

NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY TOGETHER: A ROAD MAP FOR FASD CAREGIVERS

WELCOME TO THE 3RD ANNUAL
PROOF ALLIANCE CAREGIVER CONFERENCE

PR%F
Alliance

PROOF ALLIANCE MISSION

To prevent prenatal alcohol exposure and support all impacted by fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).

DAY 1: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025

*Exhibitors will be present only on Day 1 of the conference. Be sure to visit our exhibitor tables during breaks to explore products and services supporting the FASD community.

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast and Networking
9:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	Welcome
9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	Keynote
10:15 a.m. - 10:35 a.m.	Break and Exhibit Tables
10:35 a.m. - 11:35 a.m.	Breakout Sessions 1-3
11:35 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.	Break and Exhibit Tables
11:50 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.	Breakout Sessions 4-6
12:50 p.m. - 1:50 p.m.	Lunch
1:50 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.	Facilitated Discussions
2:35 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.	Break and Exhibit Tables
2:50 p.m. - 3:50 p.m.	Keynote
3:50 p.m. 4:00 p.m.	Day 1 Wrap-Up

All presentation slides, handouts and the full conference program are available in a shared Google Drive. You can access them by scanning the QR code provided.



DAY 2: FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2025

8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Hot Breakfast
9:30 a.m. - 9:50 a.m.	Welcome: Proof Alliance Program Highlights
9:50 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Break
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Breakout Sessions 7–9
11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Break
11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Caregiver Spotlight Video
11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Keynote
12:45 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Day 2 Wrap-Up

All presentation slides, handouts and the full conference program are available in a shared Google Drive. You can access them by scanning the QR code provided.

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EXHIBITORS

We're excited to welcome a variety of exhibitors who will be sharing valuable information and resources to support families and communities.

***Exhibitors will be present only Day 1 of the conference.**

- Adoption Changes
- Adoption Medicine Clinic
- Dog Training Elite
- Families Rising Minnesota
- Family Voices of Minnesota
- Foster Adopt Minnesota
- High Fidelity Wraparound/Volunteers of America – Minnesota
- Little Homes of Hope
- Looking Forward Life Coaching
- Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
- Minnesota Inclusive Higher Education Consortium (MIHEC)
- Our Children Are Sacred, a program of Proof Alliance
- Proof Alliance
- Schromen Law, LLC
- Special Olympics Minnesota
- Toneworks MN
- True Friends
- University of Minnesota FASD Research Group (MIDB)
- We Can Ride

THANK YOU SPONSORS



DAY 1: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025



FASD Roundtable of Resilience

9:15 A.M. - 10:15 A.M.

WHERE? GARDEN CITY

About the Keynote Presentation:

Hear directly from a diverse panel of individuals with FASD, spanning a wide age range and experience levels, as they share their journeys, challenges and successes. This panel will highlight a variety of roles, offering invaluable firsthand perspectives and practical insights for caregivers and professionals.

Panelists:

- Rio Quintus (Young Adult)
- Carl Young (Adult and Caregiver)
- Lauren Fosselman (Young Adult)
- Jennifer Norena de Puente (Adult and Caregiver)

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A LIVING EXPERIENCE PANELIST?

As a Proof Alliance Living Experience Panelist, you can share your experiences with caregivers, educators, doctors and community members.

By telling your story, you help others understand what it's really like to live with an FASD. You'll be breaking down misconceptions and helping build more caring and supportive communities.

You'll be compensated for your time. Your voice is powerful, and you can make a big difference in how the world sees FASD.

If you're interested, we'd love to help you get started!

Contact us at youthandfamily@proofalliance.org.

DAY 1: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025

10:35 A.M. – 11:35 A.M.



