

Brewer latest park to call on smokers to butt out

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Brewer Park in Old Ottawa South became the latest park in Ottawa to be designated as voluntarily smoke-free.

The Old Ottawa South Community Association requested to have the park designated a voluntary smoke-free as a means to reduce tobacco use in the park and to better protect children from second hand smoke.

"We wanted to make sure that everyone enjoying this facility was protected from second-hand smoke," said Brendan McCoy, member of the association's board of directors.

The event was part of the celebrations to mark the world No Tobacco Day on May 31.

On behalf of the community association, McCoy was presented with a smoke-free sign that will be installed to identify Brewer Park as a smoke-free park. Brewer Park is one of 85 parks in the city that have been designated in this manner.

"We hope it means a cleaner park and also an indication to our kids on how we feel about smoking and hopefully they will be seeing a little less smoking and less likely to smoke themselves in the future," said McCoy.

"This is an indication to smokers that this isn't a place that they should be smoking."

Capital Counc. David Chernushenko



Submitted Photo

Brendan McCoy, left, member of the board of the Old Ottawa South Community Association receives a smoke-free sign that will be installed at Brewer Park from Capital Counc. David Chernushenko during a ceremony on May 31.

thanked community association for being proactive in wanting to provide clear air to residents, and for further protecting children.

"It is important that we send messages that even if you are a smoker, please don't do it here around children," said Chernushenko.

The World No Tobacco Day serves as

an important reminder that tobacco use continues to negatively affect the health of Ottawa residents, he said.

He encouraged other groups and associations to follow suit.

Three Ottawa Festivals have also recently announced they are going smoke-free, including the Jazz Festival, the Ottawa International Children's Festival

and the Dragon Boat Festival.

The Ottawa Public Health has been encouraging voluntary smoke-free outdoor spaces with the goal of protecting residents from second-hand smoke and increasing public awareness about its dangers.

"Even in low concentrations, second-hand smoke causes immediate short term and long term health effects," said Isra Levy, medical officer of health.

"There are more than 4,000 chemicals that are found in second hand smoking of which 50 of them cause cancer."

Though people assume that second-hand smoke is not as dangerous outdoors, Levy says that research shows it can be as harmful to your health as indoors.

"Second-hand smoke can trigger asthma, cause bronchitis, pneumonia as well as premature death from heart disease," Levy noted.

The impact is even much more dangerous to children

"Compared to adults, children have smaller lungs that are still growing and so they are more exposed to the harmful effects of those chemicals," Levy stated.

Along with community associations, more than 100 restaurants that have uncovered patios have also made those patios voluntarily smoke free. In a recent study, Ottawa Public Health found regular exposure to second-hand smoke reduces educational performances in children and teens.



Ottawa paramedic Krista Shipman will be participating in this year's Ride the Rideau to raise money for cancer research at The Ottawa Hospital. PHOTO COURTESY KRISTA SHIPMAN

THE OTTAWA HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

Krista Shipman was always a picture of health.

A recreational athlete involved in running and triathlon, the Ottawa paramedic was one of the least likely people to be diagnosed with cancer, but she was – at age 27.

After Shipman's family doctor referred her to a gynaecologist in the summer of 2004, test results showed a tumour. Shipman underwent a biopsy to remove the tumour and a few weeks later, her doctor called.

"They said it wasn't what they'd expected, and immediately, I started to cry," said Shipman.

The diagnosis was cervical cancer. Shipman underwent a radical abdominal hysterectomy and chemotherapy

and radiation treatment, but the 33-year-old still considers herself fortunate.

"I feel awesome," she said. "Everyone at The Ottawa Hospital Cancer Centre – every nurse, doctor, and everyone I dealt with – was great. I know this sounds strange, but it was an amazing experience."

In January of 2010, Shipman celebrated her last follow-up appointment at The Ottawa Hospital Cancer Centre.

Wanting to give back, she signed up to fundraise through Run for a Reason during Ottawa Race Weekend in May 2010, and helped to raise \$13,000. Her participation with her team, Paramedics with a Purpose, was the first time she had fundraised for an event.

This year, Shipman is continuing to fundraise, this time, through The Ottawa Hospital Foundation's 100 km Ottawa to Merrickville cycling fundraiser, Ride the Rideau. After raising an incredible \$940,000 in its inaugural year, The Ottawa Hospital Foundation has set the event's 2011 fundraising goal at \$1.8 million.

"I wanted to do something a little different," she said. "And I'd heard so many good things about this event."

She's happy to share her personal experience with anyone who will listen in hopes of helping others.

"I want to tell women, don't be afraid to talk to your doctor and tell them if something isn't quite right," she said. "I'm not afraid to talk about it, if it's going to help someone else. After I told my story, so many cancer stories came out. It's hard to find someone who hasn't been affected by it."

To support Krista Shipman's ride, participate or volunteer, visit www.ridetherideau.ca.



Seniors warned to be on fraud alert

Seven fall victim in string of southeast-end scams

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Ottawa Police are warning seniors to be on guard for fraudsters after dealing with seven cases of a "grandparent emergency Scam" since the beginning of March in the southeast end of the city.

Police issued the warning after noting a marked increase in the number of complaints in the last two months. In the cases reported to police, \$41,000 had been defrauded from the targeted seniors.

In a typical scenario, a grandparent receives a phone call from a con-artist claiming to be one of his or her grandchildren, according to police. The caller goes on to say that they are in some kind of trouble and need money immediately.

"Couple of weeks ago two people from the south end of the city fell victim of the scam," said Const. Gary McCoy, community police officer at the South Ottawa Community Police Centre.

These scammers claim to have been in a car accident, are having trouble returning from a foreign country or need bail money. They then ask for money to help treat injuries, to pay for damages or for a lawyer to fight charges.

"The seniors are directed to transfer money right away and not to tell anyone as their son or grandson doesn't want to get into more trouble or is too embar-

rassed and doesn't want others to know," said McCoy.

These calls, according to McCoy, put seniors into panic because in most instances they feel obliged to protect their loved ones.

Once the senior transfers the money the scammer will call back saying that more money is needed for extra legal or medical costs.

One 87-year-old woman in the south end fell victim to this scheme four times and was taken for \$20,000.

Often seniors will not report this type of crime as they feel there is nothing the police can do or they are too embarrassed and just want to forget about it.

"We need everybody who receives the phone call to let us know because the sooner we get this information, the quicker we are able to respond," said McCoy. "By reporting you are preventing this from happening to somebody else."

He encouraged seniors to ask their banks to give them a call if a large sum of money is being withdrawn from their account.

McCoy said scammers are gleaning information from social networks such as Facebook about the names and locations of grandparents, along with pertinent personal information that helps make the caller sound like they are or know the grandchild.

To report a suspicious phone call or for more information, contact Ottawa Police at 613-236-1222 ext. 5842 or call Crime Stoppers at 613-233-8477.