



Newsletter

From Pain to Gain: Using a Life Experience to Help Others - by: Janelle Breese Biagioni, Cridge Brain Injury Case Manager.



CELEBRATING 135 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE!

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In 1999, Kala Vengels (pictured) and her husband, Frank, were far from their home of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia for the Christmas Holidays. On December 27th, they left from visiting Frank's family in Thunder Bay to travel to Timmins, Ontario to visit with Kala's family.

Their departure had been delayed one day due to poor weather conditions. Another storm was to move in, so Frank and Kala were certain they were traveling ahead of the storm. About 40 km outside of Hearst, Ontario (4 hours north of Timmins) the snow began to blow across the road. Kala was driving and became quite nervous. She told Frank that she wanted to stop in Hearst and switch seats so he could drive.

Soon after their conversation, Kala saw a transport truck approaching in the opposite lane. The back end of the truck was fish-tailing and Kala said to Frank, "He's coming. He's coming." The truck came alongside Frank and Kala and as its back end lined up with the back end of the Vengels Ford F150, it swiped them sharply like the snap of a dragon's tail. Kala shouted, "Oh my God ... Oh my God!" The last thing she remembers is Frank saying, "It'll be okay. It'll be okay."

The Vengels truck hit an embankment of snow head-on. The snow was so impacted it was like hitting a ridge of ice. Their truck flipped end-over-end before landing upside down and the roof on Kala's side collapsing onto her head. The glass in the windows imploded and the snow pushed inside completely burying Kala's face, leaving her unable to breathe or see.

Frank had minor cuts to his hands but was able to get himself out of the vehicle, clear the snow from Kala's face and chest and cut her out of her seatbelt. The vehicle that had hit them was long gone. Fortunately, a passerby took the Vengels to a gas station in Hearst that had a small café. Frank and the Good Samaritan left Kala with the waitress and went back to the crash scene to locate Kala's asthma inhalers and any items they could find from her purse.

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Award Winning Respitality Program



Vancouver BC - April 21, 2008. The Honourable Minister Tom Christensen presents an Innovation Award from Community Living British Columbia, to Mimi Davis, Coordinator of the Cridge Respitality Program.

All her life, Mimi has cared about children and families. Her career choices have let her serve this group of individuals. As a teacher, she acquired many skills and learned the importance of compassion, encouragement, humour, integrity, honesty and the gift of recognizing and strengthening the worth of individuals. She is a wife, mother, grandmother and friend. Mimi loves volunteering, quilting, golden retrievers, walking, reading and cooking. She is involved with her church and with causes such as Ronald McDonald House and Cops for Cancer. As an administrator and coordinator of programs at The Cridge Centre for the Family in Victoria, she has had 18 wonderful years filled with opportunities to fulfill The Cridge's mandate of caring for families. Mimi is humbled by the commitment and dedication she sees in the families she serves.

Mimi coordinates the **Cridge Respitality Program**. Respite care can be either planned or emergency temporary child care ranging from a few hours on one occasion to a few weeks at a regularly scheduled time. Its purpose is to provide caregivers with a much-needed break from the 24 hour demands of caring for a child with a disability. This program continues to grow and has become very popular with parents who care for a child with multiple or severe disabilities. It plays a big part in making people's lives a little bit better.



Helmar Prael, Front Office Manager for The Westin Bear Mountain Victoria Golf Resort & Spa, (pictured above) welcomes the Cridge Respitality Program to the hotel. Helmar states, "we treat people, who register with us through the program, like any other guest and don't put them in the spotlight - something they appreciate. We always strive to make their stay extra special by upgrading the guests into a valley-facing one-bedroom suite. We know they are here to enjoy our resort and the ultimate goal is to have them leave feeling rested. Besides the deluxe room, Mimi delivers a beautiful gift basket before arrival

and we place it in their room for them to enjoy. Mostly they relish the opportunity to have a bit of quiet time; a time to sit back without any interruptions and maybe read a good book. 'Renewal' means different things to different people and we feel very rewarded when they leave here feeling relaxed".

Colin Mantell, Hotel Manager, was enthused about introducing the Cridge Respitality Program to the facility. "When I saw the difference the program made to people's lives while working at another property, I knew when I moved to the hotel operation at Bear Mountain Resort it would be something we would definitely support. It's great to be able to provide families in our community with a break from their daily challenges and struggles. Sometimes it is the little things that leave the biggest impression, and at The Westin Bear Mountain we are lucky that we can provide assistance to the Cridge Respitality Program.

Susan and Richard's letter (below) says it all!

