



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 26 August 2008

CLEARING THE AIR IN PERTH - ASTHMA IS SERIOUS FOR ALL AGES
Asthma Week 1 – 7 September 2008

The Asthma Foundation of WA will take asthma education to a whole new level during Asthma Week this year with displays, training sessions and interactive educational sessions being held throughout Perth for all members of the community.

With asthma affecting 1 in 9 adults and 1 in 6 children in Australia and over 220,000 Western Australians; it is hoped that during Asthma Week the community will access the range of free services being offered to teach people about asthma management, the correct way to use asthma medication and how to save someone's life in the event of an asthma attack.

CEO of the Asthma Foundation, John Gummer says "In order to reach as many people impacted by asthma as we can, our asthma educators have scheduled educational events at various times and locations, in and around Perth. With so many people mismanaging their asthma, it is hoped and encouraged that the community come along and ask for advice", he said.

"The Asthma Foundation of WA is always overwhelmed by the number of young people affected by asthma; but increasingly asthma educators have been working hard to support the ageing population who are often quite complacent with their asthma management. Findings from the Australian Bureau of Statistics this year also supports this notion, with the greatest increase in asthma related deaths, between 2005 and 2006, found in the 70 plus age bracket," he said.

Every week throughout Australia, more than 2,000 people visit a hospital emergency department with asthma, and almost 800 of them are admitted to hospital. Asthma is one of the greatest causes of hospital admission in children under 12 years, and is responsible for just under 1,000,000 days of school absenteeism nationally every year. Sadly, one Australian dies almost every day from this condition.

"New to the Asthma Week agenda this year is a special interactive education event that is being held in the Perth CBD to conclude Asthma Week on Friday 5th September. A number of asthma educators will be on hand for the community and a number of interactive and entertaining activities will be run throughout the middle of the day. We invite everyone to stop by and meet with us", he said.

The Asthma Awareness Activity will involve a range of asthma games whereby the community can participate in light hearted competitions including an *Asthma Chocolate Wheel*, during which the community can learn about asthma and have the chance to win small prizes, kindly donated by local businesses. An exercise bike will also be up for grabs for those who partake in activities and drop a business card in to the draw!

During the Asthma Awareness Activity on 5th September, a group of volunteers will be conducting an Asthma Week Street Appeal through the surrounding streets of the CBD. The Asthma Foundation urges the community to donate and support those living with asthma and the services and research conducted by the Asthma Foundation.



Asthma Week 2008 activities include:

Monday 1 Sep:

- A Free Ask the Asthma Educator session for the community to be held at the Clarkson Library in Clarkson from 10am – 12pm. These sessions focus on the correct use of asthma medications and devices, asthma first aid and understanding asthma triggers.

Tuesday 2 Sep:

- A Free Education and promotional stand offering people the opportunity to check their asthma device techniques and ask questions of trained asthma educators. To be held at the Whitfords Shopping Centre.

Thursday 4 Sep:

- A Free evening Ask the Asthma Educator session to be held at the Asthma Foundation of WA's head office at 36 Ord St, West Perth

Friday 5 Sep:

- A Free Ask the Asthma Educator session for the community to be held at Kelmscott Library in Kelmscott.
- A Free interactive Asthma Awareness Activity and fundraising collections to be held at Wesley Centre (corners of William and Hay St) in the Perth CBD from 11am – 2pm.
- A corporate fundraising sundowner event to conclude the "Putt Away Asthma" campaign.
- Conclusion of Asthma Week activities throughout Perth schools, community centres, libraries, pharmacies, GPs and childcare centres.

The Asthma Foundation of WA offers free personalised asthma education sessions all throughout the year. Members of the community are encouraged to access the Foundation's educational services to learn how to best manage their asthma, or their family member's asthma.

The Foundation's Asthma Week Donations Appeal is now underway and the community is encouraged to dig deep to support the vital work of the Asthma Foundation in providing educational services and funding medical research. To make a donation or for more information about the Asthma Foundation of WA and the services for the community, please visit www.asthmawa.org.au.

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Media Contact: Events Coordinator, Kate Van Saane 9289 3663,
kate.vansaane@asthmawa.org.au

Please make contact if interested in scheduling an interview or photograph this week.

Media are also invited to come along to any number of the activities happening throughout Asthma Week.