

Lums offer \$500 donation for police crisis training

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LATHROP – The tragic death of 25-year-old Jeremy Lum nearly a year ago has become a rallying point in his family's effort to increase society's awareness to mental illness.

Their latest step toward that goal happened at the last Lathrop City Council meeting when the UC Berkeley graduate's aunt, Connie Lum-Perez, offered a pledge of \$500 toward the creation of a Crisis Intervention Program for Lathrop's law enforcement officers. The money comes from the Jeremy Lum Memorial Fund which was established after the East Union High School graduate's death.

During her presentation, Lum-Perez reminded the council and all those present that when her nephew was picked up by Lathrop deputies while walking with his dog in August of last year, "he was misdiagnosed by police as intoxicated while, in reality, he was having a bipolar episode."

After police took his dog to his home not far from where he was picked up, young Lum was taken to the San Joaquin County Jail in French Camp where he was kept overnight. The following morning at 7 o'clock, he was released barefoot and without a vehicle. That was the last he was seen alive. Following a few days of intensive land and air search, his body was found floating in the San Joaquin River not far from the county jail.

"Since this tragic event, families and friends have worked to raise awareness of bipolar disorder," said Lum-Perez who also noted that May is National Mental Health Month.

The first step toward that goal, she said, was the \$500 with additional future donations to be used for crisis-intervention training by Lathrop police so that others will be spared of the tragedy that happened to their family. It also could serve as a vehicle to "bring the community together," Lum-Perez said of the proposed Crisis Intervention Training program for Lathrop's law enforcement officers.

According to statistics contained in the packet that she presented to the council members, one in four adults or approximately 57.7 million Americans "experience a mental health disorder in a given year."

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, which compiled the figures, also notes that "mental illness strikes individuals in the prime of their lives, often during adolescence and young adulthood."

Also in the packet that Lum-Perez gave to each of the council members is a sample of a Crisis Intervention Training program that is already being used by some cities in the country. It would consist of 40 hours of training and would involve experts in mental health, substance abuse, legal matters and family/consumer advocates, among others.

"This is an opportunity to bring much needed healing to our community and also for the City of Lathrop to step forth as a leader in San Joaquin County in addressing the issue of mental illness and law enforcement," Lum-Perez said.

None of the council members made a comment about her presentation at the council meeting. She said Tuesday that her family is still waiting for the city to respond to their offer of a \$500 pledge.

By Rose Albano-Risso of the [Manteca Bulletin](#)

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