



“Renewal of Spirit”
Calgary-June 6-9th, 2012, at the Blackfoot Inn



5th Biennial Conference of the Canadian
Burn Survivors Community



Calgary was the proud host of the 5th Biennial Conference of the Canadian Burn Survivors Community (CBSC) from June 6-9th, 2012, at the Blackfoot Inn. The conference was a huge success with 115 participants from across Canada, and a few attendees travelling from the United States. The conference theme, “Renewal of Spirit”, was carried from beginning to end, with the major themes of honor, respect, faith, and love being evident in every presentation, session, panel discussion, and activity throughout the conference.



The opening night reception was a wine and cheese reception with entertainment from a jazz band. A cash bar and light appetizers were served while the majority of out of town attendees registered and had the opportunity to visit. The conference officially opened with an inspiring keynote address from Spencer Beach titled “Turning your Demons into Diamonds”, where he talked about how he survived and now thrives after sustaining burns to 87% of his body. We were also enlightened with Kelly Falardeau’s presentation on “Self Esteem doesn’t come in a Bottle” where she shared how being burned as a child affected her self esteem and relationships and how she learned to “fall in love with me- scars and all”. The last keynote speaker, Curtis Weber, presented on Saturday morning of the conference, capturing the audience with his experience “Overcoming the Odds- a Personal Journey”. Curtis was also interviewed by Global Calgary TV and his clip can be found at <http://www.globaltvcalgary.com/video/burn+victims+find+inspiration/video.html?v=2243924484#stories>





We had some local professionals present at the conference. Dr. Jenny Horch, burn unit psychologist, presented on body image. Dr. Vincent Gabriel, Burn physiatrist and Director of the outpatient burn clinic, talked about the future of burn care around the world. Janet Fraser, psychiatric liaison nurse, presented on post traumatic stress disorder, and Angie Sourious talked about eating healthy and weight management after a burn injury. We were extremely fortunate to have a private film presentation on a recent documentary titled “Trials by Fire: Lives Re-Forged”. The production was done eloquently and respectfully presented. The films trailer can be found on their website <http://trialbyfiredoc.com/>

The conference also involved an afternoon to enjoying some complimentary healing sessions including massage therapy, Reiki, hypnotherapy, the Yuen Method, and therapeutic writing. There were several panels held over the three days including relationships post burn injury, returning to an active lifestyle, tips for amputees, an coping with scars. The Calgary Firefighters’ Burn Treatment Society hosted the Friday night outing which was a pub night at Dobson’s Pub where many attendees enjoyed a taste of Calgary nightlife. The conference concluded with separate sharing circles for the survivors, family/friends, and professionals. Following the sharing circle everyone came together to enjoy a drumming circle. The conference officially closed with a banquet where we enjoyed a photo booth and evening of dancing.



We believe attendees left the conference with a true “Renewal of Spirit” and with some new friends and long lasting memories. The conference could not have taken place without the time and effort of the conference planning committee, which included Tanya Miller (Conference Planning Chair; Unit Manager of the Calgary Firefighter’s Burn Treatment Centre), Judy Sleith (RN, Treasurer), Amelia Potter (RN, Secretary), Don Adamson (Burn Survivor & Co-Chair of the CBSC), and Becky Barrett (Burn survivor) and the generous donations from all of the sponsors.





The CBSC was excited to announce that Victoria will be the hosting the 6th Biennial Conference in 2014. The planning committee was excited to contribute \$2000 to the next conference to help start with planning. Curtis Weber also generously donated \$500 to the next conference.



The Calgary Planning committee would like to acknowledge the continued support from the Calgary Firefighters Burn Treatment Society for all of our Burn Survivor Recourses available to Burn Survivors and their families in and surrounding Calgary.

