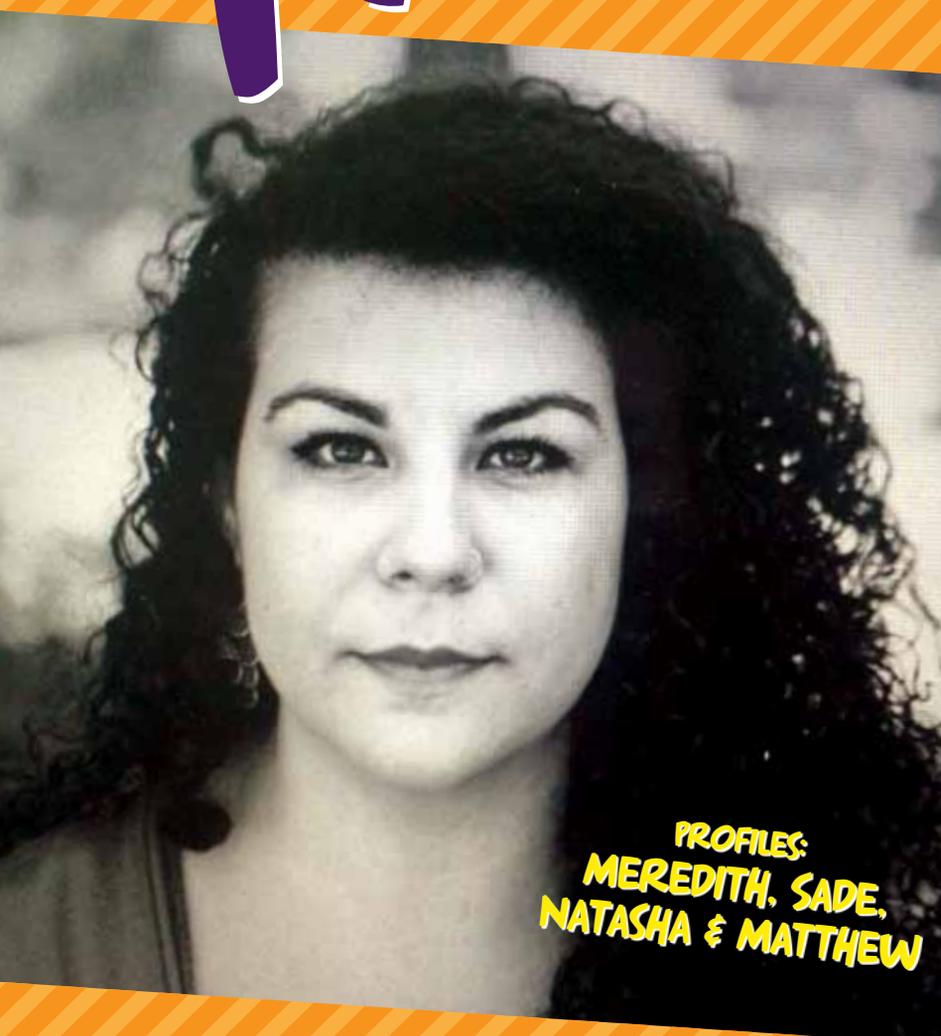


POWER PAGES

A MAGAZINE FOR
YOUTH IN & FROM CARE
AND THEIR ALLIES



FEDERATION
OF BC YOUTH
IN CARE
NETWORKS



PROFILES:
MEREDITH, SADE,
NATASHA & MATTHEW

FED HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
MEET YOUR NEW REP
HOLIDAY DINNER GRANTS
TUITION WAIVERS
STAFFING TRANSITIONS



MORE OF
YOUR AMAZING
POEMS, STORIES,
REPORTS,
ARTWORK &
PHOTOGRAPHY!

IT'S
FREE
SO TAKE
ONE!
SPRING 2017 • #48



FBCYICN is a youth-driven, provincial, non-profit with charity status dedicated to improving the lives of young people in and from care in BC between the ages of 14 and 24!

Phone: 604.527.7762 | Fax: 604.527.7764 | Toll-free: 1.800.565.8055

★ ★ 500 - 625 Agnes Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 5Y4 ★ ★

info@fbcyicn.ca

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FEDERATION OF BC YOUTH IN CARE NETWORKS



FBCYICN



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ALUMNI

FBCYICN.CA

BE A POWER PAGES CONTRIBUTOR!

WHAT'S POWER PAGES?

In each edition of *Power Pages*, you will find information and updates about FBCYICN projects and programs, partner-agency updates, important information about opportunities, resources and tips relevant to young people in and from care and, most importantly, writing, art, and photography by BC youth in and from care!

Power Pages is distributed to more than 5,000 young people, service providers and caregivers around the province and to other networks across Canada. You can find all editions of *Power Pages* at: fbcyicn.ca/programs/power-pages

HOW DO I SUBMIT STUFF?

To make sure *Power Pages* keeps representing the diverse interests and voices of young people in and from care, we need to hear from YOU!

If you are a youth in or from care between the ages of 14 and 24, you will receive an honorarium (\$\$) for each submission printed in *Power Pages* (up to a maximum of \$50/issue), so please include your name, phone number and email address with EVERY submission and submit often! You can submit any time and we publish two editions per year.

For more info about *Power Pages* submissions and deadlines — and to submit your stuff by fax, mail, email or in person — get in touch with us: Toll-Free: **1.800.565.8055** | Fax: **604-527-7764** | Website: fbcyicn.ca | Email: powerpages@fbcyicn.ca

FBCYICN EDITORIAL POLICY:

FBCYICN welcomes all submissions — including agency updates, articles, reports, stories, poems, lifestyle pieces, art and photography — relevant to youth in and from care in BC.

- Youth can request that their submissions not be edited for spelling, grammar and clarity. We feel it is important to print what young people have to say without censorship.
- Adult submissions are subject to edits, which we share with the contributor before printing. We do not print submissions from adults or youth not from care unless they are relevant to young people in care and youth friendly.
- Printing contributors' names:
 - Under 19: unless they request to appear anonymous or indicate a pen name, first name and last initial are printed with each submission;
 - 19–24: unless they request to appear anonymous or indicate a pen name, first name and last initial are printed with each submission; if their submission reveals no overly personal information, they can request to print their last name with their submission (e.g. An award announcement, a recipe, an advocacy article) however, this remains at the editor's discretion;
 - Alumni of the FBCYICN: unless they request to appear anonymous or indicate a pen name, both first and last name are printed with each submission unless otherwise appropriate; and
 - Community partners and allies over 19: first and last name will be used unless otherwise appropriate
- When we receive more submissions than we are able to fit in one issue, we prioritize submissions from BC youth in and from care.
- We will print submissions from every contributing youth in or from care unless their content does not fit with our Code of Conduct (see fbcyicn.ca for more details). For example, conflicts with code of conduct may arise with critical content where individuals are named or content that could make readers feel unsafe.
- When youth submit more than one submission, we may not have room to print them all. Have no fear! We keep remaining submissions for future *Power Pages*.

NOTE: Articles printed in *Power Pages* do not necessarily reflect the opinions or values of FBCYICN.

AGEDOUT.com

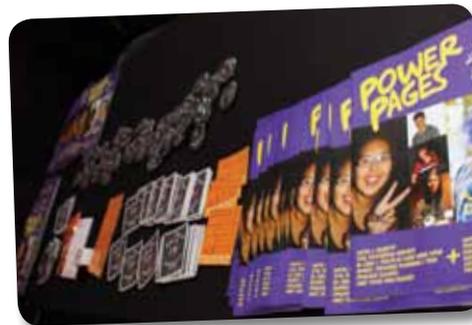
Get ready for life on your own
Take care of yourself
Learn useful life skills

Build life skills in all these areas:

Education, Health & Wellness, Housing, ID Needs, Money & Income, Personal Life

AgedOut.com provides life skills information to help you in your journey through adulthood. This website is based on information that former youth in care identified as important such as: education, housing, health, money and income, personal life, and ID needs. Find the answers to your life skills questions at **AgedOut.com**! And for learning valuable information we will reward you with lots of perks. Check out **AgedOut.com** for more information!

Don't forget to follow us:
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twitter.com/Aged_Out
youtube.com/agedoutcomBC



ON THE COVER:
SEE YOUTH PROFILES
ON PAGES 28, 30, 32 & 34

- 2 FBCYICN Updates
- 3 Update from Your Chair
- 4 Upcoming SCMs
- 5 Education Bursaries
Education Achievement
- 6 Volunteering at the FBCYICN
- 7 Become a Member
Youth Photovoice Project
- 8 The Fed Holiday Dinner Grants
- 12 Holiday Open House & 25th Anniversary
- 14 Staffing Transitions
- 18 Youth Advisory Council
- 19 Fed Travels
Locals Update
- 20 Message from the PGT!
Visit From Japan
Youth Leaders Share Knowledge
- 21 2016 YouthSpeak Research Report
New Societies Act & The AGM
- 22 SCM #71 Photos
- 24 Update from the Outgoing Rep
Update from the Acting Rep
- 25 Transitions Suites
- 26 Connecting Safely
- 28 Profile: Meredith G
- 30 Profile: Sade S
- 32 Profile: Natasha S
- 33 The Youth in Care that I Know
Part Fire, Part Dreams
- 34 Profile: Matthew S
- 35 Holiday Art Contest
- 37 True Romance
- 39 Untitled
Untitled
Made of Decolonial Love
Fear
- 40 Halloween Party
- 41 Mirror Mirror
- 42 Lest We Never Forget
- 43 Tuition Waivers: Game Changers
- 44 Skillz4Life: Power Snack
Ignite Your Spirit
- 45 Announcement Board

POWER PAGES

EDITION #48: SPRING 2017
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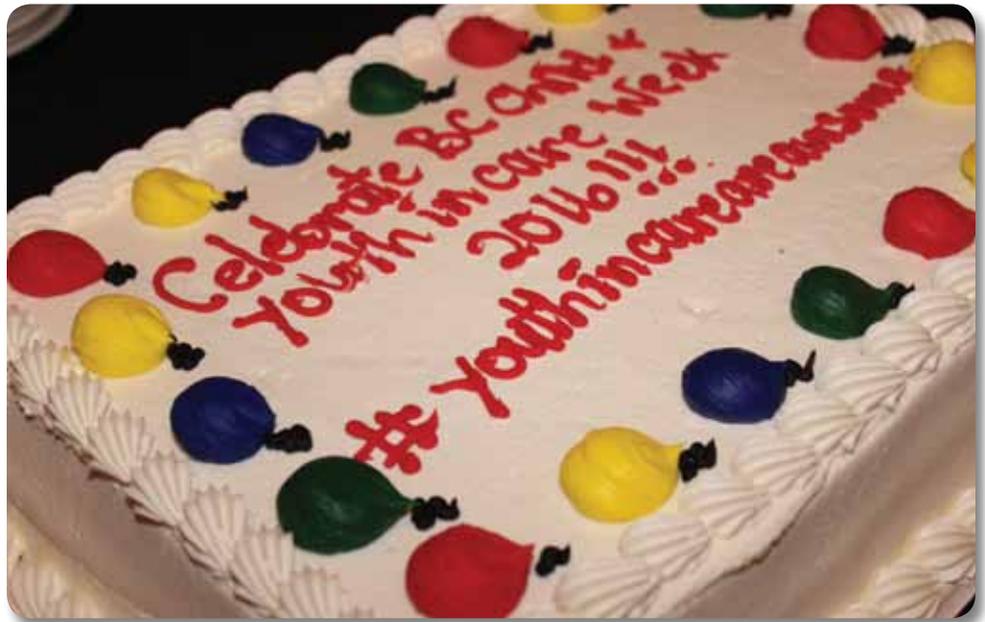
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fbcyicn.ca

Hey Fed Family!

So much has happened since our last edition of *Power Pages* and we want to make sure you're all caught up with the cool stuff that's been keeping us busy at the Fed. We had a blast at SCM #71, celebrated the holidays, gave out scholarships, and that's only a small portion of the amazing work we've been doing with our members, alumni, allies and community partners. We hope you enjoy reading this edition of *Power Pages* as much as we enjoyed making it!



PERMANENCY FORUM

This past September Fed members and staff attended the 2016 annual Permanency Forum. The forum was hosted by the Ministry of Children and Family Development's Youth Advisory Council and the theme was 'strengthening roots and growing life-long connections.' Over the course of the forum we participated in numerous workshops and discussions. We absorbed truth and teachings from young people, alumni of care, Elders and various guest speakers such as the honourable Stephanie Cadieux. The Fed also had the opportunity to facilitate a workshop on the top five issues identified by young people across the province as outlined in our YouthSpeak 2016 Report, and a workshop on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

OUTREACH GROUP (OGs)

Our team of OGs have been busy creating an interactive workshop that explains what we do at the Fed and explores the top 5 issues impacting youth in care as outlined in our YouthSpeak 2016 Report. The OGs are responsible for delivering presentations to a variety of community groups to educate and inform them of the work the Fed does, how they can get involved, and how to become an ally. Some of our recent presentations have been for a foster parent appreciation event, the YWCA's Strive Program, a group of professionals from Japan, and a group from Australia who came to visit the Fed.

If you are a youth in or from care interested in joining our team, or you would like to book a workshop, please contact Chris Buchner at chris.buchner@fbcyicn.ca

NEW WEBSITE

The Fed website's last major overhaul was in the winter of 2009! That's over seven years ago, so we thought it was well overdue for an update. We need our website to be a useful resource for young people, community partners, allies, and anyone looking to learn more about what we do — so in the spring of 2016 we started the process of revamping www.fbcyicn.ca.

