

Raising MCS awareness one projection at a time

Trevor Wright
Times Staff

Marie LeBlanc is a Winnipeg based artist who grew up in The Pas and she returned to her hometown to help raise awareness on MCS (multiple chemical sensitivity). Not only is LeBlanc affected by MCS, she also hopes to raise awareness through projecting quotes from different people who are suffering from MCS onto different buildings in various towns. This week on Tuesday night she did some projecting on the side of the building where the Opasquia Times is located.

"I am projecting quotes from people all around the world who are suffering from multiple chemical sensitivity, environmental sensitivity, mold exposure, Lyme, all those environmental conditions and their struggles, especially to find housing and just their mere survival," LeBlanc said, adding, "you can feel the

cries of the people for help, it's all around the world. There are no borders, MCS has no borders, but it seems like the borders are stopping people from getting any help because you try and go across the border to the states because that's a warmer climate. People are living in tents here in Canada, they're living in tents in winter, they cannot get any help whatsoever. The organizations are having a challenge providing help to people," said LeBlanc.

She calls this project the #endangeredhumanartproject.

MCS covers a wide range of different symptoms and it is also known as environmental illness or environmental sensitivity, sick building syndrome, idiopathic environmental intolerance, and other terms. It can also be difficult for doctors to diagnose and impacts a lot of people.

"In the studies it's about three to six, or three

to nine per cent but there's more. So (even) three percent of however millions we have in Canada is a lot of people and a lot of them can't get diagnosed because it's very hard to diagnose and there's limited doctors."

People suffering from MCS often have problems getting housing that doesn't conflict with MCS, but it is also an accessibility issue as they often have to go inside buildings for medical care, goods and services, as well as jobs.

"Housing is one of the more crucial elements for people with multiple chemical sensitivity and the environmental sensitivities. If they don't have that safe housing, they really don't have a chance because they need a place to breathe and be healthy, then they may be able to function and have a better quality of life. Some may be able to go off and work, some may not but everybody deserves a chance at life," she explained.

There have been other

places in North America that have made accommodations to help people with MCS.

"There are places that have created things like in Arizona, they have created some places for people, but it's been a challenge to have something created here in Canada," mentioned LeBlanc.

She contacted a number of people in various levels of government in trying to raise awareness of MCS or implementing change to accommodate people with MCS.

"I've approached all levels of government. I spoke with someone, I'm not sure if it was (with) Manitoba Housing, but according to them I guess it's a lack of funding, and I've written letters to Prime Minister Trudeau and all levels of government in relations to all the accessibility needs and it's a challenge," LeBlanc added.

LeBlanc speaks about her personal problems that she has when dealing with

everyday things that impact her because of MCS.

"It's a challenge for me because I have to worry about certain new products that will be outgassing or off gassing chemicals like formaldehyde; it all depends on what it is. I have a hard time with new products and also with used products because there could be mold or pesticides, or pet dander or things like that," LeBlanc said, adding, "it affects my brain, it effects how I'm thinking, cognitively it affects all my organs in my body. It's a physiological condition, for me housing has been my biggest challenge," LeBlanc explained.

With so many people being impacted it isn't without its casualties as a number of people she personally knew passed away due to complications from MCS.

"My friend Eliana from Mexico, who also suffered from MCS,

recently lost her life along with (fellow sufferers) Lauren and Nancy in their struggle to find a safe space to live with access to healthcare, transportation, food and water. Eliana had moved 73 or more times in the past few years," she wrote in an email to the Opasquia Times the next day. "I am dedicating my "WHO says we need fresh air?!" quotes to my friends Eliana, Lauren and Nancy and all of the folks living with MCS," said LeBlanc in an email to the Opasquia Times later on.

In addition LeBlanc has written a few articles on her problems with MCS on the website communitynewscommons.org where she talked about trying to raise awareness on MCS and its impacts.

According to LeBlanc there is also a stigma surrounding the discussion on MCS, and that there are many people who are affected by it and they don't realize it.

