

Student Help cares

Many of us were shaken up by the recent suicide at the residences. The student consensus seems to be that this type of occurrence is uncommon. But is it? We would like to inform you of some of the myths about suicide and

some of the symptoms which are associated with suicidal people.

How many times have we heard comments like these: "she wasn't the type...she had everything going for her...I guess that if she was going to do it, she wouldn't talk to anybody about it...don't worry about her, she just says crazy things because she's looking for attention?"

How often do we find ourselves supporting these misconceptions? Undoubtedly, we use these fallacies recurrently and it is time for us to examine some of the facts about suicide.

Suicide is the second greatest cause of death for people between the ages of 15 and 34; this makes it a common occurrence. Suicide is also an "equal-opportunity" tragedy; it transcends sex, age, economic, and social boundaries. Contrary to a popular myth, there is no "type" of person who attempts suicide.

Another falsehood about suicide is that people who "jokingly" talk about suicide are only seeking attention while those who are really serious about suicide never communicate their intentions. It is a fact that 60-80% of the people who attempt suicide, communicate their intentions beforehand.

Therefore, it is important to be sensitive to the nature of suicide. People who contemplate suicide are often uncertain about their wish to die. Their ambivalence, an inner struggle between their desire to live

and their desire to die, is expressed in some manner.

People frequently drop indirect clues when they are experiencing a crisis. They may give away treasured possessions, show agitation and restlessness, increase their consumption of drugs and alcohol, or lose their normal interest and curiosity in life. These indirect, external symptoms of suicidal tendencies indicate a hidden call for help. If we are not attentive and concerned about the feelings of others, it is easy for us to overlook these cries for assistance.

Suicide is a problem which isolates people from their resources. Friends and families use traditional myths to dismiss the problem and individuals, consequently, are left to cope with difficulties by themselves. We should be aware of the resources available to us when we are cut off from our natural support network.

At Student Help (Rm. 250, SUB, 432-4266), we are student volunteers who are willing to confidentially and empathetically assist anyone with their concerns. Student Counselling offers professional guidance in times of crisis. During the holiday season the Distress Line is open twenty-four hours per day (426-4252).

An unfortunate death, on campus, has brought home the value of life to us all. Let's take the time to help each other and to understand each other; let's make time to listen.

by the staff at Student Help

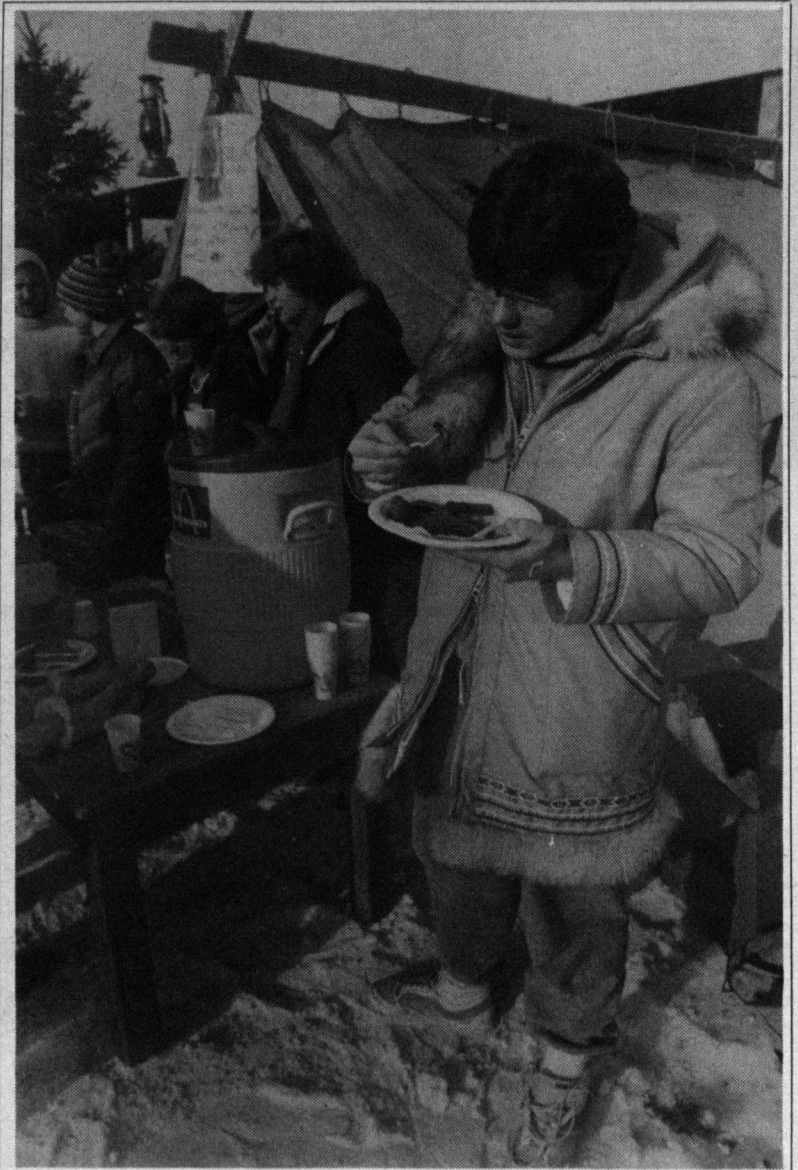


photo by Bill Inglee

Phys. Ed. student Veronica Wolski helps some classmates on their way to an extended wilderness trip by having lunch in the outdoors Wednesday. The students are trekking from Lac La Biche to Fort MacMurray.

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