



# The URBAN EDGE

## The Path Forward

One thing we all have in common is our hyper focus on ourselves. We can't stop looking at ourselves. Some humanists talk about the importance of self-interest. They posit that if everyone was driven by self-interest the world would be a beautiful place. Before you dig in your heels, they make a case for the fact that looking out for others is at the center of self-interest. If people around you are taken care of, your world will be better.

Today I felt like writing a controversial article. I will construct little escape hatches throughout, so out of ironic self-interest I can escape from your critiques by simply saying, "I'm just talking about what I see." The big question I want to touch on has to do with two imposing phrases that might make me sound like a professor, but which are nonetheless important to the cultural moment in which we find ourselves. These are the sovereignty of the individual and how it relates to the power of the collective from which the individual comes.

In the age of identity politics we have divided everyone into various collectives, often around race. These categories are intimately linked to our identities and they quickly become political. But let me be honest - I am no fan of identity politics. From what I can see, this mode of engaging with the world tends to cause harm while masquerading as virtue. Nietzsche said, "Your most secret ambitions to be tyrants thus shroud themselves in words of virtue." I think that is too often exactly what happens.

Identity politics cause us to see oppressors everywhere. To be clear, there absolutely are oppressive systems, but when you see them everywhere you actually end up like the little boy who cried wolf. Casual observers will stop paying attention to very real and very harmful oppressors because they see the term so frequently abused. It is akin to flopping in basketball or soccer. There is power to be gained by acting as if you've been fouled, but eventually the refs start to look the other way. And that is where the real harm is done. Society becomes numb and non-responsive to the real injustices out there and this hurts real victims.

We definitely need our communities, but often it isn't our community that pulls us up. I have been watching people change for 33 years, 54 - if you count me watching me. Lately I have become obsessed with questions around what people did to change. I always ask people what they did to become healthy. About two weeks ago an old friend from our community walked into my office. It was so good to see him. He looked healthy and strong. Clearly something had changed in his life compared to the last time I had seen him. So I straight up asked him what happened and he laid it out. I have heard his story over and over and over again. The details of these stories of "the walk forward" have an obvious pattern. It's a pattern that will not surprise you, because you probably know it personally.

Really, it is the 12 steps. He talked about his life being out of control. He talked about having hurt people out of the pain of his past, which of course is connected to historical oppression. However, it was precisely in that moment when he owned his response to past injustices that he found the strength to change. He then looked to God to help him stand up and began that personal journey of making amends with all

# The Path Forward CONTINUED

the people he had hurt. He stepped away from (yes — away from) his community as it had become a negative force in his life. He had gotten his identity from his community and they had told him, “You are a criminal—that’s who you are.” Somewhere deep inside God was whispering something about a different identity to him, but he needed to be called away to hear what God was saying to him as an individual.

There is something in our community that both bothers and intrigues me. Whenever someone puts their life back on a good path it involves a season of isolation and loneliness. There literally can be a mom living two houses away from another mom and both are trying to step away from addiction, but their visceral reflex to be alone remains. However, something happens in that season and I guess it squares with how we all need to step back and step out of our communities when we are making a big life decision. It is during this time that the individual is claiming back their personal power by taking responsibility for their part in the mess that their lives have become.

Is it not true that when we are broken we tend to surround ourselves with people who affirm our dysfunctions? So to heal, we have to step away from the forces that drag us down. It happens at every level - rich, poor or middle-class. If we are stuck in unhealthy ways of behaving we tend not to want to be around people who

would push us toward change. In the words of one young man who showed up looking tired and frazzled at our center: “Kent, the whole community wants me high.” So my friend needs to get away from those voices if he is going to find a way out.

However, once the season of isolation is over I see people reattach themselves to a new community that is strong and healthy, one where culture is strong and made up of individuals who fanatically own their stuff. These are strong people, who in balance, deal with the pain inflicted on them in their past while owning their past negative reactions to their pain. The individual’s decision to change is an expression of their individual sovereignty, but now their choice is being affirmed by their new community.

The message in all of this in the big change we make in our lives is that “We are the people we are waiting for.” It never works to leave our personal wellbeing in the hands of someone that doesn’t care about us as much as we care about ourselves. We need the power of a good and caring community to help us break through to the best side of the life we want to live, but that will never happen without someone taking a long hard look in the mirror, and with an earnest resolve, saying, “My life has become unmanageable. I need to make different choices.”

