Press Clippings
March 2014
Web
LEVITOWN, Pa. (AP) -- The smell of rotten eggs in the air was certainly unpleasant, but nothing alarming for Miriam Favano Dougherty when it roused her from bed around 3:30 a.m. one recent Sunday.

She went into her bathroom, then the hallway, where the smell was stronger. That is when the Lower Southampton woman decided to go downstairs to ask her son Daniel if he smelled it, too.

Daniel, a college student, was home on spring break. He wasn't in bed, but his cellphone was plugged in. Next she checked the powder room, which is when she saw the sign taped to the door.

"Three breaths will kill you," the note read, she said.

Behind that barricaded door, her 22-year-old son was dead, a suicide that brought hazardous materials and emergency response crews to the Chalet Village apartment complex where the family lives. About 30 apartment residents had to be evacuated for several hours until the scene was rendered safe.

Only later did Favano Dougherty learn her son had mixed chemicals to create a cloud of poisonous hydrogen sulfide gas, a suicide method that some experts say is growing.

The chemical suicide is the second in Bucks County in four years. In 2010, a 33-year-old man killed himself using the same lethal combination to create hydrogen sulfide as he sat in a car parked in a Richland garage, according to press accounts.

That man also taped signs to the car's windows warning of poisonous gas inside and urging readers to call hazmat units. Two police officers who responded to the call were exposed to the gas fumes for only seconds and did not require treatment, according to press accounts.

"These chemicals are very, very accessible," said Bob Brzenchek, criminal justice lead and assistant professor for the legal studies program at Peirce College in Philadelphia, who has studied the trend. "The numbers speak for themselves."

Between 2008 and June, 2011, at least 72 incidents of chemical suicides have been documented, Brzenchek said, citing a New York Times story. Often this method results in injuries to first responders and bystanders, he added.

As in Favano and the 2010 Richland case, often the person who commits suicide leaves a warning note behind, Brzenchek said.

No note warned emergency responders at the scene of an attempted suicide by chemicals in Kingston Township, Luzerne County, in 2011, when a man crashed into a tree while driving after mixing the deadly chemical combination in his car, Brzenchek said.

About four or five EMS units ended up quarantined at a hospital, and the entire hospital was
eventually quarantined.

The public should take precautions if they come into contact with such a suicide, he added.

"Size up the situation and you have to use common sense," Brzenchek said. "Do not open the door no matter where you are. If you come upon a scene and you smell something like bitter almonds or rotten eggs, that's one of your first signs that there is something wrong."

In Lower Southampton, the apartment complex owner has hired a contractor to handle removal of the remaining chemicals Daniel Favano used, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection spokeswoman Debra Fries confirmed Thursday. The chemicals have been secured and they are being stored in a secure area at the complex, pending their removal, Fries said.

Despite her son's final warning posted on the powder room door, Favano Dougherty tried to break down the door, throwing her body against it. But Daniel had barricaded it on the other side.

She then ran back upstairs and got her other son, husband and 2-year-old grandson out of the residence. They were all treated at a local hospital for fumes.

Chemical suicide is something Favano Dougherty had never heard of before that day, when a paramedic told her it's a growing trend, she said. She has spent the days since her son's death learning everything she can about this little-known suicide method.

"I want to prevent anyone else from doing this," she said.

The family hasn't been able to access his computer to see if there was any inkling he was planning suicide.

She was up with Daniel until 10 p.m. that Saturday. His older brother -- who turned 24 on Thursday -- was up with him until midnight. His mother remembers them laughing. He had lunch plans for Monday.

"There really was no sign. No one depressive day. Nothing is on his (smart) phone; I've gone through every textbook, copy book. We've talked with his friends -- nothing," she said. "It's a quick death; that is my only solace I have."

Daniel was studying clinical psychology at Temple University and maintained a 3.6 grade point average, his mother said. He reached the rank of colonel in his high school's Junior ROTC program, she said.

Since his death, Favano Dougherty has been wearing Daniel's Temple sweatshirt so she can be closer to him.

Her son was quirky; a huge fan of the British science fiction series "Dr. Who," he preferred classical music and Josh Groban. Daniel was born on Halloween, the 12th of 13 babies born at the hospital that day, his mom said.

"He was my 'Boo-Boo,'" she said. "He'd go out and go up to the doors and say, 'Trick or treat -- it's my birthday,' and he'd get double the candy."

Daniel loved long walks and he logged five miles every day. He taught himself to read music. He was also self-taught on the violin, flute and ocarina, also called a vessel flute.

"And he could play well," Favano Dougherty added.
The family planned to have Daniel cremated because his body is too toxic to bury, Favano Dougherty said. She can't touch his body because of the chemicals, she said.

