



September 27, 2013

Katrina Clarke
Alumni and Development Officer

King's University College
266 Epworth Avenue
London, Ontario N6A 2M3

Young Alumni Award Remarks

It is an absolute pleasure to be able to tell you a bit about my friend Kevin today. Although we were at King's around the same time, Kevin and I didn't actually meet until a few years later. I was moving out of my cubicle in the basement of the Stevenson-Lawson building, over on the main campus, and Kevin was leaving his job in the basement of the Social Sciences Building. He had posted a tweet offering free office supplies to the first bidder, so naturally, I made my way across the street as fast as I could.

I became a regular follower of Kevin's tweets from that time on, and learned a lot about him in the process. For one thing, Kevin was the ringleader of a group called Photo Walk London, which was really an open invitation to anyone with a camera wanting to take photos together at various scenic locations around the city. Our paths crossed again at a couple of conferences in the city; PodCamp, which was a social media information event, and ChangeCamp, which concerned citizen and community engagement.

I could tell already that Kevin was a good guy to hang around, and hang around we did. We met up at Museum London Underground events, London Poetry Slams, and Geek Dinners – which for those not in the know, are monthly meet ups for anyone involved with social media or the internet in general.

I believe it was his involvement with these small communities that inspired Kevin to bring the concept of Parking Day to London. For one Friday in 2010, Kevin made arrangements with the city to allow individuals to use metered parking spaces for activities other than parking. For example, one space was covered with sod and featured patio furniture where people could stop and enjoy their lunches. Another featured free yoga classes, one had a drum circle, one was nothing but legos, and so on. It was a fantastic event that got people thinking about downtown spaces and how parking spots can be so much more than concrete.

Around that time Kevin also started his business – Mugshot Lounge. Mugshot Lounge was a photo booth concept, whereby Kevin provided costumes and props and took photos at events around the city. The great thing about Mugshot Lounge was that it brought people together, forced them to let go of their inhibitions and added an element of fun to every event – including King’s Homecoming 2010!

Kevin has been involved with groups such as FUSE, Emerging Leaders and Ignite London. He recently won a grant from (I kid you not), the Awesome Foundation, which allowed him to develop his awesome idea for a Block Party in a Box. Thanks to Kevin, you can now throw a block party for your neighbourhood with no pre- planning necessary – it’s all in the box.

The common denominator in all of the examples I just listed, and the thing that makes Kevin an incredible person and a credit to this institution. It’s his limitless passion for bringing people together and building communities. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, Kevin is an activist for strong communities and a better London. I am proud to call him a fellow alumnus, and even more proud to call him my friend.

Please welcome Kevin Van Lierop.