

## Advocacy



*Joanne Linka, Manager of Communication and Fund Development*

What do you think about when you hear the word “advocate”? You may think about lawyers who advocate for their clients, or about a designated official who advocates for children or seniors. These are certainly accurate and fit with the dictionary definition of “a person who pleads on someone else’s behalf.” We want to draw your attention to other forms of advocacy that are going on every day, in quiet and unseen ways but which are making a significant difference in our community.

Every manager at The Cridge Centre can share stories with you about the service that they and their team do every day to care for their clients.

They develop programs, make referrals, train staff etc. However, our managers do so much more than that – they also advocate in the wider community on a variety of issues that are relevant and pertinent to the client population they serve. They speak out on issues that keep our clients in poverty or in unsafe situations, they address public policy and how it impacts services, and they speak on behalf of people who would not otherwise be heard.

This is powerful and important work – and so we want to share it with you in hopes that it will inspire you and encourage you to see how your support of The Cridge Centre has a wider impact in our community. You, too, can join us as advocates by raising your voices in support of the work that we do.

# What Advocacy Looks Like



## *Marlene Goley, Manager of The Cridge Transition House and Outreach Services*

Imagine leaving an abusive relationship or being a young mom alone with a newborn. Now imagine what it would be like to have to meet with a police officer, a lawyer, a child protection worker, or an income assistance worker in this most stressful and scary time of your life. You know the person you are talking to has tremendous power over how your life will unfold. You are beyond overwhelmed, but you must communicate your needs and concerns. It is so important you understand what is being said to you. You need someone with you to listen, to ask you if you need some clarification, to take some notes for you, to slow things down, to recognize when your dry-mouth panic has robbed you of the ability to say what you want to say and to ask for other options. This "someone" is an advocate and is your lifeline to reclaiming some control over your life. Being an advocate is one of the many supports The Cridge Transition House and The Cridge Young Parent Outreach staff provide.

Our advocacy extends beyond this crucial individual support. Making women's lives safer

also means working for systemic change. For example, new rules in the BC family law system have minimized women's experiences of intimate partner violence and put women's lives at risk by requiring mandatory mediation and co-parenting arrangements. The Cridge Transition House for Women (CTHW) and fellow anti-violence services work to inform policymakers how the new rules and processes hurt women and what needs to change. CTHW has also been

supporting proposed changes to the federal criminal justice system that would see coercive control\* become part of the Criminal Code of Canada.

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*An advocate is a lifeline to reclaiming some control over one's life.*

This is a snapshot of what advocacy looks like to support women to find their voices, be heard, and make all women's lives safer. This work happens every day at The Cridge Transition House for Women and The Cridge Young Parent Outreach Program.

\*Coercive control is an act or a **pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse** that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. ... Coercive control creates invisible chains and a sense of fear that pervades all elements of a victim's life.

# Advocating for safe and affordable housing



**3** - The average number of years individuals wait on the BC Housing Registry for affordable housing.

**94** - The percentage of eligible applicants who were not able to be housed in The Cridge Supportive Transitional Housing last quarter.

**570** - The number of dollars that income assistance gives a single mother with one child for rent.

**2,225** - The average monthly cost for a two-bedroom market rental unit in Victoria in January 2022.

## *Candace Stretch, Manager of The Cridge Supportive Housing & Family Services*

These numbers paint a powerful picture of the realities facing women who are forced to flee their homes due to intimate partner violence. Most women who leave are cut off from the family finances and forced to go on income assistance. With incredibly long waitlists for affordable housing, limited spaces in shelters and transitional housing programs, extremely low income assistance rates for rent, and insanely high rates for market rental units, women are forced to stay in unsafe situations for months, even years.

**There is no denying that we are in a housing crisis, and women are paying the price.**

Those of us at The Cridge Centre for the Family who are on the front lines of this crisis are desperate to see systemic change. Over the past few years, we have become involved in advocating for change in several different ways:

1. **Sharing our stories and statistics** with policymakers, politicians, and people in positions of power to help inform future affordable housing priorities and decisions at a local, provincial and national level.
2. **Looking for opportunities to partner** with local affordable housing providers who can help us offer more housing options to women fleeing violence.
3. **Committing to keeping housing units affordable** in The Cridge Supportive Housing Program so that women do not have to choose between safety and poverty.