Friendly But Struggling with Friendships

Kimber Mork



Parenting Extremes

Juli Geske-Peer



Waiver Services and Self-Advocacy Strategies

GeWaden Dunkley
and Dalaine Remes

HARVEST A

Friendly But Struggling with Friendships:

This presentation explores the unique challenges young people with FASD face in building and maintaining friendships, offering insights from their perspective and highlighting therapeutic strategies that can be applied both in clinical settings and at home. Presenter Kimber Mork is a clinical social worker with 25 years of experience in the mental health field. She specializes in therapy and support for neurodiverse youth including those with autism, FASD and ADHD.

HARVEST B

Parenting Extremes:

This presentation offers practical, real-life strategies for navigating the complex challenges of parenting children with FASD, empowering caregivers with tools to foster connection, reduce stress, and support their child's unique path to success. Presenter Juli Geske-Peer is the founder of Peer Performance Solutions, a leadership expert with over 25 years of experience, specializing in executive coaching, emotional intelligence and conflict resolution, while also drawing from her personal experiences parenting children with FASD to empower others.

HARVEST C

Waiver Services and Self-Advocacy Strategies:

This presentation will provide an overview of Minnesota's Medical Assistance programs, including service options, eligibility criteria, and advocacy strategies, while equipping participants with tools to navigate the system and appeal decisions related to disability support services. Presenters Dalaine Remes and GeWaden Dunkley are experienced disability advocates, with Dalaine specializing in legal support for system navigation and accommodations, and GeWaden leading community services integration and legal representation for disability rights.

DAY 1: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025

11:50 A.M. – 12:50 P.M.



What About My Other Children? The Impact on Siblings

Jana Hunsley
Lebieczinski



FASD and Advocacy in the Justice System

Nik Lovaas, M.S., LMFT



Kinship Caregivers: Resources and Supports

Janet Salo

HARVEST A

What About My Other Children? The Impact on Siblings:

This session will explore the impact of FASD on siblings, providing research-based insights and effective communication strategies that support both siblings and the entire family, helping to reduce stress and foster stronger connections. Presenter Dr. Jana Hunsley is a psychologist with expertise in consulting, training, and counseling for foster and adoptive families, specializing in trauma-informed care and post-adoption support services, with a background in clinical settings and a focus on the needs of children and youth who have experienced trauma.

HARVEST B

FASD and Advocacy in the Justice System:

Caregivers can make a difference through effective advocacy if their child or adult becomes involved in the justice system. This session will offer tools, resources and foundational knowledge on risk and protective factors to support caregivers in navigating these challenges. Presenter Nik Lovaas, M.S., LMFT, is a licensed therapist with two decades of experience supporting individuals with FASD using trauma-informed, strength-based, and culturally enriching approaches.

HARVEST C

Kinship Caregivers: Resources and Supports:

This presentation will provide kinship caregivers with an understanding of available resources, benefits, and supports, including financial, legal, and medical assistance, to help them navigate foster care and informal caregiving. Presenter Janet Salo is a Kinship Navigator with Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, bringing over 25 years of experience in advocacy, educational support, and training for kinship caregivers and individuals with unique abilities, along with various certifications in caregiving and mediation.

HUNGRY? LUNCH IS SERVED.

12:50 p.m. – 1:50 p.m. – Join us for lunch in Garden City.

DAY 1: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025

1:50 P.M. - 2:35 P.M.



Facilitated Discussion:
Birth - 12 Years Old
Sandy Hruby



Facilitated Discussion:
18+ Years Old
Melissa Fredin



Facilitated Discussion:
13 - 17 Years Old
Teresa Kothbauer



Join nearly 1,000 caregivers in the Proof Alliance Virtual Family Center (VFC) private Facebook group—connect with a community that understands!



SCAN HERE

HARVEST A

Facilitated Discussion - Birth-12 Years Old:

Connect with other caregivers raising children with an FASD in the early years. This discussion will focus on developmental milestones, early intervention, school supports and strategies for building strong foundations at home. Share experiences, ask questions and gain support from others on a similar journey. Discussion leader Sandy Hruby is the parent of three adopted adult children, two with FASD diagnoses and is currently raising her 4-year-old grandson who also has FASD. With a background as an Early Childhood Licensed Teacher, she has spent the past six years working in Social Services. Sandy has extensive experience navigating school systems, social services, therapeutic services and legal systems.

