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Contest helps North End youth

Winner receives a \$2K grant from Bridge the Gap and NECRC

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SUPPLIED PHOTO

Dance groups presented at Bridge the Gap's first fundraiser for the North End Community Renewal Corporation on Feb. 19 at the Sinclair Park Community Centre gymnasium. The event raised \$1,584 which is now part of a \$2,000 grant.

A North End project is partnering up with the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) to give a deserving organization a \$2,000 grant through a social media contest.

Bridge the Gap started as Creative Communications graduate Jenina Bondoc's final project. She has lived her whole life in the North End and wanted to dedicate her time and skills to help her community.

Last February she held a dance event to raise money for NECRC and was able to give them \$1,584, which is now part of the \$2,000 grant. Most people don't keep their final projects after school is done, but Bondoc said she "definitely wanted to continue." "I didn't want just to leave it at 'I raised money and gave it to the charity and just left it there.' I wanted to keep it going because I think there's a need for it. I think there is a lack of enthusiasm in this area, and I just wanted to continue raising awareness that the North End has a lot of vibrant, talented and passionate kids and they want to do good for the community," she said. NECRC's North End youth employment facilitator Anthony Niiganii said the organization is honoured to partner up with such an innovative project. He added this contest would open the door for organizations to learn more about other grants. Those who

submit a video but don't win will be contacted by their recreational co-ordinator to apply for NECRC's \$500 grant.

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To enter the contest, organizations have to post a video on Instagram showing what they are doing to stay active this summer.

Bridge the Gap also asks that people write what the organization is about and how they plan on using the money, followed by the hashtag #HowToSummer2016.

"The beauty (of the contest) is that it uses technology and gives them an opportunity to learn how to create a video, how to upload and how to use a hashtag. It becomes a learning experience overall," Niiganii said.

"The youth here face many barriers and all projects that can give them opportunities to have fun are great. It betters them spiritually, physically and mentally. This is quite an innovative idea, and we thought it was fantastic."

Alliance Boxing was the first organization to submit a video. They offer free boxing programs to youth in the North End and if they win, they plan to use the money to update their uniforms, which are about 20 years old.

"This is a wonderful thing they are doing and I'm glad to be part of it," program director Mark Collins said.

Bondoc said she wanted to combat negative perceptions of youth in the North End, showing people there are many young people trying to change their community for the better.

"I think the North End needs more awareness campaigns like this that involve the talent and the passion and young people coming together and being very proactive in their community. I want to erase the stereotypes that go with it and all the media representation... and I think social media is a really good way to showcase that because grant applications no one sees it. But this one is out there so everyone can see."

The Instagram contest is open and already has a few submissions. Deadline for submissions is Aug. 31.

To learn more go to bridgethegapwinnipeg.ca or find them on Instagram at [@bridgethegapwinnipeg](https://www.instagram.com/bridgethegapwinnipeg).

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