As with any major project, an important step was selecting the team to take it on. From the start we were lucky to have an outstanding group of young people, alumni, board members and staff to provide input on what would make the new site the best it could be. Trying to make sure everyone had the opportunity to share their perspectives definitely took a lot of time, but it was worth it to make sure we really understood the needs of those using the website. We selected Affinity Bridge, a local Vancouver web design firm, to help create our new look.

We hope that the new design makes it easy for young people to access the resources that they need and that it will make getting involved that much simpler! A part of making participation easier is our new database which works behind

the scenes to gather information from the online forms on the website. This is a secure, efficient system that saves everyone time — a win win. We are so excited for the upcoming official launch of our new website, and we can't wait to hear what you think!

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Back in October, Program Manager Brittaney toured the province to visit with some of the Fed's existing Locals and to meet with new young people, adult allies and organizations that are excited about starting a Local Youth in Care Network in their community. She met with Locals in Kamloops, Kelowna and Victoria, and she visited with new communities for kick-off events in Merritt, 100 Mile House, Williams Lake, Quesnel and Nanaimo. In total we have five lively locals already up and running, and hope to bring that number up to seven before spring!

If you're interested in finding out more about Locals in your community or learning how to start a Local, contact: brittaney.andreychuk@fbcyicn.ca. For more information about locals and a full update on Local Development, see page 19!

COMMUNICATIONS

Apart from our website, we are also working on updating our Communications Plan and policies which help to guide how we represent our organization to the world. Those present at this year's winter Youth

MESSAGE FROM YOUR



Retreat (SCM) and AGM will help to shape these changes, but we will also be looking to get others involved whenever we can, so stay tuned!

2017 BC CHILD AND YOUTH IN CARE WEEK

Stay tuned for the dates for this year's 7th annual BC Child and Youth in Care Week (BCCYICW)! This is a special week that youth in and from care advocated for and was first proclaimed by the Province of British Columbia in 2011. BCCYICW was created to help communities across the province stand in support of the incredible, diverse young people in and from government care. The Fed will be working as part of a team with our members, community partners and MCFD to prepare a week full of meaningful events to celebrate the achievements of youth in and from care and raise awareness about issues that matter to them!

FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES SOCIETY (FCSSS) CONFERENCE

In October 2016 the Federation of Community Social Services Society held a conference with a focus on reconciliation. The keynote speaker for this conference was Chief Dr. Robert Joseph from Reconciliation Canada. Staff and youth members from Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland were invited to participate and Chris and Ivan, two staff from the Fed, co-facilitated a workshop with the 4Rs. This workshop focused on how to meaningfully engage young people in the reconciliation work that different BC community organizations are hoping to accomplish. The speakers and workshops were impactful and informative, and the conference as a whole was a powerful experience.

WE ♥ OUR VOLUNTEERS

It's been a while since our last *Power Pages*, and our volunteers have been extremely busy doing incredible things as always. At our last SCM #71 members hosted in depth discussions about our top 5 YouthSpeak report priorities, met with MCFD decision makers, and provided

Dear Fed Members,

We have had an action-packed summer, fall and early winter!

In September, Jules and I took a fundraising trip to Toronto where we met with the Ontario Advocate for Children and Youth and a variety of potential national funding organizations. We've also had meetings with the Deputy Minister from the Ministry of Children and Family Development and many others within the Ministry to make sure your voices are heard at a provincial and national level. Jules and the Fed team have been busy submitting funding applications, and we are so excited about the opportunities as the Fed moves forward as a charitable organization.

Our new website is nearly complete and it is our hope that it will make it easier for you to connect to the Fed and its services. We also hope it helps raise public awareness about the great contributions you and the Fed are making for youth in and from care. Many thanks to the youth and staff who contributed their time and great ideas to its development.

The Finance, Human Resources and Governance, and Mission Vision and

Values board committees are underway with representation from youth, alumni, staff and the board. The committees meet regularly to support decision-making around budgets, policies and procedures, and overall direction. Thanks to all the Fed members who are speaking out for youth on the committees.

As you know, there have been a few changes within the Fed staff and board teams this year. At a board level, we are so pleased that former board member Shaelyn Bayduza has accepted a staff position with the Fed. We have missed her on the board but wish her continued success in her new position. Board member Jeff Schiffer has also stepped down this year due to family and work commitments.

Excellent new candidates have been nominated through the nomination process that has been underway since the fall. We look forward to welcoming our new board members to the Fed team!

It was great to catch up with many of you at the Christmas Party. On behalf of the whole board, I wish you a fabulous start to 2017!

Cheers!

Debbie
Board Chair

Fed staff with insightful feedback on our new direction as a registered charity. Our members also participated in the MCFD guardianship forum, presented at multiple conferences, events, and represented the Fed with pride and passion everywhere they went.

Our Dream Fund selection committee awarded inspiring young people with bursaries to help with their personal and educational goals. Our Holiday Dinner Grant selection committee provided funding for organizations and groups to host much needed holiday dinners for youth in and from care and allies. To end the year we hosted a fabulous holiday

open house on December 13th with members, allies, families, and staff to celebrate another great year of the Fed and its volunteers. There are many more interesting opportunities coming up; stay updated via Facebook and our website!

That's about it for now, but stay in touch with us through our website, Facebook and E-News and we will make sure you're up to date with everything we're doing year-round. We hope you have fun flipping through the rest of this edition!

Love and hugs,
The Fed Staff

SCM #71 SHENANIGANS!



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE ALREADY!

Learn more about how you can get involved in our diverse programs and services for youth in and from care across BC!



FBCYICN.CA

★ ★ AND FOLLOW US ★ ★

f FEDERATION OF BC YOUTH IN CARE NETWORKS

YouTube THEFBCYICN

FBCYICN

#YOUTHINCAREAREAWESOME
#STANDWITHYOUTHINCARE
#JOINTHEVILLAGE

Youth retreats (aka Steering Committee Meetings or SCMs) are youth-led weekend retreats for youth in and from care from all across BC who participate in and lead workshops, activities, consultations and events. They're an opportunity to meet other youth in and from care, share common experiences and have fun! Attending a Youth Retreat can be very rewarding. There are always lots of new youth attending and tons of staff and allies there to support a safe and inclusive weekend.

UPCOMING YOUTH RETREATS (SCMs)

**SCM #73
JUNE 2-4
EVANS LAKE CAMP
SQUAMISH, BC**

To register or if you have any questions or concerns about upcoming Youth Retreats, please contact Chris Buchner at chris.buchner@fbcyicn.ca or 1.800.565.8055

FBCYICN EDUCATION BURSARIES FOR YOUTH FROM CARE



DREAM FUND BURSARY!!!

WHAT'S THE DREAM FUND?

If you have any questions about school, like how to get into post-secondary school, available funding, or just figuring out what you want to do, you can call our office and speak to any of the staff and they can support you to pursue your education.

One way that we support young people with their education and skill building is our Dream Fund. The Dream Fund is an umbrella term that includes two distinct bursaries. The **Education Achievement Fund** bursary awards recipients up to \$5,000 for post-secondary education. The second bursary, **Reach for Success**, provides youth up to \$1,500 for extra-curricular or skill building activities. We offer these bursaries three times a year—check out our website for deadlines and to apply: fbcyicn.ca/programs/education

RECENT RECIPIENTS

We distributed another round of Dream Fund bursaries thanks to the youth, alumni and staff selection committee! Under the Dream Fund umbrella we awarded \$5,000 to three awesome applicants pursuing post-secondary education through the Education Achievement Fund and another \$1,500 to three wonderful young people through our Reach for Success bursary to help them with skill building and extra-curricular activities.

JULY 2016

REACH FOR SUCCESS:

Noah R — \$500 for music therapy
Naomi K — \$500 for driving lessons
Alexandra M — \$500 for competitive cheerleading camp

EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT:

Robyn R — \$1,250 for Camosun College
Cecily K — \$1,250 for Langara College
David B — \$1,000 for Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
Savannah B — \$1,000 for the University of Calgary
Anita S — \$500 for BCIT

OCTOBER 2016

REACH FOR SUCCESS:

Leda W — \$500 for driving lessons
Wesley B — \$500 for driving lessons
Shalom A — \$500 for a laptop

EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT:

Jaclyn Alyssa K — \$500 for Selkirk College
Rebecca L — \$1,525 for Thompson rivers University
Wyndee A — \$1,000 for BCIT
Anita B — \$475 for College of the Rockies
Tia Marie A — \$1,000 for Blanche MacDonald
Jessica JD — \$500 for John Casablanca Institute

LACY MORIN-DESJARLAIS FUND:

Valeen J — \$1,500 for Vancouver Island University

DONATE TO THE DREAM FUND AND SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE PURSUING THEIR DREAMS!



With each selection process we receive many, many more applications than we have money for. The money that sustains these funds and gives young people opportunities to pursue their dreams comes from community donors. Large or small, each contribution helps address the barriers young people in and from care face in pursuing their goals. For more information about how you can make a young person's dream a reality, check out our website: fbcyicn.ca or check us out on Canada Helps: canadahelps.org/en/charities/federation-of-bc-youth-in-care-networks/ [#ittakesavillage](https://twitter.com/ittakesavillage) [#jointhevillage](https://twitter.com/jointhevillage)

EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT

Dear Dream Fund,

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to complete my masters in clinical social work. As a former youth in care, I am grateful for your thoughtful contributions to my learning and to the future of social work practice. I could not have done this without your support.

Thank you!
Savannah

To The Dream Fund Team,

Thank you so much for choosing me as the winner of the Dream Fund Scholarship for Fall 2016. I cannot express how honoured I am to receive this award. My educational goals and dreams for September would not be possible without your help. I have been working two jobs for the past year and a half in hopes of making enough money to pay for my tuition and books. With the cost of living in Victoria, I was very worried that I would not make my goal in time for September. With your help, I am so elated to say I will be able to pursue the career of my dreams. I hope to become a lawyer, and affiliate myself professionally with the Ministry of Child and Family Development in the future. I hope to encourage other youth in care to pursue their goals and dreams. My difficult past does not define me, or determine my future. This is just the beginning, so thank you so very much for helping me get one step closer to achieving my dreams.

Sincerely,
Robyn

OUR NEXT DEADLINE IS
MARCH 10, 2017 AT 4:30PM.
DON'T FORGET TO GET
YOUR APPLICATIONS IN.

VOLUNTEERING AT FBCYICN! GIVING BACK & GETTING BACK!

INTERESTED IN GET BY GIVING BACK, YOU

YOU CAN DISCOVER NEW INTER
FRIENDS AND GUIDE THE FED AS WE

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has” — Margaret Mead

At FBCYICN, our volunteers are the heart of our organization—driving the work that we do and making it possible through their dedication, perseverance, and hard work. We want to recognize all of our volunteers since the last edition of *Power Pages* for their time, energy, and acts of kindness—THANK YOU for being so generous and for sharing your ideas and passions.



Andy A	Cammy L	Michelle C
Ashley J	Eddy B	Natasha S
Austin H	Jaye S	Rachel M
Bliss G	Joshua W	Ruby B
Caz D	Kayla J	Sara C
Caden L	Kami S	Sarah K
Chris T	Matthew S	Wheeshay M

ALUMNI MEMBER VOLUNTEERS (25+)



Jess Boon
Sara Dawkins

Raven Wright
KT Matheson



ADULT ALLY VOLUNTEERS (19+)

Alex West	Gay Smith	Kristina Splane
Austyn Bracket	Jeff Schiffer	Leigh Macleod
Chelsea Turpin	Jeff Watts	Lisa Mickleborough
Dan Malone	Jessy Neal	Marna Forsyth
Danielle Venne	Kari Beppele	Pam Kranz
Debbie Cox	Katelyn Crabtree	Stephen Calin
Gary Tennant	Kate Ritchie	Violet-Rose Pharoah

As part of our youth-driven approach, young people in and from care help lead many aspects of our work, including through volunteer roles! We offer volunteer opportunities for youth in and from care 14 and older who live in BC. Through our volunteer program, we match you with opportunities based on your interests and skills to help ensure your volunteer experience is as fun and meaningful as possible.

As a youth volunteer, you will receive training and a \$100 honorarium for every 20 hours of volunteer time. Become a Fed Volunteer today by filling out a volunteer registration form online and we’ll contact you shortly with available volunteer opportunities that might interest you!

HOW CAN I HELP OUT?

The Fed’s work could not be done without people volunteering their time for the roles we have listed below. Each volunteer role is just as valuable as any other and your support is greatly appreciated! Some of the volunteer roles happen around specific events and are not always available. We will keep all interested volunteers posted on upcoming volunteer opportunities!

👉 DISTRIBUTION ASSISTANTS

A lot goes into keeping our members connected. If you’re curious about the process and want to get involved, become a Distribution Assistant and help package, label, stamp, and mail issues of *Power Pages*, and new member Welcome Packages. It’s pretty neat!

👉 FED GREETERS

Let’s see your biggest smile! Do you enjoy or would you like to become more comfortable talking to guests and event participants? Want to test your Fed knowledge by answering random questions? Maybe being a Fed Greeter is the role for you!

👉 OFFICE ASSISTANTS

Do you enjoy connecting with folks in person and on the phone? Do you have an interest in administrative duties such as data entry, typing up meeting minutes, and creating posters and agendas? This opportunity is a great way to learn more about the daily operations of the Fed.

INTERESTED? QUESTIONS?

Contact: **Diego Cardona**, Youth Participation Coordinator
Email: diego.cardona@fbcyicn.ca
Phone: 604-527-7762 Ext 109 | Toll Free: 1-800-565-8055
Facebook: [Diego Cardona Fbcyicn](#)

BECOME A MEMBER!

BEING INVOLVED? ARE GETTING BACK!

TESTS. BUILD ON SKILLS. MAKE NEW
MOVIE. MOVE FORWARD IN OUR WORK!

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Do you enjoy capturing memorable moments with a photo? Would you like to learn basics about framing subjects and going beyond the auto setting? This might be the perfect option for you!

