

## **October 15 Community Toolkit**

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## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in hosting an event for your community. This toolkit will provide you with some direction and guidelines for organizing and promoting your event, including advanced planning, resources you may need, and tips for promotion.

## **NEW Important Information: In-Person Gatherings during COVID-19**

We recognize how important it is to save space and gather together to remember our babies. This year, PAIL Network will host a Virtual Wave of Light ceremony in lieu of in-person gatherings. Should you choose to plan an in-person gathering for your community, we ask that you adhere to all Ontario Public Health advisories at the time of your event.

**PAIL Network is not responsible for any infractions or fees owed if your event is found to be in violation of any bylaws relating to permitting or social gathering regulations.**

As of **September 19, 2020**, Ontario has limited in-person indoor gatherings to 10 people, and outdoor gatherings to 25 people. Please stay informed about emerging advisories by visiting [www.Ontario.ca/covid19](http://www.Ontario.ca/covid19) and scrolling down to “Featured updates”.

More information on recent gathering limits can be found here:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario-stages#gathering-changes>

## About October 15

October 15<sup>th</sup> is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day in Ontario. This was proclaimed in the provincial legislature as part of Bill 141: Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness, Research, and Care Act in 2015. Families affected by the loss of a pregnancy or the death of an infant participate in the International Wave of Light on this day with their families and friends. Buildings, bridges, fountains, and other local monuments and parks are illuminated in purple to honour the memory of these babies and infants gone too soon. There is also a candlelight “Wave of Light” that occurs at 7 PM local time in cities globally, making a wave of light continuous for 24 hours.

## Ways to get Involved

There are many ways that you can bring members of your community together to commemorate Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day.

- a) [Request local recognition of October 15<sup>th</sup> in your community](#)
- b) [Illuminate Landmarks](#)
- c) [Organize a Walk to Remember](#)
- d) [Organize a Wave of Light](#)
- e) [Organize an activity such as a movie night, yoga night or paint night](#)

## NEW Pregnancy and Infant Loss October 15 Awareness Kits

This year, PAIL Network has released October 15 Awareness Kits. These complementary kits can be ordered one per household for distribution within Ontario, and include;

- 4 jacket buttons (including one saying “Talk to me about Pregnancy and Infant Loss”)
- 1 October 15 Lapel Pin
- 1 Votive Candle Holder, and
- 1 Vinyl Cling Decal

Kits are available while quantities last. Please visit [www.painetwork.ca](http://www.painetwork.ca) to order yours today.

## **Request Recognition of October 15:**

If you are interested in speaking to your elected mayor in your town, they have the ability to proclaim or recognize meaningful days. PAIL Network has prepared a sample letter that you may wish to use as a guide when asking mayors or city councils to acknowledge and observe October 15 in your area.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view a sample letter to your local mayor or city councils office.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view a sample proclamation.

## **Illumination of Landmarks:**

You may be interested in asking to have a landmark in your community be lit purple, blue and pink in honour of October 15<sup>th</sup>. To do so, you'll have to find out who owns the landmark and who is responsible for the lighting of the landmark. Once you have your contact, you may wish to share the significance of lighting the landmark and what it represents.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view a sample letter to a landmark about illuminations.

## **Organize a Walk to Remember:**

Another way to bring additional awareness about pregnancy and infant loss with your community is to host a Walk to Remember. If October 15 falls on a weekday, it may be a good idea to host the event either the weekend before or the weekend after October 15. You could encourage families to write signs for their babies or wear purple in honour of all the babies that have passed.

If you wish, consider having some opening remarks before the walk begins; whether it is a poem or perhaps an excerpt from a book. Families may also appreciate if you start off your event by welcoming them and offering an opportunity to honour and remember their beloved children, for example; saying their babies names, asking for a moment of silence, lighting a candle, etc.

## **Organize a Wave of Light:**

The Wave of Light happens at 7PM local time on October 15. Families across the world light a candle in memory of their child or children. While you are more than welcome to host a Wave of Light privately, we do not recommend hosting a Wave of Light for the community at your home for safety and privacy reasons.

Some options where you could host a Wave of Light include a community centre or local park; provided you inquire about permits and get the necessary permissions needed.

Many events have chosen to use LED candles to avoid any safety risks with an open flame, while others prefer the authentic feel of a lit candle.

Note, if you decide to use long tapered candles, it is recommended that you also provide candle wax catchers. You can also suggest that participants bring their own candles to light.

## **Organize an Activity:**

There are many group activities that can support a sense of bonding with other families, such as a yoga class, meditation class or a movie night. If you'd like to include the whole family, you may think of organizing a paint night or a bowling night.

## Fundraising

Some families find it meaningful to fundraise or create a fundraiser in honour of their baby. If you wish to fundraise for PAIL Network, please contact Sunnybrook Foundation at [events@sunnybrook.ca](mailto:events@sunnybrook.ca)

## Promotion of your event

PAIL Network's website has an entire page of events dedicated to both PAIL hosted events as well as community hosted events.

