

# The URBAN EDGE

Photo by Kat J on Unsplash

## Pain and Proximity

Some weeks are too hard. Nothing can prepare you to hear news of a 14-year-old girl being brutally murdered, followed by news of a shooting involving four people who are dear to our ministry staff and this followed by the brutal stabbing of a three-year-old while he slept! All of this within five days. We have a general plan to walk with families through grief and loss but the plan is difficult to scale to meet multiple losses. If we are living into this mission of bringing hope to our community it is important to walk into the pain. We have to go where the hurt is in order to help with the healing.

When hard things like this happen in the North End, the broader society seeks answers. There is a reflex to look for answers that create distance between the pain and the person asking why. People want to know if it was gang related, if it was someone in the sex trade or whether it was someone who was addicted. Knowing that it was someone in one of those categories makes the pain “distant.” I had a good friend in the community who used to say, “The next funeral I go to is going to be my own.” He had experienced a lot of loss and had come to the point where he couldn’t handle another funeral. He needed distance, and who could blame him? One can only bear so much.

I had been thinking about my friend’s statement this week as I braced for two funerals of these beautiful young people who lost their lives

too soon. I was skirting what I knew would be a walk into dark pain. It’s not natural to want to sit in that terrible place. Romans 4 says that “all of creation groans in the pains of childbirth.” You hear those groans of loss when you attend the funeral of a young person. I knew that the loss was felt by many of the kids we knew, but sometimes getting close to that pain leaves you hollow and flat emotionally, so I had to push myself to go. Most people get to choose just how close to get to the weight of these emotionally taxing moments. The families however, do not get to choose. A mom has to be there in the midst of the loss and families have to walk right into it. I remember a young man at a funeral bouncing about ten feet from the casket, trying to force himself to walk up to say his farewell. He couldn’t do it. As he nervously paced I saw a woman give him the nod to come close. He saw her, and bolstered by the fact that someone was with him he was able to walk up and face the pain of his final farewell. I have seen this scene so many times in 34 years. What makes getting near to the pain difficult is the worry that you will be alone with something that you know full well is overwhelming.

Churches have been asking us all week what they can do. I call for prayers of the ordinary type. No retaliation. Strength for families. Healing for those who are hurt. When there is a loss of this nature in our community a fire is lit where the person passed away. This fire burns from the day of the death to the time of the funeral. It serves as a place where all who are hurting can come to support each other. Usually it’s just friends and family. In one media interview I must have mentioned the possibility of churches standing with families at that fire. You have to throw those

CONTINUED INSIDE

# Pain and Proximity CONTINUED

pie-in-the-sky ideas out occasionally, even though you don't expect anyone to take them seriously. I was blown away upon checking my Instagram feed to see one church heed the call. The photo captured a scene where a family and friends stood around the fire, but with them were 50 people from a local church. I saw a symbol in that. It offers up a wider invitation to other churches, to the rest of society and to anyone who cares. The invitation is both simple and deep.

COME A LITTLE CLOSER! Stand with families so they don't feel alone! If you can't stand with them, then stand with those of us who have chosen to stand with these families by supporting the ministry. A donation towards the ministry is a good starting point and your prayers will help move mountains.

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

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you have a keen eye for organization and cleaning? We're in need of some "end of the year" cleaning in our garage and storage spaces. We're seeking handy men and women to help us organize and clean out old equipment at ICYA. This job would be ideal for a team of volunteers willing to come for an afternoon!

## JOIN US FOR OUR CHRISTMAS EVENTS

### CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS GIFTS - DONATIONS NEEDED

Help us bring a smile to the faces of many kids at our Bridge Drop-in this Christmas Season! Each year we surprise the kids who attend the Drop-in with a Christmas gift specifically chosen for them. Our team knows the wishlist of each kid and goes and picks up special gifts for each and every child.

We're in need of monetary and gift card donations for purchasing the presents.

### COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARTY - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Thursday, December 19**

We need volunteers so together we can bless our community with a Christmas dinner and connect with friends and family living in the North End. Each year this event welcomes 450+ individuals for a meal and prizes.

### HELP BUILD A HAMPER

At Christmas our staff and volunteers build hampers to give to people in the North End. These hampers hold essential household goods and groceries. At our Christmas party we raffle to give out 20+ hampers. We kindly ask for financial donations in-lieu of donations of goods.

