An aerial photograph of a busy city crosswalk with white diagonal stripes on a dark asphalt surface. Several people are walking across the crosswalk in various directions. The scene is brightly lit, casting shadows on the pavement.

The URBAN EDGE

WHO ARE YOU?

We work at this question our whole life. Identity is critical to coming into that life God intends you to live. There is however a close link between knowing whose you are and knowing who you are. Finding your place in the world happens best when you tie your life into something that transcends this world—namely God. If we think of ourselves as children of God first and send our roots deep into that reality it really helps us answer the question of who we are.

I would despair to think of finding my identity if it hadn't been that God had found me where I was. As a young man I was angry and deeply disappointed in what life had dealt me. I won't bemoan the details of that anger but suffice it to say that if I hadn't allowed God into my life I would have never found my purpose for living and I would never have belonged anywhere or known who I was really created to be. You could argue against that belief but I can assure you that I know for certain I would be lost in the world if God had not found me.

I see my friends in the community asking “who am I” in all kinds of ways. I hear iterations of the same story over and over. I recently spoke with an OG (original gangster) who talked about his early days of founding a gang. He described who he was and it was all about violence, power, and revenge. When he found God he also found himself—I mean his deepest self. The self that God had created him to be. It turns out that he was a kind hearted, caring person who now builds up his family where before he was instrumental is tearing families apart. I have a deep respect for the person he now knows himself to be.

Another young man shared his story of running with gangs, being stabbed up, and walking through all kinds of dangerous scenarios. The unique part of his telling me his story is the fact that he knew throughout the whole terrible journey that he was living into something he really didn't identify with. I pointed that out to him. “You never belonged in the North End gang lifestyle Tim—I could see it since you were little. You had a kind heart and you had an innocence that just didn't fit with gang life.” He laughed and agreed. He has found his identity now as a Christ follower and awesome dad who dreams about coming back to the hood but this time as his true self—a community minister.



BUBBLE GALA

GATHER WITH YOUR HOUSEHOLD OR "BUBBLE" TO ENGAGE AND HEAR INNER CITY STORIES

NO GROUP IS TOO SMALL; BUT SOME ARE TOO BIG! • EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO JOIN!

HOST YOUR EVENT ANY TIME BETWEEN OCTOBER 14TH TO NOVEMBER 30TH. REGISTER TODAY!

This 45 minute event will feature:

- » Stories from Winnipeg's Inner City
- » Music by Steve Bell
- » Encouragement from Jennifer Mason, ICYA Staff Member
- » Music by the Janzen Boys and Mark Chipman
- » A virtual neighbourhood tour
- » Message from Mark Chipman on TNSE's and ICYA's collaboration
- » A word from Scott Oake, Hockey Night in Canada Sportscaster & Bruce Oake Recovery Centre

This family-friendly program will be streamed live.

WATCH A PREVIEW AND REGISTER AT:

[ICYA.CA/GALA](https://www.icya.ca/gala)

HOW THIS HOME GALA WILL WORK:

- » Register at [ICYA.ca/Gala](https://www.icya.ca/gala). Free registration.
- » We'll deliver an ICYA Gala Package to your house before the event (Open to Winnipeg Area and Southern Manitoba residents). No cost to you.
- » Tune in whenever works best for you.
- » Have a meal within your bubble (family/friends) and connect with us through the comfort of your home
- » We'll send you a link or DVD of the program.
- » Remember to follow MB Health's up-to-date protocols.



THIS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO DISCUSS TOPICS AROUND POVERTY, IDENTITY, AND NORTH END ISSUES WITH YOUR HOUSEHOLD AND/OR FRIENDS.

**QUESTIONS? MESSAGE US AT:
GALA@ICYA.CA OR CALL 204-582-8779**



So who are you? I suggest you don't ask me or yourself that question. Forget about that question and find out who God is. Find out how much He loves you and let him speak those kind words of affirmation over you. If you search for God you will find him and on the journey you will also find yourself.

Kent Dueck
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



COVID-19 UPDATE

Since the initial shutdown from COVID-19 our team has been safely and creatively serving kids, youth, and families in the North End. We couldn't have done this without YOU, our ministry partners, as this has taken hours of volunteer work, countless prayers, and many financial and in-kind donations.

FROM ALL OF US AT ICYA, THANK YOU!

