

# Under the **Ray**dar

**Ray**

Resource Assistance for Youth, Inc.





Kelly Holmes

# The Writing's on the Wall

I was on my way home from my daughter's "away" soccer game last week. I was driving through the city, listening to the radio and thankful that my car heater was functioning at full capacity. My daughter, "the soccer player" (amongst other things) was wired up to her MP3 player so the drive was quiet. I took note of the number of young people pushing strollers at 10:30 at night with the Winnipeg chill in the air.

I began a conversation in my head—you know the kind of silent dialogue where you basically question and answer yourself, symptomatic of single motherhood. I thought "That baby needs a hat!" and "Where are they going this late at night?" I wondered how often that baby had been a party-prop while the young parents continued to live out their adolescence. I wondered why that young mom got pregnant in the first place. I couldn't help but answer my own questions—she was ill-informed, looking for something to love—all the wrong reasons. I felt for that poor little baby. I hope he survives. And even if he does, what will his life be like? I'll never be out of work at this rate.

As I continued to cruise, observing all of the graffiti laden buildings, I couldn't help but think to myself, "Man, I've got my work cut out for me—what does it all mean?" And then I thought about that little baby—the party-prop, or third generation gangster—some broken little girl's new dolly. I thought about that baby growing up. Dear God.

My mind continued to knit together a script based on what I've seen through my time in this field.

I know taggers and their profile. They are that little baby grown up—a baby who started life so sweet and innocent, full of new life and new hope. I can't help but think about the proliferators who picket to save them in utero—where are they when these vulnerable babies begin to grow up? Has their life value

decreased? It doesn't make sense. I think "What would Jesus do?" We know what the powers that be would like to do—throw them in jail. Tougher sentences for young offenders is the government's answer. The remand centre is full; the youth centre is full; treatment centres are full and the court system is clogged for months. It's a sad state of affairs.

They say "If they were all put in jail, the streets would be safer." The majority of the population would be assured and satisfied... for a time anyway.

Meanwhile back at the big house, that little "baby grown up" is getting three square meals a day and a bed that isn't broken for the first time in their life. He is in the company of like-minded broken spirits that affirm and encourage his plight. Troubled and mentally twisted by a crappy life, they are all together under one roof. With weightlifting equipment and new networks, these institutions spit out more sophisticated criminals, eager to increase their wealth and exact their power in a life that has typically been starved for power of any kind.

I thought to myself, "That can't be the answer can it?"

While not every young mom's baby will be sentenced to a difficult or doomed life, it is sure obvious to me to see the obstacles that are stacked against these young ones before they even get out of the blocks.

I snap out of my internal conversation just in time to park the car and head inside my warm house, my daughter in tow. I am so grateful that she has soccer and music and friends... an abundance of opportunities that keep her interested and occupied, healthy and happy.

Like the graffiti all over the city, the writing is on the wall.

> Cameron Davis and Jeff Cook paint over graffiti on the side of RaY's building.



# RaY GOES GLOBAL:

## METHAMPHETAMINE CONFERENCE, Prague, Czech Republic

Thanks to the support of Healthy Child Manitoba and the Winnipeg Foundation, I had the privilege of attending the first Global Crystal Methamphetamine Conference in Prague.

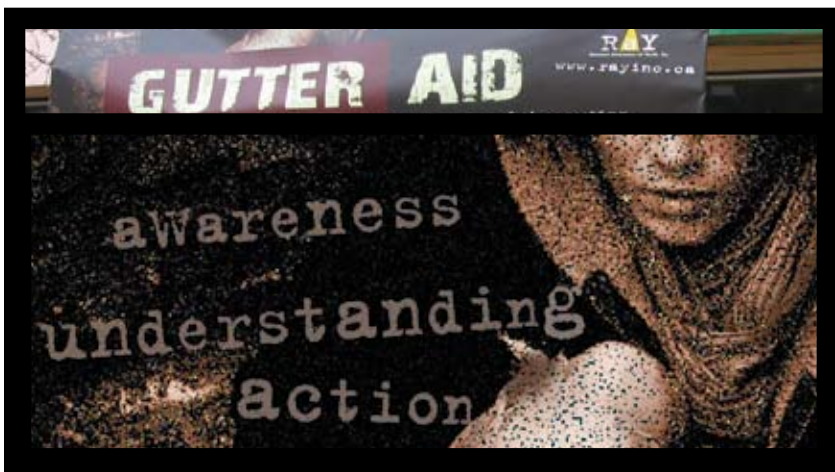
International delegates shared information on meth and the surrounding issues such as border controls, supply and demand, law enforcement, drug activity, harm reduction policy, treatment and social programming for users. It was my great honour to present at the conference information about meth use amongst Winnipeg's homeless and street-entrenched youth.

It was interesting to note the divergent thinking about crystal meth between the medical community and the frontlines. The medical community seemed focused on stats, while social workers and enforcement or frontline representatives were focused on stories associated with the drug. American presenters conducted a "how to" demonstration of creating a meth lab and all the ways in which one could die in the cooking process alone. We were told stories from the eastern bloc countries of the birth of meth factories and how meth trafficking and human trafficking have a strong connection.

