

City proclaims Monday as Suicide Prevention Day

BY NECO COCKBURN, OTTAWA CITIZEN SEPTEMBER 10, 2012



Four-year-old drummer Micheal Sammortuk joins members of Ottawa's Inuit Community at a noon-hour rally on Parliament Hill Monday to mark World Suicide Prevention Day.

Photograph by: Chris Mikula, The Ottawa Citizen

OTTAWA — Noting the need to talk about suicide, several community organizations and politicians gathered at City Hall Monday morning as Suicide Prevention Day was proclaimed in the city.

About 50 people a year commit suicide in Ottawa, officials stated, and the city's medical officer of health, Dr. Isra Levy, said it's believed about 20 attempts are made for every death.

"That means by extension that about three people every single day in this community are actually making a suicide attempt," Levy said.

"We all have to strive to bring that number to zero."

Councillor Diane Holmes, chair of the city's board of health, made the proclamation on behalf of Mayor Jim Watson. Last year, council approved funding to Ottawa Public Health to help implement a three-year mental health promotion and suicide prevention strategy for children and youth, she said.

"One aspect of this comprehensive strategy includes raising awareness of knowing what to look for, what to do, and where to seek help to prevent suicide," Holmes said.

She was joined by fellow councillors Keith Egli, Rick Chiarelli, and Allan Hubley, whose 15-year-old son,

Jamie, took his own life in October. Hubley has raised awareness about the issue following his son's death.

It was a difficult day, Hubley told reporters following the ceremony, but it was important to attend the ceremony.

"We have to raise awareness, we know we can save lives by doing this," he said.

"We learned that in our own experience people came forward, they said because we were public about what had happened in our family, they thought about getting help instead of going through with their plans, because they started to realize the impact on others.

"Unfortunately, when people are going through the thought process that can lead to suicide, they're not realizing the impacts it has on their families and friends, and maybe they don't realize just how much people do love them and want to help them."

About one in 10 Ottawa high school students considered suicide in the past year, according to data compiled by the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey for the 2010-2011 school year.

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Resources if you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or needs help:

■ Youth Services Bureau's 24/7 Crisis Line

Within Ottawa 613-260-2360

Outside Ottawa 1-877-377-7775 (toll-free)

www.ysb.ca (0 to 18 years)

■ Regional Psychiatric Emergency Services for Children and Youth at the CHEO Emergency Department: 401 Smyth Rd.

Crisis Line

Within Ottawa 613-722-6914

Outside Ottawa 1-866-996-0991 (toll-free)

www.crisisline.ca (16 years and above)

Tel-Aide Outaouais

Gatineau: 819-775-3223

Ottawa: 613-741-6433

Rural Outaouais: 1-800-567-9699 (toll-free)

Emergency departments of the Ottawa Hospital, the Montfort Hospital, or the Queensway-Carleton Hospital.

■ Distress Centre of Ottawa

613-238-3311

www.dcottawa.on.ca

■ Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

www.kidshelpphone.ca

■ Other local resources:

ementalhealth.ca

(Source: City of Ottawa)

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