

Drug tool kit update for everyone

New information package geared to city's multicultural community

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High school student Taskheer Hussain took the podium and started things off with a joke: "Why are the tides in the ocean so high?"

A moment later, he answered: "It's easy. It's because of all the seaweed."

The crowd laughed, but the presentation took a darker turn from there.

Hussain explained he heard the joke in Grade 6, his first exposure to the drug culture in Edmonton schools. Three other members of Youth Action on Addiction — a group of 14- to 24-year-olds campaigning against substance abuse — followed him, all sharing anecdotes of the same nature.

"If we each have a story about how drugs and alcohol have affected our friends, then most other youth prob-

ably have a similar story," Hussain said.

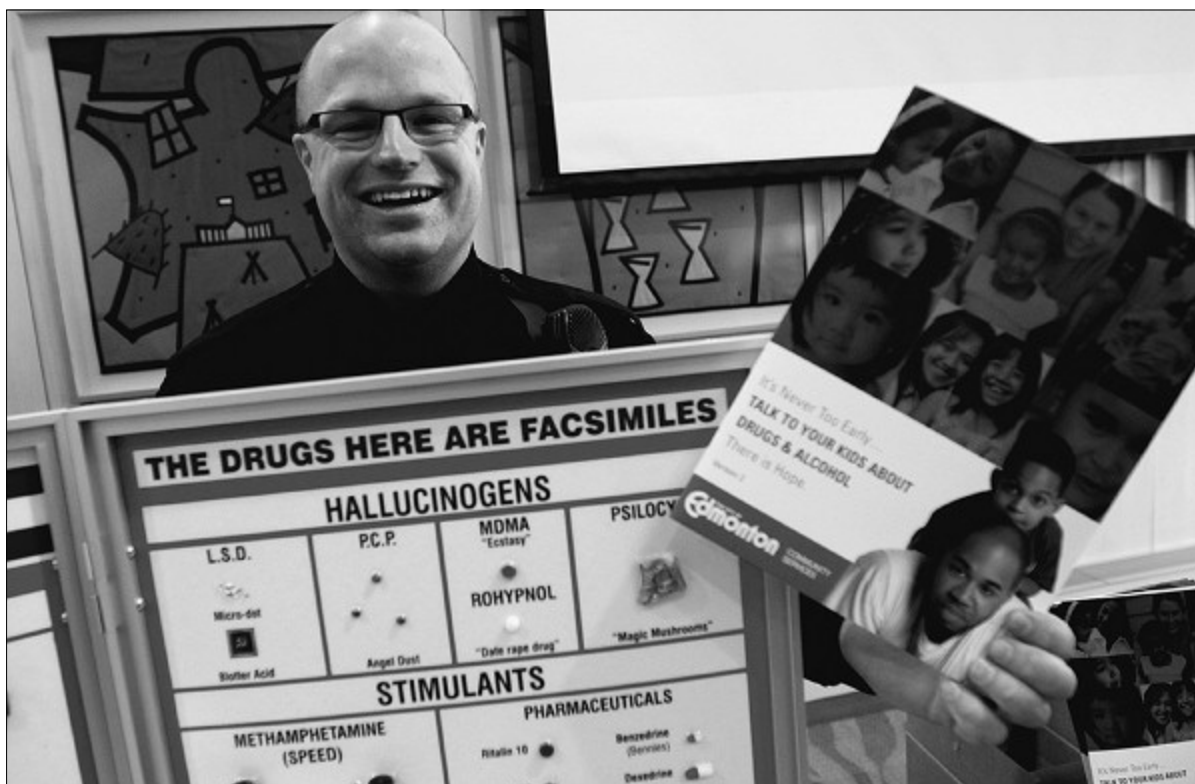
He was speaking Tuesday at City Hall, part of a ceremony launching the updated edition of Edmonton's Drug and Alcohol Parent Resource Toolkit.

First developed in 2006, the kit aims to give parents the knowledge they need to recognize signs of substance abuse and intervene before their children become addicted or entangled in the drug trade.

"Prevention is the key to success," Edmonton police Insp. Phil Bailey said. "Drugs and alcohol play a huge part in the crimes that we investigate every day."

His colleague, Staff Sgt. Darren Derko, added that 70 to 80 per cent of the city's crime is linked to drugs and alcohol, and that youth are increasingly being arrested for trafficking.

The heart of the tool kit is a newly updated catalogue of commonly



School resource officer Const. Craig Hardal displays the parents' drug tool kit and a sample board that he uses at his school to help parents and teachers recognize drugs and paraphernalia.

abused substances, from crystal meth to dextromethorphan, a common ingredient in cough syrup. The catalogue lists the drugs' appearances, common names, forms and signs of use, along with a new entry showing the effects they're used to achieve.

