# September rocks! – International FASD Awareness Month

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### In support of International FASD month, throughout September Drink Tank is sharing the stories of individuals, families and carers living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

*In support of International FASD month, throughout September Drink Tank is sharing the stories of individuals and families living with* [*Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)*](https://www.nofasd.org.au/alcohol-and-pregnancy/what-is-fasd/)*.*

*This is Cheryl’s Story, a mother of a son living with FASD and the Chair of the Board of NOFASD Australia.*

*To find out more about FASD, visit the* [*NOFASD website*](https://www.nofasd.org.au/)*. To find out more about referral, diagnosis or supports, call the NOFASD Helpline on 1800 860 613.*

I love September!  Yes, it’s the start of spring and new life seems to abound.  The swooping magpies remind me that they are guarding their eggs that will soon hatch to produce their chicks. I hope that they bring their young into our backyard to teach them the skills they will need to survive, just as they have for the last few years.

The apricot tree over our fence is full of blossoms, with the promise of plump and juicy fruit in a few months….my favourite fruit by the way.  My vegie garden which I chose to plant flowers in at the beginning of Covid-19 isolation, as a way of bringing me joy with colour every time I step out my back door, has not disappointed. The tall and vibrantly coloured poppies are my favourite. Even though I love all these delights, it’s not actually why I love September.

My name is Cheryl, I’m Chair of the Board of NOFASD Australia and I love September because it’s International FASD Awareness Month. My favourite day in September is the 9th, which is International FASD Awareness Day… of course!

I’m slightly passionate when it comes to spreading the news about FASD, so when September rolls around, it’s like Christmas.

Red shoes abound as part of the Red Shoes Rock campaign and create a party atmosphere, whether they’re being worn, adorned or being sent as pictures in every way possible via technology. So, just like in the lead up to the real Christmas in December when our inboxes are continually filled with everything relating to the season, I love the continual messages I receive via all technology forms, with information about everything FASD.

Why am I passionate about FASD? I’ll explain by introducing my family. My husband is Pete and we have two sons. Our eldest son would actually say that I’m not passionate about FASD… he’d say I’m obsessed! Our younger son just knows that I’m passionate, because it’s this passion that drives me to guide him to become the best he can be as he lives with the FASD he was born with.

Advocating, teaching and researching FASD has become the norm in my life. None of it is easy and I have come across countless roadblocks, but I have a strong belief that a roadblock means you need to take a detour!

During September, FASD information is delivered far and wide, educating professionals, families and our communities, because education is our way forward to prevent and support those who are living with this disability every single day of their lives…forever!!

Education is also the beginning of understanding and with understanding comes acceptance. Acceptance for the birth mothers who either had no knowledge of the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy, were ill advised by professionals or were struggling with an alcohol addiction. Acceptance for those who are living with FASD and their families. Support for the behaviours, learning disabilities and many other deficits that come from the damage to their brain during development in-utero.

Amidst the cold, hard facts that must be shared about how FASD affects those who live with this disability, there is also a comradery amongst the families and individuals of those affected. It is their time to shine and they deserve it! Many have endured ridicule, judgment and feelings of inadequacies that are often heartbreaking.

But each September, stories emerge of achievements, which for me are spine tingling. I can imagine the amount of support and effort that will have been required for each of the steps for their achievement. From the frustrations that inevitably occur due to the inability for their brain to co-ordinate simple instructions, to the exhaustion that overtakes their body from the effort required.

So, to those brave people and their families, thank you for sharing your stories… you are a light in the darkness for so many others who at this stage in their lives, are unable to imagine anything like this ever happening for them.

I’m excited that all around the world, people who I have met either in person or communicated with, are rockin’ their Red Shoes, proud to be a part of the FASD movement to educate everyone. We do this for the past, the present and the future. Please join me, as we Rock September!

**Learn more about the Red Shoes Rock campaign** [**here**](https://www.nofasd.org.au/blog/red-shoes-rock/)**.**

### Metadata