**Kent Dueck**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18TH, 2019**

**JOIN ICYA AT THIS YEAR’S CALLING TO CONNECT GALA! CONNECT WITH OUR MINISTRY THROUGH STORIES OF HOPE, GRACE, AND REDEMPTION.**

**This year we’ll focus on the journeys of many kids, youth, volunteers, staff, and ministry partners who have journeyed with ICYA for many years!**

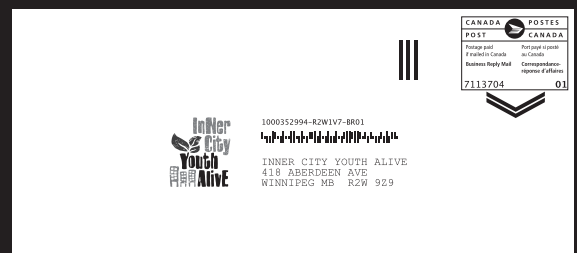
**WHERE: Centro Caboto Centre, Winnipeg**  
**DOORS OPEN: 5:30PM**



## RETURN ENVELOPES

Our new return envelopes have paid postage included! So you’ll no longer need to add a postage stamp. We encourage you to use these when mailing in donations.

We’d also love to hear from you! If you have any handwritten notes and encouragements for our kids, youth, local leaders, staff, and volunteers, please feel free to use the new return envelopes too.





# Supporting Irving

One of my responsibilities at ICYA is to be a support for the youth we get to know at the Manitoba Youth Centre (MYC). This supportive role is not only for the time when they are in jail, but also after they are released. Last year Irving, one of the guys, asked me to be his mentor. I agreed and got to know him during our Wednesday Night Bible Studies at MYC, through several one-on-one visits at MYC and a few trips to Portage la Prairie after he moved to the youth jail there. My mentorship included going to court multiple times to show the judge that I was a support for him. It involved getting him connected to a supportive residence for the time when he would get released from jail. It has included getting to know his girlfriend and her family as they also seek to support him. After connecting with him in jail for seven months, he was released and is now transitioning to life on the “outs”. He was in jail for more than three years. In this first week after his release, I have spent a couple of afternoons with him talking things through and giving him some rides. It is challenging for him to get out of bed in the morning, because he is used to someone telling him when to get up. He finds it weird to hold a glass cup in his hand, afraid that he might break it because all they use in jail is plastic. He is often afraid to walk outside, because he doesn't know whom he will run into. But he is hopeful for new life, a better path. He wants to work out at the gym regularly and go for help from his addictions counselor. He also wants to seek the support of his doctor for his mental health. He hopes to get into a culinary arts program because he wants to become a cook.

Irving has a challenging road ahead of him, but I have much hope for him. Here is a text check-in I had with him recently:

Good Morning Irving. How are you doing?

Really good.

Good to hear. Did you make it to the Pan Am yesterday?

*(He had an appointment there.)*

Couldn't, because my mom and Kokum made a shopping trip.

*(He probably had to watch the kids.)*

Okay, that's understandable. Do you think you could call Pan Am and explain to them why you had to miss your appointment?

Yeah, I'll call them today, or maybe I'll even stop by there to explain.

That's a great idea. I'm sure they will understand. You're doing great Irving!

Thank you for your support.

No problem. I believe in you, Irving!

Ok. Thank u



I know God believes in Irving much more than I do and wants the best for him, no matter how rocky the road is. As the prophet Jeremiah declared to the exiles in Babylon, we also declare to the many youth who feel like exiles in their own land today: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

# STAFF NEEDED!

ICYA is growing and our busiest time of the year is here! These positions need to be filled for various program and administrative positions

Find full job descriptions at [www.ICYA.ca/CAREERS](http://www.ICYA.ca/CAREERS)



## AVAILABLE PROGRAM POSITIONS

### BRIDGE TEAM MEMBER:

The Bridge Drop-In Team Member's primary responsibility is to develop and maintain strong mentoring relationships with local neighborhood children and youth and organizing Drop-in events. Multiple Bridge Team Member positions available!

### COMMUNITY MINISTER TO WOMEN

ICYA is seeking a Community Minister who will serve women in Winnipeg's North End Community.

