

Reasons to live

Yesterday (Monday) marked the 10th anniversary of World Suicide Prevention Day, a day when people are encouraged to discuss solutions to what is becoming an almost epidemic mental health issue among our young people.

According to Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO), suicide is the second-leading cause of death among 10-24 year olds in Canada.

Untreated mental illness—depression, in particular—is the leading risk factor for suicide.

For every suicide completion, there are thousands more young people having thoughts of suicide and attempting suicide, according to the CMHO.

One recent study found one in 10 students in Grades 7-12 reported they had seriously considered suicide, and about three per cent reported attempting suicide.

Suicide among Aboriginal youth is estimated to occur at rates five times higher than non-Aboriginal youth.

To mark World Suicide Prevention Day, the CMHO is joining with the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention to encourage communities across the province to get involved by showing their support for people affected by suicide.

While support can be expressed many ways, the gift of non-judgmental support is of utmost importance, according to support groups.

Shame is one of the most challenging and prominent feelings around suicide. The stigma associated with suicide often prevents those suffering from getting help.

“We need to be open and we need to be educated,” said Gordon Floyd, president and CEO of CMHO. “Let's remove the stigma associated with suicide and start talking about it.”

One-in-five children and youth has a mental health issue severe enough to seriously affect their daily functioning at home, school or within the community.

Early intervention remains critical to young people having the best possible chance at succeeding in all aspects of their life.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.theifp.ca)

The local fall fairs are coming, starting this weekend. What's the best part of the fairs?

- The displays (44%)
- The food (25%)
- The entertainment (18%)
- The midway (13%)

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Letters to the editor

Little sympathy for teachers' 'cuts'

Dear editor,

Re: Vic Phyllis's letter of September 4 (Teacher betrayed by MPP's column).

If the lack of knowledge displayed in the letter from Vic Phyllis is typical of the average Ontario teacher, then I fear for the future of the children under their care.

Mr. Phyllis whines that his “last two pay increases have been at about inflation” and he asks whether “anyone but the teachers are being forced to take a pay cut?”

First, in addition to their annual across the board raises, teachers also get salary grid raises based on seniority and upgrading of their qualifications, making the raises for many of them much more than inflation. As for anyone else taking pay cuts, I haven't had a raise in five years, and the same is true for a large percentage of private sector workers, not to mention the tens of thousands in the private sector who lost their jobs. MPPs have had their salaries frozen for three years, and that's now being extended to five years.

Phyllis also whines about “working three days without pay” and that “even Bob Rae didn't expect that.” The

three days without pay was a trade-off that the unions made in order to pay for keeping the teachers' salary grid raises. And as for his misinformed reference to Bob Rae, has this teacher never heard of the infamous unpaid Rae Days!?

And finally, having the teachers at Queen's Park yelling “liar, liar, liar” about Dalton McGuinty was like something out of a Monty Python sketch, given that the teachers unions spent millions getting Dalton re-elected, despite the fact that we all already knew he was a congenital liar. So what Dalton is doing to them now is just a classic case of karma.

Mike Baker, Georgetown

Teachers work for us

Dear editor,

Re: Teacher feels betrayed by MPP's column (Sept. 4).

My heart goes out to you and your fellow teachers, but I think perspective is what is needed.

Many of your fellow citizens don't get your benefits, wages, or your pension. I would also bet you would not want to tell everyone your perks now and when you retired.

Just so you understand, MPPs and teachers work for us—the taxpayer. Their job is to keep our taxes down; yours is to teach our kids. The govern-

ment confiscates our money, they don't make it.

It sure would be nice to be thanked for what both of you get, instead we get told how rough it is.

I'm a long-haul truck driver. I own my truck and just the price of fuel has cut my wages, let alone the governmental regulations that make it almost impossible to make a living.

Thanks for your good work.

Ken Ouwendyk, Georgetown

Teacher clarifies letter

Dear editor,

I would like to clarify my Sept. 4 letter.

It is in no way a statement on the education offered in the Halton Catholic District School Board. All teachers want to teach without job action. Unfortunately, the McGuinty government (now supported by Ted Arnott) has been discussing the amalgamation of boards for some time. He ‘uses’ this point as a bargaining tool with the separate school unions.

Hopefully amalgamation is primarily at the administration level, and an arrangement can be struck where the right to educate in Catholicism, as guaranteed in the British North America Act, can still be offered.

I support the education and those who deliver it in the separate system.

Vic Phyllis, Acton