

Word on the Street

A free Journal for Youth and Urban Saskatoon

The Affects of Drugs on our People

Drugs are a problem in our community. They are among our kids, teens, and adults. It's growing in our neighborhoods. It's not only a problem in Pleasant Hill and similar areas; it's all over the city. I think people over-look the fact that it is everywhere.

Do you think people should have to lose their loved ones over it, or kids having to fend for themselves, and friends losing friends over the drug problem? Drug users aren't the only victims. Victims exceed from being their children, parents, friends and family.

Kids grow up thinking that drugs are a normal thing in daily life. They don't know what's right or wrong. Kids have to fend for themselves. Parents spend money on drugs, without buying food or paying for rent. They bring there children into debt with them. Do you think a child should have to live like that?

Teens drop out of school, and give up on their dreams and goals. They live in fear and paranoia.

Some teens get in trouble with the law. Teens die of overdose, and turn to the streets to survive. Adults give up on themselves. They hurt the ones they love and put their drugs before there children. They lose friends over there drug abuse.

I believe life is our drug. Just like drugs, life has its up and downs, tosses and turns, and pain. Why do we need a drug when being straight has the same effects? Taking drugs isn't worth losing your life over, or losing loved ones.

Sure the community has many supports groups for drug users, and non-drug users. Is it really enough though? What we really need is someone speaking out for these kids, who can't speak out for themselves. Someone for teens, who will actually get the message out to other teens, and adults need to listen to their loved ones and realize what they are doing isn't only effecting them but effecting every one around them. Drugs are affecting our communities, and our world.

~Chantelle Dreaver

**Volume 2
Issue 6
June, 2006**

Contact Word on the Street

Editor:

Allysha Larsen

• **Phone: 665-3889**

• **Email:
youthcoop@sasktel.net**

Inside this issue:

Street Speak	2
The cycle of the Hood	3
Flip the Script, The art of Rap and Hip Hop	4
Poverty, The most violent street in Saskatoon	5
Movie of the month	6
Eliminating Crime, Politicians at a glance	7
The use of Natives as Mascots	8

About Word on the Street

Word on the Street is written by Saskatoon youth in and out of school. It provides a forum for teens to talk about issues and ideas that are important to youth and the whole community.

Street Speak

Is jail a solution for youth?

“Jail’s not going to help any one. Sending youth to jail is like sending them to crime school. People learn more about crime and share it with each other. Sending youth to jail only creates more problems.”

“Jail gets so lonely, it’s the most boring thing in the world. You miss your family and friends. All there is to do is go to school, go to bed, and stare at the walls. You just stare at the walls.”

“Jail hurts the youth who need help the most. Aboriginal people especially are over represented in jails.”

Your Saskatoon Westside MLA’s are here to help.

Should you have any questions or need assistance in dealing with a provincial government department or agency, please do not hesitate to contact us.



Lorne Calvert
Saskatoon Riversale
904D 22nd Street
West
651- 1211



Andy Iwanchuck
Saskatoon Fairview
16-15 Worobetz
Place
651-3801



Eric Cline
Saskatoon Massey
Place
162 7B 29th Street
West
384-7200



David Forbes
Saskatoon Centre
904D 22nd Street
West
244-3555



Frank Quennell
Saskatoon
Meewasin
610 Duchess Street
651-3581

The cycle of the hood

I feel that there are way too many youth that are in jail. For as long as I remember, I, or anyone I know would never picture me in jail. I was doing so good in school. I received a ton of awards for grade ten. Grade eleven I got a couple and then in grade twelve I started to drop. I can blame it all on being in jail. Most of the time jail isn't even a solution. Yeah maybe someone was stealing or beating someone else up, anything, I still feel jail isn't the solution.

When I got picked up for the first time I was scared of what would happen. When I got there it was nothing of what I expected. Some people I know will get picked up just so they have a warm place to stay and you will never be hungry. The country makes jails to be like a luxury. If you want to teach them a lesson, why put them in a jail like that?