PROGRAM & EVENT ASSISTANTS

Are you someone that appreciates all the details that help make an event really special? Do you want to help shop for supplies needed at events or coordinate fun activities for young people and their kids? This role is vital in helping our events and programs run smoothly!

SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Do you like to ask questions and learn about processes? Do you ever wonder how big decisions are made at the Fed? Selection Committee Members consider and compare different applicants for awards, bursaries, opportunities and at times, even staff positions.

YOUTH FACILITATORS

Do you enjoy speaking in front of people and engaging them in different ways? Have you ever considered leading an icebreaker or delivering a workshop at an SCM? As a youth facilitator, you'll receive lots of experience speaking in public and managing group dynamics.

YOUTH MCs

Are you interested in building on your skills and experience speaking in front of others? Do you want to help create a welcoming and fun environment while introducing speakers and keeping people focused and on task at events? Help host our events by being a youth MC!

YOUTH TEAMS

Do you consider yourself a team player and love working with others to complete a specific and common goal? Youth team members make up our SCM Extreme Team and the OGS! Stay tuned for upcoming opportunities to work with other youth and staff!

**VOLUNTEER WITH THE FED TODAY
BY GIVING BACK
YOU ARE GETTING BACK!**

Membership is open to any young person in and from government care in BC between the ages of 14 and 24. "In care" for us means: foster homes, group homes, residential mental health and addiction facilities, custody centres, youth agreements, independent living and extended family placements, whether through the Ministry of Children and Family Development or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency. We strive to provide a variety of meaningful opportunities for young people to become involved at all levels of FBCYICN. There are no membership fees and a young person can renew their membership every two years and cancel their membership at any time.

TOP 5 REASONS TO BECOME A MEMBER:

1. By **uniting** our voices, we are part of a movement. By coming together and sharing your needs, issues and ideas, we're able to influence the decisions affecting youth in and from care.
2. Because we are youth-driven, you have an **influence** on our decision making. Being part of a youth-driven organization means your voice and opinion matter. We want — and ask for — your feedback and input.
3. You are **celebrated** as part of our family. We honour our members and celebrate their accomplishments and milestones.
4. You get **first dibs** on cool opportunities. You are given priority when it comes to representing FBCYICN, travelling to conferences and participating in our programs.
5. Membership is **free!** If you live in the Lower Mainland and/or are able to visit our office in New Westminster, we give you a personalized tour of the office on your first visit. Regardless of where you live, you get a Welcome Kit and an orientation to FBCYICN.

Join the FBCYICN today by filling out a membership form found on our website:

fbcyicn.ca/programs/membership/

SOCIETY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF BC RECRUITING FOR YOUTH PHOTOVOICE PROJECT!

The Society for Children and Youth of BC (SCY) is currently recruiting passionate, socially engaged youth in care, between the ages of 15 and 19, for a fun and interactive Photovoice project.

Participants will explore their rights, learn photography from a professional, hear from inspiring community leaders, and engage in social media campaigning to spotlight issues affecting youth in care. The workshop will conclude with an exhibition of participant photos at a gala event to help participants further their

advocacy goals. But that's not all!

Upon completion, participants will receive a FREE digital camera, small honorarium, and a letter of reference from SCY.

This multi-series workshop starts in April 2016, with locations in Vancouver and New West.

For more information, or to let us know that you're interested, send an email to: hr@scyofbc.org

**Cost of transportation will be covered by SCY*



THE FED HOLIDAY DINNER GRANTS

Fed Holiday Dinner Grants give groups of young people and their allies across BC the opportunity to celebrate the season together. We know that the holidays can be a challenging time for many youth in and from care and that events like these can go a long way towards helping young people to feel the love and support from their community. We also know that if we supply the funds, your communities can make the fun happen!

This year we had more applicants and recipients than ever before, and we are thrilled to announce that 14 groups received funding for December 2016! Here's what the organizations had to say about their dinners:

AXIS FAMILY RESOURCES QUESNEL

On December 8th, we had 15 current and former youth in care attend the Christmas Dinner at Axis Family Resources in Quesnel. Not only were there youth from care attending, we met their spouses and their friends! Although many youth knew each other personally, they were introduced to many new faces. Laughter, good conversation, and fun were the themes throughout the evening. The youth participated in an ice breaker game along with board games. After munching on snacks, the youth ate a catered turkey dinner (with all the fixings!) and dessert. With the holiday grant provided by the Fed, we were able to supply gifts for all of the youth who attended as well as door



prizes. Those who attended said they had a great time! As they ate dinner, they were presented with videos from the Fed and a presentation from Jessy Neal which sparked interest from the youth. We are hopeful that this event encouraged youth in or from care to create a Quesnel Local of the Fed! This holiday event exceeded our expectations and we are so pleased at how this event brought people together! Without the holiday grant, this event would not have been as successful. We are so grateful.

BURNABY YOUTH HUB LOWER MAINLAND PURPOSE SOCIETY

On December 15th, the Burnaby Youth Hub was warm and bright with the glow of lights and the sound of laughter at our first Hub Community Holiday Dinner. Organized



by the Hub Youth Advisory Council (YAC), and with the generous financial support of the FBCYICN, our Hub Community Holiday Dinner brought together youth and adult allies to play games, eat great food, and





make lasting connections.

The Hub YAC spent tireless hours organizing every detail of the dinner – from invitations and prizes, to menu and decorations. They created a full evening of activities, like ‘Pin the Nose on the Reindeer’ and holiday charades, and developed a full menu of savoury and sweet treats, including vegan, gluten-free, and halal meals. They flexed their best Pinterest muscles to create beautiful, handmade decorations, and transformed the Hub Youth Centre into a winter wonderland. The evening was a huge success, and guests stayed late into the evening – decorating gingerbread houses, eating second (and third!) helpings, and laughing with new friends. We are so grateful for the support of the FBCYICN who made this event possible, and we look forward to many holiday dinners in the future!

FOSTER NATION "MISFIT CHRISTMAS"

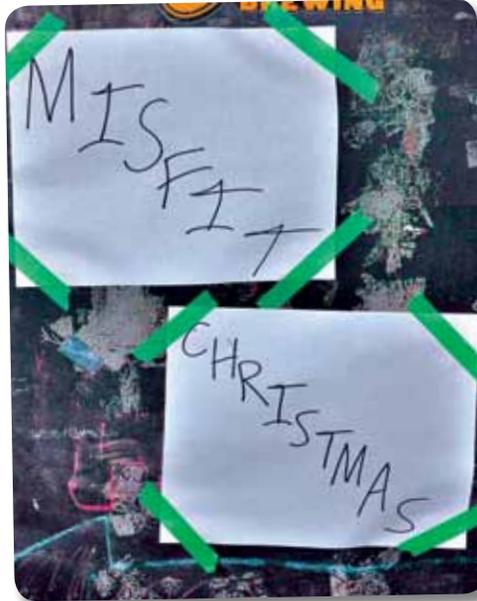
Misfit Christmas took place on the 24th of December and was a huge success! 40 people came out and enjoyed spending time together for the holidays. There is nothing like breaking bread with others who can relate to your struggle and help you to feel like you are not the only one fighting the good fight.

For many people in and from care the holidays are a giant battle of emotions. Through Misfit Christmas we were able to turn our battlefields into safe places of connection and community. We ate together, told stories, recited poetry/raps, and a lot of good people got to connect with each other and further their network of friends and support.

At the end of the night we had extra food so many of us headed to Main and Hastings where we shared the leftovers with our fellow strugglers in the neighbourhood. I remember looking around at everyone downtown and feeling a great sense of joy; I would rather be there, sharing with

the less fortunate on Christmas Eve, than anywhere else in the world. It was a beautiful feeling and one that I got to share with my fellow foster fam!

“Misfit Christmas” was an idea that stemmed from a bigger movement called “Foster Nation”. It is the idea that we don’t need to wait or ask for permission to be happy and to build our own community. We can and will start doing that now. We



will help each other out whenever we can. There is no better medicine than to help out, give gifts, and connect with those we care about, and we don’t have to wait till next Christmas to start again. Let’s build the foster fam! Long live all foster kids and foster people. Foster Nation Forever! <3

CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND CARE AT VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

The Fostering Success Project, run out of the Centre for Community Outreach and Care, was honoured to receive the Holiday Dinner Grant from the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks. Our project has been working in partnership with the

Tuition Waiver program at Vancouver Island University to support the students accessing the program to ensure they feel valued and supported by campus networks and services.

We had intended a holiday dinner but realized that students were busy with the end of the semester; instead we had the pleasure of providing 17 of them with personalized care packages to encourage our students to take part in healthy self-care practices over the winter break, while suited up in some school swag. During this process we were able to learn more about and recognize the needs of students accessing the Tuition Waivers program, furthering communication with our students about services and networks of support. We were able to include campus and community members, or as we referred to them, “our little elves”, in the process of putting together packages for students, and educating them about our project, organizations like the Fed, and some of the realities of being a student while also an alumni of care. On behalf of the project, Outreach Centre, and our students we extend many thanks and hugs for allowing us to engage in a learning experience, strengthen our community through purposeful storytelling, and show our students how much we value them, as we want them to see the university as a vessel of support to reach their aspirations. Thank you Fed!

KAMLOOPS YOUTH IN CARE NETWORK

We had our Kamloops Local Youth In Care Network event on Thursday, December 15th. Our youth leaders met over the course of several weeks to make a budget, plan the event, and pick out all the decorations and items for the stockings. Our youth then came out early to help decorate for the event and prepare food. We had 15 youth come out to enjoy the event and it was fun to see a combination of our regular attendees and some new faces as well as youth joining us from the youth shelter which we share the building with. We also had foster parents and two other supports stay and participate in the event along with our Support to Family Care Network team.

Once youth had finished trickling in one of our local leaders gave a quick welcome to the group and explained that we were a safe and confidential space for all youth.



We also explained what the leadership team looked like and welcomed anyone to come talk to us if they would like to join in the New Year. We are excited to have another youth step forward to join the team and our current youth leaders are eager to continue on with planning events and have identified additional skills they would like to learn.

We all enjoyed a delicious Christmas dinner including two deep fried turkeys made by one of our foster parents (SO GOOD!) and mountains of potatoes and Hooshum, a beverage prepared by our DAA agency in Kamloops. There were plenty of leftovers for youth to take home for lunch the next day. Youth watched Christmas films, chatted, created sock snowmen, and were given their own stocking full of goodies to take home at the end of the evening. The youth leadership team was also able to ensure the youth who may be spending Christmas at our youth shelter had a stocking to open on Christmas morning.

INTERIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES MERRITT LOCAL

Merritt held a Christmas party for youth in care in their area on December 21st. With the help of ICS staff in Merritt we were able to see four youth come out and have a great time! The staff in Merritt decorated the room festively and had a delicious spread of food waiting for the youth. As the

youth arrived we played a fun ice breaker game and got to know one another a bit before diving into the appetizers. After, we played some lively games which included a snowball fight (with marshmallows) and trying to pick up candy canes without any hands! We then went on to play a gift exchange game before wrapping up the event. Youth left with their own personal stocking and the treats/prizes they had accumulated throughout the evening.

INTERIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES WILLIAMS LAKE LOCAL & 100 MILE HOUSE LOCAL

Thank you to the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks! The two events in 100 Mile House and Williams Lake would not be put on without your support and initiative. The Youth in Care Networks are just being formed in both areas and we are looking forward to building connections and relationships with the youth in care. Interior Community Services – Support

to Family Care invited local youth in care, along with MCFD staff. We had a great time in 100 Mile House at the local A&W restaurant and we had lots of fun and laughter building snow globes. Every youth participant received a mug filled with goodies (including an A&W gift card!) This is just the beginning of a great group! In Williams Lake we worked with the Cariboo Chilcotin Child Development Centre to put on an after-school taco fest. Mugs filled with goodies were given out to youth and it was the first step in forming a Local. Thanks again to the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks!

KELOWNA YOUTH IN CARE NETWORK THE BRIDGE YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Our event went exceedingly well! Many people came together from the Youth Transitions team at The Bridge to make our party a success! There were people who baked and cooked and sewed and wrapped and decorated, all in anticipation of welcoming our youth for a very special evening! The youth had a ton of fun! Many of them enjoyed sitting together and coloring winter and Christmas scenes on bookmarks, cards and pictures. Others spent time meticulously designing and gluing beautiful decorations onto stockings that would later be filled for them to



take home for the holidays. We played a number of Minute to Win It games that proved to be a bit of a challenge and lots of fun. And finally we finished the evening with a beautiful meal, lovingly prepared! Each young person expressed their appreciation and enjoyment of the event and was glad to learn more about the Youth In Care Network.

MCCREARY CENTRE SOCIETY YOUTH RESEARCH ACADEMY

The Youth Research Academy and the McCreary Centre Society hosted their first ever holiday dinner for youth in and from care, thanks to a generous donation from the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks. The holiday celebration was planned by the Youth Research Academy, a group of youth in and from government care who work at McCreary. Youth with care experience who have worked or volunteered with McCreary over the past year were also invited to attend the event, which took place on December 29th. The celebration was a fun chance to share a special meal together at Tacofino, and to do some festive activities at McCreary while watching a holiday movie classic (which group consensus dictated was a Harry Potter marathon). The young people in our community had a fun holiday shared with supportive friends and allies.

MR./MS GAY VANCOUVER ISLAND

Mr./Ms. Gay Vancouver Island was thrilled to host "Dinner and a Showmance" on January 28th at the Intrepid Theatre Club! With support from the Federation of BC



Youth In Care Networks, the Victoria Pride Society, and other community partners, the free event welcomed LGBTQ2+ and ally youth in and from care, ages 14 to 24, for an extraordinary evening! Dinner, catered by Floyd's Diner and Borella Italian Kitchen, was followed by performances from some of Victoria's top drag performers. There were fun games and awesome prizes too!

