



Photo by Tristan Kong

Lisa and her husband, Corey Watson put their house on the market in mid-December after their tenants moved out after a year and a half. Lis said she does not think that the 'danger statistic' is the main reason it hasn't sold.

'Most dangerous city' moniker doesn't worry real estate board

Belleville's status in recent magazine article isn't hurting housing market, says real estate president
By Tristan Kong

Is Belleville the most dangerous city in Ontario? The real estate board doesn't think so.

In the wake of recent news stories, some people might be thinking twice about moving to Belleville but the new president of Quinte & District Real Estate Board is confident it is safe.

A recent Maclean's magazine survey has stated Belleville is the "most dangerous" city in Ontario. Maclean's used annual crime data from Statistics Canada for municipal police serving the nation's 100 large

est populations, each encompassing a city or town of at least 10,000 people.

Sharon Shortt, the Quinte & District Real Estate Board president, said she does not think the Maclean's survey affects the housing market in Belleville.

A local report from Belleville's Deputy Chief Paul Vandegraaf stated there is a 47 per cent decrease in reported break and enters from 2010 to 2011.

Lisa and her husband, Corey Watson, bought a house in Belleville in Feb. 2008 because they were moving to the area for work.

"At that time, Belleville didn't have the same crime stigma as it does today. I always thought of it as the friendly, small city," said Watson. "The past couple of years, it has gotten a bad reputation because of the numerous crimes and kills that happened a couple of years ago."

However, Shortt said she has not heard

yet of a case when a buyer questioned the area because of the Maclean's magazine article. She still believes that Belleville is very safe.

"Belleville has a stable economy, good job growth. It's a nice area for retirement with lots of amenities," said Shortt. "We have maintained steady house prices while other areas have been more volatile."

The Watsons put their house on the market in mid-December because she has been renting it out after she and her husband moved to Toronto for work. Their tenants are now moving out after a year and a half so the Watsons feel it is time to sell their house, as they do not come into Belleville much anymore.

Watson said she does not think that the 'danger statistic' is the main reason it is not selling.

"It was a bad time due to Christmas

and New Year's and not a lot of people were looking during the holidays," Watson said. "Many people can't afford a down payment on a house due to the economy and lack of job opportunities in Belleville."

Shortt said there is a balanced market in Belleville. "I would say we are having a typical January, perhaps slightly busier than usual," she said. "I believe we are lucky to live in the Quinte area. We have great local government and are supported by job growth in Belleville, military in Trenton and tourism in Prince Edward County."

Shortt said no one can determine exactly whether the future of the housing market will be increasing or decreasing. It depends on the global economy, interest rates, and government policies, but she points out that Belleville offers a lot of good opportunities.

Video on bullying inspiring others

Painful experience of student's friend gains momentum online
By Tristan Kong

It's been two months since 23-year-old Casey Telford released her inspirational video, and with 1,000 views so far, the video is starting to gain momentum.

Telford, a post-graduation public relations student from Loyalist College, whose video shares a painful experience at the hands of bullies. Her project, *The Kris Snary Project*, was created in the loving memory of Christopher "Kristofur" Edward Snary, which reached the community of Loyalist College and Quinte area.

The Kris Snary Project was founded in May 2011 by Telford after her friend, Christopher Snary aka Kris, committed suicide at his house. Telford said no one knows the exact reason why it happened, but suspects that he was probably bullied over his sexuality.

"Most of us here couldn't make it to the memorial, because of transportation, money or time," Telford said. "We just kind of put something together where everybody here could be in the same room together and be there for each other...we wanted it to be more of a positive event than a sad, mourning event because Kris was such a happy person."

Some bands had volunteered to play a show for *The Kris Snary Project* last summer because Kris was very musical. The money from the concert was used by Telford to start a bursary in Kris's name for Loyalist College.

It took a long time for Telford to share her own experience and it created a connection with him. It showed that although their issues were similar, it produced different outcomes.

She made the video in her class last December.

"I literally just set up my MacBook, wrote out everything it was I wanted to say. Everything was basically on impulse," Telford said. "Whatever I wrote down I said and I just did it right there in one take."

Telford released it on YouTube within a couple of minutes. The video can be seen on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4e-06L5ecI>

That night, Telford was overwhelmed when she got text messages from people



Photo by Tristan Kong

Casey Telford, post graduate public relations student from Loyalist College in Belleville, bravely delivers her inspirational message about the painful experience at the hands of bullies and her project, *The Kris Snary Project*, in the loving memory of Christopher Edward Snary. Telford tells her story using paper notes in a video.

saying they watched it and had been affected by it. They even shared it with other people.

