

# F.E.A.S.T. Highlights of 2015

***What has F.E.A.S.T. been doing all year? Read on...***



## Caregiver Support on "Around the Dinner Table" Forum

**F.E.A.S.T.'s "Around the Dinner Table" Forum (ATDT)** marked its 11th year in existence as a go-to place for caregivers of eating disorder patients to find support, information, and empowerment. Forum topics ranged from concerns about the transition to college, struggle to achieve weight restoration, signs of recovery and how long does it take, feeling 'stuck' and not sure how to proceed with treatment.

Many experienced caregivers with loved ones in recovery continue to visit the forum and mentor new members by sharing experiences, providing links to resources and answering questions about providers or programs available in their corner of the world. ***Special thanks goes to the ATDT 'Mod Squad' who volunteer their time to welcome new members, enforce the rules, and share their knowledge and skills while inspiring hope for recovery.***

### **2015 ATDT Forum Statistics:**

936 New Members (YTD)  
14,980 Topics  
209,441 Replies  
224,421 Total posts  
507,806 Average page views per month

## Let's F.E.A.S.T. Blog

The Let's F.E.A.S.T. Blog kicked off 2015 with the **"Five Questions" Blog Series**. Eating disorder advocates from around the world were invited to answer the same five questions. This blog series includes insights from eating disorder advocates Kitty Westin (USA), Fiona Bromelow (UK), Sam Thomas (UK), Mary Beth Krohel (USA), Faith Yesner (USA), Becky Henry (USA), Lizabeth Wesely-Casella (USA), Alec Rodney (USA), and Judy Krasna (Israel).

**Special thanks to F.E.A.S.T. Outreach Director Lisa LaBorde for coordinating this blog series and for sharing her own insights as a caregiver and ED advocate through her other postings on “Let’s F.E.A.S.T.”**



## **AED International Conference on Eating Disorders (ICED)**

**April, 2015**

F.E.A.S.T. was an exhibitor at the [2015 Academy for Eating Disorders Annual Conference in Boston](#), MA, USA. Attending AED conferences allows us to connect with researchers and clinicians around the world, many of whom are delighted to find resources to help them engage with caregivers as partners in treatment. During the conference, F.E.A.S.T. distributed hundreds of Family Guides, and brochures and introduced our services to hundreds of clinicians around the world.

AED ICED is an international gathering and provided the perfect venue for an Advisor Appreciation Lunch. ***F.E.A.S.T.’s Professional Advisors donate their time and knowledge to inform our work as advocates and caregivers.*** The lunch was well attended and allowed advisors, parents, advocates and other professionals to interact over a delicious meal at Legal Seafood.



F.E.A.S.T.’s presence at AED ICED Boston extended well beyond the exhibit hall. F.E.A.S.T. Founder, Laura Collins presented at two ICED workshops: ***“Virtually Recovered: Using Blogs, Video Chats, Support Groups and Apps to Meet the Needs of Patients, Practitioners and Caregivers”*** (with Lori Lieberman, Cate Sangster, Sarah Ravin), and ***“Difficult Dialogues in Eating Disorders: Can we use AED Relationships to Learn from our Diversity and Advance our Field even when we Disagree?”*** (with Carolyn Becker, Kelly Klump, Judith Banker).

In addition, F.E.A.S.T.’s Executive Director, Leah Dean and Israel Task Force Chair, Judy Krasna, were officially welcomed as ***Co-chairs of the new AED Patient-Carer Committee (PCC)***. We were able to connect with other AED committee chairs and came away with valuable connections and ideas for collaboration with other AED committees and special interest groups (SIGs) at AED. Leah also accepted an invitation to represent the PCC on the ***AED ICED 2017 Planning Committee***. ICED 2017 will take place in June in Prague, Czech Republic.

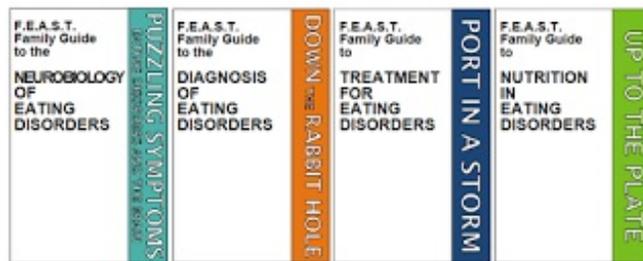
## **The F.E.A.S.T. Family Guide Booklet Series**

**April, 2015**

F.E.A.S.T. published the 4th booklet in our F.E.A.S.T. Family Guide Series: **[“Up To the Plate: The Importance of Nutrition for Understanding and Treating Eating Disorders.”](#)**

Laura Collins Lyster-Mensch wrote an initial draft, which Editor in Chief, Debra Katzman, MD, University of Toronto, Canada, used as a starting point for her and her editing team to answer common questions that families have regarding the role of nutrition in treating eating disorders.

