

The
Times

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Canstar Community News
1355 Mountain Avenue
Winnipeg, Man. R2X 3B6
Ph: 204-697-7021
www.canstarnews.com

MANAGEMENT

Managing Editor
John Kendle, 204-697-7093
john.kendle@canstarnews.com

Sales Manager
Barb Borden 204-697-7389
barb.borden@freepress.mb.ca

ADMINISTRATION

Main Switchboard: **204-697-7009**
Delivery Service: **204-925-3300**
Display Advertising Sales:
204-697-7009
or sales@canstarnews.com

Classified Advertising:
204-697-7050
Fax: **204-953-4300**

EDITORIAL

Deputy Editor
Darren Ridgley, 204-697-7098
darren.ridgley@canstarnews.com

Times Staff Reporter
Ligia Braidotti, 204-697-7206
ligia.braidotti@canstarnews.com
f facebook.com/TheTimesWpg
t @TimesWPG

Fax: **204-953-4300**

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Mural art transforms building



Doug Kretchmer
COMMUNITY
CORRESPONDENT

NORTH END

A new mural popped up on Selkirk Ave. on the East side of the Ndinawe Youth Resource Centre building at 472 Selkirk Ave. during the last week of July.

The artist, who goes by the name Mr. Cenz, was flown in from his hometown of London, U.K., to showcase some of his artwork at the Graffiti Gallery at 109 Higgins Ave. as part of the gallery's 20th anniversary celebration.

Mr. Cenz brought many of his artworks and painted an original massive piece on one of the walls in the gallery. I spoke with Graffiti Gallery artistic director Pat Lazo, who told me that Graffiti Art Programming was able to get funding for the London artist to do the mural on Selkirk Avenue as well as one at the skateboard park at The Forks honouring Jai Pereira, the late founder of Sk8 Skates.

Mr. Cenz has been making art since 1988, and his first commission came when he was just 11. He told me it would take him



Photo by Doug Kretchmer

It took British artist Mr. Cenz approximately 40 hours to create the new mural on the side of the Ndinawe Youth Resource Centre at 472 Selkirk Ave.

approximately 40 hours to do the mural on Selkirk Avenue. He started the project on July 22 and basically worked from 9 a.m to 5 p.m. for five days, basically treating it like "a regular job."

His tools included a wide assortment of spray cans of different colours, a hydraulic lift to reach the higher parts of the building, and one heck of an imagination.

It was pretty cool to watch him transform a red brick wall into an amazing piece of art during the week. The wall was painted sky blue the day before he started working on the mural.

Graffiti Art Programming is also responsible for the amazing makeover of the New West Hotel building at Main Street and Sutherland Avenue as well as many other murals throughout the city.

Behind the Lines, featuring Mr. Cenz's artwork, will be on display until Sept. 14 at Graffiti Gallery (109 Higgins Ave.).

Doug Kretchmer is a freelance writer, artist and community correspondent for The Times. Email him at quidamphotography@gmail.com

Twitter: @DougKretchmer

The search for meaning in the darkness



Hadass Eviatar
COMMUNITY
CORRESPONDENT

WEST KILDONAN

There are very few people on this Earth who have lived charmed lives, with no adversity.

Even young children learn fairly quickly that not everything in life will go their way — sometimes we need to share when we don't want to, or we fall down and hurt ourselves. What happens then?

We cry.

That's a normal reaction, whether you are a toddler who has bumped her head or an adult facing tragedy and loss, and everything in between. We express our feelings of anger, frustration or sorrow.

Then what?

This is where we see the dividing line between people who are resilient, and those who are not.

Resilience is defined as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.

Toddlers are usually quite resilient — they fall, they cry, they get up again. The storm of tears disappears as if it had never been, and they are on the rampage again.

Most of us older folks take longer to recover from life's blows. Some people remain stuck in their sorrow and anger forever. Some people turn to alcohol, drugs, food, work, shopping or other addictions to numb their pain. But others seem to rise above tragedy, and find new meaning and purpose.

What is it that makes it possible for some people to pick up the pieces of their lives and carry on, while others sink into destruction?

Austrian psychologist Viktor Frankl wrote a famous book, *Man's Search for Meaning*. It tells how he survived the Holocaust by finding personal meaning in the experience, which gave him the will to live through it.

He later established a new school of psychotherapy, based on the premise that people's underlying motivator in life is a "will to meaning," even in the most difficult of circumstances. This desire is the underpin-

ning of resilience.

Resilient people are able to move on from a "why me?" victim mentality and build something out of the experience — often from a desire to help others who have experienced similar troubles. It is no coincidence that so many trauma counsellors and youth workers have first-hand experience of the challenges their clients face. Helping others is at the top of most self-help lists, after all.

So how can we develop resilience in life?

While many people appear to be naturally optimistic and more likely to bounce back from adversity, I believe that anyone can become more resilient and better able to handle the slings and arrows of life.

Becoming more resilient requires the willingness to step out of the role of the powerless victim, to take responsibility for our own feelings, and trust that there is meaning and hope to be found in the darkness, just like Viktor Frankl.

Hadass Eviatar is a community correspondent for West Kildonan. Check out her blog at: <http://hadasseviatar.com/blog/>