POWELL RIVER CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

We had a Winter Solstice Dinner on Wednesday, December 21st in our Youth Resource Centre. At the dinner, we talked about the FBCYICN and our goal of becoming a Local and gaining some membership. We also had a gift exchange, and had a box of gifts for those who brought children. We played a team building game, had a cookie decorating station, and listened to Christmas stories. Dinner consisted of roasted chicken in cream sauce and roasted potatoes served with a few varieties of salad. Thank you again for the support in putting on this event in Powell River. Happy Holidays!

PRINCE GEORGE NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

FUBU (For Us By Us) Youth in Care Network hosted a Youth Holiday Dinner on December 16th. The youth were surrounded by friends, family, adult allies, and supports from numerous community agencies. We had an impressive turn-out of 43 youth, 25 family members/adult allies, and 9 staff from the Prince George Native Friendship Centre for a total of 77 people! We had a turkey dinner with all the fixings, watched a skit from "Twas the Night Before Christmas" by the Youth Council, sang Karaoke, and gave away prizes to all the youth who attended. The night was filled with fun and laughter!

A big thank you goes out to the Fed for the continued support of our Youth in Care Network here in Prince George!



RAYCAM COOPERATIVE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Youth Advisory Council for the Youth Matters Forum is a group of former youth in care from East Vancouver. Based out of Raycam, the youth do advocacy work and raise their concerns to decision makers. Three times a year the youth speak at the Youth Matters Forum in East Vancouver about issues and concerns in their community such as child welfare, health, education and community safety. The advisory council requested to have an end of the year holiday party, and the Holiday Dinner Grant from the FBCYICN made that possible! At our holiday dinner party we cooked a 17lb turkey, roasted veggies and ate pumpkin pie. Yum! Afterwards the youth slayed some holiday karaoke songs! From our advisory council to the Fed: Thank you so much for your support!





HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE & 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNCRC



This year we rang in the holidays with a memorable open house event, which also coincided with the 25th Anniversary of Canada's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The office was abuzz with youth, alumni, board members, staff, community partners and adorable little ones! With holiday music in

the background and holiday spirit in the air, we mixed and mingled as we feasted on a delicious spread, played games, made crafts, and enjoyed a visit from Santa.

A huge and heartfelt thank you to our longtime friend and MCFD ally, Karen Berry, for coordinating the donation of stockings overflowing with an array of exciting items

for every child, youth and alumni of care who attended. Also a huge thank you to Agnes Varona, who made an amazing cake again this year! This event was a reminder of some key FBCYICN values of community, compassion and gratitude. From all of us at the Fed, we hope that everyone had a rejuvenating and fun-filled holiday season!





STAFFING TRANSITIONS



SHAELYN BAYDUZA
ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

Hello all!

I am super excited to join the Fed staff team once again!

As some of you may know, I have been a very active member of the Fed since 2013. I have taken on various volunteer roles such as: Extreme Team Member, Hiring Committee, Dream Fund Selection Committee, BCCYICW Committee, helped create promotional videos you can find on the Fed's YouTube channel and I served as a member on the Fed's Board of Directors for five months. I am now the Administrative Coordinator. In my role, I will be responsible for different parts of operations including accounting, payroll, etc., for the Fed.

Professionally, I worked for three years as an Administrative Assistant for a realtor, a Peer Specialist at Aunt Leah's Place where

I assisted young people with housing and in additional support areas, and finally, I was the Youth SCM Coordinator for the Fed in 2014 where I supported a team of volunteers to plan the Youth Retreats. I'm looking forward to new challenges and learning within my new role and of course, being back at the Fed!

It isn't only professional experience I bring to the team, but the experience of being in care, being an Indigenous woman, and having been involved in many different levels of the organization from the first day I walked through the door. I am your friendly neighbourhood nerd and I enjoy my retro gaming, nerdy art projects, and catching Pokémon with my 2 adventurous little boys. I genuinely look forward to connecting with each and every one of you.

STAR MARTIN
YOUTH SCM COORDINATOR

I am so incredibly excited to have the opportunity to be the new Youth Coordinator at the Fed! I have been involved with the Fed since 2013, and it has grown to become a very special safe haven for me. Obtaining this role is a dream come true. I hope to make the members, alumni, and staff, proud to have me on their team, and I am so thrilled to have the opportunity to learn and expand my knowledge on the Fed, and the way everything works and comes together.

I'm very passionate about this organization, but I also have a lot of passion elsewhere. Film and music are the two things that lead my life in every way. I've always looked to music and film as an escape, and decided to pursue music as a career at a young age. I play many instruments.

But at the end of high school, my plan changed last minute, and I decided that I wanted film acting

to be my career path. So I attended a college level film acting program for two years, and graduated in January 2016 with a diploma. While I work at the Fed, I will also be continuing my work on local film sets as both a production assistant, as well as auditioning for roles, which will hopefully result in some incredible opportunities. If you ever wonder about the film industry in any way, I welcome your questions and would love to help you look at options! I hope this is an amazing new chapter for everybody, and I am so excited!





DIEGO CARDONA YOUTH PARTICIPATION COORDINATOR

Hey Everybody! I am overwhelmed with excitement about the opportunity of joining the Fed as your new Youth Participation Coordinator. I am looking forward to meeting many of you, working together, and hopefully creating new or enhancing current volunteer and engagement opportunities.

Originally, I am from Colombia and I came to Canada as a refugee in 2005. I speak English, French and Spanish, and I am in my third year of Political Science and Economics at UBC.

I've spent the past five years working at different youth and settlement organizations doing youth engagement and

public policy advocacy work with migrant communities on issues ranging from education, systemic racism, criminal justice reform, immigration, and electoral politics.

As a former youth in care, my energy, lived experience, and commitment to the youth in care community will allow me to always listen to your voices and ensure that it is driving our work in a direction that will help the Fed family grow, strengthen our capacity to advocate for systemic change, and give us many fun and enjoyable moments together.

Feel free to contact me and ask any questions. We are in for an amazing journey together!

DASHA COTIC-EHN PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Joining the Fed as a Program Coordinator is such an exciting and inspiring opportunity. I strongly believe that the voices of young people are some of the most valuable resources when trying to make change, and I'm excited to be working for an organization that both recognizes and prioritizes this.

Over the past five years I've worked for the Vancouver Parks Board organizing and leading youth programs, and I'm eager to bring what I learned to my job at the Fed. Some of my other experiences include co-facilitating a Leadership & Resiliency Program for youth, planning special events, and helping to plan the Pride Parade and Festivals.

To tell you a bit more about myself, I'm a few courses away from being done my undergrad degree in Communications. Some of my interests include cycling, art, reading and (very poorly) playing the ukulele. In the future I intend to pursue a career in law or public policy, and I'm eager to take what I learn at the Fed down one of these paths with me. I'm stoked to meet as many youth members as possible so come by my desk and say hello!





IVAN WONG **PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

Hello everyone! I'm extremely blessed to have this role working with the strong and resilient youth in care community.

I have been engulfed by love and compassion since I started volunteering at this organization in 2014. It is a pleasure for me to continue my participation at the Fed as a Program Coordinator and I hope to provide the most memorable and exciting experience for everyone! Feel free to give me some input because I would love to hear it!

I have a passion for health and fitness as well as discussions about social justice, history, politics, science and technology.

REBECCA LARDER **COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**

I am so excited to be joining this bright, warm, energizing community of young people and allies here at the Fed! I instantly felt the drive for positive change in the air when I stepped through these doors, and I am thrilled to now be a part of the team as Communications Coordinator. Working with young people to help share their stories has been a dream of mine for a long time so I am so honoured that you have given me this opportunity — thank you!

I have worked in both corporate and non-profit organizations: writing magazines, designing reports, creating websites, producing videos, working with the media and planning events. I love all parts of my job, but I chose a career in communications because I am passionate about the power of storytelling to change the world.

My life outside of work is all about doing things in the great outdoors, travelling to new places, listening to podcasts and watching old musicals.

I can't wait to meet you so if you have the opportunity to connect, please don't hesitate, come and say hi!



SEE YOU AROUND

FROM FORMER FED STAFF
DAWN JOHNSON & COLLEEN DANES

Dear Beloved Fed Members, Alumni, and Community Allies,

It is with mixed emotions that I make this announcement to let you know that I will be transitioning from the Fed to embark on a new journey at law school. I was accepted to UBC Law for this past September and decided it was important to accept this offer and follow my dreams of pursuing a legal education.

In 2015 I began my journey with the Fed as a staff person and it has been such an amazing opportunity and blessing to meet so many of you, and to reconnect with those of you that I knew in the past. I am constantly inspired and humbled by the pride, passion, connection, and love that you all have for each other and for this organization. It is these things that drew me to want to work for the Fed and it is also these things that make it hard for me to leave at this time. Each and every one of you has touched my life and inspired me in my own growth and passion.

This inspiration also reminded me in so many ways that it is important that we never give up on our dreams. As both an Indigenous woman and an alumni from care myself, I believe that it is important to show just how amazing we are and can be. I wanted to be a lawyer when I was a little girl and I gave up on those dreams believing that a goal like that wasn't meant for 'someone like me'... but the truth is, it is! I guess what I am trying to say is you have inspired me to pursue my own dreams and goals, and the message I have for each of you is to go after yours!

Each of you possess incredible gifts and the beauty of the Fed is that this organization truly is a family that helps people to grow and realize their potential. I feel so honoured and grateful to have been able to witness those gifts in each of you, and for allowing me to witness the power and strength that you each have as individuals and with your voices united.

As I transition from my role as a staff person I hope to stay connected to this Fed family in other ways, so this is not really a goodbye but a see you around! As I move into this next phase of my journey, know that I will continue to champion each of you and the youth in care movement!

Kinanaskomitin (Thank you) to each of you for welcoming me into this family,
Dawn



Dear Beloved Fed Members and Community Allies,

As I sit here, trying to form my thoughts into words, I feel myself experiencing so many emotions. It has been an amazing journey working at the Fed and meeting each and every one of you, but it is my time to transition from the organization to pursue a new career working with seniors.

For the last 11 years, I have worked, breathed and lived this organization. I have watched its many changes, moves and amazing opportunities. I have stood beside you all, watched you grow into adults with so much strength and honor. You all let me in your lives and I am forever grateful for this.

Deciding to transition from the organization was not an easy decision and still isn't. This

hasn't felt like a job for me so deciding to move on to pursue a new career does make me feel empty like I am losing a piece of who I am, but on the other side I am so excited for the new journey I am embarking on. It is time to get fresh new faces in here and for them to have some of the same opportunities I did and the pleasure in getting to know each and everyone one of you, of walking beside you and to keep this organization strong.

I have learned so much for all of you that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. Coming into this organization I was a completely different person than I am today. I have learned strength, happiness, resilience, determination, love and friendship.

As I transition from the organization, I need everyone to know that this is not the end, but a new beginning of me being involved in a different capacity than just a staff member. I hope to stay around to watch even more of you grow and shape into amazing adults, to watch this organization shift and change and become stronger each and every year.

Thank you so much for letting me into your lives, and letting me be a piece of this organization. I cherish all the memories, laughter, happiness and heartache that has been presented to me over the years.

Keep fighting the fight, keep on just being you, and follow your dreams and passions. Keep helping to shift the views on youth in care and pass along your strength to new members. Wherever I may be in my journey I will always be cheering you on, and watching each of you keep growing!

All my love,
Colleen

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

TESTIMONIALS FROM MEMBERS OF THE YAC



RAVEN MCCALLUM

My name is Raven and I am 25 years old. The past year with the Youth Advisory Council for the Provincial Director of Child Welfare has been absolutely incredible. I feel that I have been able to take complete ownership over my identity and my past with the YAC. The team helping support this growth is the 20 youth advisors in and from care, ministry employees, executives (this sounds a lot less personal than it actually is), and other connections with people involved with the MCFD from across the province. These people are some of the most supportive, compassionate, and dedicated people I have ever met. Each member of the team has the chance to be involved in various activities, events, panels, teams, projects, and workshops.

My involvement with the YAC started in June 2015, when I was introduced at the Guardianship Forum along with five other Youth Advisors. Following this, we had our first meeting with all of the Youth Advisory Council in Victoria in September. During this meeting, we discussed the issues that matter most to us, created ideas for action plans on how we want these issues addressed, and had the chance to bond with the other youth— sharing our stories with one another. Throughout the year, we met in person three times and had virtual meetings once a month.

Since the first meeting, I was invited to

several events and projects. Some of these have included being the youth voice on project teams such as the Youth Transitions project, sitting on a panel for Grand Chief Ed John's Custom Adoption Forum, presenting my story for social workers and ministry employees, and creating a workshop for the Permanency Forum in September. All of these opportunities have created space for self-reflection and have provided powerful connections with those from similar situations and those who want to take action to make a better world for youth in care.

Overall, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with YAC and am looking forward to the experiences I will be able to have this year. The YAC has given me new family members, connections, and a chance to do something positive with my experience. I am so proud of the work the "fosta-gang" has done. We are seeing real change in the MCFD— it is already happening.

JO-MARY CROWCHILD-FLETCHER

Many of us were strangers to each other at our first meeting, but our bond continues to grow with every phone call and gathering. Even though the distance was great, the hard work was greater. With such a supportive team, the council members have accomplished the many

goals and tasks that were put in front of them. Our voices have been heard on a large number of issues that have affected many youth in care. We have offered our advice from sexual health posters to co-hosting the Permanency forum which took place recently in Richmond, BC.

Educating those involved with the system was one of our main goals. Throughout the year, individual members joined different groups to add the Youth Advisory Council voice to the discussion. Those committees included the Agreements with Young Adults expansion, Youth in Care Week working group, Aboriginal Advisory Committee, and that's just to name a few.

