

THE

October 2010

CALL OUT



ERSARA HELPS AUTISTIC FAMILIES

Testing a Personal Tracking Device

This summer, Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue Association (ERSARA) and Search and Rescue Dog Association of Alberta (SARDAA) were invited by Edmonton Police Service (EPS) to participate in a mock search and rescue exercise to test the benefits of the Eyez-ON personal GPS for use with autistic people.

The Eyez-ON GPS (<http://www.eyezon.com>) uses the GSM footprint to deliver notices about where the device is. It is capable of establishing a “geofence” that allows users to be kept inside of or outside of an area. If the boundaries of the geofence are crossed, the caregivers are notified so that they can take action. The Eyez-ON can be tracked through the company's web portal which provides a pin point of the path the wanderer has traveled and the speed they are

moving at, in addition to their location. The device also has a “find me” button that the wearer can press if they become disoriented or afraid. This type of personal GPS is great for all people, but particularly vulnerable people such as Autistic, Alzheimers, Downs Syndrome, the elderly and children.

Families of autistic children are particularly concerned about roaming children as their condition often predisposes them to wander. It only takes a moment of inattention before a child strays from the safety of their families. It was the The Autism Society of Edmonton Area (ASEA) (<http://www.autismedmonton.org/>) that first approached EPS to ask them to help test the efficiency of the Eyez-ON GPS device.



The scenario for the search was, the family was packing up to leave the park after a picnic. The subject had wandered away from the car and re-entered the heavily treed park of Mill Creek Ravine. It had taken some time before the subject's absence was noticed.

The “mother” and the Society representative were impressed by the search procedures.

The park is well used by dog walkers, joggers, cyclists, and other nature enthusiasts who enjoy jaunts along a number of chipped and paved paths. It is part of Edmonton's 94 km of trails cutting through the river valley area. On that particular day the park was in full use by people enjoying the sunny day.

The teams assembled and were tasked to find a 45-year old, non-verbal, autistic male subject. The subject was outfitted with a backpack where the small, cell phone sized Eye-Zon device was attached. Searchers were told not to call out the subject's name as it would most likely spook him and he would try to hide, or flee faster. This added to the difficulty of finding the subject.

The “mother” of the subject and a representative from ASEA travelled with the members of ERSARA. They asked questions about the search as well as answered the search member's questions about the behaviour of the subject.

The device gave a 100% probability of detection.

Within half an hour of the search commencement, the Eyez-ON device was located with the abandoned back

pack. Two hours later, the subject was located by the dog team.

The “mother” and the Society representative were impressed by the search procedures. It was an emotional reaction as they imagined their own autistic children going through this scenario. Realizing how quickly the device had been found using a cell phone to track it, encouraged them. In the scenario the device had been separated from the subject which caused them to consider how to attach the device to their children without the child being able to remove it.

The ERSARA and SARDAA teams were impressed by the overall length of the search. The device gave a 100% probability of detection (POD) until it became separated from the subject. However, finding the device provided a more accurate point last seen (PLS) because in addition to working off the location of the device, it also gave a time stamp so that Search Managers could quickly determine the search area.



The over all time it took for the search and rescue was greatly reduced thus making the work of the SAR teams that much more efficient. Other benefits of the shortened search time to both the searchers and the subject included less exposure time, risks and hazards as well as fatigue in the searchers. For families, it reduced the stress of worrying about their wandering child.

Overall, the test was a success. The Eye-Zon device delivered what it promised which made the work of ERSARA and SARDAA that much easier.

Selina Rawe
Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue

Autism and Emergency Response

If you are in the emergency response field and you are looking for a great resource for Autism risk and safety management check out this website by Dennis Debbaudt.

www.autismriskmanagement.com

ERSARA SOCIAL DAY



SAR Fact

SAR groups all over Alberta may respond to one or many searches together. Like other emergency response groups, having the opportunity to do some team building is helpful while building trust between groups.