If you wish to have your event posted on our site, please e-mail [suzie.oregan@sunnybrook.ca](mailto:suzie.oregan@sunnybrook.ca) with the following information. Here is an example:

### Example:

**Name of Event:** Wave of Light – Toronto

**Date of Event:** Monday October 15, 2019

**Start time of Event:** 6:30PM

**Full Address:** Roundhouse Park | 255 Bremner Blvd. | Toronto, ON

**Notes:** Please bring LED candles with you and dress appropriately for the weather.

If you are a member of PAIL Network's private Facebook group, you are welcome to post details about your event in our group provided it meets our group rules.

You may also consider other ways to promote your event using your personal social media accounts, printed flyers, and other local advertisements. Speak to health centres, funeral homes, and other places in the community about ways they can assist in promoting the event (i.e. permission to post flyers or posters).

**NOTE FOR VOLUNTEERS:** Please note, due to Sunnybrook guidelines, PAIL employees and volunteers cannot create events on Facebook and collect names through that channel. If you need an accurate number for your event and would like to include an RSVP option, you are more than welcome to use your Sunnybrook e-mail as a point of contact.

## Planning

We recommend that you begin your planning process early, where possible, and recommend July or August as a great place to start. This allows you time to decide on which activity you'd like to do, and gives you time to work out what's needed.

We also suggest that you begin to promote your event a month beforehand to ensure visibility and to give people time to make arrangements so they can attend.

## Peer Support

While remembering our babies, we realize that this can be a sensitive and difficult time. If you feel you need support throughout this, do not hesitate to reach out to us. You can complete a request for support by visiting [www.painnetwork.ca](http://www.painnetwork.ca).

## Sample Letter to Mayor/Councillor's Office

### Sample Letter

Dear [Mayor/Councillor Etc.] \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing to request that October 15 be proclaimed as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day in the city/town of \_\_\_\_\_.

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day is a global campaign of remembrance for pregnancy loss and infant death; which includes but is not limited to, miscarriage, stillbirth, medical termination, SIDS and the death of a newborn. In 1988, Ronald Regan, the sitting president of the United States of America, proclaimed October as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness month. By 2002, the idea to proclaim a specific remembrance day was started by Robyn Bear, Lisa Brown and Tammy Novak. Together, they petitioned the government to nationally observe October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day across all 50 states.

Here in Ontario, Bill 141, an act for research to be done and programs to be developed for pregnancy loss and infant death support was passed in 2015. This legislation included the proclamation of October 15<sup>th</sup> to be recognized throughout the province.

In recognition of the importance of support needed when a family experiences this traumatic loss, I would be particularly honoured to have you present this proclamation at (describe the event at which you would like the proclamation read.) We look forward to working with your office on this important endeavor and in representing our [city] in Ontario.

Thank you for your consideration.

[Your Name]



## Sample Proclamation

DATE

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS- Pregnancy and Infant loss is a tragedy that affects 1 in 4 pregnancies, with devastating heartbreak for families and;

WHEREAS- The censorship that surrounds these losses impedes healing for those affected and;

WHEREAS- Awareness and sharing about these losses especially within one's own community helps healing to take place and;

WHEREAS- A day of remembrance honours the lives of the children and supports grieving parents, families and friends whose lives are forever altered by the heartbreak of losing a child and;

WHEREAS- The 15th day of October is recognized in parts of Canada and in many others jurisdictions around the world, as a day of remembrance and awareness of pregnancy and infant loss.

NOW THEREFORE- I Mayor Name, by virtue the power vested in me, as Mayor of City Name, do hereby declare October 15th as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day.

**Representatives** (Names of who will speak at council)

**Explanation of Cause** On average the INSERT CITY NAME has been welcoming INSERT LOCAL STATISTICS, IF KNOWN new babies every year. Our community is a great place to raise a family, with the pure beauty of the surrounding landscape, and the kind and loving people that choose to live here. However, sometimes the joy of welcoming a new baby into the world turns into a great tragedy; we experience between INSERT LOCAL STATISTICS, IF KNOWN infant deaths (which includes but is not limited to miscarriage, stillbirth, SIDS, or the death of a newborn) per year as a community. The pain of losing a child is unimaginable.

In hopes of helping fellow families who have gone through such tragedy we are hosting a Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness and Remembrance Event.

It will take place LOCATION, DATE & TIME on a day that is globally recognized as a day to remember those babies who have gone too soon. It is our/my hope that this event can bring together individuals, families and organizations to help ease some of the pain but to also offer a time to remember our babies without feeling the stigma that often comes with talking about our losses.

## Sample Illumination Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

October 15th is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day in Ontario. Every year over 37,000 families in Ontario experience this type of loss and too often, families suffer in silence.

Here in Ontario, Bill 141, an act for research to be done and programs to be developed for pregnancy loss and infant death support was passed in 2015. This legislation included the proclamation of October 15<sup>th</sup> to be recognized throughout the province.

On this day, families affected by the loss of a pregnancy or the death of an infant will be participating in the International Wave of Light with their families and friends at 7PM local time. Many other landmark buildings, bridges and fountains will be illuminated in purple to honour the memory of these babies and we hope that you will participate with us.

Having the (insert building name here) included in this important day of recognition will create great visual awareness for our work, and send the message to these families that they are not alone.

Thank you for your consideration and for supporting this initiative. Please contact me at (insert contact information) to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]