One of our biggest achievements was the Permanency Forum, which touched many people's hearts and practices. One of our member's designs was even chosen to be the beautiful logo that was displayed throughout the conference. A few other areas that the council members appeared were as MCs, workshops hosts, and in our own little World Cafés telling our story.

As our first year came to a close, the Youth Advisory Council has accomplished many goals with a mixture of laughter and tears. The council is continuing on for another year. We have added to our lovely family and can't wait to continue on with our work to improve the foster care system for all those involved.

FED TRAVELS

CONNECTING WITH ALLIES ACROSS CANADA AND INTERNATIONALLY

In the last few months the Fed was fortunate to have the opportunity to connect with allies from across Canada, and around the world to share insights and plans for the future with others who work to improve the lives of youth in and from care.

Starting in August, we hosted three different delegations from overseas who visited Canada to learn more about the work of organizations like the Fed. Two groups from Japan stopped by our main office and we really enjoyed having the opportunity to talk with them about our programs. A special thanks to our OG presenters who made themselves available for their visits. An Australian delegation from the City of Logan stopped by on October 31st to gather ideas for their initiative to improve the

health and wellbeing of every child in their city. We hope our conversation can help them achieve their goals!

Our Executive Director, Jules Wilson, and Board Chair, Debbie Cox travelled to Victoria, BC in the fall to meet with ministry representatives and exchange perspectives on our current and future work. Thank you so much to those who took the time to connect, and a special thank you to Lori Wanamaker, recently appointed MCFD Deputy Minister. It was extremely valuable to meet and talk about our shared objectives.

Jules and Debbie were only back on the mainland for a few days before they were on the road again, this time to Ontario to meet with community partners and strengthen our connections with advocates across

the country. While they were there, they met with Irwin Elman, Ontario's Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. We are fortunate that Irwin has been a long-time supporter of the Fed, and this visit was another example of his kindness, generosity and willingness to share his knowledge with others — kudos! We also met with Carleen and Jen from Youth in Care Ontario who shared a bit about their history and mandate with us and with the Children's Aid Foundation who taught us some valuable insights from their 35 years of fundraising.

We will be using the lessons learned from both of these trips to make our work more thoughtful, accessible, effective and efficient going forward. Thanks to everyone who connected with us!

FBCYICN LOCAL YOUTH IN CARE NETWORKS UPDATE!

KAMLOOPS

APPROVED LOCAL AS OF MARCH 2016

Since becoming an official Fed local, Kamloops has hit the ground running, planning many different and exciting events for young people. They've had picnics and played giant lawn games, gone bowling and even travelled to Merritt for a movie night. In the fall they hosted a gathering where they played games, ate food, identified new Local Leaders and learned about different ways to get involved with the Fed.

KELOWNA

APPROVED LOCAL AS OF MARCH 2013

Kelowna had a jam-packed summer full of fun activities such as paintball, baseball, lawn games, bowling and games nights. Kelowna is seeking more young people to get involved in their local in both participant and leadership roles. If you live in or around Kelowna be sure to connect with them.

PRINCE GEORGE

APPROVED LOCAL AS OF DECEMBER 2015

For Us By Us (FUBU) meets once per month during their Youth Council Meetings at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre. In addition to their Youth Council Meetings, FUBU has activities every day of the week such as community kitchens, drum group, recreation night, movie night, youth connections and an afternoon activity. Check out FUBU next time you're in the area; drop in on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between 1–5pm.

SQUAMISH

APPROVED LOCAL AS OF JUNE 2016

Please give a big Fed welcome to our newest Local in Squamish! We are so excited to welcome this group to the Fed family and community. They've got big plans coming up and we can't wait to share what this fabulous group of young people gets up to.

VICTORIA

APPROVED LOCAL AS OF JUNE 2012

Since the last edition, the Victoria Youth in Care Network (VYICN) has been up to some exciting stuff including a night out at the board game café, going to the movies and bowling. They attended a budgeting workshop hosted by the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) and a barbecue put on by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and had a celebration for BC Child and Youth in Care Week. The VYICN has identified new Local Leaders and has put lots of time into planning for an exciting 2017.

CURRENT LOCALS:

KAMLOOPS, KELOWNA, PRINCE GEORGE, SQUAMISH & VICTORIA

INTERESTED COMMUNITIES:

MERRITT, NANAIMO, PORT ALBERNI & SURREY

COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE

STARTED THE PROCESS:
NEW WESTMINSTER, QUESNEL,
WILLIAMS LAKE & 100 MILE HOUSE

MESSAGE FROM THE PGT!



The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) is coguardian with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Service Agencies for children and youth who are in the continuing care of the province. The PGT's role is to act as property guardian, which means that the PGT is responsible for protecting your legal and financial interests. As property guardian, the PGT investigates potential legal claims and pursues financial benefits to which you may be entitled, such as Canada Pension Plan Children's Benefits and Registered Disability Savings Plans. The PGT also conducts various financial literacy workshops to help prepare youth for the transition to adulthood.

PGT EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FUND

Are you planning to pursue a post-secondary education? Do you want to further your educational goals?

Former youth in care over the age of 19 who require extra support to manage their educational costs (such as classes, books, fees transportation or living expenses) can apply for funding from the PGT through the Public Guardian and Trustee Educational Assistance Fund. This bursary is meant to provide financial assistance so former youth in care don't have to leave school if their expenses are more than they can manage.

The PGT Educational Assistance Fund started in 1989 when three generous community members donated money to assist people in BC with their education and career development. Over the last 11 years, the bursary has been paid to 171 people ranging in age from 19 to 52. Last year, 14 successful applicants received bursaries of amounts between \$750 and \$1,875. These applicants were pursuing a variety of educational fields including social work, child and youth care, nursing, business, civil engineering, political science and international relations.

You can find more information about the PGT Educational Assistance Fund, including how to apply, at www.trustee.bc.ca/services/estate-and-personal-trust-services/pages/pgt-educational-assistance-fund.aspx. You can also contact the Personal Trust Administrator at the PGT by phone at 604.660.0957.

Don't miss out! The deadline for submitting your application is April 15th, 2017.



THE FED GETS A VISIT FROM JAPAN!

In October, a group of young people, our Board Chair and staff were present to welcome 16 Japanese delegates to our office at the conclusion of their Canadian tour. The delegates traveled to Canada with the support of the Shiseido Social Welfare Foundation to learn more about the foster care system in this country, and they stopped by the Fed to find out how we support young people in and from care in BC.

It was a great evening with lots of discussion, a pizza dinner and amazing insights shared by the young people present. The delegates ended the evening

by performing for us to give us "a sample of just some of the parts of Japanese culture." Check out the picture of the delegates in action! Pretty incredible!



YOUTH LEADERS SHARE KNOWLEDGE WITH MINISTRY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA ENGAGES WITH INDIGENOUS YOUTH AT THE FED

We were pleased to have the opportunity to host a meeting between Special Ministry Representative, Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux and a group of Indigenous youth members and Fed alumni on November 29th at the Fed office. It was an interesting discussion and it was great to see government engaging with Indigenous youth in and from care about their experiences and thoughts to improve the child welfare system.

As our 2016 YouthSpeak Report identified, cultural connections are an important protective factor for youth in and from care. We need to work together

as a province and as a country to make sure that youth growing up in care have the opportunity to grow up connected to their cultural roots. In this meeting, we had the chance to talk more about what this means personally for our members.

Meetings like this are also an example of how we can work to give youth a voice in decisions that matter to them, another top issue

identified by the YouthSpeak report. As an organization that strives to provide young people with every possible opportunity to be heard in their communities, we are proud to help facilitate this process in any way that we can.



2016 YOUTHSPEAK RESEARCH REPORT

Last year the Fed released the 2016 YouthSpeak Research Report, which gave BC youth in and from care between the ages of 14 and 24 a chance to share their needs, experiences and ideas on the child welfare system and transitioning at age 19. With help from the Fed and the McCreary Centre Society, youth in and from care were supported to be the lead researchers, talking to and surveying hundreds of other young people in and from care.

The YouthSpeak Research Report found that the top five issues facing youth in and from care based on those surveyed were:

- 1. Permanency** — Young people shared that to thrive they need stability as well as life-long relational and cultural connections. Many young people said that they had to move homes often, making it hard to build friendships, participate in extracurricular activities, and find and keep jobs.
- 2. Transitions** — Young people shared that they were “aging out into poverty.” They highlighted that having housing supports, the chance to stay in care until the age of 24, and starting to create a transition plan sooner as keys to creating better transition experiences.
- 3. Mental Health** — Young people highlighted that the trauma and instability many have experienced require long-term approaches to healing and that this support is rarely available to them. 67% of young people surveyed said they had at least one health condition or disability, and were more likely than youth not from care to have missed out on mental health supports because they did not think they could afford it or because they didn’t know what services were available to them.
- 4. Supportive Social Workers** — Young people drew attention to the need for strong relationships with social workers for all, not just the “lucky ones.” Almost half of the youth surveyed said they had four or more social workers during their time in care. Many of the young people said they liked their social worker, but thought their social worker was too busy for them.
- 5. Youth Voice** — Young people reiterated that they know what they need and if asked they will share. Only 48% of youth surveyed felt their voice was heard and respected when talking to other people about their situation. The research showed that young people who felt they were involved in making decisions about their life were more likely to feel ready to transition out of care.

Since the release of the report, McCreary’s youth research team has completed a literature review about the top five issues and compared these to the findings shared in other current research. Our goal is to launch a second YouthSpeak report in 2017 that includes a summary of the YouthSpeak research, the literature review and the recommendations from our June meeting with young people, decision makers and community partners.

You can download a copy of our YouthSpeak Research report from our website www.fbcyicn.ca

NEW SOCIETIES ACT AND THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) IN FEBRUARY

What is the New Societies Act and why is it important?

The New Societies Act came into effect on November 28th as the legislation that governs non-profits, like the Fed, in BC. This change in law brought with it some steps that we have to complete to remain legally recognized as an organization in good standing moving forward.

How does it affect the Fed?

Each non-profit has to complete a transition process which informs the BC Registrar of Companies that we have met their set of required changes to both our constitution and bylaws. Some of the key

changes include new guidelines for voting including the use of electronic means, filing AGM minutes electronically, and additional information about the organization being made available to the public.

How does it affect the Youth?

The new law reduces the number of votes needed to move forward with a motion, meaning the voices of our youth members are especially important! It includes a minimum and maximum notice period for Annual and Special General Meetings, allows voting to occur by electronic means, and reduces the number of members required to be present to make a meeting official.

What type of information will become public?

The Fed now needs to provide more information about the board, and the income of the top paid staff members. Our year-end financial information and board minutes need to be public as well, which is pretty simple since they already are!

Will there be any changes in programming, or how the Fed functions?

We don’t anticipate any significant changes but will keep you informed once we complete the transition process and work with it for a while.

**MORE SCM #71
SHENANIGANS**







UPDATE FROM THE REP!

OUTGOING

Hi everyone,

As much as I hate to say it, this is going to be my last letter to you as BC's Representative for Children and Youth. After 10 years, I have reached the end of my two terms and, by the time you read this, a new Representative, Bernard Richard, will be in the position. I am delighted at his appointment. Bernard is committed to children and youth, and works hard to change the system so that it will work for you and give you what you need.

Just so you know: the selection of the Rep is made by an all-party committee of the BC Legislature, which means it's not a government appointment, and that's good because this is a non-political office.

In the meantime, remember that during the transition, you can still count on us. We have a full staff of advocates who work at our three locations, Victoria, Burnaby and Prince George, and they are here to help you with issues you may face, no matter where you live in BC.

So don't hesitate to call. We're available at 1-800-476-3933.

Thank you to each of you for standing with me and believing that your rights — the rights of children and youth in BC — matter. I know that life can feel precarious at times and you require and deserve vocal and determined support to reach your full potential. I've learned so much as Representative about love, kindness and resilience — and the importance of standing up when it's not okay and making it better. I'm thankful for every minute of that time and will carry with me a deep respect for each of you as I move into the next chapter of my career and life as a friend to many of you.

Stay strong, and keep making your voice heard. The world needs to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond

ACTING

UPDATE FROM THE REP!

BC'S REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Hello everyone,

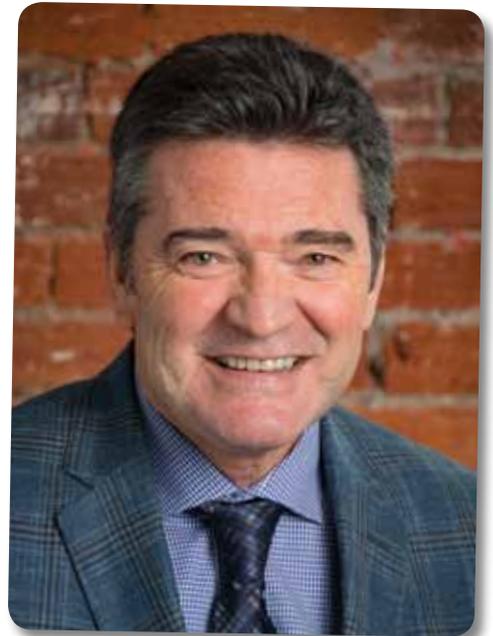
I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself: I'm Bernard Richard and I'm the new Acting Representative for Children and Youth in BC. By the time you read this, I may not be "acting" anymore but, until I'm officially appointed sometime early in the new year, that is my title. In any case, I want to tell you that I am so happy to be here and am looking forward to meeting as many of you as I can and hearing your stories. My plan is to represent your interests and to keep up the excellent work of my predecessor, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond.

