



RYAN JACKSON, THE JOURNAL

Paige Tomaszewsky developed a violent, severe form of Tourette's syndrome very suddenly when she was 13. Her story was the inspiration for Bob Lysay's and Agnieszka Matejko's art installation, which opens Friday. Tomaszewsky poses with the installation, comprised of several video screens, in Enterprise Square main floor gallery at 10230 Jasper Avenue.

# Into the mind of a teen with Tourette's

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SHERWOOD PARK

When Paige Tomaszewsky smells heavy perfume, she gets an urge to jump.

It can be overwhelming at the entrance to The Bay. She once jumped on the spot for 15 minutes straight until the episode passed, she said, laughing easily about it now as she sits having coffee at a Sherwood Park bookstore.

Paige was 13 when she developed a complex, serious and sometimes violent form of Tourette's syndrome. She threw pencils, screamed in school hallways and hit. Hard.

She feels an urge to scream in the bookstore. Strangers stand behind the cashier and read books by the fireplace. "I'm holding it in," she said. "Most of the time I can't, but I really want to right now. It's like holding in a sneeze. It only gets worse."

When Paige first developed the tics, adults were afraid for her. Her mother was worried she would be shunned and bullied for her odd outbursts. Agnieszka Matejko, the mother of a school friend, had visions of her own daughter shunning Paige. "My daughter wants to be so cool and beautiful

## Installation at The Works helps explain aspects of puzzling syndrome

all the time. I didn't know what it would do for their relationship."

Paige handled the outbursts with as much laughter as possible, and now Matejko has built on her fears to create a documentary art installation about teenagers and Tourette's that opens today.

Tourette's typically appears in children age four to six and often disappears in adolescence. But it can appear late. It can last into adulthood.

It tends to run in families, but no one understands the exact cause, said Dr. Alan Carroll, who treats patients with Tourette's and helped Matejko find other teenage patients to talk about their experience. The disorder limits the body's ability to control impulses and affects up to one per cent of the population.

Paige remembers the first time her arm swung out of control. She was camping with cousins from Denmark on the edge of a lake about a three-hour drive from Edmonton. They were sitting around the campfire when she struck her 13-year-old cousin across the chest.

He was shocked and thought she did it on purpose. She was just as surprised. Whenever she saw someone



### SCAN ME

To see more on The Works Walking Tour, a Google map of downtown, and to view The Works photo gallery

swing their arm or even stretch, her arm would respond as if jolted by an electric shock. She hit hard enough to cause bruises and hurt herself when she struck a tree.

It was unknown, bizarre and taking over her body, but it helped that her mother Rose guessed it was Tourette's right away.

Three years later, Paige, 16, looks like a happy, carefree teen. Her hair is tied back in a ponytail, bangs slightly frizzy and face clear of makeup.

Her leg vibrates while she talks as if she's nervous. She just laughs. That's not being nervous. "It's a tic." Her head jerks every 10 minutes or so, but that doesn't seem to worry her.

After getting Tourette's, Paige's biggest concern was going back to school in the fall. But students and teachers at the rural Fultonvale Elementary/Junior High were

supportive.

Rather than getting upset, her teacher offered prizes for anyone who caught the pencils Paige threw in class. Soon it was a game. Paige would yell "heads" as she watched her arm go up, and by the end of the first term the students didn't flinch.

Friends still don't sit in the desk next to her. They leave a desk in between. "But I still have lots of friends," she said. "They just learn to accept who I am. I'm a nice person underneath all the hitting."

During the past couple of years, Paige tried several medications, but the first just made the outbursts more frequent. The second made her so tired she could only stay awake five hours at a time.

Vitamins — zinc, vitamin B, calcium and fish oil — helped reduce the symptoms for a time, but mostly she has just learned to predict the tics and live her life by ignoring them.

She has one year left of high school, then plans to attend Olds College for either greenhouse management or landscaping.

"The only limitations are the ones you put on yourself," she said.

