

(collateral damage)

IMAGES OF THOSE LEFT BEHIND BY SUICIDE

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Left Behind by Suicide

Scott Chisholm was just 16 when his dad took his own life.

The 44-year-old Thunder Bay man remembers it like yesterday.

“My brother and I were shooting some baskets at the school gym when the teacher came in with a really serious look on his face,” Chisholm recalls. “Right away, I thought, we’ve been caught. I didn’t know what we’d done, but we were boys. We were always up to something.”

Instead of discipline for a teenage prank, Chisholm and his brother got news that would change their lives forever. Their father, Robert, had shot himself. Committed suicide.

Or died by suicide as Chisholm likes to differentiate.

“Commit makes it sound like a crime,” he says. “Suicide isn’t a crime. The stigma around it is.”

That’s why Chisholm is embarking upon a photographic journey to tell his story and the stories of others whose lives have been affected by suicide. To challenge the stigma that casts such a long shadow.

Collateral Damage: Images of Those Left Behind By Suicide will be a book of photographs of people whose loved ones have taken their own lives.

Chisholm, a Thunder Bay firefighter and photographer, will take the pictures himself.

“The idea of putting a face to those left behind by suicide has been with me for more than 10 years,” he says. “I passionately believe stepping out of the dark to talk about this taboo subject will help others facing a similar life-altering experience today.”

Olympic champion swimmer Alex Baumann has agreed to participate in the project. His older brother Roman jumped over Niagara Falls when Baumann was 16.

“I have personally been affected by suicide and I believe that a collection of images of survivors will not only create a path of healing but will also help with the social stigmas that continue to plague the issues of suicide,” Baumann says.

The Canadian Mental Health Association is also behind the concept of *Collateral Damage: Images of Those Left Behind by Suicide*.

“The impact of suicide from the perspective of a survivor is not a story that has been well told,” says Maurice Fortin, Executive Director of the Thunder Bay Branch of the CMHA. “We believe that such a resource would be a valuable asset as an education tool to expand community knowledge about the terrible toll on those left behind by suicide.”

For more information, or to arrange an interview with Scott Chisholm or Alex Baumann, please contact:

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