"Wow! What a beautiful suite. Thank you for giving us and other families an opportunity to experience a wonderful night away. The daily challenge we face at home is exhausting so having Westin Bear Mountain join the Cridge Respitality team is greatly appreciated. We would not have had this opportunity without your generosity. My nights away are usually on hospital cots, Easter Seal House and, for some other families, Canuck Place."

Thank you again!

Susan & Richard

The Cridge Respitality Program

PARTICIPATING HOTELS, BED & BREAKFASTS

ABIGAIL'S HOTEL ◆ ACCENT INNS ◆ CHATEAU VICTORIA HOTEL ◆ HARBOUR TOWERS HOTEL
 HOWARD JOHNSON HOTEL AND SUITES VICTORIA at ELK LAKE ◆ HUNTINGDON HOTEL AND SUITES
 LAUREL POINT INN ◆ MAGNOLIA HOTEL ◆ MARRIOTT VICTORIA INNER HARBOUR ◆ THE FAIRMONT EMPRESS
 THE ROSEWOOD INN ◆ THE OAK BAY BEACH HOTEL ◆ THE HOTEL GRAND PACIFIC
 ◆ THE WESTIN BEAR MOUNTAIN VICTORIA GOLF RESORT AND SPA
 ◆ THE DELTA VICTORIA OCEAN POINTE RESORT AND SPA ◆ QUEEN VICTORIA HOTEL AND SUITES
 ◆ SPINNAKERS GASTRO BREWPUB AND GUESTHOUSES

PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

CANADIAN PHONE DIRECTORIES ◆ EPICURE SELECTIONS ◆ HATLEY PARK NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
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 ROGERS' CHOCOLATES ◆ RONALD GRANT NAIL SYSTEMS ◆ THE ROYAL AND MCPHERSON THEATRES SOCIETY
 THE KIWANIS CLUBS OF VICTORIA AND ESQUIMALT ◆ SAANICH COMMONWEALTH PLACE RECREATION
 ◆ VICTORIA CONCIERGE SERVICES

OUR SUPPORTERS WILL APPRECIATE YOUR PATRONAGE AND SUPPORT.

THANK YOU to all who supported the recent **Cridge Respitality fundraiser event**. Thanks to generous donors, our keynote speaker **Katherine Gibson**, and generous auction bidders, the event surpassed a \$10,000 goal netting over \$21,000!

Major Sponsor: ScotiaMcLeod Bob Unwin

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 Garth Homer Centre
 Harbour Towers Hotel and Suites
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 Hotel Grand Pacific
 Howard Johnson Hotel & Suites
 - Elk Lake
 Island Farms
 Jennifer Olsen of Epicure Selections
 Jodee Hansen of McDonalds Resaurants
 Kenmar Flower Farm
 Leanne Chamberlain – Mary Kay
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 Victoria Riding for the Disabled Association
 Village Wine Works
 Westin Bear Mountain Victoria Golf Resort & Spa



Major Sponsor Bob Unwin of Scotia McLeod with Respitality Coordinator Mimi Davis and featured speaker, author Katherine Gibson at the Cridge Respitality fundraiser.



There were plenty of smiles and plenty of fun during the auction!

Volunteers Made It Happen at the RespiTality Event!

Volunteer Event Manager -Rosemary Smyth

★ Ann Auld ★ Pat Bailey ★ Miran Bigrigg ★ Karen Brantley ★ Pat Clinton-Baker ★ Gary Davis ★ Mimi Davis
 ★ Janine Duprey ★ Laura Gandy ★ Geoff Gaunt ★ Marlene Goley ★ Sharon Goudie ★ Donna Harder ★ Adriana Hatton
 ★ Greg Hatton ★ Katherine Haupt ★ Karen Johnston ★ Rick Johnston ★ Marlene Letendre ★ Barb Middleton
 ★ Janice Miller ★ Shelley Morris ★ Louise Neufeldt ★ Susan Pang ★ Christian Reid ★ Jeannie Owens-Wallace
 Tina Rogalinski ★ Arla Taylor ★ Caulene Thoms ★ Wes Treleaven ★ Sharie Young ★ Linda Zwick

Staff at Garth Homer Centre: Kaye Kennish, Greg Falconberg and team, Tim and David

The Forging Spirits: Beata, Barb, Liz and Nel

The Restoration of a Treasure!



Scotty Gardiner and Shelley Morris with the 'Treasure-in-the-rough!'



Scotty at work with traditional tools.



Scotty with the Treasure with its beauty restored!

For years, the old chair was shuffled from corner to corner, occasionally being saved from the garbage bin at the last moment at the hands of some well-meaning soul, intent on tidying up the 'image' of The Cridge Centre.