## JOIN OUR TEAM

Learn more at  
[ICYA.ca/CAREERS](http://ICYA.ca/CAREERS)

## WE'RE IN URGENT NEED OF THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

### FACILITIES MANAGER (FULL TIME):

This person would ensure that both facilities and vehicles in the city and at camp are well maintained, repaired and ready for program use. The expectation for this position is a minimum 40-hour workweek with the normal schedule being Monday to Friday, 9-5 at our Winnipeg location.

### IT TECHNICIAN (PART-TIME):

This role is ideal for any current IT professional looking for part-time or evening work. The main responsibility is to lead and manage all activities related to our computer systems and telephone systems.

See full job descriptions at [icya.ca/careers](http://icya.ca/careers) or message us with your questions or resumes. If you are interested or know someone who could help to fill these roles, please contact [andrewbraun@icya.ca](mailto:andrewbraun@icya.ca)

# FINANCIAL CRISIS AVERTED BUT CHALLENGES AHEAD



In September we cut expenses and worried about paying staff. Our ministry partners responded and we were able to make payroll and maintain programming to children and youth. Thank you to our gracious community for joining us in our time of need.

We've never been more sure of our purpose in light of all the violence and the crisis in our community. This has coincided with a financial need we've never faced in our 34-year history.

Our staff are frontline working with families during a year of unprecedented violence. You've walked

alongside us in prayer and financial gifts. Your support is felt and deeply appreciated here.

Our year-end target to raise is **\$475,000**. This is **\$175,000 more than last year**, so the challenge persists. We come to our community again needing your support to finish well. We can't do this alone, you are needed here!

God Bless,

**Kent Dueck**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## YOU ARE NEEDED HERE! JOIN US IN REACHING OUR YEAR-END TARGET.



**PRAY**

[icya.ca/pray](http://icya.ca/pray)



**VOLUNTEER**

[icya.ca/volunteer](http://icya.ca/volunteer)



**GIVE**

[icya.ca/give](http://icya.ca/give)



CALLING TO CONNECT

**HOPE TO THE CORE**

FUNDRAISING GALA

On October 18, we hosted our 13th annual 'Calling to Connect Gala'. The sold out event welcomed 360+ ICYA supporters, staff and volunteers along with youth and community leaders. Our guests enjoyed music by the Winnipeg Symphony Quartet and an acoustic set by Don Amero. Following the music Carolyn Klassen shared about the importance of connection and what we can learn from the sequoia trees. We also gave out awards to four amazing individuals:

- » **Kamara Bushie** (Youth Leadership Award) for all her hard work leading at The Bridge this past summer.
- » **Heaven-Leigh McCallum** (Exceptional Achievement) for the care and humble leadership of her family, community and all the kids at The Bridge.
- » **Darren Plett and Bob Kehler** (Volunteers of the Year) for the 20+ years of leading work and service teams to Gem Lake Wilderness Camp.

The gala raised **\$186,915** for the benefit of ICYA programs and staff! Thank you to all who attended and gave so generously.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR NEXT YEAR:**  
GALA 2020 ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16TH

A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

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# STORIES FROM THE NORTH END



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**



**STORY STUDIO**

## BREAKING THE CYCLE: IRMA COOK'S STORY

**The following is a portion of Irma's shared story.  
See the full story at the Story Studio YouTube page.**

Hello! My name is Irma Cook. I am 29 years old from Lake St. Martin, a proud mother of three boys and pregnant with my fourth child, a baby girl.

My mom is one of the women of the 'Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.' She was murdered in 1991. I was placed in foster care by CFS when I was six months old and my older brother, who was about one year old, was sent to another family.

I was fortunate to grow up in the same foster home for 18 years. My older brother was adopted into another family and I never knew him growing up. It always felt like a piece was missing since I never knew my biological family. After I grew out of the system my foster family disowned me. The pain of this experience led me into a path of hurt and anger, drowned in drinking and drug addiction. I was so lost I tried to kill myself a few times. I became a deeply angry person and never understood the reasons why I had to experience the feeling of loss, loneliness and despair in my whole life.