Team building
is key

In September ERSARA held a social day that was sponsored by our good friends at the Sherwood Park Radio Club. A big thanks to Bill and Germaine for organizing the day. They did a great job getting out invitations, organizing lunch and finding a great picnic site. Also, a huge pat on the back to Joel for organizing the training for the day. Thirty two members got a chance to partake in Geo Cacheing followed by lunch and prizes for the best geo chachers.

ERSARA members also had a chance to mingle with group members from the radio club, Parkland SAR and the SAR Dog Association of Alberta. This event not only allowed members to practice their GPS and mapping skills it allowed them to buy and trade SAR gear with fellow members.



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ESSENTIALS:

1. Flashlight, spare batteries and bulb
2. Firemaking kit – waterproof matches/lighter, firestarter/candle
3. Signalling device – whistle or mirror to signal searchers if you become lost
4. Extra food and water – 1 litre/person
5. Extra clothing (rain, wind, water protection and toque)
6. Navigational/ Communication Aids (maps, compass, GPS, charts, cellular phone, satellite phone, hand held radio – fully charged battery) – know how to use them
7. First Aid kit – know how to use it
8. Emergency shelter – orange tarp or large orange garbage bag. These can also be used as signalling devices
9. Pocket knife.
10. Sun protection (glasses, sunscreen, hat)

PREVENTATIVE SAR

Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue has been a long time provider of the RCMPs Lost in the Woods/Hug-a-Tree program and over the years has provided countless youngsters with the knowledge they need to better enjoy the outdoors. Recently, the Hug-a-Tree program has been updated and expanded to include the Survive Outside Program as well as the Snow Safety Education Program. Collectively, these three programs are being delivered under the name **AdventureSmart**.

The AdventureSmart search and rescue prevention program originated in British Columbia in 2005 and experienced great successes. As a result of this success, the National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS) adopted the AdventureSmart program as the national standard for SAR prevention and awareness in Canada. Under the administration of the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada (SARVAC), over 500 SAR volunteers from across the country have been trained in the delivery of these programs and to date have reached almost 15,000 participants.

AdventureSmart is committed to encouraging people to get informed and go outdoors through education and awareness.

Hug-A-Tree and Survive

This program is targeted at children from kindergarten to grade 6 and provides them with the skills they need in the wilderness should they get lost. Topics include:

- How to avoid getting lost
- What to do if you become lost
- How to avoid harm
- How to help searchers find you

Survive Outside

This program is aimed at people aged 12 to 99 years of age and is adaptable to all skill levels. Topics include:

- Basics about Canada SAR program
- The Code of Responsibility
- The 3 Ts : Trip Planning, Training, and Ten Essentials

Snow Safety Education Program

This presentation is aimed at children in grades 4 – 6. Topics include:

- Ski hill safety and signage
- Alpine Code of Responsibility
- “Out of Bounds” hazards and backcountry preparedness
- Avalanche awareness
- Basic snow science
- The 3 Ts: Trip Planning, Training, and Ten Essentials

Bart Pouteau
Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Orange and Blue Searching for You

ERSARA is gearing up for one of its biggest fundraising events. More details will follow but for now here are some teaser details.

Location: Schanks Sports Bar 9927 - 178 Street. Edm, AB
When: Saturday, November 6th, 2010

Silent Auction & 50/50 Games include Mini-Golf, 3-Ball Competition, Closest to the Pin

The event starts at 6pm with light snacks at 7:30. Tickets are on sale only until October 3, 2010.



About ERSASA

Edmonton Regional Search and Rescue Association was formed in 1996 in Edmonton, Alberta as a 100% volunteer, non-profit charitable organization. We will respond 24/7, 365 days a year to any search as tasked by law enforcement agencies.

NOTICE:

All ERSARA members please ensure your phone numbers and email addresses are up to date. Contact Brandie Howey if you need to make any changes.

TRAINING

Watch for up and coming practical nights on the third Wednesday of each month. Email the training committee at ersara.training@gmail.com for details.

VISIT US ONLINE:

<http://www.ersara.com>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4420424787>

Thank you for reading

All ERSARA members appreciate your time in reading our newsletter. Please feel free to email our editor if you have any ideas you think will improve our newsletter. Also, if you have story ideas or have a story please email our editor at: news@ersara.com

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Next Newsletter

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