"Our children are familiar with (this). It's out there. They see it. And it's important for us as parents to see it, to recognize it and make some connections," said Const. Craig Hardal, a police resource officer at Louis St. Laurent High School.

The kit also contains a story from a young mother who overcame ad-

iction, photos of items commonly used to prepare and hide drugs, tips for handling dangerous substances, and a collection of advice for talking to youth about drugs and building their confidence to resist them.

The tool kit is available in 12 languages, three of which are new to the updated second edition. Farsi, Punjabi and Cree were added after considering new census information and consulting with the multicultural workers.

"We're a multi-language community. A multitude of different groups live in our city, so we need to make sure that we direct our ef-

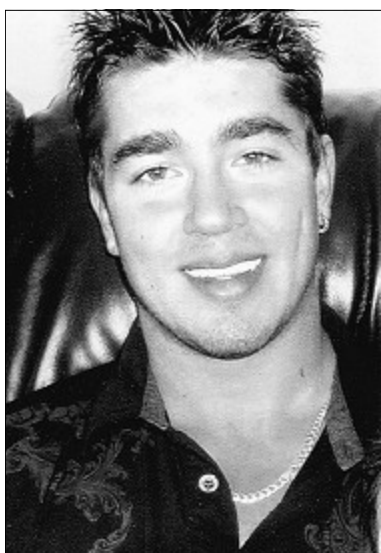
orts to everyone," Mayor Stephen Mandel said.

Yvonne Chiu of Multicultural Health Brokers, a refugee and immigrant support group that helped create the kit, added that the translations serve as symbols of inclusiveness.

"When parents see the tool kit in their own language, they say, 'Somebody cared enough for me to put this in my language,'" she said.

The kit is available online on the city's website and copies are kept at police victims service offices. Officers will also now carry cards introducing parents to the kit.

Family wants access to missing man's bank account



Dylan Koshman

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The last time Melanie Alix heard her son's voice, he was crooning *Happy Birthday* into the phone at full volume and she was teasing him, saying: "Who is this?"

"Dylan," he said. "It's Dylan."

"But Dylan doesn't sing," she said, laughing.

"But I'm a changed man, mom," he said.

He was 21, and he had just moved to Edmonton from Moose Jaw to work for a pipefitter. He was thinking of going back to school to learn the trade.

He had a girlfriend. He talked to his family at least once a week. He seemed happy.

Then he vanished. Dylan Koshman — bodybuilder, soccer player, son, boyfriend — disappeared without a trace on Oct. 11, 2008. He'd had a fight with his cousins and stormed out. Police found his wallet in a neighbour's yard.

And that's it. There's no evidence of foul play — no blood, no body — and so police haven't been able to access his bank accounts or his computers.

Alix said the province's privacy act prevents police from accessing the records because Dylan was over 18 when he disappeared and may have chosen to start his life anew.

"I know in my heart he wouldn't just leave on his own," Alix said Tuesday.

"The whole situation — no ID, no money, not even a jacket — it doesn't

make sense."

She is fighting in the courts to get access to those records, in the hopes of finding her son.

In the meantime, she lost in a world of wishes and what-ifs, prayers and possibilities, scenarios that are making her crazy.

What's playing in her mind is this: "If he was taken from this life, if he was a victim of foul play, of robbers, why didn't we find his body? Why would they go to the extreme of hiding it so well? Unless he has a head injury and he still is out there, but people would have spotted him, unless his appearance has changed dramatically. It has happened. Did he get in a vehicle and someone take him to B. C.?"

She said the "worst thought is of him suffering; I don't want him to

have suffered and I don't want him to suffer.

"The best scenario is me spotting him on the street and running up to him and grabbing him, or him finding his way home and me going to the door ..."

She started to cry. "Every time a body is found I wonder, is that my son?"

The police are still investigating, but they have no new leads and seem to be stumped, Alix said.

She and her family came back to Edmonton to put up posters and search the river valley on the off chance they might find something. Alix realizes it's a longshot.

"We have nothing else. It's like I'm grasping at straws. Somebody help us."

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Albertan directs humanitarian aid in Haiti

Sarah Wallace sleeps under a tarp after 12-hour days of organizing supplies, volunteers

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Two weeks after an earthquake crippled Haiti, Sarah Wallace finds herself directing supplies and volunteers who have landed at the small airport in Jacmel.

