

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACTS;**

Bud Osborn

home: 608-1369

or

Bryan Alleyne, President

Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users

telephone: 683-8595

fax: 6838586

email: vandu@vcn.bc.ca

or Ann Livingston, Project Coordinator

VANDU

home: 683-4797

email: annlive@direct.ca

**ON THE MORNING OF TUESDAY JULY 11<sup>TH</sup>  
TWO THOUSAND CROSSES PLANTED IN OPPENHEIMER PARK  
EACH CROSS SYMBOLIZES A DEATH FROM ILLICIT DRUG OVERDOSE IN BC SINCE 1990**

In July of 1997, a demonstration was held at the corner of Main and Hastings where traffic was blocked for 15 minutes. A thousand crosses were planted in Oppenheimer Park, each one symbolizing a lethal drug overdose death in BC from 1992 to 1997. The event was put on by the Committee for Compassion and Justice, a coalition brought together by Bud Osborn and spearheaded by the Portland Hotel Society.

**In the three years since 1997, one thousand more people have died as the result of illicit drug overdose in British Columbia, most of them in the downtown eastside of Vancouver.**

A number of groups, including the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users -- VANDU and the Harm Reduction Action Society -- HRAS, are putting on a two thousand cross event on Tuesday, July 11th, 2000.

The plans for the day include;

9:30 AM -- blocking traffic at Main & Hastings & the burning of research and reports,

10:30 AM -- speakers, music & food at Oppenheimer Park

11:30 AM -- press conference at Oppenheimer Park.

July 11<sup>th</sup> is the birthday of Gil Puder, an internationally respected constable with the Vancouver Police Department, who died on November 12, 1999 of cancer. Gil is celebrated as a courageous and outspoken opponent of the War on Drugs and an advocate for returning honor to policing.

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