

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN THE NEWS

OTAC President on Brain Injury Awareness

Expert Weighs In On Natasha Richardson's Case And Brain Injury Awareness
March 20, 2009

By Anthony Jones - Celebrity News Service Contributor

Los Angeles, CA (CNS) - With the news of screen star Natasha Richardson's life ending tragedy, brain injury awareness is garnering worldwide attention. The autopsy reported the cause of death to be an "epidural hematoma due to blunt impact to the head." But while details of the impact are still sketchy, Shawn Phipps, President of the Occupational Therapy Association of California reveals what type of brain injuries Richardson could have sustained and how it possibly could have been prevented.

"There are many types of brain injuries. There are the types in this situation like hitting against the snow or a tree that cause trauma to the brain, but then there's also one which is like a whiplash effect with brain being pressed up against either the front or the back of the skull causing the damage," Phipps said. "The person may have never hit their head on anything." Richardson's accident was said to be laughed off and she made her way to her room at the Mont Blanc Resort in Quebec without any visible injury which sadly became ultimately fatal. "In the case of Natasha Richardson, reports said initially she felt fine and this is common," Phipps said. "It can take a while before there's enough pressure on the brain to create damage before they start having neurological symptoms, from headaches, to confusion, to a comatose state."

What many people didn't know before Richardson's passing is that March is Brain Injury Awareness month. Phipps and the Occupational Therapy Association of California have been working to spread awareness and education of the preventative measures that can be taken for accidents like the one that affected Richardson and her family. As trite and obvious as it may sound, Phipps says wearing a helmet during activities like these are the best way to prevent brain injuries.

"There's some controversy on whether or not helmets should be required when on the ski slopes," Phipps continued. "Whether a helmet would have helped Natasha Richardson is unclear. We're not exactly sure of the details of her type of injury, but it can prevent other types of injuries caused by these types of accidents."

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OTAC Vision & Mission

VISION STATEMENT:

A world where all people participate in meaningful occupations to optimize their life experience.

MISSION STATEMENT:

OTAC is the collective voice that serves, promotes, and supports the profession of occupational therapy and its practitioners.



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09/10/09