

Heroes



PHOTO BY JESSICA ROCKOWITZ. UNSPLASH

Adam Richards, CEO of The Cridge Centre for the Family

Sometimes our image of heroes is a well-built person with a cape and superhuman skills. Sometimes our heroes are those we read about in the news who have achieved grand things. Here at The Cridge Centre, I see two kinds of heroes: the first are our staff, who show up every day to make a difference in someone's life. They are walking beside a person on the road to recovery, serving a senior a delicious meal, playing with a child, or engaging with those who have experienced trauma. In every corner of our organization I see heroes.

But if you look just a little closer you will note that the greatest heroes among us are those very clients and residents we serve. Every day we see those recovering from a brain injury take one more step toward independence, towards health, overcoming all kinds of obstacles that many of us will never have to face.

We see parents using up every resource possible and making huge sacrifices to care for their child who is facing a life of illness or challenge. We see an immigrant family who have left their home and culture to start fresh in a new and safer place. We see their grief as they say goodbye to loved ones, to their homes and careers in order to protect their families. We see a woman who has dug deep with the courage to leave her abuser, risking poverty, isolation, and danger in order to protect her kids and to say no more to the violence. She then journeys through the challenges of finding a home, a new life, and new resources, toward a better life for those she loves. She is our hero! She is the one who inspires us to keep showing up every day to support her journey.

In this Messenger, you will read their stories and be inspired by their courage and tenacity. And, without sounding too cliché, you too can be a hero in all of this, through your prayers, encouragement, and financial support.

Road to Recovery

Robin Bienvenu



My Mother and I at Grad 2022. I inherited my strength, my compassion for others, and my sweet tooth from her.

My name is Robin Bienvenu, and I am a brain injury survivor.

2006 was one of the best years of my life. I was 44 years old, in love, we just had a healthy baby boy, I had a job I loved as a city bus driver, and I was involved in a thriving paintball business. I was set for life. Then on March 9, 2007, I got a sudden reminder of my mortality. I came home from work not feeling well and went into a sudden, unexpected coma. I woke up on April 22, completely paralyzed, mostly blind, and very, very confused. I was just an animated piece of meat. I couldn't even feel my body on the mattress -- I was just a head on a pillow. Everything was alien to me.

A person starts to get brain damage after four days in a coma, and my coma lasted for 44 days.

The coma was caused by a rare illness called acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM), which is characterized by a brief but widespread inflammation in the brain. ADEM causes damage to the myelin sheath on the nerves, (the white matter), like Multiple Sclerosis (MS). If the brain is a computer, the wiring could be compared to the grey matter. The insulation on the wiring would be white matter. Both grey and white matter are required for healthy brain function.

Over the months after regaining consciousness, I experienced hundreds of little victories. I had to reformat all my senses, muscles, memories... everything. I felt like I was born completely blank. My youngest son turned one year old and took his first steps when I was in a coma. So, since I woke up completely blank,

technically, he could be considered to be one year older than I am. I went from being an animated piece of meat in bed to being trapped in a stranger's body for the next 5 – 6 years.

Muscles take weeks to heal after an injury. Bones and tendons take months to heal. The brain is an organ that takes years of constant arduous rehabilitation to heal. A brain injury is a terrifying experience that affects every aspect of one's life. To this day, I can still feel slight improvements in some areas, but other areas are still challenging. I have accepted that I have to push myself to get better, and healthier.

Everyone goes to school to get better. I started college in January 2009. I finished college with an associate's degree in Social Work and started University in September 2014. I graduated with a BA in Psychology on June 2022.

We have learned more about the human brain over the last five years than we have over the last five thousand years. So, it could be said, this is the best time in human history to get a brain injury.

Robin Bienvenu is one of my heroes. I met Robin when he was a tenant at Mary Cridge Manor in 2009. He was starting his journey to recovery. Today, as Robin begins his professional journey we are proud to share that he is employed in our Brain Injury Services. His journey and experiences through brain injury will help him to be an excellent support to our tenants and a contributing member of our community. THANK YOU ROBIN!