What they didn't always know was that this treasure was a part of our history. This in fact was the very chair that belonged to co-founder Mary Cridge back in the 1870s. This piece of treasured history saw the early days of the BC Protestant Orphans' Home, and likely saw Mrs. Cridge herself nestled back and cuddling the little ones she took under her care.

Steve Hodges, of Hodges and Company Insurance Agency saw our request for a donor to step forward and help cover the costs of restoration. Furniture restoration happens to be a hobby and passion of his, and he generously offered the cost of the re-upholstering.

Thanks to the gracious donation of untold hours of time from master antique furniture-restorer Scotty Gardiner new life was given to this old treasure.

It is amazing the interest it has generated. Scotty supplied material samples and copies of the photos documenting the process step by step to Dr. Lorne Hammond, History Curator at the Royal BC Museum. In the course of identifying wood and materials, we had the assistance of Ron Forbes of Applewood Antiques, Dwight Sept of Vintage Woodworking, Bruce Davies from Craigdarroch Castle and Mrs. Jane Nylander, eminent fabric and antique authority from New Hampshire! All the re-upholstery work was done under the care of Tanya Gabriel at Christal Custom Upholstery.

We are immensely proud of this restored treasure and humbled by the generous support that allowed this project to be successfully completed! THANK YOU ALL!

Coming Fall, 2008: The Messenger will profile Mrs. Mary Cridge – the incredible, tireless, visionary woman who is responsible for starting our organization.

Introducing Greg Hatton, Manager of Communication & Fund Development



“Why” sometimes requires more thought and introspection than describing the “what and how” of what one does. In the case of The Cridge Centre for the Family, the “why” is summarized in our purpose statement. It begins with the words: “Our purpose is to manifest the love of Jesus Christ...”

Some people may feel that choosing these words seems different than choosing words like “to do good” or “to serve the community”. Properly understood, choosing to manifest the love of Jesus Christ is to do good and serve. If the two seem different for you, there is a vitally important dimension of The Cridge Centre for the Family awaiting your discovery.

As the recently appointed Manager of Communication and Fund Development, this seems to me to be a good premise upon which to build an overall development strategy. The “what and how” will be to communicate information, make the needs known to you, and provide opportunities for you to respond as friends and supporters.

From the outset, it is also important to say a word about stewardship. The Cridge Centre for the Family is a charitable trust of far more than the treasure of gifts, grants, bequests and public funding that comes our way; we are the stewards of the time and talents of our some 150-member staff, as well as dozens of volunteers, board and society members.

One of our themes will be to encourage regular faithful stewardship of giving. Please think about becoming a monthly donor in **The Circle of Care** for The Cridge Centre for the Family.

We share with you a commitment to do our best to provide aid and service to children, adults and families to meet basic needs to help maximize their opportunities.

Specific Priority Needs:

- Updated correct contact information – please email me at ghatton@cridge.org!
- \$12,000 needed to fund balance of the Cridge Respality Program \$33,000 budget this year
- Major funding needed to support employment program services for brain injury survivors
- A study to determine the needs for homeless brain injury survivors
- Major funding needed to provide 8 new housing units for homeless women
- A 250KW generator for emergency preparedness at the Seniors Centre

Your calls and emails are welcome anytime!

Thank you,

Greg Hatton,
 Manager of Communication and Fund Development
 Direct line: 250 995-6419
 Email: ghatton@cridge.org



The Circle of Care Gift Commitment Form

Name(s): (first) _____ (last) _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

Please note: monthly giving options are available for donors whose annualized support is \$120 and above – or \$10 and above monthly. Donors will be recognized as follows:

- Supporter – annualized giving total of \$120-499; monthly gift in the range of \$10-\$40*
- Sustainer – annualized giving total of \$500-999; monthly gift in the range of \$42-\$80*
- Patron – annualized giving total of \$1,000-4,999; monthly gift in the range of \$85-\$400*
- Benefactor – annualized giving total of \$5,000+; monthly gift of \$420 and above.*

Payments can be made on Visa or MasterCard, or by pre-authorized bank withdrawals. All payments will be scheduled the *first* day of each month. Receipts for your charitable giving tax credit will be issued annually.

