfeeding in public, so that it is accepted everywhere.
5. Gather as many mothers and families.



Breastfeeding Challenge Cyprus (Photo credits top and bottom: Maria Erotokritou)

Cyprus Does the Challenge 2018!

In 2018, there were 19 sites with 260 mothers and 266 children "latching on" for the Breastfeeding Challenge in Cyprus. Congratulations Cyprus!

We received the following report from an organizer:

"The event was a celebration throughout Cyprus with 19 different sites. Cyprus Breastfeeding Association "Gift of Life" organized the event to raise awareness about breastfeeding. It held the event for the 12th consecutive year, and it was under the auspices of the Minister of Health as a part of the World Breastfeeding Week." ~Irene Paphiti



Breastfeeding Challenge: NICU style



NICU mom at BC Women's Hospital, Vancouver, taking part in the Breastfeeding Challenge 2018

BC Women's Hospital in Vancouver is a designated "Baby-Friendly" hospital with over 7,000 births a year and a 70 bed NICU. BC Women's has participated in the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge since 2001. That first year, the hospital invited mothers from the community. After a few years the community health department took over this idea and BC Women's focused on the mothers in the hospital. For a few years, mothers in both BC Women's and Children's hospitals (they are physically connected) participated in the Challenge.

A few years back, one of the lactation consultants working with a very disadvantaged NICU family mentioned the Challenge to the mother. Very enthusiastic to participate, she was "counted in" on the appointed day and time as she breastfed her baby in the NICU. The mom proudly displayed her participation certificate at her baby's bedside for all to see. This experience encouraged us to embrace the NICU for the Challenge. Each year we encourage NICU mothers to take part by doing skin-to-skin and expressing a few drops or breastfeeding where possible. If the baby

cannot go skin-to-skin then the mother is included if she pumps or hand expresses at the bedside at appointed time on the appointed day. Mothers from birthing, postpartum NICU and a few on the Children's Hospital side of the campus all take part.

How is this done in a busy maternity unit and tertiary, level 4 NICU?. Time is short with so many demands. But something like the Challenge only comes along once a year and with the mother from our first experience in the NICU in mind, we now have a well-organized plan. Each year, we put announcements in our staff newsletter for a few weeks before the Challenge. In the weeks leading up to the Challenge, the participation certificates, forms for each hospital area to record participation, and a short fact sheet on breastfeeding are printed off. We also have children's books donated so that each participant gets a book. In the NICU, we ask staff members to talk to moms the day before. Each room where the mother wants to take part is flagged with a "sticky" on the door. The nurses in all areas are reminded of the event and the time on the day before and the day of the Challenge. On the day of the Challenge, volunteer staff (plus students in some years) call the units and then go around talking to mothers and staff. The PA system on each unit announces "Latch on" and between staff and volunteers the participation certificates, fact sheets and gift books are distributed. The participation sheets are collected from the units and the tally done.

Every mother and baby counts! If every NICU in Canada took part, what a powerful message for families - no matter whether it was one family per unit or every breastfeeding mother in the unit. If we wait until we “have time” we miss opportunities to support families plus the opportunity to educate mothers, families and the public.

In 2019, we are having a NICU party to follow the Quintessence Challenge with breast themed cupcakes, tea/coffee and selfies. We hope hospitals across Canada will register and encourage even one mother to take part. It’s fun and empowers mothers in achieving their breastfeeding goals.



St John's, New Brunswick, Breastfeeding Challenge 2018

Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge 2019!

Calling all sites for the 2019 Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge- it is not too late! Register a site today on the Quintessence Foundation website. Whether the site involves one mother and child or many - support breastfeeding and non-profit donor milk banking- Register today!