

# Senator walks with Bear Clan Patrol to see meth crisis firsthand

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Canadian Senator Patricia Bovey joins the West Broadway Bear Clan Patrol on a walk through the Winnipeg community on Friday. DANTON UNGER / Winnipeg Sun/Postmedia Network

A Canadian Senator walked with Winnipeg's Bear Clan Patrol to see for herself the meth crisis that grips the city.

On Friday evening, Senator Patricia Bovey joined nearly 25 members of the West Broadway Bear Clan Patrol on a walk along the river bed to see the "hotspots" that show the front lines of the meth crisis.

"This is very important to me. Winnipeg is not the only city with a crisis, but Winnipeg's crisis is very real." said Bovey, dressed in a bright yellow Bear Clan Patrol vest. "I want to see for myself what is going on in my neighbourhood."

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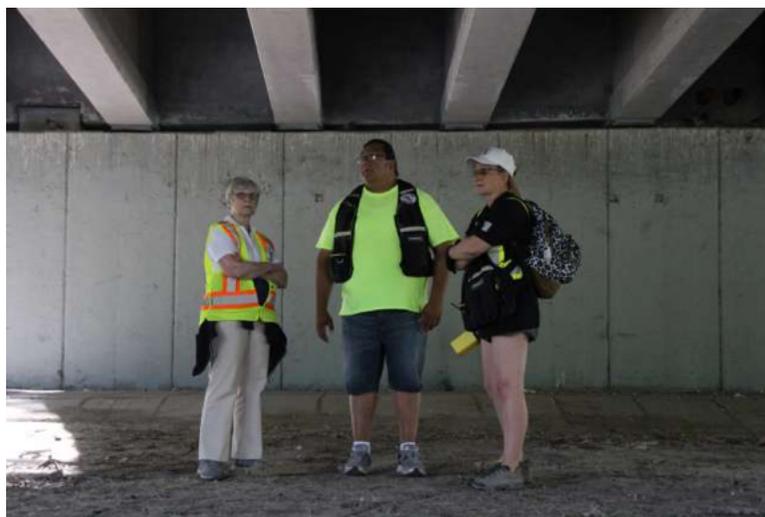


Canadian Senator Patricia Bovey joins the West Broadway Bear Clan Patrol on a walk through the Winnipeg community on Friday. DANTON UNGER/Winnipeg Sun/Postmedia Network  
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Bovey said she lives in Osbourne Village, just across the river from West Broadway, and knows about the challenges facing the community. She said it was time she experienced firsthand what the meth crisis has done to the city.

“I don’t believe that we will stand a chance of resolving some of the huge societal issues that we face, unless we understand what they are. There’s no better way than going out with the Bear Clan,” Bovey said as she prepared to leave for the walk. “I know what I’m expecting to see, and I hope I’m wrong.”

She wasn’t wrong.



Canadian Senator Patricia Bovey (left) speaks with Bear Clan Patrol organizers Travis Bighetty (centre) and Angela Klassen (right), under the Osborne Street Bridge in Winnipeg during a patrol walk on Friday. DANTON UNGER/Winnipeg Sun/Postmedia Network  
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On the walk, the group of patrols cleaned up needles, gave out food and hygiene packages to people on the street. Not five minutes in the walk, people approached the patrol asking for food and water.

A Bear Clan Patrol spokesperson said this year has been especially bad for the amount of needles found on the ground. Last year, the spokesperson said they found 40,000 needles. By May this year, the group had already picked up over 50,000 needles.

“I think a lot of our country is in denial that there is a meth crisis going on,” said Angela Klassen, lead female volunteer for the West Broadway chapter. “Maybe what the senator sees, by documenting it herself, by taking pictures, or having the press with her, maybe she can show those things to people and build support.”



Canadian Senator Patricia Bovey speaks with Bear Clan Patrol organizer Angela Klassen, under the Osborne Street Bridge in Winnipeg during a patrol walk on Friday. DANTON UNGER/Winnipeg Sun/Postmedia Network DANTON UNGER / Winnipeg Sun/Postmedia Network

The senator requested to walk down on the banks of the Assiniboine River. Klassen said the river bank is one of the hotspots for drug abuse and crime in the neighbourhood.

This is the first walk Bovey has taken with the members of the West Broadway Bear Clan Patrol, but the senator said she has been involved with the North End chapter for a while.

The senator said the opioid crisis is an ongoing discussion in The Senate, and she was looking forward to sharing her experience with her colleagues back in Ottawa.

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