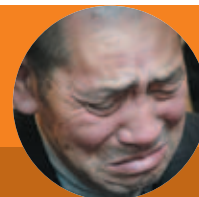


The sixth anniversary of Amanda Zhao's murder will be commemorated at the Vancouver Chinese Cultural Centre tonight. Her parents will attend.



need to know

Killer whale lawsuit

A coalition of environmental groups including Greenpeace and the David Suzuki Foundation is suing the federal government for not doing enough to protect killer whales along the coast of B.C. The lawsuit, filed in Vancouver, calls for new practices by federal officials to protect whale habitat.



Surrey housing help

A \$1-million grant from the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society will see a centre for pregnant, at-risk women and their children get built in Whalley. Atira Women's Resource Society received the grant yesterday, which paves the way for the construction of the new Maxxine Wright Place.

briefs

local news

Victim sought

Here's one with a twist: North Vancouver RCMP are looking for the victim of a purse snatching after arresting two men near Chesterfield Avenue and West Esplanade Sept. 20. But the female victim was gone when officers returned after the arrests and hasn't contacted police since.

Fatal shooting

The Integrated Homicide Intervention Team has taken over a case in Surrey after a shooting at 10928 Timberland Road Tuesday evening. A man from the home was taken to hospital with gunshot wounds but later died. The victim has not been named.

Suspect wanted

Burnaby RCMP have released footage taken at the Coast Capital Savings branch at Metrotown mall to track down a man suspected of robbing the bank in June. The man, seen wearing a red shirt and white shorts, threatened staff with mace and fled with an undisclosed amount of money.



Centre funded

The Justice Institute of British Columbia will have a new training facility for paramedics, police officers and firefighters in Chilliwack thanks to \$5.1 million from the provincial government. The 2.3-hectare site is near the University of the Fraser Valley.

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EA takes homeless on board

A handful of businesses are taking social responsibility beyond buzzwords and getting directly involved in changing people's lives.

That was evident yesterday as Electronic Arts hosted a corporate tour through Vancouver's Directions Youth Services Centre – a facility for the city's homeless youth – as part of the "Seeing is Believing Tour."



SMALL

The videogame giant has been a longtime supporter of Directions and even gives homeless youth the opportunity to become game testers while gaining valuable work skills.

EA vice-president Evaleen Jaeger-Roy guided executives from a dozen other corporations through Directions yesterday to encourage them to get involved.

Sharon Small, a 21-year-old who attends Directions, told media corporate help has been invaluable to her.

"No one is going to ask a street kid to test a video game, nobody," she said. "So giving opportunities to people who have nothing can only be beneficial."

- Matt Kieiltyka, 24 hours

Transit deficit balloons

TransLink is projecting a \$3.1-million deficit this year after originally aiming for an \$11.4-million surplus, the cash-strapped transit authority said yesterday.

The projected shortfall stems from rising fuel costs and lower than anticipated tax revenue.

In effect, TransLink can't afford to run a deficit this year. Starting next year, it'll be drawing down on its \$400 million reserve just to make ends meet.

TransLink will tighten the belt to make up the extra cash, said spokesperson Ken Hardie.

"The reserves are going to

carry us for the next couple of years until we get some funding gaps closed," Hardie said.

Those 'funding gaps' are sizeable.

By 2012, TransLink expects to be short \$150 million yearly just to run the system with projects it has already committed to. But it will be short \$450-500 million every year – nearly half its current budget – if it hopes to take on the commitments made under the province's partially funded \$14-billion transit plan for the region announced this year.

It's further evidence, says NDP

transportation critic Maurine Karagianis, of chronic underfunding.

"TransLink was burdened with a huge amount of promises by the Campbell government that they're not going to be able to achieve," she said. "How is the government going to make good on the promises they can double transit ridership by 2020?"

TransLink has been looking into a controversial revenue scheme that would see the transit authority have its fingers in real estate development along transit routes.

- Irwin Loy, 24 hours

Kids always heroes to their mom

When their mother suffered a life-threatening diabetic low in July, 11-year-old Alexander Thiessen and his two younger brothers weren't thinking about awards.

But thanks to the quick thinking of Alexander, William, 8, and Nicholas, 4, Betsy Thiessen was able to watch her children receive Good Samaritan Awards from the BC Ambulance Service yesterday.

"I'm so grateful," Betsy said yesterday outside Richmond's St. Joseph the Worker Elementary school.

When Betsy became ill, her boys quickly called 911, tested her blood sugar and treated her while paramedics raced to the scene.

"It's amazing," said Nathan Blackstock, the emergency medical dispatcher who took the call.

- Matt Kieiltyka, 24 hours



- Rob Kruyt, 24 hours

HEROES INDEED: The Thiessen brothers, William, left, 8, and Alexander, 11, received Good Samaritan Awards for rescuing their mom who was in diabetic shock. Nicholas, centre, 4, helped by comforting his mom.



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