After I got out for the first time I was so scared every time I saw a cop car. I had an undertaking for curfew. It's so hard to abide by that. It seems that once you get picked up and thrown in jail you'll be in jail for the rest of your life, long term or just on and off. Most of the time you don't mean to get picked up, but everyone judges you after that. Now my family, everyone judges me like I'm a criminal. Something goes missing... blame it on me. Nobody knows how much I feel like shit and every time they do this to me it worsens. I'm still the same person inside, why treat me like I'm going to kill you. I feel like everyone just gave up on me. It's almost like they don't even love me anymore. I get stereotyped by my own family, don't you think that they'd know me better than that. I guess not, I'm just another hood rat, as they say.



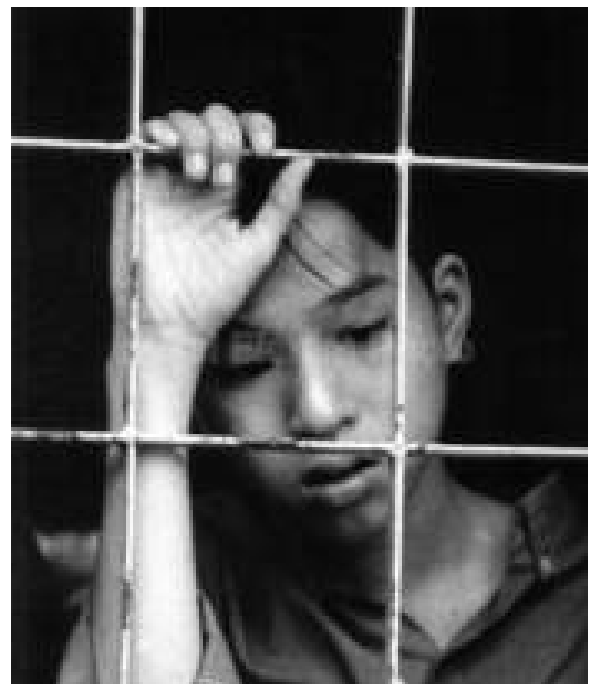
I recently got picked up. Instead of trying to help me, my family made them keep me in there for longer. It didn't help me, it just makes me want to give up, just shrivel up in a corner. The other day my dad asked me if I wanted a smoke, like just because I was in jail I smoke and do all kinds of drugs.

People don't know how bad that makes a person feel. I cried while everyone was making fun of me upstairs laughing. I don't know how people can be so strong, because I was only in jail three times and I already feel like giving up on everything. I'm too young to get my own place, so until then I'm going to be stuck in the cycle. The cycle of the hood.

Nobody knows how I feel, so the next time your family members get thrown in jail don't stereotype, because it makes things worse. Who wants to be at home when you're constantly getting blamed for things just because you were in jail. The factors can be drugs or alcohol, even people who need attention in their lives.

Recently my lawyer told me that my mom wanted me to go into alcohol and drug treatment, and do you know what I said? I told her the only way I'm doing it is if my mom does it with me. Everyone needs to set an example. My mom is going to be mine. So let's see what happens. My moms an alchy so I don't know how far this will go.

~Anonymous



Flip the script

When I was a little younger I used to get into so much trouble that I was put on house arrest, back then I just didn't care about anything or where I ended up.

When I'd get in trouble by the police it really wouldn't matter to me because I knew that if I got caught I'd be released. It was like that over and over again. People said that it was friends or peer pressure, but I don't think I was peer pressured because everything I did I did for myself, it was more like me pressuring my friends and when I look back on it, it gets me mad cause I seemed so selfish. My life was just constant twists and turns and everyday I felt shittier.

My teachers at school were proud of me for doing so good but then they started seeing me slipping and when they'd ask why I'd changed I'd get mad because it was none of their business. Just when everything would be going the way I wanted, I'd have another problem on my shoulder, my walls seemed to crumble but eventually I'd build them back up again.