F.E.A.S.T. Executive Director, Leah Dean, served as copy editor for the final draft and arranged for the printing of 5,000 copies. *The 'Nutrition Guide' and our other three booklet titles can be [ordered through our website store](#), or downloaded as PDF documents.*



## AED & F.E.A.S.T. Twitter Chat:



November, 2015

F.E.A.S.T. Board Members Leah Dean (USA), Lisa LaBorde (CAN), and Nicki Wilson (New Zealand), answered questions on the topic, "[The Road to Recovery: Parents as Partners in Treatment](#)", hosted by the [AED Social Media Committee](#).

## “Nine Truths About Eating Disorders”

May, 2015

F.E.A.S.T. was proud to co-sign "[Nine Truths About Eating Disorders](#)," *a consensus document that recognizes new scientific knowledge about a group of illnesses that has been poorly understood for a long time.* "Nine Truths" was produced by thirteen professional and advocacy groups in collaboration with Dr. Cynthia Bulik, PhD, FAED, Distinguished Professor at the Univ of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

*The “Nine Truths” document offers a strategy to increase public awareness and understanding about eating disorders and end the dissemination of misinformation about the typical sufferer and their family.* The “Nine Truths” have been translated into multiple languages.

F.E.A.S.T. is thrilled to be part of this united effort to dispel stigma and raise understanding with the ultimate goal of bringing families and caregivers together with empirically supported care. *F.E.A.S.T. believes that empowered caregivers are essential to the treatment and recovery process.*



*Truth #1: Many people with eating disorders look healthy, yet may be extremely ill.*

*Truth #2: Families are not to blame, and can be the patients' and providers' best allies in treatment.*

*Truth #3: An eating disorder diagnosis is a health crisis that disrupts personal and family functioning.*

*Truth #4: Eating disorders are not choices, but serious biologically influenced illnesses.*

*Truth #5: Eating disorders affect people of all genders, ages, races, ethnicities, body shapes and weights, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses.*

*Truth #6: Eating disorders carry an increased risk for both suicide and medical complications.*

*Truth #7: Genes and environment play important roles in the development of eating disorders.*

*Truth #8: Genes alone do not predict who will develop eating disorders.*

*Truth #9: Full recovery from an eating disorder is possible. Early detection and intervention are important.*

## **NEW: F.E.A.S.T. Israel Task Force**

**June, 2015**

F.E.A.S.T. is proud to announce a new Local Task Force, chaired by Judy Krasna in Israel. Judy also co-chairs the AED Patient-Carer Committee and was invited to be a guest host for the [AED Twitter Chat: "Treating Eating Disorders in the Orthodox Jewish Community"](#)



## **Australasian Activities:**

**May, 2015**

F.E.A.S.T. Founder, Laura Collins Lyster-Mensh was welcomed to Australia by Don Irvine and other 'FEASTies,' in Perth, where she spoke at the **"Bridging the Gap: Collaboration with Clinicians and Carers"** event in Perth, AUS, hosted by [Bridges Eating Disorders Association of Western Australia, Inc.](#)



From Perth, Laura travelled to Melbourne to give the Keynote Presentation **“From Fear to Fierce - Transforming parents into a powerful treatment ally,”** at the 2nd **“At Home with Eating Disorders” (AHWED) Carers Conference.**



F.E.A.S.T. Board Member and Australian Task Force Chair Belinda Caldwell, represented F.E.A.S.T., in partnership with *The Butterfly Foundation*, the *Victorian Centre of Excellence in Eating Disorders (CEED)* and the *Australia & New Zealand Academy for Eating Disorders (ANZAED)* for the planning of the 2nd AHWED conference.

Belinda also partnered with Laura to present a **Pre-Conference Clinician Workshop: “Families and Carers as Allies in the Treatment of Eating Disorders.”** Also presenting to the carers at AHWED was F.E.A.S.T. Dad and Task Force volunteer, Don Irvine, and F.E.A.S.T. Board member Nicki Wilson from New Zealand.

### **August, 2015**

On the Gold Coast of Australia ‘FEASTies’ Belinda Caldwell, Don Irvine and Nicki Wilson attended the **2015 ANZAED Annual Conference**. F.E.A.S.T. shared an exhibit table with another parent-founded charity, the *Eating Disorders Association of New Zealand (EDANZ)*. During the conference, F.E.A.S.T. distributed hundreds of Family Guides, and brochures and introduced our services to hundreds of ED Clinicians in Australia and New Zealand.



In addition, F.E.A.S.T. Dad and Australian Task Force Member, Don Irvine and Dr. Rod McClymont presented a workshop entitled **“Mobilizing male Loved Ones As Treatment & Recovery Resources,”** which was created in collaboration with writer and family advocate Joe Kelly, and clinician Michael P. Levine.

### **November, 2015**

The relationships forged between local F.E.A.S.T. volunteers and ANZAED led to Don Irvine’s involvement in the creation of the recent **ANZAED Position Statement on Inpatient Services for Eating Disorders**. F.E.A.S.T. is proud to endorse this document, which aligns well with **F.E.A.S.T.’s Founding Principles**. In addition, Nicki and Belinda were asked by ANZAED to take part in a newly formed **Carer-Consumer Task Force**.

## **Canada Activities:**

Members of the F.E.A.S.T. Canada Task Force also had a busy year. In addition to providing phone support for Canadian families, they continued to distribute packages of F.E.A.S.T. informational materials to physicians, clinics and families.