See HOUSING P12

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Cormorant Lake School in Cormorant, MB

Saturday, August 26, 2017 at 1:00 PM
The Metis Club Room in The Pas, MB

All eligible recipients will be required to sign a receipt
and provide photo ID at the meeting.

For more information, please contact Terri Chevrefils,
Summerberry Compensation Coordinator –
First Preference Trappers at the Manitoba Metis
Federation Home Office.

204-586-8474 ext. 378 or terri.chevrefils@mmf.mb.ca



Housing is a major issue facing those with MCS

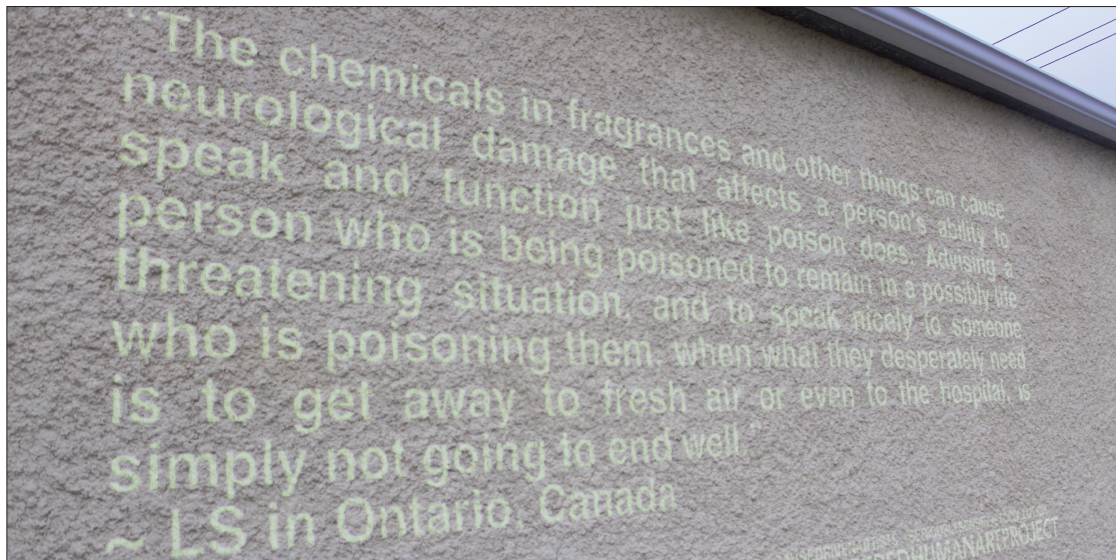
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"There are just too many people facing the stigma and they want to talk but they have no one to talk to. Last year I came here and had some photos out during one of your street fairs, and they were happy that I was raising awareness.

I had one of my friends go in a bubble and approach the legislature

Some people are too afraid and I would be too, but I'm not anymore, I went public. I went to the legislature last year, I had one of my friends go in a bubble and approach the legislature on Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Awareness Day because I was trying to represent safe housing or the lack thereof," LeBlanc said.

Toxic mold exposure is one of the biggest prob-



LeBlanc was projecting quotes from people who are impacted by MCS Tuesday night, and she plans to do so again tonight. Trevor Wright/Opasquia Times

lems for people suffering from MCS, LeBlanc mentioned, and it is almost impossible to have some resemblance of living a normal life.

But she has been receiving support locally, Sound Innovations has

donated \$200 for gas so she can keep traveling and raising awareness, she also wanted to thank the people of The Pas for all their support.

She will also be doing more projecting on the same building Friday

night, with quotes from people locally, provincially, nationally as well as globally who are afflicted with MCS. She also suggested that people come fragrance free when going to checking out the projections Friday night.

If you happened to be in Winnipeg on September 30, LeBlanc will also be around during the Nuit Blanche Culture Day hoping to raise more awareness about the issue.

LeBlanc is also looking for more quotes to use,

so if you are suffering from MCS and want to raise awareness, you can contact her via email at toxicnomad911@gmail.com or on her Facebook page Marie LeBlanc Artist/Street Photographer Winnipeg.

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