

TRUE STORIES

NEW HAMPSHIRE MAN IN HOME DEPOT STEALS AIR CONDITIONERS

Police say a man donned an orange Home Depot apron and posed as an employee to steal air conditioners in New Hampshire. But a manager noticed the name on the garment didn't match that of any worker at the store.

Police arrested 53-year-old Bernardo Calana, of Haverhill, Massachusetts, on Saturday.

WMUR-TV reported. Calana loaded two air conditioners into his pickup truck in Plaistow and went back inside. A manager noticed the apron with the name "Shannon" with flowers drawn on it and called police.

Calana later told police he didn't know anything about the air conditioners, but a Home Depot apron was found in his back pocket.

DELAWARE DELIVERYMAN TAKES PIZZA TO TRAIN RIDERS

A pizza delivery man in Delaware got an order from an unusual address: a stalled Amtrak train from New York on its way to Washington.

Passenger Mitchell Katz posted a video of deliveryman Jim Leary walking up to the train Sunday evening as it sat on the tracks. People on board were getting restless after being left without access to food or water during the long delay and eventually some passengers came up with the idea of ordering pizza, Katz said.

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The View

Reasons to care

"Get a snack, settle in, cause I'm about to tell you the story of my life. More specifically, why my life ended. And if you are listening to this tape, you're one of the reasons why," says Hannah, the main character of "13 Reasons Why," in a series of audio tapes she makes that are distributed to selected individuals after her suicide.

The recipients of Hannah's audio tapes listen to her enumerate the reasons for her suicide as she assigns blame to certain individuals in her life.

While shining a light on a topic that often hides in the darkness of stigma and fear, the show and its depiction of Hannah's death has been criticized by suicide prevention experts because of its sensationalized treatment of youth suicide and its failure to make clear that suicide is never a solution — it is an irreversible choice regarding a temporary problem. It is sad to see both the missed opportunities, and the attempts by her friends, parents and counselors to help her.

It is estimated that one in five of us will experience a mental health disorder during our lifetime, and over 1 million Coloradans will experience a mental health or substance use disorder this year. Fortunately, diagnosed mental illness is treatable and over 90 percent of those who receive treatment recover from the illness.

However, those with a mental illness do not always get help, which can lead to devastating consequences. In 2015, 44,193 Americans died by suicide, exceeding those who died from breast cancer (40,290), homicide (15,809), or motor vehicle accidents (38,300). In 2014, suicide was the second leading cause of death for people 15 to 24, and Colorado ranked ninth among the states for completed suicides.

Rising rates of suicide is a crisis and a more robust response is required to reduce the number of individuals who die by suicide. Eliminating the stigma that surrounds mental illness, providing more treatment providers and increasing access to treatment, and equipping each of us with the skills to help recognize the signs of mental illness is critical to saving lives.

Comedian Ruby Wax, diagnosed with clinical depression, told the story of her hospitalization in a recent TED Talk and the fact that no cards were sent to her, flowers did not fill her room, and visitors were scarce. She

was told to "pull herself together." If she had suffered a broken leg, she suspects that the opposite would have occurred.

Why do we continue to treat mental illness, a common illness given the statistics shown above, as though it is a moral failing or a flaw in one's character? Perhaps for the same reasons that we once hung witches in Salem, shunned individuals with leprosy, discriminated against individuals with the HIV virus, and ignored the growing opioid addiction until it occurred in our own neighborhood.

During Mental Health Awareness month, if you know of someone struggling with a mental illness or a substance use disorder, please help them access the resources we have locally. The Center for Mental Health, Telluride Medical Center and Uncompahgre Medical Center have therapists on staff and can refer you to one of our local therapists as well. In addition, state and national hotlines are available for individuals suffering from a mental health crisis or disorder and, importantly, for those individuals who are trying to help friends or loved ones dealing with a mental health disorder. The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is 800-273-TALK (8255) and the Rocky Mountain Crisis Line is 970-252-6220. You can also text HOME to 741741 and be connected to a crisis counselor who will support you via text.

Tri-County Health Network offers courses in both Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid to help train everyone in our community to help those developing a mental health disorder or experiencing a mental health crisis. Call 970-708-7096 for more information.

Recognize Mental Health Awareness Month by sharing your own experiences with mental illness, talking openly about the challenges you may be facing in your life, and supporting those who are struggling in our community. Give hope to individuals who are struggling — encourage them to seek professional help or, for less severe issues, encourage self-care, listen to people's stories without judgment, and give reassurance. Most importantly, never feel that you walk alone or that you must hide in the shadows. Encourage mental wellness in all you do, in your family, among friends and in our community.

Paul W. Reich is the behavioral health program manager for the Tri-County Health Network. He can be reached via email at pmbh@tchnetwork.com.

Editor's Note:

The View is a space in the Telluride Daily Planet for local voices on local matters. We're always looking for more opinions and more voices in our pages, so if you've got something to say we'd love to hear it. Guest opinions should be about 750 words long and, as always, not contain any personal attacks. Please include picture and a tagline, with general information about the author. This is your space — use it. Questions? Manuscripts? E-mail: Editor@telluridedailyplanet.com

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