I went to jail so much that I met more and more people, but the hard part was being shut off by the world and for once someone would tell me what to do and I'd have no choice but to do it. My charges started adding up and every court appearance I wouldn't make it. Eventually the judges and my family got fed up and they were going to give me 3 months, not much but I couldn't stand being away that long from my freedom. My lawyer beat the time and I beat the game, after thinking and thinking I finally decided to walk away...and I did. I told myself that if I wanted to live my life the right way I was going to have to stop.

Now, it's changed, I've changed and I feel good about it, no more jail, no more conditions, no more probation and no more problems. I found a way to spend my spare time and the co-op helps me do it. I feel bad for my friends who are in and out of jail but I write to them just so they have someone there to talk to or write to. But for all you youngin's out there, there's a better way and it's not as hard as it looks.

-Faren Lafond

THE ART OF RAP AND HIP HOP

Rap and Hip Hop are genres of music which are most misunderstood. They are often taken to influence violence and insight crime across the world, similar to the lifestyle of a "mob." Under suspicion, Rap and Hip Hop have been accused of developing gangs, acquiring lethal arms, "representing," and gaining city-wide identity. Rap and Hip Hop music have become so influential on society that entire divisions of police departments across North America have been developed to monitor these two genres of music. Rap and Hip music may be misunderstood, but those who do understand the material see that it speaks, or relates to them. Rap and Hip Hop are art. It is a form of expression. It tells of the story/struggle that one or more people have experienced in life. It is about the come-up from a "gutter liven" lifestyle, to the "top of the game." So when it is taken to influence acts of violence, it is misinterpreted through paranoia, suspicion, or straight out hate for these certain genres of music, and/or lifestyle. Rap and Hip Hop do not influence or insight violence, that is only the way that it is received by certain figures (i.e. the media). Rap and Hip Hop are an art form all to themselves. These types of music have NO LIMITS to where you're going to take it.

-Sharp 88

Poverty at Home and Around the World

Poverty is a big problem in our communities. People are living on the streets; kids are going hungry. It's not happening in only our communities, but all over the world. Every second of the day children are dying because of malnutrition and disease. Sure the government does a lot to try and help the problem, the question is are they doing enough? I personally think the government doesn't do as much as is needed. Everyday I see and watch those shows about Ethiopia and other places. It honestly saddens me to see kids die.

Last week I was walking downtown, and I came across a panhandler. My first reaction was to keep walking. I examined other people walking past them. It was like they never existed. I pulled out whatever spare change I could and gave it to the panhandler. They are human beings, they get hungry just like us. They have families like us, so what makes them so different from us? The thing I don't get is, why doesn't the government set up some kind of income for them? They have social services and safe houses, but nothing for people who don't have kids etc. If it bugs the government so much, why don't they do something about it instead of just watching all those commercials about the problem? The fact is people shouldn't have to live that way because they're less fortunate, or rather die over not being able to afford food and the little things in life.

~Ayla Wuttunee

The Most Violent Street in Saskatoon

There are way too many drugs and gangs flowing in the streets. Everyday when I'm either walking or riding down 20th street I see people dealing drugs or prostitutes on the corners. The payphones at the fas gas on 20th and avenue H seem to be where everybody gets a hold of drugs. I can't even stand there using the phone without somebody asking me "if I'm lookin" or "do you wanna buy some pills". It makes me so sick when people do that to me. Do I look like a drug addict or something? I hope not.

It can be very dangerous if there is someone feening for a hit, because things can become violent. When I'm walking down 20th street, even when I'm with my friends I always see perverts staring. Why do they drive by over and over when I'm literally calling them perverts? To be honest, it seems they don't even look at the prostitutes only the other people walking somewhere. I think that 20th is the most violent street in Saskatoon.

