



FAVOURITE WEST END MURAL RESTORED

Mural of Walter “Zooky” Ruesch returned to original design

MEDIA RELEASE

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Winnipeg, MB - After an eight-month hiatus, the West End’s Zooky mural has been fully restored thanks to the generosity of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, the owners of the building on which the mural is located.

The building, a former bingo hall at 635 Sargent Avenue that was purchased by the Redeemed Christian Church of God last year, had several structural issues that required immediate attention. Boarded-up windows that had key sections of the mural painted on them had begun to leak and required replacement. The mural honours a West End resident **Walter “Zooky” Ruesch** who was well known in the community. The installed new windows were devoid of the artwork that included the face of Zooky as well as his mid-sections. Specially produced decals by **SRS Signs** reproduced the images and have recreated the original look and the interior of the church receives more sunlight than ever before.

“The Zooky mural was a very important part of our outdoor mural gallery,” said **Gloria Cardwell-Hoepfner, Executive Director of the West End BIZ**. *“So many people in the West End have fond memories of seeing Mr. Ruesch pedaling around the neighbourhood. He was known for being a kind-hearted and soft-spoken individual who would collect old bicycles and stereos, fix them up and donate them to families. This mural honours those memories as well as Zooky himself who passed away in 2002.”*

“We’re so excited to have the mural back just in time for our tour season,” said **Joe Kornelsen, Promotion and Development Coordinator at the West End BIZ**, *“The Zooky mural is a favourite stop on our mural tours and restaurant tours.”*

The West End BIZ extends a huge thank-you to the congregation at the Redeemed Christian Church of God for ensuring that the mural will continue to be enjoyed by West Enders and Winnipeggers alike.

The West End BIZ Mural Program is award-winning and internationally recognized, having won the prestigious **International Downtown Association’s “Award of Distinction.”** **WHERE Magazine** also named the West End BIZ Mural Tours as **one of Canada’s Top Ten Attractions**. The murals deter graffiti and create vibrancy and interest in the fascinating stories of the incredible people and places in our communities. Ninety murals have been created to date in the West End neighbourhoods.

The West End Business Improvement Zone (West End BIZ) is a non-profit organization committed to working with area businesses and stakeholders to enhance and promote Winnipeg’s West End.

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For further information please call Gloria Cardwell-Hoepfner, BIZ Executive Director at (204) 954-7900 or (204) 290-9378 or Joe Kornelsen BIZ Promotion & Development Coordinator (204)954-7900.