### GEM LAKE WILDERNESS CAMP LEADERS

The camp staff have the tremendous opportunity to walk alongside our campers as they experience God and the great outdoors in a fun, safe and active environment.

### CAMP-CITY LIAISON COORDINATOR:

The Camp-City Liaison works primarily out of our city office (418 Aberdeen Ave) and is a supportive role to our camp staff. The position runs July and August.

## AVAILABLE ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (FULL-TIME):

We're seeking a welcoming and friendly individual to join the ICYA team. The purpose of this role is to provide reception services to Inner City Youth Alive staff and programs, and to provide administrative assistance to staff.

### VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR (HALF-TIME):

Volunteers play a large role in complimenting ICYA staff in living out our mission of bringing hope and future through Christ to at-risk youth and their families living in the North End. We want to ensure our volunteers are matched well with the roles given, that they are properly screened before placed in care of children and youth, that they are trained, equipped, and feel valued. Position opens in July 2019.

# HELP SEND AN INNER CITY KID TO CAMP

Every summer we run eight camps at Gem Lake Wilderness Camp located 250+km northeast of Winnipeg in Nopiming Provincial Park.

**These camps are free for any inner city kid and youth.**

We often hear from former campers how transformational a week at camp was when they were growing up. It creates life-long memories that change the trajectory of many kids and youth. After a couple of nights at Gem Lake, kids often comment on how peaceful and quiet the space is. In God's backcountry classroom the kids experience the beauty of creation around them. We see some of the tough gang involved kids just melt into the love of God as the week progresses.

**JOIN US AND GIVE THE GIFT OF HOPE THIS SUMMER!**

The difference one summer can make to an underprivileged child is enormous. Your gift will help to send a child to camp for one week.

**Send your donation marked Gem Lake Camp in the enclosed return envelope, or visit [icya.ca/donate](http://icya.ca/donate), or call (204) 582-8779.**



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# STORIES FROM THE NORTH END



## TIRRELL'S TESTIMONY

Watch Tirrell's full story at [ICYA.ca/StoryStudio](https://www.icya.ca/StoryStudio)

Growing up was hard for me. My mom left me on my grandma's couch when I was two weeks old and my dad wasn't around because he was an alcoholic. It was a few hours before anyone found me. When someone finally did, they found me with a note saying that my mom couldn't take care of me and that she was leaving. In my earliest years I felt that I never belonged. Nobody wanted me. When I was eight years old my dad came to visit for the first time. I was so excited thinking that we'd become a family. I ran down the hallway and finally saw him. At first he didn't even say hi! I tried to get his attention so he would notice me. He walked past me as if I didn't exist. I followed him down the road. When he noticed me, he turned around and said I couldn't come where he was going. He turned and walked away. I continued after him and he repeated himself a few times. Then he finally turned around and said, "I'm never coming back." At that point it felt like a burn to me and that something was broken. I stood there and watched him until I couldn't see him anymore. I ran home and cried and cried. Nobody came to check up on me. It felt like nobody loved me.

Years passed and I was looking for love in all the wrong places because I never got it at home. I got into gangs and crime. I remember robbing one guy's house and finding lots of money. My friends and I took it all. As we left one of the neighbors saw us. We quickly ran away and planned to go to a local festival to swiftly spend all the money we just stole. When we got there we found that the festival was closed, so we walked home. As my friends and I were walking home, we looked down the street and saw the guy from whom we just stole the money. He waved us over and asked whether we knew who broke into his house. I said, "No". He stopped, took a deep breath and looked back to me and asked us again. I said no a second time. After I lied again I felt something in my heart that I'd never felt before. I had lied and felt convicted. He told us to come to him by tomorrow before he would call the cops. I went home and couldn't sleep. All night all I could think about was that I was going to jail. The next morning I finally worked up the courage to pick up the phone and dialed his number. I told him the truth that it was me who robbed his house and that I was ready to go to jail. The phone was silent for a bit until he finally replied, "I'm not going to call the cops on you. I want you to pay me back by helping me build a shed for my family." I quickly replied that yes, I would help. As I hung up the phone I felt confused. This kind of grace had never happened to me before. When I went over to him the next day I expected him to beat me and yell at me. Instead, he welcomed me into his home and showed me something I had never experienced... forgiveness, grace and love.