### **February, 2015**

F.E.A.S.T. Canada volunteers staffed a F.E.A.S.T. exhibit table for **Eating Disorders Awareness Week** in Guelph, Ontario.

### **October, 2015**

F.E.A.S.T. Canada volunteers staffed an exhibit table at a **Carers Workshop with Professor Janet Treasure** in Kitchener, Ontario.

Also in October, Canada Task Force Co-Chair Laura Beattie spoke at the **“M.O.M. March Against ED”** in Toronto, at the request of the *National Initiative for Eating Disorders (NIED) Organization*.

## Other Canada Task Force Activities from 2015 included:

- Hosting a NIED Symposium on "Including Families in Care".
- Serving on the review panel for Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario parent support online program, Ottawa.
- Participating in a study on Transition Age youth issues at Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto.
- Attending the Annual General Meeting for the [Eating Disorders Foundation of Canada](#).
- Planning and Workshop Panel Participation for ASSIST Mental Health Leaders for the Ontario Ministry of Education on Eating Disorders.
- Helping to plan a Parent Support Group for McMaster Children's Hospital, Hamilton.
- Attending meetings with Members of Parliament and clinicians on feasibility of recruiting for ANGI25K in Canada.
- Responding to a request for translating the F.E.A.S.T. Family Guides into French Canadian with a cost estimate and proposal. (Set aside due to lack of funds)

## United Kingdom Activities

### May, 2015

F.E.A.S.T. UK Task Force volunteer Erica Husain hosted a F.E.A.S.T. exhibit table at a **UCL Clinician Training Workshop talk by Dr. James Locke**. She distributed many of F.E.A.S.T. [Family Guide booklets and brochures](#) and spoke with workshop participants about F.E.A.S.T.'s mission and support services for carers.



### January - November, 2015

F.E.A.S.T. UK Task Force volunteers remain engaged with the **Charlotte's Helix** genetics initiative, which F.E.A.S.T. was instrumental in putting into motion in 2013. <http://www.charlotteshelix.net/>



## 2015 Helix awareness and fundraising activities have included:

- Two musical performance/art auction/fundraising events were held at Covent Garden in January and November.
- Publicity for the January event included an interview on **BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour**, featuring F.E.A.S.T. Advisor, **Prof. Cynthia Bulik** talking about genetics, alongside Ulrike Schmidt from the Maudsley Hospital. [Click to listen to the interview.](#)

### November – December, 2015

F.E.A.S.T. Volunteer, Jen Haken has been working hard to jump-start some local parent support groups in England. And three meet-ups took place in November and December. For more information on how to connect with these groups, be sure to sign up for our UK Announcement email list.

### Looking forward to March, 2016...

F.E.A.S.T. Board Member Susan Ringwood, and F.E.A.S.T. Member Eva Musby each had their workshop proposals accepted for the **2016 Eating Disorders International Conference (EDIC)**, hosted by the Institute of Education in London and **B-eat (Beating Eating Disorders)**. Both workshops will focus on issues related to utilizing,



empowering, and supporting carers as a part of the treatment process.

## United States Activities

**The Pacific Northwest Task Force** continues to host a monthly parent support in Seattle, and has begun a second parent support group in Bellingham, Washington which currently meets 2-3 times a year.



### September, 2015

F.E.A.S.T. Executive Director, Leah Dean travelled to Washington, DC for the [NIMH Alliance for Research Progress Meeting](#).

### October, 2015

F.E.A.S.T. Outreach Director, Lisa LaBorde travelled from Toronto, Canada to Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA to speak at the [Third Annual Conference on Eating Disorders: Integrating Clinical and Research Findings in the Treatment of Eating Disorders](#).

F.E.A.S.T. Board Member, Becky Henry served on the planning committee for the ["M.O.M. \(Mothers and Others\) March Against Eating Disorders](#) in Washington DC. F.E.A.S.T. Executive Director, Leah Dean and F.E.A.S.T. Founder Laura Collins attended the event. Leah and many other F.E.A.S.T. members then met the next day for the [Eating Disorder Coalition's \(EDC\) Fall Lobby Day](#) in support of the [Anna Westin Act](#).



The day of the M.O.M. March, F.E.A.S.T. hosted a ["Lunch & Learn" event featuring a talk by Dr. Mark Warren](#). Thirty-nine parents, patients and advocates attended, most of who headed directly to the US Capital afterwards to attend the M.O.M. March.



## 2014 Activities

For a more detailed look at last year's activities, finances, and member statistics, follow the link below to read our [2014 Annual Report](#).

## Support Us!

All of F.E.A.S.T.'s support services are provided for free. However, as an all volunteer-run organization, we operate on a very tight budget. Many of our volunteers not only spend their time, but their own money to travel and represent the interests of caregivers.

We do not take sponsorships or donations from eating disorder treatment services, and rely on YOUR individual donations to support our operations. Every donation, whatever the amount, is used wisely and is very much appreciated!

***If you value the services we provide, please consider making a donation to F.E.A.S.T. today!***