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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: RYAN SHIPPEL

YOU DROPPED YOUR SAW We've dug up some campus legends in time for Halloween. The frights start on page 10.

Chair in pediatric oncology to further cancer research

CAROLINE LEE
News Writer

Northern Alberta's first research chair in pediatric oncology is set to be established by the Kids with Cancer Society and the University of Alberta's Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry—once the necessary \$3 million is raised.

The Kids with Cancer Society has taken a leadership role in developing the idea for the research chair with a commitment to endowing \$1.5 million in support of childhood cancer research, a figure that will be matched by the U of A.

Val Figliuzzi, executive director of the Kids with Cancer Society, explained that while \$500 000 has already been contributed by the foundation, the remaining \$1 million must still be raised in order to fully fund the position.

"We have a very ambitious goal in front of us. We're looking toward the community to open their hearts and help us through donations, so that we can make a difference in the lives of these children through this research chair," Figliuzzi said.

Dr Paul Grundy, the director of the Northern Alberta Children's Cancer Program and of U of A's Pediatric Hematology, Oncology, and Palliative Care, explained that the current treatments for childhood cancer lack efficiency and have side effects that can be immediate or long-term. He expanded further that the current cure rate for cancer in children is around 80 per cent—a drastic improvement from the 10–20 per cent figure 40 years ago.

"In one way, we have made a lot of

progress and are moving in the right direction. But, to a child or to their parents [with cancer], it's nowhere near good enough. So the biggest thing wrong with current treatment is that they aren't effective enough," he said.

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VAL FIGLIUZZI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KIDS WITH CANCER SOCIETY

Grundy explained that diagnosed children often exhibit a wide range of symptoms, as chemotherapy and radiation are designed to target actively growing cells. As a result, children often experience significant damage to their internal organs and can develop learning disabilities when treatment is specifically directed to the brains, such as for children with leukemia. Additionally, cancer treatment can actually increase the risk for developing secondary cancer.

PLEASE SEE **PEDIATRICS** ♦ PAGE 2

New research shows link between athleticism and popularity in youths

ALLISON GRAHAM
News Writer

If you were one of those kids in elementary school who thought that if you were picked last for kickball your life would be ruined, new research suggests that you might not have been too far off.

Dr Janice Causgrove Dunn from the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation has led a study showing that children who were seen as less athletic by their peers were also seen as less popular, making them prone to loneliness and social ostracism.

U of A researchers, led by Dunn, conducted the study in the form of a "self-report measure," giving a total of 208 students from grades four to six at seven different Edmonton schools questionnaires that contained three different measures to test the children: loneliness, self-confidence, and

socio-metric status.

According to Dunn, "[the] kids who received higher athletic ability ratings from their peers [...] were the kids who received the higher peer nomination status, and they experienced less loneliness at school."

During the study, the children first rated statements that tested their loneliness by writing how much they agreed or disagreed with given statements about how many friends they had. Then, the children were each given a class list asking them to rate every child in their class (including themselves) according to athletic ability, from one (not good) to five (very good). The last test, used to measure popularity, asked the students to pick three children they would want to be in a group with on a field trip, and then to pick the three children they would least like to be in their group.

After the scores of the children were calculated, it

was found that each of the three tests confirmed the correlation between athleticism and popularity.

Dunn explained that although childhood loneliness, social status, and even physical ability in children have been studied previously, they had not been directly compared until now.

"We were interested in [asking], does not being very good at physical activity from the perspective of their peers mean that young kids actually feel lonely at school—that they perceive that the number or the quality of relationships that they have with their peers isn't what they want, and it makes them feel sad?" Dunn said, adding that it was the social aspects of physical ability in children that had yet to be presented that triggered the study.

"It's almost like it was just assumed or it made sense theoretically that these benefits would be there," she said. "But there wasn't the evidence."

Dunn explained that the study is very important in understanding how to prevent the short- and long-term effects of loneliness, such as increased risk of marijuana use, cigarette smoking, alcoholism, and depression in adolescence and adulthood.

The solution, she says, is fairly simple: encouraging those kids that excel in athletics to include the ones that do get picked last for every team sport could be the first step to more confidence and better social skills for the young outcasts. Until then, Dunn said, we can at least better understand why more physically apt children are considered more popular.

"What we speculated [...] is that kids who have at least a minimal level of athletic competence have the skills necessary to join in activities," Dunn said. "That gives them more opportunities to socialize with other kids so they develop more friendships."

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Flirty Frauen

Is dressing up as a sexy señorita culturally insensitive, or is it simply keeping in the spirit of Halloween?

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Far-off Fußballspielen

What do Germans, dancing, racism, and Rihanna have in common? Eddy Sidra talks about all of them.

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