"I can't say he was the light of my life -- all my sons all are -- but every day he made me laugh," she added. "Not one person has told me he was depressed at all. Everyone is asking me why."

Online:

http://bit.ly/1m3YjLM

Information from: Bucks County Courier Times, http://www.buckscountycouriertimes.com

AP Feeds:
   AP Regional State News
   AP Regional State Report - Pennsylvania

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Highlights: Peirce College
Have you ever met a successful woman and wondered how she did it? Come to this FREE TD Bank-sponsored event, which will feature local executives who will answer your questions about leadership's role in achieving personal and professional success.

**EVENT DETAILS**
**WHEN**
Wednesday, March 26, 2014
Recurring: ONCE

**TIME & PRICE**
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM FREE

**WHERE**
Peirce College, 1420 Pine Street, Philadelphia, PA
One time only on 03/26/2014.

**FOR MORE INFO**
www.peirce.edu/2014WIL
John Johnny Doc Dougherty, the powerful business manager of the city electricians' union, is facing a possible challenge to his position as a Democratic ward leader.

Karen Brown, 52, the Republican candidate for mayor in 2011, changed her registration back to Democratic last month and is trying to regain her longtime spot as a Democratic committeewoman in South Philadelphia's First Ward.

Brown said Monday that if she wins in the May 21 primary election, I would consider running (for ward leader), and I know there are also other people considering running.

Dougherty, who replaced Joe Hoffman as ward leader in 2010, dismissed Brown's threat as a farce.

She's not even allowed to run. Read the rules, Dougherty said, apparently referring to Democratic Party rules that prohibit ward or committee positions for anyone who has supported a non-Democrat at any general election within the last two years.

She's looking for a job. That's what it's about, said Dougherty, business manager of Local 98 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. That's illegal. I'm not doing anything like that.

Brown had been a Democratic committeewoman since for more than 20 years, she said, before changing her registration in early 2011 to seek the Republican nomination for mayor.

Since that race, Brown said, she has not supported anyone but Democrats. She said she talked to Dougherty about a job three years ago but was not interested now, as she takes paralegal and pre-law classes at Peirce College and Philadelphia Community College.

Based on the pending challenges in the First Ward, any effort to take on Dougherty would be a long shot.

With 21 divisions in the ward, each with two committeemen, it would take just 22 votes for Dougherty to win reelection.

While challenges are underway in 13 of the 21 divisions, the eight uncontested divisions would yield 16 votes. In eight more divisions, there are three contestants for two spots.

Brown complained that under Hoffman, committeemen used to vote on which candidates to support, but the practice ended after Dougherty became ward leader. You're told what to do, how to do it and how to vote, she said. There's no democracy.

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Bob Warner Inquirer Staff Writer
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"We believe in a holistic approach to education and partnering with compatible organizations," said James J. Mergiotti, president & chief executive officer of Peirce College. "Our students require human development and experiential learning as well as academics, so they have the best possible preparation for today's job market. We believe that Philadelphia holds enormous opportunity for this partnership, and that together we can have a significant impact on community, workforce, and economic development throughout the region."

In commenting on his vision for this program, Year Up Founder and Chief Executive Officer Gerald Chertavian said, "By cutting the ribbon at Peirce College, we are reaffirming a belief in young people: that they are the economic assets that fuel the best companies in this country."

The Year Up PTC program in Philadelphia offers students 27 credits at Peirce College and a full-time internship at a Fortune 1000 company, preparing participants to become active contributors in Philadelphia's workforce.

Comcast has served as one of the foundational partners in this internship program. William Strahan, executive vice president of human resources for Comcast, was honored at the March 5 ribbon cutting and commented on the partnership: "This is a community of companies in Philadelphia standing up for a great program. Like Peirce, we are an organization that has deep Philadelphia roots, and we are committed to investing in local students. The partnership of Year Up and Peirce College is wonderful for the city and we are delighted to be part of the corporate team here today."

Thirty-four students are currently enrolled in the program and serve as leaders in pioneering this solution for Philadelphia. Richard Negrin, deputy mayor of administration & coordination for the Mayor's Office, has committed his office to working with at least six Year Up students each year. Negrin joined in the ribbon cutting celebration and said, "We need Year Up in Philadelphia, and we have already seen this program help us bridge the gap of opportunity. On behalf of the Mayor and the city of
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For more on this partnership, please visit [www.peirce.edu/partnerships](http://www.peirce.edu/partnerships) or [www.yearup.org/philadelphia](http://www.yearup.org/philadelphia).

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Philadelphia standing up for.
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Visit Peirce
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By: Peirce College via Business Wire News Releases

March 14, 2014 at 10:52 AM EDT

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