

# Workshop sheds light on dark drug

By Sarah Fox  
The Daily News

The Gitmaxmak'ay society wants to prevent crystal meth from becoming a larger problem in Prince Rupert and is raising awareness through a two-day workshop.

Adults are invited to attend a workshop at Nisga'a Hall, June 22 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. where they will learn the truth about crystal meth and all other dangerous street drugs.

"This workshop is highly recommended for parents, teachers, alcohol and drug counsellors and front-line workers that work with youth, so that [the front-line workers] will know how to deal with the youth who are often on their own at age 15 or 16," said Carol Smythe-Doolan, programs and service coordinator at Nisga'a Hall. "For this reason, this workshop really targets the parents to take a more active role."

A youth workshop will be held June 23 at 4:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at Fisherman's Hall at 869 Fraser Street.

The youth will be shown a series of DVDs, the first of which is titled *Death by Jib* and is a recently produced 20-minute documentary shot in Vancouver featuring crystal meth users talking about how the drug has played such a predominant role in ruining their lives. The second film is called *Tweaked* and is a shocking 20-minute film to wake youth up to the fact that crystal meth is not a recreational drug. This film shows very clearly the dark and volatile nature of crystal meth addiction once it gets its claws into a user.

There will be a third video named *Nightmare on Meth Street*. It is a 15-minute video created by the Young Warriors Network, the group that is funded by the government to give the two-day workshops.

"We've asked youth if they are aware of it and they say, not yet, but we know that if they are willing to try it once, they're hooked," said Smythe-Doolan.

She thinks these workshops are a "must have" in this community, to inform the community of what is coming and be aware of and how residents can handle it when it does come, "so we're not scrambling."

Although Smythe-Doolan has contacted RCMP and she says that there is not currently a meth problem in Prince Rupert, the facilitator of the workshops, Lee Mason disagrees.

"I've been to some pretty isolated areas and they're all hit with meth so our guys are definitely hit with it

as well," he said. "You've got it too, it's just not being talked about. There's a lot of young people everywhere doing ecstasy, there's a lot of people in Rupert doing ecstasy... most of the ecstasy out there today is straight amphetamine which is similar to the crystal methamphetamine or crystal meth. It's a gateway drug."

Mason mentioned doing workshops in Terrace and New Aiyansh where he said there are evident crystal meth addiction problems.

He says that if youth and adults are doing cocaine and ecstasy then chances are they're doing crystal meth as well. Mason has been running the Young Warriors' crystal meth awareness programs all over B.C. since January of 2005.

Smythe-Doolan said she is expecting about 50 to 100 adults to show up at the workshop and would like to invite any adults and youth that are interested to attend. She is also looking for more businesses to donate door prizes for the event.

She can be contacted at 627-1595.