It brought me to the point to realize that love and grace can change someone's life forever. Today I write and perform music to inspire change and help people and I'm even inspired by the stories I hear! So I don't want to write music about gangs and violence. I want to write about what matters - to bring the best out of myself and other people.

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The Story Studio is a safe space in which the storyteller can express their story in whatever way best suits them. It can be by verbally sharing, through music, spoken word, art, creative writing, and more.

SEE MORE STORIES LIKE THIS ONE AT OUR STORY STUDIO PAGE ON YOUTUBE OR AT [ICYA.CA/STORYSTUDIO](https://www.icya.ca/StoryStudio)



## STORY STUDIO



# Pray FOR THE NORTH END

AS WE ENTER A NEW SEASON WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US REGULARLY IN PRAYING FOR THE NORTH END.

In 2019 we plan to send out regular prayer and praise updates of our ministry. If you're interested in joining this new E-MAIL list, please contact us at [pray@icya.ca](mailto:pray@icya.ca) or go to [www.icya.ca/pray](http://www.icya.ca/pray)

- » Pray for our Bridge Team as they lead VBS programs this summer to kids in our neighbourhood.
- » Pray for our Community Ministry team as in the summer months they connect with families affected by addictions and mental health issues.
- » Pray for our staff team who are on sabbatical. Pray that they find rest, quality time with family and friends, and moments to draw closer to God. Pray for renewal as they come back refreshed.
- » Please continue to pray for the people affected by the meth epidemic in our city. The effects of this drug are evident all across Winnipeg. Pray for healing and restoration of those suffering from all of its terrible effects.
- » Pray for staff members to join our team. As our ministry grows and summer programs ramp up, we are in need of leaders to come serve the North End. Pray that people would hear the call and answer.
- » Please pray for our Aberdeen Block Party happening on June 12th. Each year we welcome over 800 North End community members to celebrate our neighbourhood. We provide a free BBQ, carnival games, a petting zoo, and local musicians. Pray that our community will feel blessed and celebrated!

WE ALSO WANT TO HEAR YOUR PRAYER REQUESTS! LET'S JOURNEY TOGETHER! [www.icya.ca/pray](http://www.icya.ca/pray)



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Instagram: @InnerCityYouthAlive

## OUR MISSION

To bring hope and a future through Christ to youth and their families in the inner city.

## OUR PROGRAMS

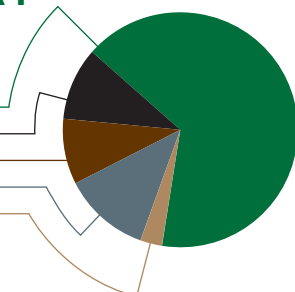


STORY STUDIO

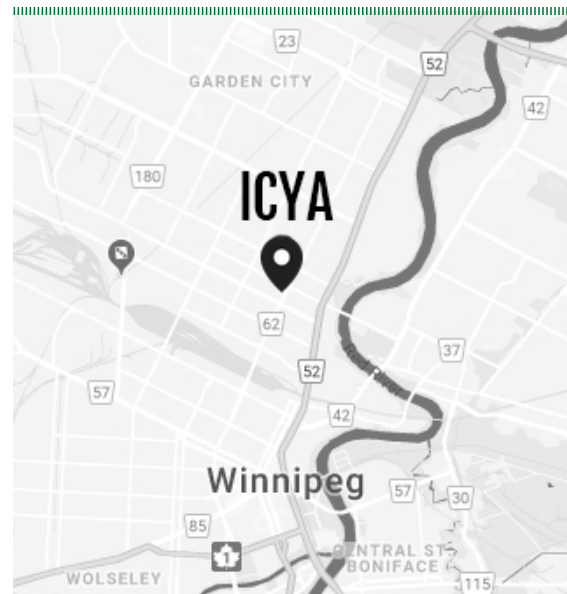


## OUR MINISTRY PARTNERS

- Individuals 66%
- Businesses 10%
- Churches 9%
- Foundations 12%
- Government 3%



### ICYA RECEIVES GRANTS FROM:



You can donate online at [www.icya.ca/donate](http://www.icya.ca/donate) or call 204.582.8779



A monthly credit card donation plan is available as well.