"I had people approaching me in the hallway, telling me 'I saw your video, that it was so touching...I cried...I knew Chris...I know you through somebody else.' People somehow found a way to connect with it," Telford said. "I was not expecting and it to be shared so many times on Facebook; it was unbelievable."

Chris Barnim, president of student government for Loyalist College, said that he has known Telford for almost a year, and that she is a very kind hearted person, inspirational and a great friend.

"It was very emotional. She has sent a great message in the video," Barnim said. "It made me want to look into the anti-bullying cause even further."

Loyalist College's respect committee messaged Telford for her permission to put her video because they thought it was a good fit for the project that they had been working on.

Dave Templar, who works as a residence coordinator at Loyalist College and one of the respect committee members, is impressed with Telford's courage to speak out about her experience.

"She seems like a fairly mature, well-rounded person who has had some challenges herself," Templar said. "She's been

here for a few years and clearly has had some success and enjoys it here."

After receiving many positive responses, more people joined *The Kris Snary Project's* Facebook page and her video on YouTube has reached over 1,000 viewers after less than a month.

Telford was invited by the community to spotlight her video, showing it at a film event called "Reelout" in Kingston last weekend. She spoke for two or three minutes about her own story.

Telford said there are people in the community who are very open to working together and collaborating. "It's actually shocking the response our efforts get," Telford said.

Immigrant Services tries to help new Canadians

Potential conflicts and misunderstandings issues for organization

By Mark Tarnovetsky

Although the majority of cultural problems never reach the magnitude of the Shafia killings, Quinte United Immigrant Services has strived to avoid such catastrophes.

"There are always potential conflicts and misunderstandings among different cultures," says Orlando Ferro, executive director of Quinte United Immigrant Services.

QUIS strives to ease the transition of a new immigrant in the region. Ferro mentioned the importance of the host program, in which a new immigrant would be put in contact with a student or professional volunteer.

The host program was developed over 25 years ago to promote communication between new immigrants and local Canadians. Last spring the program was discontinued.

"We are trying now to recreate that program. We are trying fundraising for that, to get back the volunteering force that we used to have last year."

Recently Ferro did a presentation at Loyalist College about the loss of the program.

"We are trying to get students to recreate that program. It's going to be on a volunteer base."

QUIS receives no funding from the government. The service relies solely on donations from the community.

Director of Student Success Catherine O'Rourke has been working with international students since the mid 90s, and formally with the International Student Services at Loyalist College six years ago. International Student Services offers a range of resources based on the personal needs of individual students.

"Because it's student driven, we don't try to fit a square peg into a round hole, we really want to seek out what each individual requires and provide it for them."

International issues can include language barriers, banking, housing as well as other cultural and social gaps.

O'Rourke said that she does not fully understand the circumstances of the Shafia killings, but she does "know that domestic violence for women in some cultures is more prevalent than in other cultures."

O'Rourke said the problem does not lie squarely with a lack of resources, but a problem with societal influences in general.

"I think that access to services is always an issue, and if you look at some of the research that's done on partner abuse it's not that there aren't resources, it's that women for a host of reasons don't access the resources."

O'Rourke said that proper education for young girls and women is the answer.

"It's not just about resources, it's really about society and how we raise our children."

O'Rourke is not familiar with the host program that was discontinued last year, but she is feels that student volunteers recreating the program is a great idea.

"Anytime the community can come together to support diversity I think that's a good thing to do."

Canadians nationwide are still reacting to the verdict of the Shafia trial, in which a couple, Mohammad Shafia and Tooba Mohammad Yahya, as well as their son Hamed, were found guilty of the first-degree murder of four of their family members. Shafia sisters Zainab, 19, Sahar Shafia, 17, and Geeti Shafia, 13, as well as Mohammad's first wife Rona Amir Mohammed, were found deceased inside a submerged car in Kingston Mills lock of the Rideau Canal.

Ontario currently has a population of approximately 3.4 million immigrants, with 7,880 settled in Belleville and 3,160 in the region of Quinte West.

Sledding...

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Supervision is also one of the important pieces of advice Safe Kids Canada offers on its website about winter sledding safety.

The organization also recommends choosing a hill away from roads, rivers or railroads with plenty of room to stop at the bottom of the hill, using a toboggan that is in good working condition, tobogganing while kneeling to avoid head and spine injuries, not tobogganing at night unless the hill is well lit, and most importantly, wearing a helmet.

While it isn't a legal requirement to wear a helmet while going downhill, according to Safe Kids, a properly fitted ski or hockey helmet can greatly reduce the risk of injury, as they are designed to work in cold temperatures while bicycle helmets are not.

For more information about sledding safety, as well as other safety tips for winter activities, visit www.safekidscanada.ca.