Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is a well known disorder, yet the far reaching societal ramifications need continuous highlighting until everyone realizes its deep societal impact, as well as how easily it can be prevented.

On January 2 the Minnesota Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS) stood tall in their “Day on the Hill.” An excellent, well organized rally in the Capitol buildings’ Great Hall showed the maturing of their advocacy efforts. Present in support of MOFAS were Jeannie Fox, Deputy Policy Director for Minnesota Council of Non-Profits, Minnesota State Rep. Larry Hosch, DFL-14B and Minnesota State Sen. Ann Lynch DFL-30.

Approximately 8,500 Minnesota babies are born each year with brain damage caused by prenatal alcohol exposure (CDC 2006). Once the damage is done it cannot be reversed, FAS is 100% preventable. Presenters at the MOFAS Day on the Hill suggested that if the community adopts a more visible stance against the notion of expectant mothers consuming alcohol, then an epidemic in the right direction could be possible.

According to the US Surgeon General, there is no safe amount of, no safe time of consumption, and no safe kind of alcohol during pregnancy). However, the Minnesota Dept of Health reported that one third (33%) of women said that their provider did not mention alcohol use during their pregnancy. MOFAS also reports that college-educated women are the most likely of any group to drink alcohol while pregnant. For those who are somehow not moved by the ongoing social-societal ramifications caused by people being mentally impaired due to prenatal exposure to alcohol, know this: it is estimated to cost Minnesotans $107.4 million annually for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

Fox spoke of an early career stint working in a detox facility. Through that experience she gained a first-hand understanding of the many struggles, including incarceration, from

individuals not properly diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. In this way Fetal Alcohol Syndrome has impacts exponentially more powerful than the quick, silent sip of alcohol that begins the huge, painful snowball, and that is putting it lightly.

MOFAS is committed to educating communities on the harmful effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Through its outreach efforts, MOFAS also works to improve the lives of children and families who are affected by FAS. For more information, www. http://www.mofas.org/