Having safe and affordable housing is essential for women and children fleeing violence to find hope and healing. It is our hope that our advocacy will translate into meaningful change so we can see the end of this crisis.

# Advocating for Women with Brain Injury

*Tori Dach, The Cridge Intimate Partner Violence and Brain Injury Program Coordinator*

Although advocacy itself is one of the areas of engagement within the Intimate Partner Violence and Brain Injury (IPV-BI) initiatives, there is advocacy work woven throughout training, direct services, prevention, and research.

**Training.** Our team has worked with many community and provincial organizations like Homelessness Services Association of BC, Justice BC, Brain Injury Canada, and the BC Society of Transition Houses to deliver presentations on Intimate Partner Violence and Brain injury. The presentations help us increase awareness of this issue within our communities and help frontline workers identify symptoms when working with clients.

**Research.** The Cridge Centre is part of the national COVID IPV-BI Consortium and contributed to the recently published Intimate Partner Violence and Traumatic Brain Injury article published in The Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation.

Presently, we are engaging with the YWCA of Greater Vancouver, Ending Violence Association of BC, and the BC Women's Foundation on



an awareness campaign to shed light on the prevalence of brain injury in intimate partner violence. We are also working with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Home-

lessness to explore solutions for women at risk of violence and homelessness in our community. The team has been very open to integrating brain injury into their dialogue and solution-focused work.

**Direct services.** We continue to explore and address the strict diagnostic requirements/limitations for IPV-BI survivors. We plan to collaborate with local Occupational Therapists and Neuropsychologists in determining alternative brain injury diagnostic/assessment tools to increase access to Island Health services for IPV survivors living with a brain injury.

*Special thanks to artist M. Audley.*

# Advocacy for Safety & Well-being



*Sarah Smith, Manager of The Cridge Seniors' Village Centre*

Advocacy is a big part of everyday work for all who work in social services. The Cridge Seniors' Village Centre is no different.

Advocacy takes many shapes, but for the last two years, our primary focus in our Assisted and Independent Living has been around the COVID-19 restrictions put in place by the Ministry of Health. Our whole team is constantly working on ways to follow all Public Health Orders and go above and beyond to keep ourselves and our buildings safe. While working for the highest level of safety, we are also striving to find ways that preserve, as much as possible, our residents' quality of life and interactions. When no visitors were permitted in the building, our residents had an opportunity to connect with families digitally. Our thanks to Telus, who donated tablets, and to our staff who quickly figured out how to make it all work. This facilitated residents to meet new great-grandbabies virtually, attend family weddings from the safety of our lounge, interact with children, and grandchildren far away, and so much more.

With families having less in-person contact with residents, we occasionally noticed changes in their health needs a bit sooner than families did and were able to advocate for them getting the increased care they required with the health authority.

Every one of our staff members genuinely cares about our residents, and it shows every day in every way by doing all they can to support and care for our seniors.

# Advocacy and Awareness

*Geoff Sing, Manager of  
The Cridge Brain  
Injury Services*

Recently, I was golfing with a gentleman I had never met —pleasant fellow, very engaging. We got to chatting about occupations and social issues. He mentioned how frustrated he was with the number of “handouts” the unhoused were receiving. He couldn’t understand why they couldn’t “just get a job.”

This comment opened an awareness and advocacy conversation. I was able to share that there generally is a reason why individuals struggle in the community. It could be a brain injury, mental illness, or addictions issue.

There was an “aha” moment for this person - he shared he had a close friend struggling with addictions. He injured his arm in a workplace accident, was prescribed a high dosage of opiates to address the pain issue and sadly became addicted. This friend changed from an engaging, outgoing, and supportive friend to one unable to hold a job, communicate with friends and family, and completely isolated from his community.

In short order, my golf colleague’s frus-



trations with the homeless population took on a mindset of support and understanding. There was a recognition that homelessness can happen to anyone. If we intervene early, better outcomes may be achieved.

**Advocacy is our primary role for those we support. We need to be the voice for those who encounter misfortune: be determined to speak out with those within our circle and be unafraid to step up and be an**

**advocate and bring awareness.** Gentle, supportive communication will bring understanding and compassion and open a dialogue for a path toward better outcomes for those in need of our support. This will lead us toward a stronger and more prosperous community.

**Over 50% of people  
struggling with homelessness  
have a brain injury**

# How Can I Help?



When faced with the reality of systemic issues in our community, our response is often to ask HOW CAN I HELP?