I know so many people who have got jacked or beat up by gang members. Every day and night all you hear is sirens, especially down avenue H. When I lived on avenue H there was stabbings and gang brawls a lot, especially on check day. It could be next door or a couple blocks away, but there is always some kind of action going on. It gets scary and that's no kind of neighborhood for kids to grow up in. Just a couple of days ago a woman was thrown off of the top balcony right across the street from a park in Meadowgreen. There was a big group of little kids that were watching all of this.

Truthfully, I have even gotten into fights on either avenue H or 20th street, usually because they say I'm wearing the wrong colour or "reppen" something. That's so stupid. The police should start focusing on these situations. I'm not saying to pull everyone over, but to watch closely on what's going on.

~Anonymous

Movie of the Month

M.I.III Review

3 out of 5

Mission Impossible 3 is pretty good, for Tom Cruise it's what you would expect an A- Rated B- Actor. The stunts are good, as you would expect for a high budget movie these days but some of the actors do outshine Tom Cruise. Both bad guys for instance are better actors than he is but I don't know the two actors' names one is the guy who played Capote and I don't know who the other is nor do I wish to spoil the surprise of the twist at the end. It sure threw me for a loop though. Some of the action though is unreasonable like Tom Cruise shooting down a fighter jet with a machine gun that he just pulled out of the SUV. And when the missile hits the bridge near him and the shockwave makes him fly about seven feet sideways into a car so hard that he breaks the windshield. It's too unrealistic for me. Also with Ethan's wife Julia, when he teaches her to shoot a gun and all the sudden she's an expert assassin. Like what the hell? It doesn't work that way. I mean I'm all for surrealistic movies where it's all crazy stunts and stuff but they totally skipped what would have been the coolest part. It would have been better if they would have shown him stealing the 'Rabbit's Foot' instead of all the sudden he's in then he's out in about 45 seconds. It would have been the good old Mission Impossible scene with the whole infiltration deal. But no, they skip it... needless to say this movie was lacking some serious qualities that you can't quite put your finger on. Go see it for yourself but don't pay full price. Wait a month until it is in cheap seats and pay three bucks but don't pay the full ten. It's not worth it.

Glenn S.

Your views and opinions are
important...

So write for Word on the Street

If you're a youth with something to say,
write it down and send it to CNYC!

- Become a youth journalist and get paid for your articles
- Help inform your community on issues that effect youth
- Improve your writing skills and receive school credit

Contact Allysha at CNYC
665-3889 or youthcoop@sasktel.net

How Parents, Police Force and School Can Help Eliminate Crime

I really feel that it is the parent's job to lead their child on the right path. Parents need to communicate with their children. They should ask where they are going, who they are with and what is the phone number there. But don't get nosy and ask in detail what they will be doing because you will get lied to. It will just cause problems and you need to pick your battles. I feel that teenagers should be trusted until they give you a reason to not be trusted. If you are really worried make a phone call to where they are. The police do not have a good relationship with teenagers. When you end up face to face with one they give off this vibe that they are better than the average person. The officers need some serious public relations training, especially the female officers. I can definitely say that I am not in trouble with the law and I still do not trust the police. No good has ever come from calling them, in fact the way they deal with teenagers endangers more of them than helps them. Lots of repeat crimes are due to injustices. The justice system should be cracking down on drug trafficking and weapons (what they need is **no tolerance**). I think schools need to communicate with home at least once a week. Teachers should have relationships with their students free from being judged. If a young person knows that you won't judge them, they are more likely to be open with you.

~Jen Friesen

Politicians at a Glance



Focus on Youth:

My proudest accomplishment in dealing with youth was the formation of the 3R's Youth Co-op several years ago out of St. John School. When we found the need for young people in the core neighbourhoods to organize, it evolved into the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op. Small world, eh!

Who? Owen Fortosky

What is your job? I actually have two jobs, both that involve work in the core neighbourhoods. First of all, I am the Principal of St. Mary's Community School. Secondly, I am an elected member of Saskatoon's City Council representing the people of Ward 2 which covers the areas of Riversdale, King George, Pleasant Hill, Meadowgreen, Holiday Park, and Montgomery.

