

Laugh your face off at FunnyFest

By NEIL MACKINNON
Metro Calgary

Why did the chicken cross the road?

Well, to get to the FunnyFest Calgary Comedy Festival, of course. And while there might be the odd chicken-road joke splattered in there somewhere from a non-cheese, dark and dissected vantage-point, the Metro-sponsored event kicks off today, runs until May 11 at nine venues and will feature 40 shows en route to its historic half-millionth punchline.

Where past years may have focused more on adult entertainment, the eighth annual installment will have something to offer for everyone, said FunnyFest executive director Stu Hughes, adding he had two heart attacks yesterday due to opening day preparations and now finds himself hooked up to a car battery.

"It's going to be a buffet of belly laughs," Hughes said. For more information or for tickets, call 228-7888.

-neil.mackinnon@metronews.ca

Tails wag for the blind

5-year-old girl the focus of upcoming fundraiser

By KRISTA SYLVESTER
Metro Calgary

A local child and future seeing-eye dog candidate at the centre of an upcoming fundraiser for the blind met a guide puppy in training yesterday.

Five-year-old Rosie McDougald met five-month old puppy Nelson in celebration of International Guide Dog Day, but that isn't the only reason they met up for the special day.

McDougald, who suffers from a rare genetic disease that caused her to go deaf and is now causing her to go blind, may need a guide dog in a few years.

The Alberta Guide Dog Services organization is helping to promote an upcoming fundraiser that will be used to help people like McDougald.

"We just think it's a great cause especially because Rosie may be a future client of ours. She loves dogs and it gives her a chance to meet a guide dog in training,"



Rosie McDougald, 5, with Nelson, a five-month-old guide black Lab in-training hang out together for a few laughs as they could be partners in the future. MacDougald was there to celebrate International Guide Dog Day.

spokesperson Susan Deike told Metro.

"It's so cute to see them play together, Nelson has a lot of patience and Rosie is very gentle with him."

Nelson's volunteer dog trainer Brenda Antosz spends 24-hours a day, seven days a

week training the puppy, which is a two year process from start to finish for the trainer and dog.

"He's doing really well, he already knows to stop at curbs and doors, and when I stop. He's a brilliant animal," Antosz said.

The Comic Vision fundraiser in support of the Foundation Fighting Blindness is on May 7 at The Laugh Shop.

For more information please visit www.comicvision.ca.

-krista.sylvester@metronews.ca

Mental health centre aimed at aiding youth

By KRISTA SYLVESTER
Metro Calgary

With suicide the second leading cause of death in youth a new mental health centre slated for the city was unveiled yesterday.

Sod-turning for the new Tuer Children's Mental Health Centre at Wood's Homes in the city's north-west began with chair of the Calgary Health Region David Tuer on site.

"This is an area that the province is under-resourced in and I'm proud to be part of something that will help so many people," Tuer told Metro.

The \$5 million state-of-the-art youth mental health facility, slated for opening in 14 months, is named after Tuer because of his extensive support of Wood's Homes.

CEO of Wood's Homes Jane Matheson said the partnership is an important one because while suicide is a sad reality for far too many youth, only one if five adolescents receive treatment.

"This centre will help hundreds of kids, parents and families." Matheson said.

ROBIN KUUSKI FOR METRO CALGARY