HARVEST B

Facilitated Discussion - 18+ Years Old:

Connect with other caregivers supporting adults with an FASD. This discussion will focus on topics like transitions, independence, housing, employment and navigating adult systems of care. Share experiences, challenges and resources in a supportive space. Discussion leader Melissa Fredin has been a dedicated foster care provider since 1999 and has spent over 20 years offering parent support and coaching to families. An adoptive mother of seven, with her oldest in their 30s, Melissa continues to learn and grow alongside the families she serves.

HARVEST C

Facilitated Discussion - 13-17 Years Old:

Join fellow caregivers raising teens with an FASD for a supportive conversation about navigating adolescence. This session will explore topics like independence, mental health, school and social dynamics and preparing for the transition to adulthood. Connect, share and learn from others facing similar challenges and triumphs. Discussion leader Teresa Kothbauer is a member of the Proof Alliance Certified Trainers (PACT) and has worked with Proof Alliance since her son's FASD diagnosis in 2014. She brings valuable experience as a caregiver, along with years of ongoing learning.

DAY 1: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025



Blocked Care - Attending to the Caregiver's Needs

2:50 P.M. - 3:50 P.M.

WHERE? GARDEN CITY

About This Keynote Presentation:

Chronic stress, feelings of helplessness and isolation can take a toll on caregivers, making it difficult to provide the compassionate, nurturing, and consistent care their children need. Over time, these pressures can push caregivers into a state of emotional exhaustion known as blocked care—where survival mode takes over, and connection becomes difficult.

In this training, we will explore blocked care: how it develops, how it impacts both caregivers and children and most importantly, how to help caregivers move beyond it. By understanding and addressing blocked care, we can foster healing for the entire family system and create an environment where both children and caregivers can thrive.

About the Presenter:

Dr. Jana Hunsley is a psychologist dedicated to supporting foster and adoptive families through consulting, training, coaching, and counseling. Her work is centered on understanding and addressing the unique needs of every family member, ensuring a holistic approach to healing and stability.

With extensive experience in counseling, research, teaching, and resource development, Jana has created a proven model that improves the well-being and quality of life for foster and adoptive families. She earned her doctorate in experimental psychology from the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University, where she focused on developing post-adoption support services.

Jana has worked in a variety of clinical settings, including residential treatment, institutional care, schools, child welfare, and juvenile detention, providing therapy for children and youth who have experienced trauma. Her passion for this work is deeply personal—shaped by her own experience as a teenager when her family adopted her siblings.

HUNGRY? WE'VE GOT BREAKFAST.

Day 1 (Continental Breakfast): 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Day 2 (Hot Breakfast): 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Both will take place in Garden City.

Start your day with great conversation and a delicious meal!

PROOF PROGRAMMING



Proof Alliance offers a variety of in-person and virtual support groups as well as family-friendly events, all led by FASD-informed staff, partners and volunteers. These gatherings, hosted at Proof Alliance or partner sites across the metro and beyond, provide a safe space for connection and community. Scan the QR code to explore our current list of events, initiatives and support groups.

THE PROOF ALLIANCE VIRTUAL FAMILY CENTER



The Proof Alliance Virtual Family Center is a peer support Facebook group for FASD caregivers to share encouragement, resources, experiences, and wins. This welcoming online community is open to caregivers everywhere seeking connection and support from others who understand the unique joys and challenges of raising someone with an FASD.

DAY 2: FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2025

10:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.



Caregiving with Confidence: Care Smarter, Not Harder

Melissa Fredin



Navigating Adulthood with Your Child

Sara Swan



Access to Appropriate Special Education Services

Julene Powell Zizza

HARVEST A

Caregiving with Confidence: Care Smarter, Not Harder:

This presentation offers practical tips and strategies from an experienced caregiver to help navigate everyday challenges, set healthy boundaries, and maintain a sense of humor while fostering a positive caregiving experience. Presenter Melissa Fredin is a co-owner of Engaged 360 Parent Coaching, a Master Level Trainer for childcare providers, and a contractor with Proof Alliance, with over 20 years of experience in foster care, family support and community education.