What do you do for members of your community? I try my best to speak and act on issues that are important to the well being of all citizens in Saskatoon especially young people. I bring forward issues presented to me by the people I represent as well as introducing ideas that I feel are of benefit to the city. Sometimes, those ideas are controversial and don't get very far but my number one goal is to build people's awareness of the plight many of our citizens, especially children and youth, face daily and to foster debate and discussion that otherwise might just be ignored. Although there is much that needs to be done, I am proud to live, work, and raise a family in Saskatoon's west side.

What is your background? I was born and raised in Pleasant Hill and attended school at St. Mary's and E.D. Feehan High School before spending a few years living and traveling overseas. I started teaching and am now a Principal. I have spent my last two summers volunteering in Uganda, Africa working with teachers and youth and hope to return in the future. I am married and am the proud father of three awesome boys.

The use of Natives as Mascots

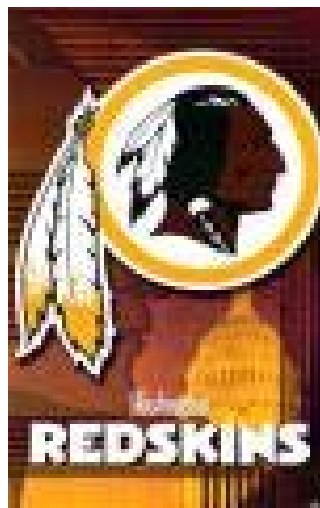
Many schools throughout North America have used generic Native nicknames such as Indians, Braves or Chiefs, and others adopt specific tribal names like Seminoles, Cherokees, or Apaches. In recent years school divisions have decided that using such terms is a form of racism and have chosen to get rid of the derogatory images and names from their schools. Of the estimated 3,000 schools in the United States that once used First Nations as mascots, many have chosen to use a new, non-racist mascot. But Indian mascots are still used in over 1,500 public schools throughout the United States. With such mascots still existing, children are prevented from developing real, healthy attitudes about Indians. Moreover, Indian children who constantly see themselves being stereotyped and their cultures belittled, grow into adults who feel and act inferior to other people.



These racist and wrong behaviours mock Indian culture and cause many Indian youngsters to have low self-esteem and feel shame about their cultural identity. Many bad effects are associated with a person who has low self-esteem such as suicide, low academic performance or dropping out all together, which then ultimately leads to a difficult time finding a fulfilling job. It is no coincidence that American Indians have the highest suicide, school dropout and unemployment rates of any ethnic group in the United States. These statistics would have great relevance north of the border as well.

In Canada, the issue of using Native mascots almost seems to be non-existent. While I attended high school at Bedford Road collegiate in the mid nineties, the issue came up because the nickname of the school I attended was the Redmen. The students were allowed to have a vote on the matter and the outcome was to keep the name as is, and has remained status quo since. Doug Cuthand whom is an Aboriginal award winning writer, director and producer wrote in the local paper at the time that the controversy in Saskatoon was a “white liberal debate, with little relevance in the First Nations community.” Issues in the Saskatoon and Regina First Nations communities focus on housing, jobs, quality of life and dealing with racism that is more overt than the name a high school chooses to call its team.

The use of mascots is about cultural, spiritual, and intellectual exploitation. Therefore, the real issues are about power and control. Negative ethnic images are driven by people in power wanting to define other ethnic groups and control their images in order to have the public believe that their truth is the only truth. The way to break this power and control over Native people is to get rid all hurtful mascots, logos and nicknames that currently exist. Continual exposure and education on the issue is what it will take to finally eradicate the use of Natives as mascots, logos and nicknames.



This article is an excerpt from an essay entitled: “The Use of Natives as Mascots, and the Effects of Euro-American Hegemony” by CNYC carpenter extraordinaire, Elvis Kambeitz