Creating **effective** and **long-lasting** change takes effort and long-term thinking. It requires resources and partners working together to bring about the needed change.

One of the best ways to support foundational change is to provide **foundational support**. Have you considered becoming a monthly donor?

Our monthly donors are people who have entrusted us with a long-term commitment that provides us with the resources to create long-lasting, foundational change.

We would be so grateful to have you join this group of change-makers!

**For more information about becoming a monthly donor, call Sharon at 250 995 6427 or email [scrozier@cridge.org](mailto:scrozier@cridge.org)**



act justly | love mercy | walk humbly

# Chef's Corner: Artichoke and Spinach Dip

Nik Milonas, Executive Chef of The Cridge Village Seniors' Centre



Yield: Makes one rectangular ceramic pan enough for a family gathering.

- |                 |       |   |
|-----------------|-------|---|
| 600             | g     | Cream cheese  |
| 300             | ml    | Sour cream  |
| 400             | ml    | Heavy cream   |
| 350             | g     | Fontina, Edam, or cheddar cheese shredded                   |
| 250             | g     | Swiss cheese shredded                                       |
| 2 X 400 ml cans |       | Artichokes drained and roughly chopped                      |
| One             | bunch | Green onions chopped  |
| ¼               | bunch | Parsley minced  |
| 500             | g     | Fresh or frozen spinach drained squeezed of excess moisture |
| 30              | ml    | Dijon   |
| 25              | ml    | Minced garlic   |
| 7.5             | ml    | Tabasco   |
| 90              | ml    | Lemon juice   |
| 30              | ml    | Salt  |
| 15              | ml    | White pepper  |

**Method:** Combine all the ingredients and mix until combined. Top with 100 ml heavy cream. Bake covered at 350°F for about 45 minutes (until bubbly). Serve immediately with baguette, corn chips, pita or vegetable sticks.

# Donation Form

2022 – 03

Single gift amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque enclosed or  Please charge my credit card

Monthly gift amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Void cheque enclosed or  Please charge my credit card

**Gift End Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ or until further notice

Please use my gift as follows:

[ ] Where needed most

[ ] With the following designation

\_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Mr [ ] Mrs [ ] Ms Other \_\_\_\_\_

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**With credit card and identity fraud on the rise, we have measures in place to keep your information safe. Please choose from one of the following options:**

- **Donate online at [cridge.org/donate/](http://cridge.org/donate/)**
- **Call 250-995-6427 to speak with our Donor Specialist**

Sign also to authorise bank withdrawals.

All monthly payments will be scheduled the first day of each month. Receipts for your charitable giving tax credit will be issued annually.

Charitable Registration # 108079419RR0001

The Cridge Centre for the Family collects personal information on this form for reasonable and obvious purposes that meet with regulatory requirements. This information will never be shared, and will never be used for purposes outside of the obvious without your

**Please detach and mail this form to:**

The Cridge Centre for the Family

1307 Hillside Ave. Victoria, BC V8T 0A2

Contact: Joanne Linka, Manager of Communication & Fund Development 250.995.6419 Email: [jlinka@cridge.org](mailto:jlinka@cridge.org)

Spending of funds is confined to Board approved programs and purchases. Each gift designated toward an approved program will be used as designated with the understanding that when a given need has been met, designated gifts will be used where needed most. Gifts will be acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes.

The Cridge Centre for the Family is certified by the Canadian Council of Christian Charities and is accredited by the Imagine Canada Standards program.



## Let's Connect

-  TheCridgeCentre
-  TheCridgeCentre
-  thecridgecentre
-  CridgeCentre
-  The Cridge Centre for the Family Official
-  [cridge.org/category/story-library](https://cridge.org/category/story-library)

## How do you want to receive The Messenger?

We would like to start sending The Messenger to you by email.

If you don't have email, don't worry, we will continue to send it in the mail.

If you would like to receive it by email, please let Sharon know at [scrozier@cridge.org](mailto:scrozier@cridge.org)

NOTE: Please double check the accuracy of your name and address and notify Sharon Crozier of any changes via email to [scrozier@cridge.org](mailto:scrozier@cridge.org) or by phone at 250-995-6427.

The Messenger is published by The Cridge Centre for the Family in March, July and November.  
Editors: Marina Bazalitskaya, Joanne Linka, Shelley Morris | Production: IdeaZone | Printing: ARC Document Solutions

PM40024094

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