



The Mamingwey Burn Survivor Society held its 21th annual Burn Survivor gathering on October 19 and 20, 2018 at the Canad Inns Polo Park Hotel in Winnipeg. The theme this year was **“Not all Scars are Visible”**.

Seventy-five burn survivors, their family members as well as Burn Unit staff from Manitoba attended this 2-day conference. The atmosphere was very uplifting and had a feeling of a family gathering, as people reconnected with other survivors, family members and hospital staff.

Keynote speaker **Kelly Falardeu** opened the conference by speaking on the theme **“Not all Scars are Visible”**. She shared her experiences of being burned as a two year old in a camp fire accident, which resulted in years of reconstructive surgeries as she grew up. She discussed her struggle and the hardship of not feeling beautiful and being labeled as the “ugly scar faced girl” for most of her life. Kelly revealed her vulnerabilities of wanting to be accepted by the world. With strength and determination, Kelly has moved towards acceptance, and works as motivational speaker to improve people’s self-worth and confidence; she strives to make sure everyone knows their inner beauty. Kelly also shared her project “Blankets for Burn kids”. Several Manitoba rotary clubs offered monetary sponsorship for a blanket to be given to each kid at Manitoba’s FireFighters’ Burn Fund burn camp, Camp Phoenix, next year.



Sandi Mitchell spoke on the topic of **Vicarious Trauma**, She led her discussion on the signs and symptoms of what Vicarious trauma is and how easily it can be present in our daily lives from being over-stressed while being in a caregiving role. She talked in relation to care givers of burn survivors which includes family, friends and health care professionals.

Sara-Jane Milne, Occupational Therapist, presented on the dangers of the internet when looking up health information. Her presentation was very informative and gave tips and tricks on how to know if the information you are obtaining is accurate and factual.

We heard about The FireFighters' Burn Fund from Chair, Martin Johnson and Vice-Chair Jim Abram; they talked about the history of the Fund as well how they wanted to help burn survivors throughout their journey, and not just during the fire or accident.

Two of our local survivors and one family member of a burn survivor spoke as a **panel**, discussing their lives after being affected by a burn injury and how not all scars are visible. Their struggles and triumphs were told from the heart and many in our audience related to their words and were moved.



Conference attendees participated in several **sharing circles**, which are considered a most valuable healing experience. Survivors, family and friends of survivors as well as the health care professionals had separate meetings and were able to share their distinct journeys.

The conference closed with a banquet dinner including a local jazz trio who ensured we had some great entertainment and an upbeat atmosphere.

The Mamingwey Burn Survivor Society would like to thank our sponsors: The **Firefighters' Burn Fund Inc.**, the **Health Sciences Centre Foundation**, as well as the **Manitoba Government**, **Manitoba Hydro**, **Sobey's Birds Hill**, **Bio Oil**, **Century 21 Carrie.com**, and **Marie Alkana** for their generous contributions that made this event possible.

We are very excited for the next conference, which is booked for October 19 and 20, 2019, at the same location. For more information, please email chair-person Barbara-Anne Hodge at barb@hodgfamily.ca or visit our website at www.mamingwey.ca