A bit about me: I have a background in law and social work and am from a small fishing village in New Brunswick called Cap Pelé, and I have four sons and eight grandchildren, including three here in BC. I have worked in government in several roles, including as New Brunswick's Children's Advocate — so working to help youth is something I really care about deeply. Issues such as the number of Indigenous children and youth in care in BC, youth mental health and the rights of children and youth are all top concerns of mine and areas I will focus on in my new role.

I'm also concerned about advocacy, and I want to make sure you know that our Office continues to be here for you. The Rep has changed, but our services haven't. Our advocates are available for you from wherever you are in the province, so please call if you need to: 1-800-476-3933.

Who do we help? Our advocates assist youth in care or not in care, Indigenous youth, and youth and young adults with disabilities. We can also help you if you have a Youth Agreement, if you're in custody or if you have special needs and you're transitioning to adult services.

Our advocates can help you to know your rights and speak up in a way that might solve your problem. We can also help you



get connected to programs and services, and be a part of discussions about you and the services you receive. We can help you navigate government and advocate on your behalf, if necessary.

We can advocate for you until you turn 19, or — if you are receiving CLBC services — until your 24th birthday, so please don't hold back. We're here to help.

In the meantime, I'm honoured to be here and am looking forward to this new challenge. Stay tuned to our social media to keep up to date with what's going on at the Rep's Office: on Facebook [@rcybcyouth](#) and [@rcybc](#), on Instagram [@rcybcyouth](#) and on Twitter [@rcybcyouth](#)

'Til next time,

Bernard Richard



SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE BRITISH COLUMBIA OPENS TRANSITION SUITES FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

WILLIAM BRENNAN
MANAGER OF COMMUNICATIONS

SOS Children's Village BC recently celebrated the grand opening of three transition suites for youth aging out of care, as well as the organization's 30th anniversary. As Canada's only SOS Children's Village, SOS Children's Village BC provides stable homes, a supportive and healing environment, and community-based family care programs to help foster children and youth in need grow into caring, self-reliant adults.

Clouds loomed overhead throughout the ribbon cutting ceremony, but luckily the rain held off and everyone had a wonderful time. There were over one hundred of SOS Children's Village BC's closest supporters in attendance, including SOS BC's founders, local politicians, an Aboriginal Elder, and corporate and foundation donors.

Letters of congratulations from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Canadian Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett, Premier of BC Christy Clark, and the Mayor of Surrey Linda Hepner were read aloud to guests.

Every year in the province of British Columbia, more than 700 teenagers 'age out' of the government foster care system. As soon as they turn 19, the only support system they have known is no longer available to them, and they are expected to begin taking care of themselves. But at just 19, with no support or resources, it's setting these kids

up for failure. And far too many of them do fail — ending up homeless, living on the streets, addicted, or in trouble with the law. Indeed, over 40% of youth living on the streets have been in foster care.

That's why SOS Children's Village BC is excited about the completion of construction on three independent living accommodations. Separate building entrances, bath and restrooms, living spaces, and kitchen areas will allow young adults or young mothers, to live an independent lifestyle.

Unique to SOS Children's Village BC's 'Year Intensive' program, youth will be able to access any or all of the therapeutic and support programs offered to the village families including: learning clubs; music program; camps; recreation and cultural programs; cognitive, expressive arts; and Neurofeedback therapies. These services will contribute to a more normalized experience of transitioning to adulthood for teens aging out of care. They will be taught the life skills needed to live independently, skills they never learned while being shuffled from foster home to foster home.

SOS Children's Village BC also operates two thrift stores, and can outfit a young person with clothes, school supplies, furniture, and more, all at no charge. A number of Transition to Adulthood participants in the established outreach program have already been provided with the business attire needed for successful job interviews.

Additionally, the youth who reside in the transition suites will receive rewards from SOS BC as they reach their educational and other goals, including everything required for their own apartment: furniture, appliances, kitchenware, computer, TV, etc. — an 'apartment in a box' that they can take with them once they complete the yearlong program.

A stable living locale will allow these youth aging out of care to positively connect to their communities. With the location of the housing at an SOS Children's Village, the teens will be healthier — with improved mental health — and more able to live independently with access to the extensive green space and facilities of the village which include a sports court, dedicated and stocked art and music studios, and more.

This momentous moment in the history of foster care in BC is the culmination of two years of intensive capital campaign fundraising of \$250,000 to build five permanent suites. Success has been achieved through the generosity of individuals, corporations, foundations, and governments who understand the incredible need for this project. Fundraising continues for the construction of the final two suites.

Learn more at www.sosbc.org or by following [@SOSBCVillage](https://www.instagram.com/SOSBCVillage). You can also contact village director Kistie Singh at kistiesingh@sosbc.org.



CONNECTING SAFELY

Next time you are standing in a public place — the food court at the mall, a hotel lobby, or at the bus stop — take a look around you and count the number of people who are using their phones or tablets. Since the explosion of smart phones in the early 2000s, our digital lives are becoming increasingly difficult to separate from our “offline” experience.

This means that our behavior online doesn't just impact how we appear on social media sites, it is increasingly becoming a part of our work, our education, our relationships, and by extension, our safety. Being conscious about online safety isn't just about protecting your passwords and not opening junk mail, it's about managing the connection between your virtual world and the relationships and resources that you use in the physical world every day.

Here are some handy tips that may help you navigate this difficult territory:

ABOUT TO POST A PICTURE THAT YOU WOULDN'T WANT YOUR BOSS TO SEE?

According to leading job site, Monster.com, 77% of employers Google applicants and 35% eliminated candidates based on information that they found online.

Tip: You've heard it before, but what you post online doesn't go away! Remember that whatever you share on social media sites, through emails, on apps, or even in text messages is out of your control once you press “send.”

Be kind to your future self, and always imagine who could potentially see what you are writing or posting. If a picture of you has been shared without your consent, talk to someone you trust for support — there are ways to get it removed. Check out www.needhelpnow.ca to see how to report for different platforms.

ABUSING OTHERS ONLINE IS A SERIOUS OFFENSE

Only a small number of young people abuse their peers online. According to the McCreary Centre Society report, *Untangling the Web*, 7% of males and 6% of females surveyed reported that they had used technology to bully or pick on someone in the last 12 months.

Tip: It is easier to say hurtful things anonymously online, but that does not make it less impactful for those who are targeted.

“THINK ABOUT IT: IN 2008, 2 IN 10 AMERICANS SURVEYED HAD A SMART PHONE. TODAY, OVER 90 PERCENT OF CANADIANS AGED 18–34 OWN A SMART PHONE. ON AVERAGE, CANADIANS SPEND 17.2 HOURS ONLINE PER WEEK.”

Teasing comments, unkind posts, and sharing pictures that were not meant to be shared are all actions that can have long-term consequences and in some cases may be illegal. Don't be a troll! When you see something posted that is hurtful, disrespectful or mean-spirited, don't like it or share it. If you see something abusive online, report it!

If you are being targeted through cruel behavior online, there are resources to help you. You are not alone. You have the right to feel safe online. Check out this awesome website: www.needhelpnow.ca or give any of us at the Fed a call — we want to help!

SEXTING & EXPLICIT IMAGE SHARING

“Don't ever ask someone you love for a pic and if someone really loves you and understands the consequences of sending a pic, they won't ask you to.” — Merlyn Horton, CEO of SafeOnline.com

Tip: Think very carefully about the risks of sharing sexual pictures or videos with another person before you send. Once you share a picture or video, you lose control of who can see it and what it can be used for.

If someone is pressuring you to share images or videos, it might be a good time to reassess if this is a healthy relationship. In healthy relationships, neither person feels pressured to do something that they are not comfortable with. Keep in mind, it is illegal to have sexual images of anyone (other than yourself) under the age of 18 in your possession.

If someone has shared pictures of you without your permission there are resources and supports that can help. Remember that you are not alone. Talk to someone you trust and they can help you work through the problem and move forward.

ROMANCE & SEXUALITY ONLINE

Tip: Most of us are looking for love and connection, and the internet is now a natural part of our search to fulfill those needs, but it is important to be cautious about the connections you make online and the reliability of the information that is available.

Online dating is now one of the top way for couples to meet, but just because many people do it, doesn't mean there are not potential dangers. You may feel that you have a strong connection with someone you meet online, but until you know they are who they say they are, treat them as a stranger who you are just getting to know. Don't tell them personal details about you, only meet in busy, public places and always tell someone where you are going.

The internet has also made finding porn and sexual content to view easier than ever before. Think about keeping a balanced approach to the sexual material that you seek out online.

If you have questions about relationships, sexuality and gender, look to trusted, reputable sources to find your answers, because what you see in pornography won't necessarily be anything like real life.

Check out www.sexandu.ca, a website for young people by The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada for answers on a range of topics related to sex and relationships.

DON'T DRIVE DISTRACTED

Distracted driving is a leading cause of car crash fatalities in BC and one of the most common distractions behind the wheel is an electronic device — ICBC.

Tip: Everyone knows it is true: if you are looking at a screen you cannot be looking at the road at the same time! Plan to avoid distractions before you get behind the wheel. Put your phone out of reach or ask your passenger to make or receive calls and texts.

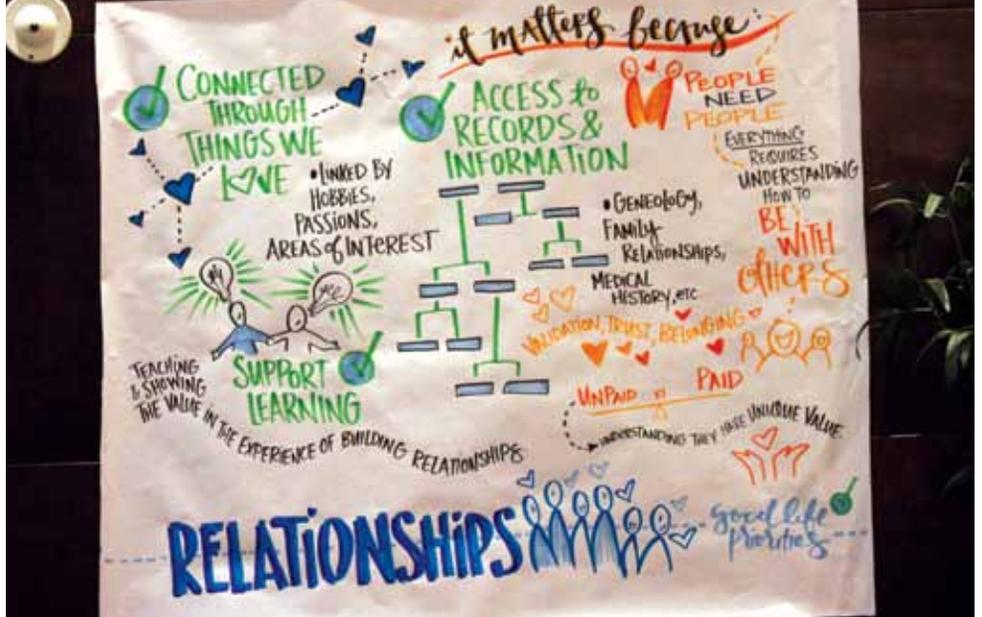
Did you know that some municipalities are also thinking about banning device distracted walking? If you are not aware of your surroundings, you are putting yourself and others in danger, so be smart!

THINK ABOUT WHEN/WHERE YOU CONNECT

The average smartphone user claims they check their phone 19 times a day, in reality the estimated number of times the average smartphone user checks their device is more like 150 times in a day — “Smartphone Insights Report 2013” by Insights West and iamota

Tip: When you go to bed at night, is your smartphone your alarm? Recent studies show that viewing any screen immediately before bed can have a negative effect on your sleep. According to a recent review of studies on how portable media impacts sleep by the University of London, even having your device in the room with you at night can affect the quality of your sleep.

Constant stimulation from our media devices keep us awake at night and can also leave us feeling disconnected from those closest to us during the day. Take a step back from your devices sometimes to make sure that you have a balanced approach. Plan a digital holiday where you purposefully put your phone away and focus instead on the experiences you may be missing out on when you are busy online.



COMMUNITY MEMBER PROFILE

RESILIENT & PASSIONATE MEREDITH G

Meredith always carries with her an extremely contagious level of positive energy. Meredith is a poet, an actress, a youth and family development worker, and a committed advocate for youth in and from government care. Meredith is never afraid to talk about her experience in care, and often uses it as a tool for advocacy and systemic change. Her poems are rooted in her personal resilience and her courage. Meredith is known for many incredible accomplishments, in particular for her work with Vancouver Foundation's Fostering Change initiative and her most recent selection as the 2016 recipient of the Courage to Come Back Award in the social adversity category. Meredith's commitment, passion, and deeply personal reasons to fight for better conditions for youth in and from care make us, the Fed staff and community, feel extremely grateful for her presence and the difference she makes daily in the lives of young people.

Tell us about yourself!

*Oh gosh. What do you want to know? *laughs awkwardly**

My name is Meredith, I am a proud former youth in "care" and I journey with mental illness. I am an advocate for improved systems and services for people who are journeying through the "care" system as well as those who journey with mental illness. I am a spoken word artist and I believe in the power of art to connect us, engage us, unite us, and mobilize us. I am currently in the fourth and final year (so incredibly close and I am so incredibly excited) of my Bachelor of Arts Degree in Child and Youth Care Counselling, I am a youth worker with St. Leonard's Youth



and Family Services, and I am an elected student representative with the Douglas College Students' Union. I am an auntie, my favourite colour is purple, my favourite animal is the hummingbird, my favourite season is Autumn because the air smells sweet, I pretend I can sing, I love the study of language and the origins of words, I thoroughly enjoy brushing my teeth ... shall I continue?

How did you get involved in the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks?

