

Burn Prevention and Awareness Coordinator – Lynda Fraser

Lynda was severely burned in an apartment fire in 1983 when she went into the fire to rescue her five year old son Adam. Lynda suffered burns to 80% of her body with 50% being third degree. The most extensive burns are on her face, hands, arms and back. Adam had less extensive burns as a result of a quick thinking neighbour who immediately put him in a tub of cool water.

Lynda began her campaign to educate the general public, corporations and medical professionals in burn awareness and social acceptance of burn survivors in 1984. Three years ago she started delivering her school based presentations to students throughout Alberta. Lynda brought her program to the **Canadian Burn Foundation** in January 2005 and is now offering it through them to students in Alberta and other places in Canada as requested. The program is free of charge to the schools.

Lynda Rae Fraser captures the students' attention from the minute they walk into the room. The program talks about the different ways people get burned (e.g. electrical, chemical, scalds and fire), how to prevent these injuries, and what can be done immediately to lessen the severity of the injury. Near the end of the hour Lynda shows the students a video, for the students in grade four and up she uses an old W5 show about a young girl who was burned when she was nine (she is 14 in the video) and her talking about the experience. There are four very quick pictures of how she looked while she was still in the hospital. While these images are not the nicest to look at Lynda tells the students about them ahead of time and tells them they can look away for the second or two that they are on the screen. So far, these images have not disturbed anyone as those that don't want to look choose not to and therefore don't see them.

Lynda then tells her own story of injury and recovery only going into as much detail as is appropriate for the age group of her audience. She also brings with her some of the things used in the healing of burns, like splints and pressure garments. This allows the students to understand better what it is like to go through this injury.

It is not Lynda's intention to scare the students but to give them a realistic view of what it is like to go through a burn injury. It is her hope that the students will understand better so that they will be more careful around things that could burn them but also so that if and when they meet someone who has been burned they will be more empathetic towards that person.

Lynda has found a way to turn something traumatic into something positive by teaching students not only about safety but acceptance of differences in people and themselves. Lynda always tells her audience that she likes the way she looks and she does! It is her hope that the students realize that if she can be

okay with the way she looks that there is no need for them to worry about the imperfections in their lives.