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## ART INSTALLATION: THE SPACE BETWEEN YOU AND ME

► Agnieszka Matejko and Bob Lysay, colleagues at Grant MacEwan University's Centre for the Arts, used Paige Tomaszewsky's experience as inspiration to create an art installation.

► The installation runs Friday through July 7 in Enterprise Square as part of The Works Art and Design Festival.

► The piece uses interviews with seven teenagers with Tourette's syndrome. Three simultaneous videos tie the interviews into images of the wind twisting branches and an interpretive dance to give a picture of what's happening inside the minds of those who have the syndrome.

► Adding images of violence in nature was Tomaszewsky's idea, Matejko said, and all the images together give an important sense of chaos.

► Tomaszewsky "has changed our view of illness," Matejko said. "She didn't see her Tourette's as an illness to battle. It's part of nature. It's part of herself."

# Woman who killed teen landscaper pleads guilty to careless driving

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EDMONTON

A 25-year-old woman who slammed her car into the back of a work truck, pinning a teenage landscaper and killing him, pleaded guilty Thursday to careless driving.

Taryn Crawford entered the plea in provincial court in connection with the death of 19-year-old Sefatullah Khanzadeh.

Khanzadeh was working as a seasonal landscaper for LandTec Landscape Contractors on July 24, 2009. The teenager and two other employees were doing weeding work on the meridian of 97th Street near 144th Avenue around 10:30 a.m.

A work truck had been parked in the northbound inside lane of 97th Street.

Traffic cones had been placed around the site to direct vehicles away from the inside lane. When the work was completed, Khanzadeh started picking up the cones and throwing them into the back of the truck while a colleague slowly reversed the truck.

That's when Crawford's Honda Civic slammed into the back of the truck, pinning Khanzadeh between the two vehicles. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

"For some reason, (Crawford) ran into the back of the truck," Crown prosecutor Brendan Gaunt told court. Several cars driving ahead of Crawford saw the truck and pulled into the other lanes.

A Workplace Health and Safety fatality report released in February, which was not presented in court, stated the driver of the Civic was "distracted from driving responsibilities" and was seen texting on her cellphone as she exited her car after the crash.

"The driver of the (Civic) did not even know that she had crushed a landscape worker. There were no visible skid marks from the passenger vehicle," indicating the driver had not tried to stop before the crash, the report said.

The report also noted the amber light on the roof of the work truck was not functioning at the time of the crash.

The careless driving charge falls under the Traffic Safety Act. The maximum penalty for the charge is a \$2,000 fine and six months in jail.

The case is scheduled to be back in court June 29, when a more complete set of facts about the incident will be discussed.

Khanzadeh's family was not in court Thursday and lawyers wanted to give them the opportunity to attend the full court proceeding.

Khanzadeh came to Canada from Afghanistan in 2006 with his family.

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# Churchill Square getting cooler

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The basketball hoops at Churchill Square have been getting a good workout since they went up, but Mayor Stephen Mandel says more can be done to make the square more user-friendly.

An information report going to council's executive committee next week outlines a number of options administration is looking at to improve year-round use of the downtown square.

The options include having three-on-three basketball tournaments, turning the square's souvenir store into a crafts/arts/musical/city and aboriginal venue, bringing in more greenery and loosening up the rules so food vendors can sell on the square instead of the perimeter.

"I think some of the suggestions that have been indicated are good ones, and I think it needs good management and more opportunities for people to enjoy themselves," Mandel said Thursday. But there has to be a balance so downtown businesses don't complain Churchill Square



JOHN LUCAS, THE JOURNAL

Owen Piper, 17, left, and Stille Larson, 15, keep cool at City Hall on Thursday.

activities are hurting their bottom lines, he said. "Our job is to make Churchill more fun, but not to take business away from the local businesses downtown. The intent is to make it a place of congregation and getting together," he said.

More winter programming is a definite must and he doesn't think the city has to spend big money to achieve a busy downtown square year-round, Mandel said.

"It's not going to cost a ton of money to be creative and that is what we are going to talk about. I think the time has come to be more creative in how we manage the square."

Built in 2004 at cost of \$13 million, it costs about \$1.2 million annually to operate Churchill Square.

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