



La Leche League Canada

Because breastfeeding isn't always easy, we're here to help

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News Release: January 30, 2011



On the current season of the hit CBC TV show, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, Dr. Rayyan Hamoudi (played by Sitara Hewitt) has become engaged to her true love and is about to embark on her life as a wife and mother.

It's a case of art imitating life: actor Sitara Hewitt is already a wife and mother and recently celebrated the first birthday of son Rowan. And despite her on-screen successes, Hewitt says: "Pregnancy, labour and breastfeeding are the accomplishments I am most proud of in my life."

Her appreciation of both the challenges and rewards of breastfeeding led her to partner with La Leche League Canada in creating a public service announcement to let other women know that they can get the information and support they need to breastfeed. La Leche League Canada is a national non-profit organization whose accredited volunteer Leaders – all experienced breastfeeding mothers - provide the encouragement and practical help mothers need to overcome breastfeeding difficulties.

"Breastfeeding wasn't easy for me in the beginning," says Hewitt, "but getting the support I needed was the key to overcoming those initial challenges. After that, breastfeeding turned out to be a very rewarding experience."

La Leche League Canada has more than 475 trained volunteers who provide breastfeeding help by telephone, in-person and on-line. The mother-to-mother support these volunteers give has been shown to increase breastfeeding duration and satisfaction. However, many women don't realize that the help they need can be as close as their telephone or computer.

LLL Board Chair Fiona Audy is optimistic that the public service announcement, part of the organization's 2011 awareness campaign, will help mothers find the help they want. "Many mothers give up breastfeeding before they intended because of a lack of good information and practical support," she says. "We hope that our awareness campaign will help more Canadian families connect with the breastfeeding support and information they are looking for in 2011."





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Hewitt hopes so, too. She's proud to have volunteered her time for this campaign, which includes the public service announcement released this week, a poster and an eleven minute film. The film, produced and shot by Allan Wylie and Shadow Pictures Media and featuring interviews with breastfeeding mothers from the Toronto area, will be screened in many Canadian communities later this year.

La Leche League Canada received financial support for the awareness campaign from individual donors, the Calgary Breastfeeding Matters Foundation, Bravado! Designs Inc., Oakville Galleries and from the Alberta Department of Health and Wellness, the Newfoundland Department of Health and Community Services, the Yukon Territory Department of Health and Social Services and the New Brunswick Department of Health.

For more information, and to view the public service announcement featuring Sitara Hewit, visit www.LLLC.ca.

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