Wallace has spent the last few days working at the airport, which is being operated by Canadian soldiers out of CFB Trenton.

Wallace, who is a midwife originally from Devon, and a doctor from New Brunswick have stepped in to work logistics 12 hours a day — to meet the pilots, figure out what they've brought, where it's supposed to go and how it's going to get there.

Today they are expecting a 42,000-pound shipment of rice, beans, oil and salt.

"Whatever food or medical supplies come in that don't have a destination, we take and put into a depot or a house that we rented last week," she said Tuesday.

"From there, we have a list of people who come and get truckloads of food and then they distribute to their communities. The Canadian Military is awesome. They run the airport but they also have a medical clinic in Jacmel and they are actually physically building a hospital in Leogane, which is between here and Port-au-Prince.

"I heard that the walls were going up already and they hope that by next week they are seeing patients."

Since *The Journal* first spoke with Wallace about her efforts in Haiti after the 7.0 quake destroyed much of the town where she has lived since 2008, her Olive Tree Projects charity has been receiving donations in support of her work in Jacmel.

Wallace is in the process of finding others to take over her work at the airport.

"Last week, I had a meeting with my board of directors in Canada. We decided that as soon as I can get out of the airport, we're going to continue to work toward the original goals of Olive Tree Projects — orphaned



Canadian soldiers and Haitian citizens unload food and water from a Sea Dragon helicopter at the airport in Jacmel.



Cpl. Nicolas Champagne-Leblanc, a medical technician from the 5e Ambulance de Campagne, Valcartier Que., treats an injured Haitian woman in Jacmel.

children and pregnant moms," she said.

"Before the earthquake, I had hoped that over the next 10 years I would be able to get multiple small birthing centres and an orphanage set up and running."

The earthquake has only increased the number of orphans in the impoverished country. Few will find them-

selves on planes to families in more stable countries such as Canada.

Pregnant women are facing overrun hospitals and delivering their children outside for fear buildings will come down.

"It's great that all the adoptions were fast-tracked because there is no doubt that those orphanages will be filled again," Wallace said. "I think

that there is so much focus on relief aid — food, water and temporary shelter. But not enough emphasis on the long term.

"We've already seen a drastic decrease in the amount of supplies coming in and I think that everyone is going to send a donation or send some supplies. But then they will feel like they've done their part in disaster relief and there will be nothing more coming in the future."

Wallace is still sleeping in a soccer field with about 30 other people under tarps. She's uneasy about sleeping alone in her home, preferring the safety of the group as rumours run rampant of high crime amid the rubble.

"There's no rebuilding happening yet," she said.

"The mayor has hired some backhoes to start moving out the rubble. Most people are still sleeping outside or on their porches. We've still been having aftershocks."

Wallace hopes that she will soon be able to finish renovations on the maternity centre, because beyond the death and destruction that has rocked Haiti this month, there is new life in need of a healthy start.

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Court told of Svekla's sex impulses

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Thomas Svekla cannot control his sexual impulses and has displayed a pattern of spontaneous violence toward women since he was a teenager, Court of Queen's Bench heard on Tuesday.

In closing arguments at Svekla's dangerous-offender hearing, Crown prosecutor Ashley Finlayson summarized evidence presented over the past several weeks. It included testimony from four women, including ex-girlfriends and former friends, who all testified that Svekla attacked them for a sexual purpose.

Some of the incidents have resulted in criminal convictions for Svekla, while others have not.

Finlayson argued that each of the attacks occurred suddenly and demonstrate that Svekla cannot control his sexual impulses.

"They're all incidents where there was a very sudden or very spontaneous turn of events," Finlayson said.

The Crown is seeking a dangerous-offender designation for Svekla in connection with a 2005 attack on a High Level woman. Svekla was convicted of sexually assaulting the woman in his basement suite and threatening to kill her.

If deemed a dangerous offender, Svekla would likely spend the rest of his life in prison. The vast majority of Canada's dangerous offenders are not able to convince the National Parole Board to let them leave prison.

Finlayson must show Svekla committed either a singularly brutal act or that he has developed a pattern of violent behaviour that is unlikely to stop in the future. The pattern must involve a likelihood of death, injury or severe psychological damage.

Svekla, 41, was sentenced last year to life in prison with no chance of parole for 17 years for the 2006 murder of Theresa Innes. Svekla transported Innes' remains in a hockey bag from High Level to Fort Saskatchewan.

Most recently, Svekla was convicted of sexual assault and sexual interference for abusing the foster daughter of a woman he was dating in 1995.

Closing arguments continue today.

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