HARVEST B

Navigating Adulthood with Your Child:

This presentation will explore strategies for preparing individuals with FASD and their caregivers for the transition into adulthood, focusing on essential resources, supports, and approaches to create a smoother and more peaceful transition. Presenter Sara Swan is the founder and executive director of Looking Forward Life Coaching, a nonprofit supporting neurodivergent adults, including those with FASD and autism, and brings 30 years of experience as a guardian and advocate for her uncle and neurodiverse daughter.

HARVEST C

Access to Appropriate Special Education Services:

This presentation will explore the legal rights families and guardians have under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) from birth to age 21, highlighting challenges and opportunities in navigating education and laying the groundwork for long-term success for individuals with disabilities. Presenter Julene Powell Zizza is a special education teacher with 39 years of experience and a Master's in Special Education and Rehabilitation. She is an advocate for individuals with FASD and substance use disorders during pregnancy. Julene has been a national speaker for ACOG Grand Rounds and an active member of the FASD United Birth Mother's Circle of Hope for 24 years.

DAY 2: FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2025



From Struggles to Strength - A Family's FASD Story

11:30 A.M. - 12:45 P.M.

WHERE? GARDEN CITY

About This Keynote Presentation:

Join the engaging mother-and-son duo, Barb and Zeke Clark, as they share their family's transformative journey in supporting their daughter and sister, who lives with FASD. Through heartfelt storytelling, infused with humor and authenticity, Barb and Zeke will recount the highs and lows of their experiences, including their successes, mistakes and the invaluable lessons learned along the way.

This workshop offers a unique and personal perspective on navigating the complexities of family dynamics when raising and supporting an individual with FASD. From practical strategies to epic missteps, Barb and Zeke will highlight what worked for their family, what they would change in hindsight and how they built a foundation of resilience and understanding.

About the Presenters:

Barb Clark is the Director of Training at Families Rising and the proud adoptive parent of five adult children. With a passion for turning her parenting challenges into valuable lessons, Barb openly shares her experiences to help others avoid common pitfalls. She uses humor and real-life stories to inspire professionals and caregivers to question traditional approaches and embrace innovative strategies. A University of Minnesota Youth Development graduate, she credits her greatest learning to raising children affected by prenatal alcohol, drug exposure and trauma.

Zeke Clark is a college track athlete set to graduate from Minnesota State University-Mankato in June 2025 with a degree in Criminal Justice and Policing Studies. As the youngest of five siblings and the brother of a young woman with FASD, he is a dedicated advocate for FASD awareness. Zeke is passionate about educating others on the challenges faced by individuals with FASD and their families, working to promote greater understanding and support within communities.

**Note: This presenter did not provide a slide deck for inclusion in the shared Google Drive.*

FAQS

Q: ARE MEALS PROVIDED?

A: Yes! Breakfast will be provided on both days of the conference, and lunch will be served on day one.

Q: WILL I BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE CONFERENCE MATERIALS LATER?

A: Yes! All presentation slides, handouts and the full conference program are available in a shared Google Drive. You can access them by scanning the QR code provided below.



Q. ARE CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS AVAILABLE TO ATTENDEES?

a: All attendees will receive a certificate of attendance which includes 6.25 learning hours. Hard copies will be available at the end of the conference for your convenience.

Q. HOW CAN I PROVIDE FEEDBACK ABOUT THE CONFERENCE?

A: We value your input! A conference evaluation form will be provided in hard copy at the end of the event and will also be sent via email. Your feedback helps us improve future programming.

Q. HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT FASD?

A: Visit learn.proofalliance.org to explore free, self-paced online courses designed to deepen your understanding of FASD and related topics.

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