I'm not sure I have a direct answer for that question... I have been involved with the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks as an alumnus, I suppose! Somehow I missed out on the Fed when I was a young person in care. Now I have the opportunity to partner alongside some of the Fed's initiatives, facilitate workshops, and connect my kids — now that I am a youth worker.

What makes you so passionate about the youth in care movement?

My passion for the youth in care movement grows out of recognizing that we collectively have an opportunity and a responsibility to do better with and for our young people. We must do better. We cannot let the tragedy of our relations in "care" go without working to honour their life and legacy.

What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

Some of my proudest accomplishments? Gosh. leaving "home" at 13, graduating high school, having friends, not letting my heart get hard, being an auntie who my niece loves, being in a movie, being in a play about a former gang member and his journey to create a program preventing young people from being involved in gangs, being hired to work in the group home I used to live in, writing a spoken word poem that is being used in training for social workers across BC, being a member of the YAC for Vancouver Foundation's Fostering Change initiative, creating the Seven Sisters Collective and hosting a space to honour the lost lives of young people in and from care, receiving the 2016 Courage to Come Back award in Social Adversity, being a keynote speaker at the 2016 Permanency Forum, being a vegetarian for almost 12 years...

Why do you think you've been able to overcome and accomplish so much?

My symphony of resiliency. None of the above-mentioned 'accomplishments' could have happened without a community of people who gathered around to love to me through these adventures: (in a quasi-chronological order) teachers,

youth workers, vice-principals, Reconnect workers, my pretend mamas and chosen family, my psychologist, landlords, college instructors/friends, bosses, advocates, allies, and countless people who do not fit these categories. These people have shown me that I am worth loving; they have reflected all this back to me when my mirror was broken. I am an amalgamation of all their love.

What inspires you most?

Appreciating where we have come from and knowing how far we still have left to go. Fierce and kind warriors who continue to advocate for change. The people in my life who see the fire in my soul and believe I have something to contribute. My homies from the system who continue to do incredible work as advocates for change. My kids from the system who dare to shine despite all they have endured. Our kids we have lost. Michael J. Fox, Mariska Hargitay, and Margaret Trudeau. Wanting to not be defeated or defined by my mental illnesses or my care experiences.

What are some of the biggest life lessons and wisdom you have learned that you'd like to share with youth growing up in care and transitioning to life on their own?

You are, without a single microscopic molecule of doubt, worthy of all things good. If you cannot see it because your mirror is dusty, connect with someone who will reflect it back for you. Or find me. I will dust that mirror off with you so you can see your shining, worthy, beautiful face.

Ask for what you need.

Ask for what you want.

Darkness is relative.

Success is relative.

Build one another up and celebrate the successes of yourself and others around you; we can all be tall poppies.

What are some of your goals for the future?

I want to study for my masters and then my doctorate in counselling psychology. Then, I will open a theatre therapy studio where I can blend together my two passions of theatre and supporting people through

their healing journey with theatre and storytelling as a main tool.

I would really like to complete my book — a combination of my story with poetry inserts.

One of my, potentially forever, goals is learning to love myself and believe that others love me just as I am. Have lunch with my main heroes Michael J. Fox, Mariska Hargitay, and Margaret Trudeau. Find love? *laughs awkwardly*

What changes would you like to see happen for children and youth in and from care in BC and around the world?

Oh glory. How do I unpack all of this in three sentences? I would really like to see:

a) a focus on prevention instead of reaction — appropriate, adequate, and non-criminalizing structures and services in place for families and young people to access an exhaustive list of strengthening supports before being placed in government care becomes an option.

b) an opportunity for young people with various legal designations to have the opportunity to engage in all the perceived benefits once they step into the community (ie. tuition waiver expansion to include those on VCA). While I am on this note... the call for institutions to be amplified community allies and partners to support our young people in and from government care.

c) increased therapeutic opportunities for young people in and from care who journey with mental illness. More attention paid to the impact of multiple and complex traumas on a young person and their subsequent relationship to themselves and the world.

Tell us something interesting or surprising about you that no one would guess.

Something that people wouldn't know about me...? Hmm. I actually get incredibly anxious doing pretty much anything. What people often think is my quick wit and self-deprecating humour is actually my anxiety in full action mode. Somehow, and gratefully, it gets channelled into something semi-hilarious.

I have size 12 feet.

I cannot stand (read: am terrified of) cotton balls.

I don't touch door handles.

What would be your Karaoke song if you could pick anything?

Karaoke song is definitely, "Believe" by Cher. I have 'performed' it once at Karaoke and, while my voice impersonation is fairly en pointe, it still needs maybe one or two dress rehearsals before I would feel comfortable recording it and tagging Cher in the video on Instagram.

Anything else you'd like to share with us?

Just a thank you to the Fed family for this honour! You have made my heart sing. xx



THOUGHTFUL & PATIENT SADE S



Sade has a long history at the Fed as a member, a Youth Staff, and a support to young people during the International Foster Care Organization Conference in 2011. Her kindness and eagerness to help make her an awesome alumni. She is a proud mother, an ambitious student, and an advocate and role model for youth in and from care. Sade is a shining example of the wisdom, resilience and passion that stems from being a former youth in care, and the Fed is proud to know her and have her as part of our community. We were lucky enough to catch up with her recently; here's what she had to say!

Tell us about yourself!

My Aboriginal name is Was'oney'geeshi'gook, it means Light in the Sky Woman. I am Cree on my mother's side and Coast Salish from the Tseil-Waututh and Squamish Nations, Irish and Hawaiian on my father's side. I am originally from Saskatchewan and I was raised in Vancouver, BC for most of my life. I am currently twenty-nine years old and I was in government care from the age of six years old and aged out at nineteen years old.

I am a proud mother of two babies and one five year old and I have the honour to co-parent three wonderful step children who bring so much joy and happiness to my life. I share my journey with a wonderful and supportive spouse who supports me unconditionally.

I am currently enrolled in my fourth year of the Child and Youth Care Counselling program at Douglas College and I am working on my criminology degree on the side. I am a proud employee of Ayas Men Men Child and Family Services for Squamish Nation as the Youth Services Team Leader. It is my goal to continue to pursue my education and gain as much knowledge as I can to support children and youth in care to become leaders in their community and beat the stereotypes. We all can be successful despite our journey through care.

How did you get involved in the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks?

I was first introduced to the FBCYICN when I was a young person through my foster sister, Margaret Joseph, who was actively involved. I later gained a term youth mentor position when I was nineteen years old. Since then, I continue to stay in touch and get involved in anything I can to either support young people or hang out with the amazing, fun and spontaneous staff, youth and alumni.

Now that you're an alumni, what do you think being a great alumni member means?

Given our busy lives, staying in touch is important to inspire, motivate, and mentor current and past youth members. It is also important to continue to be a role model for those walking beside you and looking for inspiration to find their own strengths and youth voice.

What makes you so passionate about the youth in care movement?

As a previous youth in care, I feel that many young people look for support and at times can feel alone and need a sense of belonging. This is why I am passionate about youth in care, to support, mentor and advocate for young people looking for a sense of belonging and identity. I feel really passionate about my own Aboriginal culture and given the number of youth in care that are Aboriginal, I feel that it is important to provide opportunities and connect them to their roots and culture, and to instill pride in who they are and where they come from.

What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

I am proud of my children and being able to bring these three beautiful human beings into this world. They bring me so much joy and motivate me to work harder every day.

My second would be graduating with my child and youth care diploma while working full time, parenting four children, all while being pregnant with my daughter. It was a challenging year but I did it with the support of my spouse, my dad and my closest friends.

Why do you think you've been able to overcome and accomplish so much?

I feel that I have accomplished so much because I am motivated to make change in this community. I feel as though I have a responsibility as an Aboriginal women to inspire children that have gone through the system with very little supports and little to no cultural connection. I was blessed with the opportunity to learn from my late uncle Daniel and all the cultural knowledge he passed onto me. With that being said, it is my responsibility to continue to be generous and humble by giving back to others through knowledge sharing and by being a role model.

What inspires you most?

My children inspire me to be better than I was yesterday and to never give up on achieving my dreams. Children and youth in care also inspire me because of the resilience and strength that each child has.

Tell us about something going on for you outside of the Fed that you're excited to share!

I recently gave birth to my youngest son who was born on September 21st, 2016. I continue to go to school and I look forward to doing a little traveling with my family and friends this summer.

What are some of the biggest life lessons and wisdom you have learned that you'd like to share with youth growing up in care and transitioning on their own?

There are times when you'll need to focus more energy on the positives in life and avoid dwelling on the negatives. A really good friend of mine always reminds me to think positive and the negative will pass. I didn't feel like a product of care until I was in my twenties and I became a single mother. It

was then that it dawned on me that I didn't have the support that one would have if they had their mother to show them how to overcome obstacles. But I was able to overcome this and focus my energy and be thankful for those who were there. They may not have been blood related but they never left my side and continue to support and love me and my children. Never give up because if you want something bad enough it will come; you just have to be willing to work hard and be creative.

What are some of your goals for the future?

I want to continue to pursue my education in Child and Youth Care and one day soon graduate with my masters. I plan to continue growing and working with the Squamish Nation as the team leader.

What changes would you like to see happen for children and youth in and from care in BC and around the world?

I would like to see youth in care receive more support prior to aging out of care, be provided with more opportunities to pursue an education, be safe from harm, and be connected to their Culture regardless of their ethnic background. I would like to see more funding go towards children and youth to receive the supports and resources needed to thrive in our society. I would like to see youth in care learn about their rights and self-advocate as proud young people.

Tell us something interesting or surprising about you that no one would guess!

I love brussels sprouts! Haha...who loves those?! Me!

What would be your Karaoke song if you could pick anything?!

The last time I did any public singing I was ten years old singing the spice girls dressed up as Posh in front of my aunty and uncle with my foster sisters and my little cousins. Since then I am not one for public singing so I would have to choose "Cha Cha Slide" and I would sing it with my son Jamar and my daughter Juliana. They love this song and the dance.

Anything else you'd like to share with us?

Remember to love yourself and remember to acknowledge that you're all amazing!

PHOTOS BY NICHOLE N



AMBITIOUS & DEDICATED NATASHA S

We at the Fed are extremely proud of Natasha and all her accomplishments. She has been a member for 7 years and has grown into a beautiful, strong, smart, caring and dedicated young woman. She would probably tell you that if we had said to her at her first Youth Retreat when she was 16 that one day soon she would be supporting young people at our Youth Retreats and facilitating workshops at conferences, she would never have believed it. Natasha has taken on many leadership roles at the Fed and is extremely reliable. Just in the past year alone she has volunteered around 140 hours. Outside of the Fed, Natasha is also dedicated to her post-secondary education to fulfill her goal of working with children and youth and won't let anything get in the way of fulfilling her dreams.

Tell us a bit about yourself!

I was born in Surrey but I was raised in Kelowna. I didn't have the best life growing up and as a result I didn't make good choices for myself or my life. When I was 14 I moved back to Surrey from Kelowna. I met some of the wrong people, got into some bad stuff, started doing heavy drugs and went hard on a path of destruction. This went on until I was 18, that's when I decided to turn my life around. I got myself into the Portage Treatment Centre, spent my 19th birthday in rehab and took my life back. Life has never been easy but I'm not someone who gives up easily. Everything I was told I can't do, everything I initially doubted I could do, I did it, I'm still doing it. I survived my life, I have overcome everything that was designed to break me, and here I am today, 4 years sober, in college, no longer living on the streets or working in them. I have good friends and a family that's always there no matter what. Today I love the woman I have become, because I fought to become her.



How did you get involved with the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks?

My sister forced me to come! My first interaction was going to a Youth Retreat. I wasn't sure if I liked it at the Fed at first because I was really shy and growing up it was never easy for me to make friends so I kind of just kept to myself. I stopped coming for a bit after that and when I came back I loved it, I was able to open up more and let my guard down to really get a good experience. Now I volunteer at the Fed all the time and I'm actually a part of 3 programs: YouthSpeak, Extreme Team and the Outreach Group.

What makes you passionate about the youth in care movement?

I grew up in Kelowna. I believe that Kelowna has one of the worst government care systems in Canada, and because I grew up in such a broken system I want to make sure I'm a part of something that benefits the youth in care in ways that I never had the opportunity to get.

What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

My biggest accomplishment was starting Douglas College. I have major anxiety and have all my life so sticking to my goal to finish has been challenging, but so far I have completed a year. This is my second year and I am still going strong, with a

grade average of an A-. I'm upgrading so that I can get into the Child & Youth Care Program next year. It hasn't been easy going to college without the background knowledge of high school (I dropped out.) And despite having issues with my mental illness I have proved to myself over and over that I am beyond capable of achieving the life that I want, and I work hard for it every day of my life. For me it's another step in the right direction of truly loving who I am inside.

Why do you think you've been able to overcome and accomplish so much so young?

The support system I have; my family and the Fed have always been there when I need them. But the two main reasons I've come so far and I'm able to do so much are two youth workers I've had: Adriana and Jordana. They've been with me every step of the way, even after I aged out and to this day, they have shown me unconditional love, have given me guidance, a metaphorical kick in the butt when needed and they have never given up on me. These women believe in me so greatly that it's hard not to believe in myself as well. They made me see in the possibility of a life I could never have even imagined being able to grasp before them, and for that I am forever grateful.

What inspires you most?

The inspiration I get to be the best person I can be in my life today comes from my nieces and nephews. I love those little buggers, all 5 of my nephews and my 3 nieces. I truly wouldn't be me without them; one of the greatest things I have ever been is an Aunt. I want them to see that greatness can come from even the worst of situations, and that the possibilities for their lives truly are endless.

What are some of the biggest life lessons and wisdom you have learned that you'd like to share with youth growing up in care and transitioning on their own?