The Cridge Centre does not sell, rent, trade or give their list of supporters to any other organizations. Charity #108079419RR0001

Please indicate the monthly gift commitment you wish to make:

“I/we hereby, and until further notice, commit to a monthly unrestricted gift to The Cridge Centre for the Family in the amount of \$_____ monthly. I/we prefer: *Please check.*

Visa OR MasterCard

Card # _____ Expiry Date: ____ / ____

Name on Card: _____

Bank withdrawals – name of banking institution: _____

Signature(s): _____ Please attach a Void cheque.
Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

OR I/we would like to give as follows: A single gift amount enclosed: \$_____

I/we would like to arrange a gift of securities of: _____

I/we would like to make you aware of gift arrangements in my/our Will _____

1307 Hillside Avenue, Victoria, BC V8T 0A2 Phone 250 384-8058 Fax 250-384-5267 www.cridge.org

*...Kala Vengels story continued
from page 1*

At the café, Kala went to the bathroom and noticed a lot of blood but she was unable to make any sense in her communication with others. In fact, she wasn't able to get any words out! The waitress was concerned and kept saying, "She is not alright. She needs to go to the hospital." A police officer came to the café to speak to Frank and Kala. She remembers thinking that he must have been there to arrest her. She didn't know what for, but in her mind, why else was he there??? The officer asked Kala questions and she was not able to answer them verbally. She made gestures and in her mind she was saying the words but she was actually incoherent. Frank and the waitress again said she should go to the hospital. The young officer assured Frank that his wife would be okay and that she was just in shock; there was no need to seek medical treatment.

Frank and Kala checked into a local motel for the night. Her grandfather and uncle were coming down the next morning from Timmins to get them. The clerk at the motel felt bad for them so she put them in their nicest suite with a hot tub. Kala hurt all over and expected that she should, given the extent of the damage to their vehicle. Frank, in attempting to soothe his wife's aches and pains, helped her into the hot tub. Minutes later, he was horrified to see specks of blood surfacing all over her face. They hadn't realized that Kala's face (eyelids, mouth and ears) were imbedded with tiny shards of glass; the heat from the hot tub was forcing the minute crystals to the surface of her skin.

Getting home to Dartmouth was a challenge. Because of the delays related to the crash, Frank had to start work the day after returning home. Kala was still not making sense and in tremendous pain, so Frank dropped her off to their doctor before heading to work. The next thing Frank knew was that his wife was on the telephone saying she was going by ambulance to the hospital straight from the doctor's office. It had been four days since the horrific crash and Kala was just learning that she had broken ribs, a broken pubic bone, broken wrist, broken jaw and a tear in her bowel, hence the extensive bleeding she was experiencing.

The doctors providing the care in hospital spoke mostly about her physical injuries. No one told her that she had a brain injury. Instead they talked about impairments and the possibility of having to put a shunt in her head to ease the pressure. The following days and weeks were a blur for Kala. She remembers arguing with the medical staff and waking in the middle of the night to find a psychiatric patient sitting on her bedside touching her inappropriately. Although she tried to convey her upset about the situation to the staff, as did Frank, the scenario was simply dismissed. Eventually, Kala left the hospital against the advice of her doctors.

Kala's emotional well-being soon began to crash. She was frustrated. She did not know what was wrong with her. Why could she not remember the simplest thing? Why was she feeling so depressed? Why couldn't she carry out her day-to-day living as she had prior to the accident? Why was she perseverating on the time? And why would she

literally collapse into sleep regardless of where she was or what she should be doing? Pre-injury, she was an efficient, competent woman well on her way to completing degrees in Psychology and Sociology with a minor in Women's studies. Post-injury she couldn't cope at her job and eventually lost it. Why? Furthermore, she falsely believed that all her pain, confusion, and inability to read or be in crowds, was because she broke her jaw. It just didn't make sense.

Kala's memory was incredibly impaired. As an example, about 2-3 months after the accident, Kala was outside their building heading to a physio/acupuncture appointment (for pain related to the accident, specifically headaches and pain in her jaw) and was shocked to find that their truck (the one that was written off in the accident) was missing. She forgot that her friend was picking her up. The friend was very surprised to arrive and to find Kala filing a report about her "stolen truck". It also took the friend some time to convince Kala that she had not been robbed.

On top of this, Frank, who is an engineer in the military, was away an average of 296 days a year for the following three years. Thankfully, their friend Debbie took Kala under her wing and ensured she got to doctor's appointments, had groceries in the house, and supported her through the darkest of times while Frank was away. Kala steadily improved.

...continued on page 8

...Kala Vengels Story continued
from page 7

In January 2003, Frank and Kala were transferred to Victoria. It was in gathering her medical records for the move that Kala learned the truth. She had sustained a brain injury, but her doctor never told her. He had merely talked in circles and dismissed any possibility of her returning to the life she had pre-injury.

