



Paul Archer Mural in downtown Grand Forks—May 2022

The Compassion in Action Community Conference

Submitted by the Grand Forks Community Action Team
(Photo courtesy of Paul Archer)

The Compassion in Action Community Conference is coming up on Friday, June 24th and Saturday, June 25th in Grand Forks. This 2-day educational conference event will be an opportunity to learn from experts about the provincial overdose crisis and the healthcare response.

The conference will provide education about substance use treatment, mental health care, public healthcare, and local supports for families. The conference will focus on how to keep families safer and reduce harms due to substance use.

Leslie McBain, co-founder of Moms Stop the Harm, and Family Engagement Lead with BC Centre on Substance Use is one of the conference speakers. Leslie lost her son to a drug overdose several years ago. She founded the Moms Stop the Harm group with other parents who have lost family members to create a provincial network of support, advocacy, and healing for families.

West Kootenay nurse practitioner Zak Matieschyn will also speak at the conference. Matieschyn has specialized training in substance use and addiction. Zak will speak about best practices for substance use treatment and the reasons behind addiction.

This free 2-day conference will be at the USCC Community Centre. The conference is on Friday, June 24th and Saturday, June 25th, 2022, from 8:30 am to 3pm ~ each day. There is a maximum of 100 people for this event. There will be a continental breakfast and a Doukhobor lunch for attendees.

To register and for more information please follow this [Conference Eventbrite Registration link](#). All attendees must pre-register for the event.

Grand Forks City Councillor Christine Thompson says, “The speakers list is outstanding...I encourage my colleagues and the public to attend this informative conference where there will be an opportunity to ask questions and to learn.”

The Grand Forks Community Action Team is hosting the event in collaboration with the BC Centre on Substance Use and ANKORS West.

The Grand Forks Community Action Team is committed to improving services, providing education around substance use, and helping families to staying safer. The group recommends this [Interior Health website](#) to learn more about the healthcare response to the overdose crisis and to find local support and treatment for substance use.

Laura Savinkoff, the Boundary Peace Initiative Coordinator, USCC (Doukhobor), and Grand Forks Representative to the Spiritual and Cultural Development Committee, also encourages local people to come out to the learning event.

Laura says, “This is a great opportunity for the people of the Boundary to explore and to learn how we can all work together to reduce the harm and eliminate the stigma of addiction.”

Ashley Cole, the Community Engagement Lead with the BC Centre on Substance Use, will lead a workshop at the event. Ashley will engage conference participants in supportive conversations to help create positive change and to advocate for more services for Grand Forks community.

Tanis Carson, ANKORS Outreach Worker, and Moms Stop the Harm member, states, “My hope is that our ‘Compassion in Action’ conference will bring awareness and education around substance use disorders and reduce stigma in our community. Only when we understand addiction, can we let go of the stigma that prevents us from seeing the person before the addiction.”

If you or someone you know is struggling with substance use, please reach out to friends, family, a doctor, or connect with your local mental health office at 310-MHSU for support.

There is also support available through ANKORS West at 250-505-5506.

To access support groups for families who have lost loved ones or have family members using substances please visit the [Moms Stop the Harm website](#) or contact holdinghopewestkootenays@gmail.com