Here is the impact of all your gifts, time, and prayers:

- 6,500+ hampers and activity packs delivered directly to kids, youth, and families in the North End.
- 450+ unique households reached out. Many of these homes were new to ICYA, we enjoyed meeting new friends in the neighbourhood.
- 150+ meals taken home from our Bridge Drop-in after we opened again. Our kitchen team cooked meals, sealed them in takeout containers, and gave them to each kid as they went home at the end of drop-in.
- 900+ messages received on Facebook requesting hampers and/or looking for someone to talk to. Thanks to your generosity we could answer all requests from families in the North End.
- Dozens of individuals living in "trap houses" (homes occupied by addicts and homeless people) received care packages and ready-cooked food from our Community Ministers.
- 350+ baby supply hampers given to single parents in the community.

REGISTER AND THEN TUNE IN TO OUR GALA VIDEO TO SEE MORE!

We still need your support as we continue to deliver hampers to those in severe need in our community five days a week.

Your gifts helps us purchase food, baby supplies, fuel for our vans, vehicle maintenance, and program delivery costs.

Give today and earmark your gift to "COVID Relief" for your entire gift to go to this program!

Thank you for partnering with our ministry!





Camp

UPDATE

» At the Bridge Drop-in we ran three weeks of summer day camps. The kids, volunteers, and staff worked hard to prepare our space to meet all safety requirements. The smiles were extra huge this summer as kids were missing interactions with friends and fun games to play!

THIS SUMMER WASN'T A NORMAL CAMP SEASON AS WE COULD NOT DO OVERNIGHT CAMPS DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS. HOWEVER, OUR TEAM FOUND SAFE, FUN, AND CREATIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE KIDS IN THE NORTH END.

» Gem Lake Wilderness Camp offered a unique opportunity for local leaders and our summer staff. We hired 14 youth from the community ages 15 to 18 for a two-week leadership camp. These staff were all former campers with interest to work at Gem Lake camp one summer. The team did a number of activities, camp training, and camp maintenance work.

HOPELESSNESS, IDENTITY, TATTOOS & HOPE

At times it is difficult not to be overwhelmed by the spirit of hopelessness that hangs over so many of our friends living on the extreme margins of society. I invite you to try to imagine the extreme levels of hopelessness these young men are experiencing as you read these troubling and disturbing comments that were made to me over the past years:

“I think I’m just gonna go back to jail. In jail, I’m somebody. Out here I’m nobody.”

T.M. – a friend and homeless addict that I was visiting in a tent by the river where he lived

I think I’m gonna do something to go to Stoney or Edmonton. That’s where my bros are. There’s nothing out there (outside of prison) for me.

K.S. – a 17-year-old young man I was visiting in youth jail just prior to his release. Edmonton Max and Stoney Mountain are both federal penitentiaries

“I kinda wanna go back to jail. At least then I have something to look forward to!”

M.R. – a young gang member & drug dealer I’ve been building a relationship with

Often these feelings of hopelessness and shame are intertwined with questions of identity – which can be expressed in various ways. Though many of our supporters did not grow up with tattoos, they have become much more mainstream over the past few decades. Recent surveys suggest that approximately 40% of Americans have at least one tattoo. These days, tattoos are very much considered a form of self-expression. I am not trying to advocate for or defend tattoos. I am just stating that in our world in general – and in the gang-involved and meth addict subcultures I minister in, tattoos are just a given reality. I would find it difficult to think of someone I know who does not have at least one tattoo, let alone many more. But what do tattoos tell us about a person? In our community tattoos often demarcate a person’s family name, neighbourhood, children, boyfriends/girlfriends (past & present), gang affiliation and “philosophy of life” (i.e. “Ride Or Die”, “Hustle To Live”, “Money On My Mind”...). What follows is a list of some of the tattoos that I have seen recently. What comes to mind when you think about why someone would have the following tattooed on their body? What do they communicate about how individuals see themselves? Are they expressing pain? Pride? Shame? Hopelessness?

CURSED

(On the temple of a young man who just got out of prison for killing someone.)

(devil's horns)

Usually on those who have been convicted of murder/ manslaughter, or who have killed but have "gotten away with it.")

R.I.P. Tattoos

In memory of loved ones who have passed away or been murdered.



VI VI VI

Roman numerals for 666 (the mark of the beast)

Numb

(across the cheek of a young woman I was standing behind in line to enter the law courts recently. What has happened to her and/or what pain is she trying to deny that makes her identify in such way?)

VIOLENT & VICIOUS

(across both hands of a young man we know - is this how he sees himself? This is how the media has portrayed him on the front page of the paper and yet we have often seen a COMPLETELY different side to him.)

F**K LOVE

(seen numerous times on different people. Legacy of pain, abandonment, betrayal and brokenness? One young woman I know even carved these words into her arm with a knife.)

Hustle to Love

(I'll do whatever it takes to survive.)

