



National Eating Disorder Information Centre

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December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014

Dear Mayor Van Bynen,

I am writing to request a proclamation from the Town of Newmarket of the week of February 1<sup>st</sup> to February 7<sup>th</sup> 2015 as Eating Disorder Awareness Week (EDAW). EDAW has been commemorated across Canada since 1988 by established eating disorder organizations, education and public health institutions, and concerned members of the public. It draws attention to the causes, prevalence and impact of eating disorders.

Eating disorders are the number one cause of death among all psychiatric illnesses and are the third most common cause of death in teenage girls. In fact, 5-8% of Canadian girls will experience an eating disorder in their lifetime. However, eating disorders can develop in anyone, regardless of age, ethno-racial background, socioeconomic status, gender or ability. Unfortunately, stigma and secrecy still surround eating disorders, causing many people who are suffering to refrain from seeking help, and to struggle in silence.

We know that through open, supportive dialogue, we can help break the shame and silence that affect nearly 1 million Canadians that are living with a diagnosed eating disorder and the millions of others who are struggling with unhealthy food and weight preoccupation. EDAW is a time to increase awareness about eating disorders, their impact and to shed light on the dangerous and pervasive myths that surround them. It is a time of year when Canadians can learn more about eating disorders and about the resources that are available for individuals and family members who are impacted by them.

The National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) was a founding member of the international drive to institute EDAW. Founded in 1985, NEDIC is Canada's oldest national organization dedicated to helping those with eating disorders. We provide education and information as well as support and referral for those with eating disorders, their families, friends and health care professionals. Since our toll-free helpline became available to Canadians from coast to coast in 2013, we have spoken with thousands of individuals, parents, friends, and teachers who are seeking help and information. It is through our outreach and education efforts, that we are able to support these individuals in their struggle to find hope and healing.

Municipal recognition of EDAW would help to affirm the experiences of those with a friend, family member, or important person in their life who is dealing with this life-threatening mental illness, and draw attention to the need for eating disorder prevention, research, treatment, and resources. Below, please find the goals of Eating Disorder Awareness Week 2015.

Please proclaim EDAW in Newmarket and help raise awareness and hope among the many who are impacted by this illness.

For more information about Eating Disorder Awareness Week and this request, please contact me.

Thank You.

Kind Regards,

Jeahlisa Bridgeman  
Program Assistant

# Eating Disorder Awareness Week 2015

## Goal:

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To reduce the prevalence of anorexia, bulimia, dieting and other disordered eating through a public awareness campaign that educates, informs and engages Canadians to talk about eating disorders.

## Objectives:

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1. To provide information on eating disorders, dieting and weight preoccupation, addressing social factors and dispelling common myths.
  2. To launch a national media campaign designed to heighten awareness of EDAW and to make connections between eating disorders, body-image problems and self-esteem.
  3. To advocate for widespread changes in social attitudes and gender stereotyping by emphasizing an individual's identity and personhood rather than external appearance.
  4. To encourage individuals with eating disorders and their families to acknowledge the problem, to encourage and direct them to appropriate resources, and to provide them with information and support.
  5. To educate professionals on the importance of primary and secondary prevention, and to provide professional development for educators and health care workers.
  6. To make governments aware of the need for additional funding for health promotion, primary prevention and treatment programs.
  7. **To celebrate the natural diversity of body sizes and shapes.**
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