It was interesting to realize the global perspective when all of my focus has been on downtown Winnipeg. As my Anishanabe sisters would say, my perspective changed from that of a mouse focused on one crumb to one of an eagle soaring through the sky.



**"Trying to control supply is futile if there is demand pull."** Antonio Maria Costa.



# The word from the gutter.

Last October, over 4 days (concluding on the International Day of the Eradication of Poverty), RaY hosted Gutter Aid, an awareness-raising event to educate Winnipeggers about poverty and its surrounding issues. Our aim was to provide a forum where discussion could take place amongst different age groups, sector representatives, professional media and artisans. The hope was that participants would make a personal investment at finding solutions.

Over three days, 220 students took part and viewed the movie short that was produced by RaY staff and youth. Many prominent Winnipeggers, representing a variety of different systems and organizations participated in our discussion panels. The public also took part.

Thank you to those that took part and worked hard to make this event a great success—the bands, the panelists, the artists and the moderators. A special thank you to Neighbourhoods Alive and Healthy Child Manitoba for their continued support and faith in the work that we do.

# Partnerships

The Network is a network of people who are currently working with youth; we are activists and advocates, community-based service providers committed to a single mission. That mission, our common bond, is a shared interest in youth between the ages of 0 to 29 years of age. Our network provides deep insight into the multi-dimensional complexity of our youth of today. We recognize and value the diversity of youth whether they are homeless, a single mom, in a gang or out of a gang, using or not using substances; or if they are a new up and coming artist or musician. We are there.

– Sharon Taylor, Executive Director, Wolseley Family Place

## Broadway Neighbourhood Centre

Forming a close partnership with RaY, especially through the Odd Jobs program has meant that our building and outside needs are taken care of while at the same time providing a place for youth to come and work. This helps reduce our costs in areas of maintenance staffing. They also do flyer deliveries for us on a regular basis so that we can make the community aware of our various programming and events. This partnership is definitely a two-way street of giving. RaY's youth and especially those who come work on a more regular basis have been building great rapport with BNC's staff members. We have become a big team of individuals from all different backgrounds. Sometimes this partnership is not always perfect, we encounter trials and challenges with the youth in the odd jobs program but it lends itself as an avenue of positive growth. Because we are not a traditional employer we are able to work through these challenges, learn from them and find ways towards the best possible outcomes that more traditional employers may not be willing to do. RaY also holds their popular cooking program once a week in our kitchen. We are happy to provide space for youth to learn practical life skills and healthy nutrition options. Broadway Neighbourhood Centre was also happy to once again host RaY's annual Christmas dinner. We hope this helps to encourage youth that West Broadway is their community centre too. Thank you RaY for your continued help and positive impact on our Centre.

– Amanda Horn, Program Director

## Wolseley Family Place

Building a village out of blocks with a 3-year-old boy so he could have somewhere for his bear to live, running after 1-year-olds to keep them safe (and somewhat clean) and reading stories to anyone who asks—these are some of the jobs done by our RAY volunteers. We have two volunteers, one comes Tuesday afternoons and the other comes Friday mornings. They pitch right in and connect with children and staff. It is great to see them involved in the children's learning process by encouraging imaginative play. One of the volunteers even brought in a book to leave here for the children.

– Noelle Campbell, Playroom Supervisor.

## Art City

Art City thrives because of our network with other youth serving agencies in the West Broadway neighbourhood. RaY, Wolseley Family Place, Broadway Neighbourhood Center and Art City are at different sites and we cater to diverse interests and groups. This means that every unique youth in our neighbourhood is more likely to find a place where they belong and where their needs will be met.

When an individual comes to Art City looking for resources that we cannot provide we know where to send them. If a youth or a family is having trouble finding a place to live, we know that they can find support at RaY or at Wolseley Family Place. More importantly, because of our close partnerships, we probably know the name of the person who they can talk to for guidance.

Working as a team helps us to deliver more services with less resources. Through RaY's Odd Jobs, Art City is able to send our monthly program calendar to every door in West Broadway. This calendar is how we let our regular and new participants know what art programs Art City is offering and that they are welcome to come, drop-in and free of charge. On our own, Art City would not have the resources to deliver this calendar in such a comprehensive manner. Because we get this message out, several hundreds of local youth are able to access top quality art workshops facilitated by professional and community artists. Thank you RaY Odd Jobs!

– Cam Forbes, Executive Director





RaY staff serves Christmas dinner, catered by Wolseley Family Place, and gives presents to 50 youth at Broadway Neighbourhood Centre.

## WEST BROADWAY YOUTH NETWORK: BROADWAY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE, WOLSELEY FAMILY PLACE, ART CITY AND RAY.



West Broadway Youth Coalition Executive Directors Kelly Holmes of RaY, Sharon Taylor of Wolseley Family Place, Cam Forbes of Art City, Lawrence "Spatch" Mulhull of Broadway Neighbourhood Centre.