Kala states, "No one was happier than me about the move. No one knew us in Victoria. No one knew about the car crash. It was chance of a lifetime to leave behind all the pain and hurt." Moreover, Kala rejoiced that no one would know the doctors had declared her "incompetent" and that she would never be capable of holding down a job again. For Kala, she could slip into the community and find a suitable volunteer position and no one would be the wiser. That was until her and another volunteer crossed paths.

Janelle Breese Biagioni, Case Manager for The Cridge Center for the Family, met Kala while volunteering with her in the Rainbows program at the Military Family Resource Centre. "I was completely taken with Kala's people skills, her organization, dedication and super efficiency," states Breese Biagioni. "She had a plethora of skills that I felt would be an asset to the Cridge Networks (a program building social connections for people living with the outcome of a brain injury) so I asked to meet with her. I had no idea that Kala had first-hand knowledge of the impact of brain injury. I just saw a totally competent person who would be an asset to the team."

The proposed meeting with Janelle had Kala in a heightened state of anxiety. "The cat was out of the bag so to speak," tells Kala. "Frank and I agreed that I was just going to have to tell her that the doctors said I am not competent to hold down a job because I have a brain injury."

At the meeting, Janelle went through the steps of being a facilitator for a Cridge network. Finally, Kala had to interrupt her. "I should tell you before you go any further... I was in a car crash and I have a brain injury." What transpired next was beyond Kala's expectations. "I fully expected that Janelle would finally 'get it' and that would be the end of the meeting. Instead, she looked at me and cheered, 'Great, I don't even have to train you. You fully understand what happens to an individual and a family when a loved one sustains a brain injury.' I was stunned."

Since starting out as a Cridge Facilitator in 2005, Kala has accepted contracts as both Community Support Worker (CSW) and Case Manager (CM). Breese Biagioni comments, "The individuals and their families who work with Kala are in good hands. She understands brain injury. She is skilled and talented. She is passionate, compassionate, resourceful, and most of all **COMPETENT.**"



One of The Cridge's recent grads!



Ester dances to the sounds of Christian music on a 'Dance Mat'. Whether solo or in competition with her friends, the children love this activity at Cridge's School Aged Care Program.

We recently received **GENEROUS** support from community partners displayed on this page, and we can't thank them enough!

To you - our dedicated readers, supporters, donors, friends, clients, residents, prayer-partners, staff and community partners - we want to thank each one of you for your support and generosity. You equip us, you encourage us, you supply our need and your cheer us on! You make it worthwhile! **Bless You All!**



Victoria Foundation



Thank you to those who contributed so much time and talent for our Fundraising Concert in April: **Sahara Sloan, Timothy Chooi, Carolyn Tsao, Melody Taves, Bob & Arlene Overman, Central Baptist Church** and all our wonderful guests and donors – **We raised over \$9,000** thanks to you all!



Thanks to **Prince of Whales, Butchart Gardens, Gray Line West, and Harbour Air** - these Cridge kids had a fantastic adventure! Picked up by bus and delivered to a four hour whale watching tour, dropped off by boat at the Gardens for a hosted tour and meal, and then flown back to the inner harbour! An amazing opportunity to see some of the richness that Victoria has to offer! **WE THANK YOU ALL.**

CALENDAR

Annual General Meeting

**Monday Evening,
September 22, 2008
at 7:30 pm.
1307 Hillside Avenue**
Society and Board
Members will be
attending.

November - Fall/Winter
Newsletter

Looking for a fulfilling,
exciting career?
Check out our employment
opportunities at
www.cridge.org.

Update from the Board

One of the best things our board can do is to take time each year to meet with the full Cridge Management Team to identify the top strategic priorities. We met in late February during the time that your last Messenger Newsletter was already at the print shop.

The board is delighted with the enthusiastic and tireless commitment of our CEO Shelley Morris and her entire management and staff team. We have some amazing and challenging priorities in the community that The Cridge Centre for the Family is ideally positioned to serve. These are:

- Our Respite Victoria program, which recently received the Innovation Award from Community Living BC.
- Our Brain Injury Program, providing sustainable employment support services and housing for homeless brain injury survivors. We recently submitted a project proposal to the Volunteer Victoria RealNet team to help with a study to better determine the needs for housing for brain injury survivors living on the street.
- Our Women's Transitional Housing and support programs. Right now we're working on a plan to provide eight new housing units for homeless women.

Stay tuned and please keep us in your prayers as we reach out "to manifest the love of Jesus" to those who are among the most significantly challenged in the Greater Victoria region.

Yours in Christ,
David Rand, Board Secretary

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