

I grew up in Prince George. I remember as a kid my family and I moved to a few different neighbourhoods throughout my childhood. I didn't really start paying attention to my surroundings until I was living on my own. The first area I remember well was the Millar Addition. This was in 2006 and I loved it there. I felt safe in my area, and I felt proud of where I was living. I also felt a sense of community in the area and that others were proud to be there as well.

The area was tranquil with an extra bonus of being right near the park. The houses were unique and the streets closest to the park have beautiful trees framing the road. These look stunning in the spring and fall. When I would dream of owning a home, my first choice was on Patricia Blvd. On one side you have houses and on the other you have grass with a walkway and benches. It is right in the city, but you almost feel like you have your own little walking area. Throughout a lot of concrete and city life, you have this stretch of grass and a calm area that looks over the city.

In 2009 I moved from Prince George and did some traveling, I spent time in Alberta before moving to Australia and England for a few years. I had a daughter while I was away and started to think about where it was, I wanted to raise her and set up our roots. I had a few different options at the time, but I couldn't help but think of my time growing up in Prince George. I wanted to give that experience to my daughter. We moved back in 2017, coincidentally, we moved to the same street that I had previously lived in the Millar Addition. The very street and area that I thought of when I decided that Prince George was where we should be for the long term.

I am incredibly sad when I talk about the Millar Addition now. It is a place people avoid. It is a place that the rest of the city tries their best to keep away from. Now, instead of a sense of community and neighbourhood, it is security cameras and constantly keeping a lookout. It is constant fires and smoke from things burning in the encampment. It is never knowing when the next fire is going to go too far and end up taking a house from the Millar Addition with it. It is our things being stolen and no one doing anything about it. It is open drug use and paraphernalia across from an elementary school.

When is enough enough? When someone gets seriously injured? When a house or multiple houses go up in flames because of one of the many out of control fires? When long time residents of the area get serious illnesses down the line due to the horrible air quality, they are subject to constantly? My daughter and I have Asthma and the smoke that comes from the encampment is unbearable at times.

The encampment is not the answer. Putting the homeless and drug addicted away and out of sight is not an answer. It is putting everyone in danger. This city needs to do better.

-Millar Addition Resident