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

Celebrating Children's Creativity

Christine Wosilius, Assistant Manager of Children's Services

I had the great privilege of sharing some of our children's artwork at this year's Annual General Meeting. I am always so very proud of the staff, and the work that they do with the children and this was a perfect opportunity to showcase that.

In July when Adam requested "some art" from the children for our AGM I asked each of the groups to think about how they might participate, and what they'd like to contribute.

The results were beautiful and joyful in their creativity and so varied in their outcome. Our toddlers experimented with pastels and noticed the textures and smudges. The daycare children tried a variety of mediums: paint pouring on canvas, working with glue as a medium, taking photographs to create a special message, and painting their bodies to make prints on the paper.

Other children used their bodies to spread the paint and dance on the canvas, while the Nature Preschool were inspired by a favourite book and created a felt representation of the illustrations.

The older groups in School Age Care worked on embroidery projects and canvas painting.

We hung all of the works of art in the foyer during the AGM -- we even had several people offer to buy some of the pieces! We are actually thinking about having a larger, more focused, art show for the children next year where their pieces would be for sale. If you know of a venue that might work, please be in touch with me!

I love how art is a joyful reflection of each individual child that can be enjoyed by people of all ages. This piece was created by Isaac, 10 years old, in our School Age Care program. He used paint on canvas to make the background lines and then he described the rest of his process: "I thought of what was true, and then I did it."

"I love Cridge." Me too Isaac, me too.

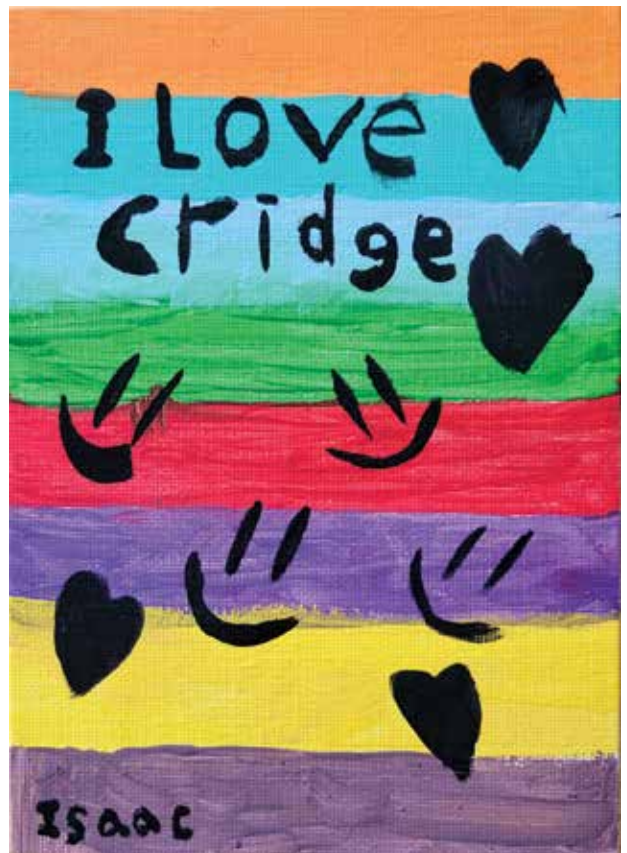




PHOTO BY KRISTINA PAUKSHTITE. PEXELS

Filling the Gaps for Young Parents

Marlene Goley, Manager of The Cridge Transition House for Women and Outreach Services

The Cridge Young Parent Outreach Program has been supporting young families in our community for over twelve years. One of the first young moms to connect with the program was Cindy and her daughter.

Cindy was 19, had a 10-month-old baby girl, Angie, and was transitioning from a supported living program. The program helped Cindy during her pregnancy and helped launch her life as a new mom. However, Cindy was far from being able to manage on her own, with no family or “village” to lean on. She had no one to call for advice when she was worried about Angie or when she struggled with her own mental health. And no one to share Angie’s milestones. Cindy wanted stability and to make a good future for herself and baby Angie. Thankfully, Nicole and The Cridge Young Parent Outreach Program was there, ready to help.

