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Group aims to address stigma through cardboard cutout breastfeeding campaign

By Kathryn Boyle
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A local coalition has taken pictures of moms breastfeeding their children to promote and support the act of breastfeeding in the region.

Anna West, public health liaison to the Halton Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI), was one of the key organizers in putting the March 23 event together.

BFI board members decided at their annual general meeting in December life-size cutouts would help normalize breastfeeding in public and promote it.

It's something we've been meaning to do for a while, and it's something other breastfeeding coalitions and health units have done in Ontario and outside of Ontario, West explained.

The organization partnered with a local photographer, and a local photo development store will create the cutouts.

It was on our plan to do for this year and there's a few different members on the work group that really wanted to make it happen, West said. There's a few of us that have taken the lead on sorting it out and getting it going and making it happen.

The cutouts will be put in public places in an effort of making women more comfortable with the idea of breastfeeding for as long as they can.

We're trying to encourage families to breastfeed until two years and beyond, West said. That's our main goal.

By the time the event rolled around, all the tickets had been sold. If people are interested, the organization would consider adding another day, West said.

A lot of women like to have breastfeeding pictures done of them and their child, and they're beautiful pictures they do, West said of the photographer.

The coalition plans on erecting the cutouts in Halton hospitals, including the Georgetown Hospital, during the Canadian and the world breastfeeding weeks, taking place the first week of October and sometime in August, respectively.

We're going to print four of these cutouts and one will go to each of the Halton hospitals, West said. If anyone is interested in putting a cutout somewhere other than the hospital, West encourages them to come forward.

For more information, visit babyfriendly-halton.ca

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