

# Red Deer Advocate

HOMELESSNESS

## Housing benefits touted

BY SUSAN ZIELINSKI  
ADVOCATE STAFF

Housing the homeless in Red Deer greatly reduced their impact on justice and health systems, statistics show.

The city's 2014-2015 Homeless Initiatives report released on Thursday indicates that incarcerations were reduced by 92.5 per cent, court appearances were cut by 59 per cent and interactions with police fell by 51 per cent for the homeless once they had permanent housing.

Days in hospital dropped by 79.4 per cent, interactions with EMS (emergency medical services) fell 60 per cent and emergency room visits declined by 53 per cent.

Reductions were determined by comparing interactions 12 months prior to housing and post housing since April 2013.

"First and foremost, it's about the health and well-being of the individuals being housed. They are healthier as a result of being housed through housing first," said Scott Cameron, the city's social planning manager, on Thursday.

The data also shows how the investment into ending homelessness reduces costs to justice and health systems, he said.

"I think that is important information for the province because they are the funders for those other systems for the large part."

In 2014-15, city programs received a \$3.1-million grant from Alberta's Outreach and Support Services Initiative and \$421,528 from the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

Some of the programs that received funding were the housing first program at the former Buffalo Hotel operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Red Deer Housing Team with Central Alberta Women's Outreach Shelter, Safe Harbour Society's housing programs, Red Deer Native Friendship Society's housing first and prevention services, and McMan Youth Family and Community Services Association's Arcadia Youth Project.

Housing results for the city showed a total of 581 individuals were housed or received continued support from the previous year in their housing between April 1, 2014, to March 31, 2015.

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Christmarie Salcedo, left, and Keily Dominguez pose for a picture with Sylvan Lake Hockey Camp instructor Olivia Sutter after their ice time on Wednesday afternoon.

## Sylvan Lake hockey camp gives inner city youth some much needed practice

BY CRYSTAL RHYNO  
ADVOCATE STAFF

Two young American hockey players will have some stories to tell after spending a week at the Sylvan Lake Hockey Camp.

And they will put their improved skills to the test on the ice.

Christmarie Salcedo, 15, finally got the handle of stopping with her outside leg.

Keily Dominguez, 12, got some much needed practice on her c-cuts.

The two players are part of the Ice Hockey in Harlem program, in which four players attend a week-long hockey camp in Sylvan Lake.

The program has been running since 1991, when four young Harlem players from the same family came to Sylvan Lake for the hockey camp.

At the time, Duane and Brent Sutter, who were playing for the New York Islanders, were involved with the camp.

"One family with four boys thought it would be cool for their four boys to come to a hockey school where there

were six Sutters," said Graham Parsons, camp president and owner. "It was a New York thing at the time."

Parsons said an airline sponsored the flights while the hockey camp covered the room and board and camp fees. The hockey camp continues to cover the expenses.

Parsons said the camp has invited four players — two boys and two girls — every year since.

"It's very interesting to see the interaction between the kids," said Parsons. "Kids always ask a lot of questions."

Ice Hockey in Harlem offers inner-city youth and teenagers the hockey experience in outdoor rinks near Central Park in New York.

"It's been a great program over the years," said Parsons. "There's been some interesting kids with interesting backgrounds."

A few of the players have gone on to play college hockey.

Salcedo, who has played for six years, said it was fun to play in the indoor rinks and to see Canada.

"I tried other sports and I liked them but not as much as I did in hock-

ey," said Salcedo, a Grade 10 student in New York. "You can be rough on ice and there's all the fighting. I like fighting for the puck."

She and three other girls play on a team that is otherwise all boys.

She noticed she has more time with the puck in the camp.

"Over there they just hit you and take the puck away," she said.

This was her first trip to Canada.

"I love it because it's so calm here. There's no fighting and you get a parking spot really quickly."

Dominguez, who lives in Manhattan, has played hockey for five years.

Dominguez plays on an all-girls team that plays every weekend starting in late September. The Grade 7 student started playing after learning about the sport from her teachers, who were coaches. She followed in the footsteps of her brother, Wesley, 14, who is a goalie.

"It's fun," she said. "Also you get to meet different people and have other opportunities."

crhyno@reddeeradvocate.com

## Ponoka man working to create more caring, less hateful Alberta



Contributed photo  
Chevi Rabbit gives his mother, Lavenia Schug, a kiss on the cheek at the first From Hate to Hope Walk, held in Edmonton in 2012, two weeks after he was attacked.

A walk to the grocery store four years ago turned into a brutal attack. It ended up changing his life for the better.

Today, Chevi Rabbit hopes an annual community walk established since then is helping to change the way some Albertans think about each other — less hate, more caring.

"I identify myself as a gay man, but gender fluid ... breaking traditional gender norms and gender expressions. ... So it is to say you can be straight or gay, but the traditional



MARY-ANN  
BARR  
BARRSIDE

norms of what it looks like to be a masculine man or a feminine woman, you kind of blur those boundaries.

"Some days I wear lipstick and some days I wear heels, some days I feel like a man and I'll want to wear a suit. I feel like I shouldn't have to be restricted." He's not big on using pronouns to describe himself.

Chevi, 28, grew up in Ponoka. He said he lived in a bit of a protective "bubble."

"I was openly gay since I was 12. That's why I think I like Ponoka. ... You're one of the community members and they really do take care of you."

"Ponoka has a surprisingly high LGBT rate. ... I never got bullied in Ponoka."

Chevi would learn later that when he was a child his mother thought he might be gay. Unbeknownst to him, "She went to my family ... she said 'I don't want you guys to wreck his development, and if you guys don't accept

his being gay you're not welcome in our family.'" So no one ever said anything to him about being gay.

Then one day when he told his mother he thought he was gay, "She said, 'Oh, that's good. Do you want anything for breakfast?'"


Chevi came to Red Deer first for post-secondary education. He earned a diploma in Hospitality and Tourism Management from 2006 to 2008 at Red Deer College. His natural and colourful artistic ability led him to an interest in doing makeup, and so he also studied makeup artistry at Marvel College in the evenings. Now he's a professional makeup artist.

Chevi's mother, Lavenia Schug, grew up on the Montana First Nation, north of Ponoka. Chevi's father, who died when he was three, was French. His mother and stepfather raised him in Ponoka.

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WEATHER

Sun and cloud. High 25. Low 11.



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PM vows to look at fighting future wildfires

Prime Minister Stephen Harper vowed Thursday to take a hard look at new ways to fight devastating wildfires.

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