With Nicole’s support, Cindy made a plan. First on the list was to secure housing. Then how to spread out her meagre budget to pay rent and buy groceries. As Cindy struggled to initiate these first steps, it became apparent that she needed to pay some attention to her mental health. With Nicole’s support, she connected with her doctor who helped her find the right combination of medication and coping strategies. Nicole supported Cindy when she returned back to school, getting Angie into daycare, and staying disciplined about her mental health care strategies.

Nicole continued to support Cindy throughout the years: to finish her college program and launch into the workforce and Nicole became a part of the support system every mother deserves -- the kind of support that does not have a beginning, middle, or end. Over the years, Cindy has needed Nicole sometimes for just a brief time and sometimes for longer. When Angie started school, she was diagnosed with a learning disability. Cindy reached out to Nicole for help advocating for and accessing resources to help Angie thrive.

Cindy knows that Nicole and The Cridge Young Parent Outreach Program support is always available to her. That knowledge has kept her grounded and positive about the future. Cindy is proud of the parent and adult she has become, and we celebrate her success!

The support given to Cindy is what new young parents just connecting with Cridge YPOP can expect for their future.

The Cridge Centre News

STUFF THE STOCKING

Stuff the Stocking is happening online and coming your way November 28th to December 2nd. Find us on social media and stay updated for a chance to win some fabulous prizes! To donate to Respitality and Stuff the Stocking, visit: cridge.org/donate/respitality



SCHMOOP FEST



A big thank you to everyone who attended our first staff, volunteer, and contractor annual fall kick-off. We had tons of fun! And thanks to Adam for the delicious lunch!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022



OUR 150TH ANNIVERSARY IS COMING!

It's not every day that an anniversary of 150 years of service takes place! That is worth celebrating! We are in the process of planning a year of celebrations, with events, unveilings, swag and, of course, a fundraising campaign! We are looking forward to celebrating with YOU!

If you would like to help with planning the celebrations, contact Joanne jlinka@cridge.org or call 250 995 6419

GIVE HOPE TODAY!



A legacy of care is what drives the work of The Cridge Centre – after almost 150 years, we are **still** caring for the vulnerable and working to make a difference in our community.



You have been an important part of that legacy – your faithful and generous contributions have built programs, supported families, provided essential services and most of all, given HOPE. Thank you! I'm not sure where we – or our community – would be without you!



Please – don't stop now! The need is urgent. Give today to have your donation matched 1:1.

To donate online, please visit cridge.org/give3/ or contact Sharon at 250 995 6427 or scrozier@cridge.org



act justly
love mercy
walk humbly

Chef's Corner: Borscht

The Cridge Centre for the Family is home to many cultures and ethnicities with many opportunities to try different flavours. Here is a traditional family recipe from one of our Ukrainian families.



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 cup | diced celery |
| 1 cup | diced onions |
| 1 cup | chopped cabbage |
| 2 cloves | garlic grated or pressed |
| 1 tbsp. | butter |
| 8 cups | water, beef or chicken broth |
| 1 can | diced tomatoes – home or commercially canned |
| 2-3 | medium to large peeled beets, half grated and half diced |
| 1-2 | medium carrots, diced |
| 1 | medium potato diced |
| ½ cup | fresh dill |
| Salt and pepper to taste | |
| Optional: bay leaf, green beans, peas, beet greens, and shredded pork/pork sausage | |

Method: Sauté the onions, celery, and cabbage with butter until soft and translucent. Add the can of diced tomatoes and garlic, as well as water or broth. Bring to a boil over medium heat and let simmer. Peel the beets, carrots, and a potato. Dice half the beets and grate the other half. Grate all the carrots. Dice the potato. Add the beets, carrots, and a potato to the broth. If you'd like to add any additional veggies (green beans, peas, beet greens) do so now. Allow soup to simmer on medium heat until diced beet and potatoes are soft (test them with a fork), about 15 minutes. Remove the soup from the heat. Stir in chopped fresh dill, salt and black pepper. Serve hot with a dollop of sour cream and a slice of bread with butter (rye bread is the best!)

Donation Form

2022 – 11

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

Match my gift today

Mr Mrs Ms Other _____

First Name _____ Middle Initial _____

Last Name _____

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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/](https://www.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 permission.

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

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

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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

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

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