RaY's Erica Chatelaine at the 2008 Snoball Winter Carnival with Peaches and Peter.

Karly and Kevin, pictured with RaY's Sarah MacKinnon and Asha Harrington, at RaY's Monday night food program is made possible by the use of the BNC kitchen.

RaY's Larysa Jorgenson and Nancy Chippendale with their mini snow family at the 2009 Snoball.

# WAY TO GO!



Terri-Lynn celebrating her year anniversary: Clean and serene.



Oanh (pictured left) receives office support Tuesday afternoons by Chantelle and Nigel at the West Broadway Development Corporation.



Leslie and his daughter Elizabeth spending time together.



Kristy helps Laurel Centre with office support on Wednesdays and Libby has completed a research project for the Eco Network.



Patsy at her weekly job experience shift at Wanabees Diner.



Cheyenne organizes RaY's clothing bank every week.



Adam meets Dr. Jon Gerrard at the annual LITE breakfast at the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre in November.



And WaY to Go greenspace supporters Winnipeg Centre MP Pat Martin and MLA for Wolseley Rob Altemeyer, pictured at one of the community rallies imploring governments and school officials for the creation of a green athletic field at the vacant lot on Broadway and Portage Avenue, adjacent to Gordon Bell School that has been purchased by Canada Post.



**Mike  
Sauv **

**“The more  
you know  
yourself,  
the more  
you can  
forgive  
yourself.”**

**RaY:** You recently worked at the Flying J Restaurant in Headlingly for nine months. How did you get your job there?

**Mike:** A friend of the family told me to go apply. In my interview I told them I had a criminal record and hoped that it wouldn't be a problem. They said it would be and to apply at other places. About a week later, after applying at various jobs and taking one job that paid the rent, they phoned back and asked if I could come for a second interview. I told them if they could beat what the new job was offering I could come out there, so they did and they hired me.

**RaY:** How has the food handling certificate you got through RaY helped you?

**Mike:** It allowed me to work in a kitchen and actually make a little bit more than minimum wage because I have that certificate. I enjoy cooking, so it opens up many doors for cooking and cooking school. It's also something that I can put on my resumé when I'm applying for kitchen jobs.

**RaY:** On March 3rd, you celebrated eighteen months of complete abstinence. How have the recovery meetings at RaY helped you?

**Mike:** They helped because they were every other day at prime time. Just coming and listening for an hour, and getting stuff off my chest...that every other day really helped me not pick up and use. RaY's Addictions Worker Lynn has been awesome to where I am in my life. If it wasn't for her stepping up and getting me into detox and saying "you better take this kid," I'd probably be dead. The compassion she has for people who want help is just unbelievable.

**RaY:** What are your future hopes?

**Mike:** My future hopes right now are just to keep on keeping on and to go to culinary arts school. I was really honoured when RaY asked me to go speak to high school kids in Tuelon...

**RaY:** Would you like to do more speaking for RaY?

**Mike:** Absolutely

**RaY:** Thanks so much, Mike.



# Did you know that youth make up 1/3 of Winnipeg's homeless population?

Your support of RaY helps us help them get back on their feet. To offer your support, please complete this donation form and send it to the address below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my gift of:  \$20  \$25  \$50  \$75  \$100  Other

If you wish to donate using a credit card, please visit our website, [www.rayinc.ca](http://www.rayinc.ca) and click on "Ways to Give." **Resource Assistance for Youth, 195 Young Street, Winnipeg, MB R3C 3S8**

**RAY**  
Resource Assistance for Youth, Inc.

**Our front cover features Baby Gat, a painting by Jacqueline Traverse.** Born in Winnipeg, Jackie is Ojibway from the Lake St. Martin First Nation. She recently completed her fourth year of fine arts at the University of Manitoba, and considers herself to be a multi-media artist. Her second short film "Two Scoops," is about the scoop of Aboriginal kids into the child welfare system during the 60s and 70s. But painting is truly where her heart lies, and Baby Gat is a wry commentary on gang violence in our city. "I visualized this generation of gangsters as they grow up and start having children of their own," says Jackie, "I have a lot of family in gangs and they have children now and their kids are in gangs. It's a cycle. When I hear about gang shootings I wonder where those kids got the guns from? An adult? Who would put a gun in a child's hand? There are so many questions but really the work was created to get people thinking of these issues. **Contact Jackie at [traverse\\_jackie\\_r\\_t@hotmail.com](mailto:traverse_jackie_r_t@hotmail.com).**



This newsletter was made possible by



Editors: Kelly Holmes, Jason Neufeld, Nancy Chippendale  
Writers: Kelly Holmes, Jason Neufeld, Sharon Taylor, Amanda Horn, Noelle Campbell, Cam Forbes, Lynn Thomson  
Photos: Nancy Chippendale, Lindy Lee, Marshall Norris  
Cover Art: Jacqueline Traverse  
Design: BCG Communications

Resource Assistance for Youth  
195 Young St, Wpg, MB R3C 3S8 P: 204.783.5617 F: 204.775.4988

Thank you to our funders/supporters