But what happens when we start to see ourselves differently? What happens when we find our identity in Christ as beloved children of God created with value, worth and purpose? What happens when we no longer find our identity in the worst things that have been done to us or the worst things we have done?



"Darryl" was a young man with a reputation as a crazy gangster who described to us how he would drive around at night with a loaded gun looking to exact revenge on enemies from a rival gang that had killed his best friend. As God began working in his life we slowly noticed an identity shift of sorts begin to take place. He came to the point where he left his gang life behind (not always an easy path to choose), and he became known as someone who hated gangs and who was outspoken about the disillusionment he had experienced with the empty promises of the gangster lifestyle. Whereas the tattoos on his face had once proclaimed that he was a proud gangster seeking to kill members of a certain rival gang, now he no longer wanted to be identified as a gang member - that was no longer his identity. In fact, he even worked at getting certain gang tattoos removed.

Terry is a young man that we have been walking alongside for some 13-14 years now. Like so many in our community, he faced significant neglect and abuse as a child growing up in a home with addicts. As a teen he experienced gang involvement, substance abuse, violence and loss. All of this resulted in a destructive mixture of trauma and shame. As we walked alongside Terry and disciple him over the years, we have seen him take huge steps growing in his faith and as a person.

I remember the day he stood on the stage at our annual block party - in front of hundreds of people - on the very street where he had grown up, sharing the story of his life, and how God had been working in his life. No longer was he ashamed of his Cree heritage. He had come to realize that God hadn't messed up when he created him to be Indigenous. He now had a new identity in Christ and was learning to worship the Creator using the cultural expressions of his people.

Since then Terry married an Ojibway woman named Marissa and the two are now raising their daughter on the Sagkeeng First Nation. He is no longer the fearful and angry young man we first met so long ago.



Finally, I'll close with the image of our friend Matt, another young man who was caught up in the violent world of gangs and selling drugs. After experiencing God's protection and grace in an undeniable way, Matt gave his life to Christ. He chose to express his change in identity with a huge tattoo covering his entire back. This is what it reads:

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

EZEKIEL 36:26

Pray FOR THE NORTH END

- » This past September there have been a number of serious tragedies affecting past campers and Bridge participants. Many of these individuals have aged out of camp and drop-in programs, but they still connect often. Pray for peace as they mourn and journey through some very difficult circumstances.
- » Continue to pray for the many kids and youth in our community struggling with isolation and fear in the COVID-19 season.
- » Pray for youth in our community that are struggling with the new school routines. Pray for wisdom and guidance as our staff encourage them to stay invested in their classes.
- » Pray for the many individuals across Manitoba hit hard by the financial downturn during the pandemic.
- » Thank you for continuing to partner with us in prayer! Your prayers move "mountains" in our community.
- » We also want to hear from you if you're needing prayer. E-mail our team and we'll pray for you during our daily prayer meetings: PRAY@ICYA.CA



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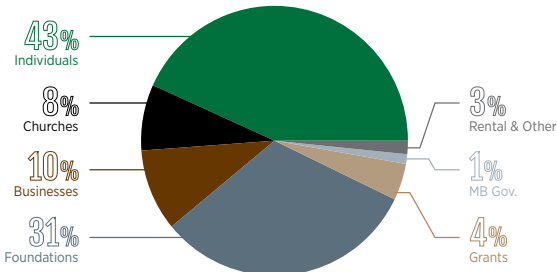
OUR MISSION

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

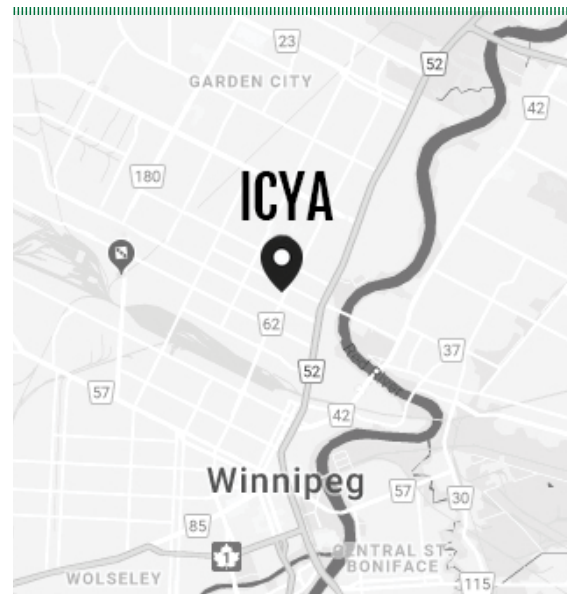
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