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Community grieves loss of father and son



Christopher and John Charmont were both killed in the blast at a Mexican resort.

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People from the Drumheller area are mourning the deaths of Christopher Charmont and his 10-year-old son, John after an explosion ripped through the resort hotel they were staying in.

The Charmonts were among five Canadians killed in an explosion at the Grande Riviera Princess Hotel in Playa del Carmen on Sunday.

The blast occurred shortly after 9:30 a.m. local time, at the 676-room resort, which lies on the Yucatan peninsula south of Cancun.

Mexican officials say the cause of the blast appears to be a natural gas explosion stating that gas from a nearby swamp had built up under the hotel and ignited.

Witnesses say the powerful explosion blew out windows and ceiling tiles and hurled paving stones as far as 50 metres from the epicentre.

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Kevin Rich talks to residents who are dealing with the deaths of their own.

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The Charmont family was in Mexico on vacation and it is believed that the father and son had gone down to the lobby to get a drink when the tragedy happened. Christopher's wife, Terra and daughter were in the room at the time and survived the blast.

A crisis team was brought in to the Greentree Elementary School in Drumheller on Monday to help staff and classmates of John Charmont deal with their grief.

The Charmont family was heavily involved in sports in their community.

John Charmont was a member of an atom hockey club and his father was a major contributor to local minor hockey organizations.

"Absolutely involved in everything his kids were involved in," said family friend Tammy Garbutt, "anything that was happening with them, he was there, you would surely find either one of them, even when he was working he would take the time off and come down to the arena."

Another Albertan, Darlene Ferguson from Ardrossan was also killed in the explosion. She was at the resort attending her son's wedding.

In total five Canadians and two Mexican workers were killed in the powerful blast.

Another six Canadians were injured; two of them are listed in critical condition.

With files from The Canadian Press and CTV.ca



Debris are seen scattered in the lawn of the Grand Riviera Princess Hotel in Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo state, Mexico, Sunday Nov. 14, 2010. A powerful explosion believed to have been caused by an accumulation of gas killed six people, including four Canadian tourists, and injured 15, according to Quintana Roo state Attorney General Francisco Alor. (AP Photo)



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