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Footprints Initiative Expands Into The Bonnyville Medical Clinic



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The Bonnyville Medical Clinic is partnering with Blaise Hunter to improve support on the frontlines. Hunter, the Founder of Footprints Infertility & Pregnancy Loss Initiative, formed the group to start a conversation and infuse empathy into a subject that has been taboo for so long. “My vision is to give a voice to our angel babies and be an advocate for grieving parents,” said Hunter. “No longer do we need to suffer in silence and feel alone. It is time to start addressing infertility and loss as a mental health issue and not just a medical one. I am so pleased to have the full support of the doctors and I am beyond excited about our collaboration to bring healing tools and mental health resources into the system.”



Hunter needed funding to launch her efforts in the clinic and the community stepped up. “I put out a call to action for the Lakeland and they responded,” details Hunter. “Within a week, I received \$5,700 to proceed with implementing the distribution of support bags to parents the moment their trauma happens as well as to those who are struggling with infertility. The community spoke loud and clear that they want these bags and they support me in my efforts to invoke positive change.”

President of the Bonnyville Medical Clinic, Theresa Watson, is ecstatic over the alliance, “We are always looking for new ways to enhance patient care and Footprints is such a great initiative that brings empathy and support to a part of the system that has been in the shadows for far too long. The staff of the BMC is delighted to implement the Footprints support bags in the clinic and we know this is such a wonderful program for the area.”

The support bags will be rolling out over the summer months.



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The author of *Heroine: Embrace Your Flaws & Own Your Awesome* wrote about her three miscarriages and is an advocate for getting loud about infertility and pregnancy loss. "I wrote my book to help me and others heal emotionally from the trauma infertility and loss can have on one's life," Hunter explained. "Partnerships with The Dragonfly Centre and now the Bonnyville Medical Clinic will just extend our reach with the program and will truly help others heal. With the financial support and these joint ventures, I can now move into the second and third phases of this initiative which includes; creating a memorial and distributing the bags in Cold Lake."



The mandate for Footprints is a two-part mission:

- Improve the systems on the frontlines to ensure parents get the care, information and emotional support the moment their trauma happens.
- Create an on-going support group to continue the efforts to aid in the emotional support in the weeks and months after parents leave the clinic/hospital.

Hunter facilitates monthly support group meetings at The Dragonfly Centre for men and women. The meetings are on hiatus over the summer and will resume in September. Footprints is featured on the Alberta Health Services and Covenant Health Pregnancy Loss Support Group's Regional list and all info and meetings can be found on www.blaisehunter.com as well as the Facebook Group - Footprints: Infertility & Pregnancy Loss Support Group.

Hunter won the 2019 Cold Lake Women of Influence Award in the Health & Wellness Category for her work with Footprints.

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