My little boy saved me. When I gave birth to my son I knew I needed to change. I wanted to give him all the opportunities I never had. Although I still had my struggles and issues, I tried my best to be there for him. The innocence and beauty of my little boy gave me hope. Even as a little baby he gave me courage to reach out and ask for help. He is still an amazing little boy and teaches me so much.

Things took a turn for the worse when I met another guy. It all started out great. At the time I thought he would be a great dad and partner. But he changed and became manipulative. He got into my head and made me feel ashamed and worthless. I never felt good enough for him. This man abused me and my sons for four years before I finally ran away. My sons gave me the courage to break free from his abusive grasp.

After that relationship I carried a lot of pain with me. I didn't know how to cope with the darkness I carried. I felt as if I had a hole in me and that drugs and alcohol would fill that gap. Addiction only brought further darkness and control over my life. Because of my addiction my kids were taken away from me. I was devastated, because I said I would never be in a place where they'd have to take my kids from me.

The cycle repeats itself.

My first son is eight years old this year. From my issues and his tough circumstances he carries a lot of anger in him. Nevertheless, he's still a beautiful little boy who wants to save the world and learn everything he can. He has big dreams. Often he tells me, "Mom, one day I'll take care of you."

My sons give me hope every day. My goal is to be strong for my kids so they don't make the mistakes I've made in the past. Right now I'm learning to love and respect myself. I'm working hard to be the very best role model for my kids.

It's amazing to see these young boys grow up with goals and dreams. They're inspiring me. I have hope that they'll follow their dreams, and in that way help to break the cycle.

*- Story told by Irma Cook at the Story Studio*



@STORYSTUDIOWPG

# 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 2020 we plan to continue sending 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)

- » 2019 has been a difficult year for many families in the North End. Pray for those suffering loss of loved ones. Pray for strength for our staff as they journey with many families.
- » Pray for the Community Christmas Party, the hamper deliveries and gifts for children. Pray that these initiatives bless our neighbours.
- » Pray for the next year as our team seeks clear vision of how we can best serve our community going forward.
- » For many people Christmas is a joyful time to celebrate with family and friends. For some it is a tough season of loneliness and depression. Please pray for our friends that struggle during this time. Pray that they see and know the love and hope of Jesus.

## HOW CAN WE PRAY FOR YOU?

As a supporter you are a partner and an essential piece of our ministry to Winnipeg's Inner City. Every week our staff meets to pray for our community. We want to pray for you as well, for whatever praise or prayer request you have in your life.

Message us at [ICYA.ca/pray](http://ICYA.ca/pray)



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Instagram: @InnerCityYouthAlive

## OUR MISSION

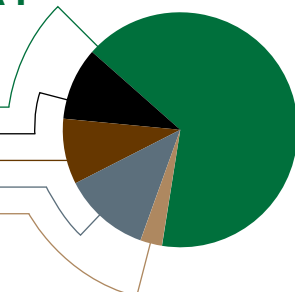
To bring hope and a future through Christ to youth and their families in the inner city.

## OUR PROGRAMS

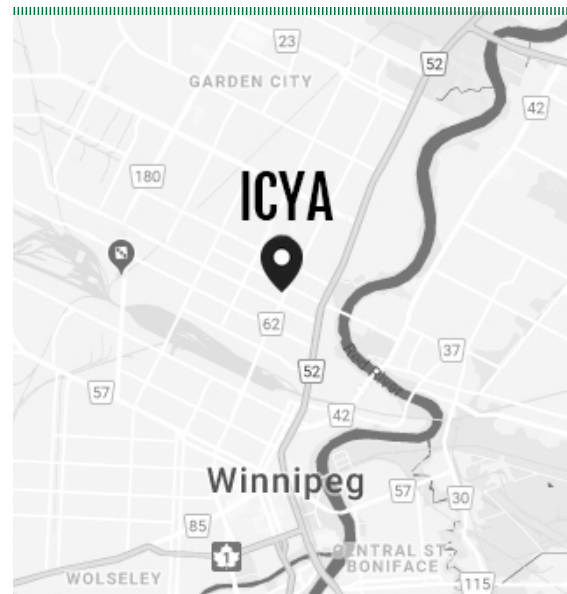


## OUR MINISTRY PARTNERS

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



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A monthly credit card donation plan is available as well.

