

## Winnipeg 2016

The seventh **Canadian Burn Survivors Conference** was held in Winnipeg from **June 15 to 18, 2016**, and was hosted by the **Mamingway Burn Survivor Society**.



Just over 180 burn survivors, family members, fire fighters and burn unit staff were in attendance. Attendees came from across the country, all the way from Victoria BC to Gander Newfoundland. Our opening reception featured a comedy Improv group and yummy finger food.

Keynote Speaker **Justina Page** kicked off the conference. She shared her story as a burn survivor is both gripping and inspirational, and a testament to the power of hope in dark times. Justina's life was changed forever when fire swept through her home, March 7, 1999. The loss of her 22-month old twin son, Amos, the severe and lasting injuries of her other twin son, Benjamin, and her own devastating experience of third degree burns covering 55 percent of her body affected the entire family.



Our second day featured Keynote Speaker **Tyler Pelke** who spoke about forgiveness. Tyler's friend Curtis was murdered, while he was sexually assaulted, his throat slit, set on fire and left to die by the same attacker. He shared the compelling story of confronting his attacker in prison and finding peace and purpose in life through his journey of forgiveness and serving others.

**Deborah Blaney Ward** shared her courageous story of burn recovery and how she found the courage to write a book about her life, and gave very practical tips for others interested in writing their stories.

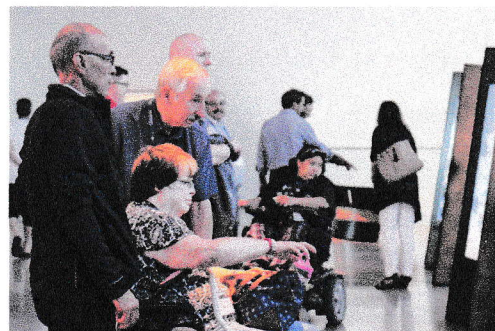


There were many other presentations by burn survivors on a variety of themes such as **"Hope"**, **"Forgiveness"**, **"Navigating Online Burn Support"** and **"Dealing with a Change of Plans"**.



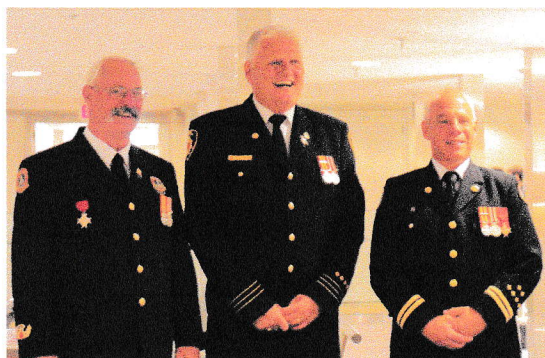
Medical presentations by **Dr. Richard Haydey**, dermatologist, clinical psychologist **Sulaye Thakrar** and **Dr. Sarvesh Logsetty** on the latest in research survivors cope with their physical as well as psychological injuries. Therapist **James Bosch** and nurse **Cindy Rutter** led a session about body image and sexuality following a burn injury, a very important topic.

Thursday evening, we were treated to special tours at the **Canadian Museum for Human Rights**, which was a highlight for many of our out of town attendees. One attendee stated that "This was incredible and great bonding time for the group."



There was also a **Young Adult program** at Adrenaline Adventures where some of the younger burn survivors and a few others shared the physical challenges of a ropes course; they also had time to talk about their journeys as survivors.

The conference ended Saturday evening with a **banquet dinner** and dancing groups from the Folk Arts Council who offered multi-cultural entertainment; this was followed by an evening of dancing.



Thanks to all who attended in making this conference, entitled "Building a Supportive Community", a huge success! Hope to see you all again at the next conference in 2018!