I guess the biggest thing I've learned, coming from the situations I've lived through is to try not to doubt my abilities all the time. Growing up in the foster care system it is easy to get into the habit of thinking you aren't capable of having a better life, you're not smart enough or you're too broken. I am very much in this habit, and every time I do something that I felt I was not capable of, it really boosts my confidence in myself. It's still a learning process; I'm still working on it. Growing up without much in the sense of a 'cheering section' it's hard to believe that you can actually accomplish what you want for yourself and your life, but honestly I found that hard work and faith in yourself, and knowing that it's ok to reach out and ask for help when needed really does go a long way.

What are some of your goals for the future?

I'm working towards being a Youth Worker for sexually exploited youth. I guess for now that's my ultimate goal in life.

What changes would you like to see happen for children and youth in and from care in BC and around the world?

The biggest thing I want to see is better preparation and supports for individuals aging out of the ministry system. I aged out while I was still in a treatment centre program and I didn't have much preparation or support. I was left on my own, basically, to figure things out while struggling to piece my life back together. I am hoping to see more preparation and

education put forth so that individuals get the chance for a decent start to their life. Life skills, better housing support, and help with basic needs for one to start a life on their own, most without a family to rely on for help, is something that is very necessary.

Tell us something interesting or surprising about you that no one would guess!

Only a select few people know that I'm bisexual; a lot of people don't know that about me because I haven't come out to everybody. This is something I have kept mostly to myself for my whole life and only in this last year have I told less than a handful of people. Before I was never comfortable with people knowing that about me but in the last couple of years I have really been working on myself, I'm learning to embrace every part of who I am and I know that regardless of outside opinions I have to start being true to me.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would your song be?

My favourite song right now is "Scars to Your Beautiful" by Alessia Cara.

Anything else you'd like to share with us?

Sure! I just want to say how the Fed has helped to shape who I am today and who I am going to be. Through working with the Fed on the Youth in Care Movement doing various things I have learned to better cope with my anxiety. This has benefitted me greatly in academics as well as in every other aspect of my life. Before volunteering with the Fed I would allow my anxiety to control me in everything I did. For example — I wouldn't speak in public to a room with 5 people in it, not even if you handed me a million dollars. And now I can give presentations to conference rooms packed with people. In no way am I saying that my anxiety has left the building, it is still very much present in almost everything I do, but the difference now is I can push through it. Being a part of the Fed Family has been a life changing experience. Since coming here I have learned a lot, I have grown a lot and still it continues...

THE YOUTH IN CARE THAT I KNOW

BY KAMI S

I've been a youth under the Ministry's care for two years now. Within those two years I have met absolutely incredible individuals, some that I even consider family now. There's this stigma that these youth in or from care are bad people. For the longest time I didn't tell anyone I had a social worker who I worked with, in fear that they would classify me as a troubled teenager. I just want to say that it's not true. Yes, some youth in care are very closed off but they have reasons to be that way. I really just want to shine light on the youth in care that I know and love and I won't mention names for privacy but you all know who you are. I am so very happy to see the things that these AMAZING individuals are doing with their lives, I love seeing the updates on Facebook about the job interviews or the opportunities that have either come or are on their way to them. Youth in care are seen as rebellious, trouble makers, disrespectful and the list goes on but as I put in a speech, the youth that I see are artists, whether that's with music, paint or words. We are believers, we are strong. I really just want to put out my love and support to all youth in care, and just tell you all how proud I am and how happy it makes me to see all the great things you're accomplishing. You're amazing people and I'm very lucky to have you in my life.

PART FIRE. PART DREAMS

BY VALEEN J

I want to live as fire:
Wild
Sacred
Powerful.
I want to live as dreams:
Fearless
Timeless
Creative.



LOCAL LEADER PROFILE

PATIENT, GRATEFUL & RELIABLE MATTHEW S

Since we met Matthew back in April 2015, he's warmed our hearts with his kind-hearted spirit and dedication to the Fed—both as a member and Local Leader in Victoria. In June 2015, he was one of the Fed Ambassadors and Greeters at the second annual MCFD Guardianship Forum which focused on permanency. He's volunteered as a photographer at two of the Fed's Youth Retreats and he is committed to becoming the best-possible adult support he can be as he soon will transition to an alumni of the Fed! Matthew has, undeniably, been a wonderful addition to the Fed family and community. We really appreciate his unique calming energy and contributions towards the youth in care movement. Read on to learn more about this incredible young man!

Tell us about yourself!

My name is Matthew and I am 24 years old. I live in Victoria and I have been part of the Victoria Local for about two years. I became a Fed member a year and a half ago.

How did you get involved in the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks?

I was invited to a Local event, which was bowling, where I had a great time. After that I started to attend regular meetings, and here we are now, with me as one of the Local Leaders.

What makes you so passionate about the youth in care network?

Knowing that this organization is mainly run by former youth in care and those still in care is what makes me passionate, and knowing we are making the system better for children and youth that are still in care.



What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

My proudest accomplishment would be my cadet career where I aged out as a sergeant. In the 5 years that I was a cadet, my confidence in myself grew a lot. Cadets is also where I grew as a great leader. Several awards and medals that I received while in cadets include:

- ★ The Commanding Officers Award for top overall cadet in the corps
- ★ The Wesley Black Memorial cup for top senior cadet
- ★ The Cadet Service medal for 4 or more years of service
- ★ The Royal Canadian Legion Cadet Medal of excellence for outstanding cadet service, Citizenship and Comradeship.

Graduating from high school was also a proud moment for me.

Why do you think you've been able to overcome and accomplishment so much?

I have been able to overcome and accomplish so much because I'm the type of person that doesn't like to give up easily. Also, saying yes to lots of opportunities has helped me out.

What inspires you the most?

Not a what but a who! His name is Charles Trippy. Not only is he a Youtuber, he plays base for a band called We The Kings. Several years ago he suffered a seizure and found out he had a tumour in his brain. He did not let this stop him from accomplishing his goals. He is always telling viewers to be what they want to be, and to just keep breathing.

What are some of the biggest life lessons and wisdom you have learned that you'd like to share with youth growing up in care and transitioning on their own?

Don't be afraid to ask questions and to ask for help. Take any opportunities that come your way. If you are old enough join a local in your community. Also, just keep breathing.

What are some of your goals for the future?

I want to start a business in film and advertisement. I also want to visit several war sites in Europe. Lastly, I want to make a photography book.

What changes would you like to see happen for children and youth in and from care in BC and around the world?

I'd like to see the age of care raised to 25. I would also like to see more workshops (like budgeting, cooking and taxes, just to name a few) offered to youth about to age out.

Tell us something interesting or surprising about you that no one would guess!

I have 96 different Starbucks gift cards in my collection so far.

What would be your karaoke song if you could pick anything?

"Fireflies" by Owl City or "I'm Yours" by Jason Mraz.

Anything else you'd like to share with us?

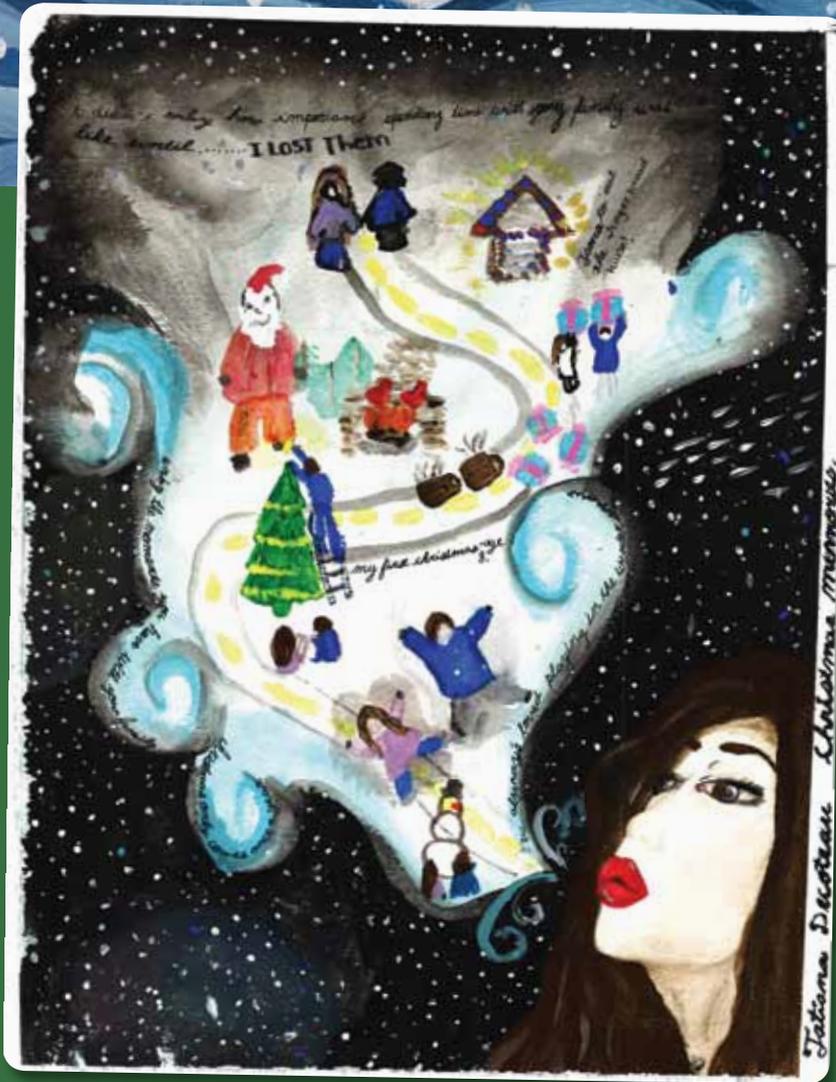
I'm quiet at first, but get to know me better, I become a talker!



BY JAYE S

HOLIDAY ART CONTEST

CHECK OUT THE WINNING
WORKS OF ART FOR THE FED'S
HOLIDAY ART CONTEST!



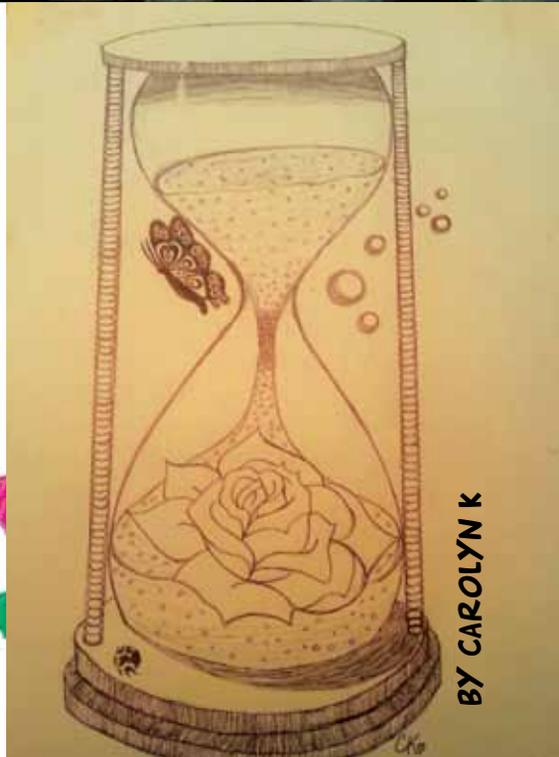
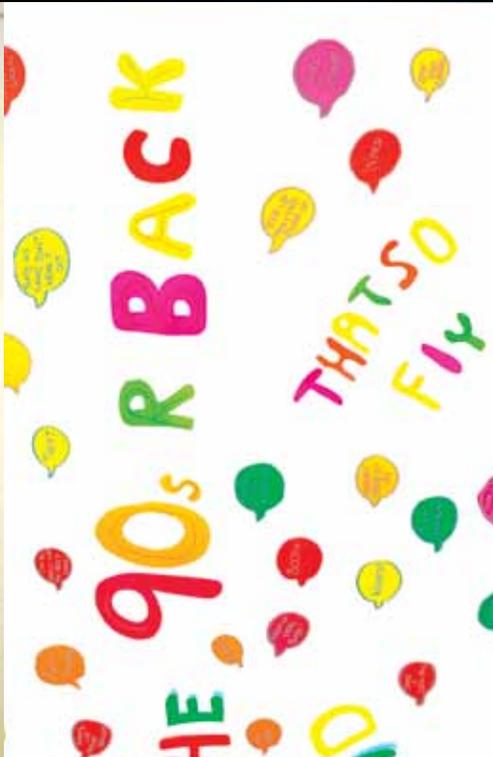
BY TATIANA D



BY CAROLYN K



BY SAM D



BY CAROLYN K

TRUE ROMANCE

BY BRYANT DORADEA

There was a time when a gram of kush and a couple of down homies were the only things I ever needed. Having two grams was considered wealthiness, and smoking whole Du Maurier's right down to the filter was life's only real luxury. Clouds of smoke billowed ostentatiously from our young mouths. It was like the smoke emanated a coolness that made us feel untouchable. The irony that inhaling death, in our youth, to feel more alive was not something we ever thought about. Thinking of course was not cool.

We looked to the older homies to guide us and we knew that if we ever made it to the day where we could knock people out with one punch or gulp down excessive amounts of liquor in one shot that would mean we truly had become masters of the universe! Practice made perfect.

We ran around the neighbourhood at high speed, memorizing every little thing we saw. Every shady deal, every corner store that would sell cigarettes to minors, every crevice that could be potentially exploited as a hiding place later on. We saved all of it to our memories. We were educated by the streets, and in return it demanded that we bought our tuition with pieces of our own innocence. A price we happily paid.

Finally, we were equals in a world, which up until that point, had treated us so unfairly. The streets did not discriminate, and they were not biased. The people we encountered did not wonder why we were there, and the alleyways we traversed offered a path to all those who sought refuge regardless of age, purpose, or past.

What a wonderful, magical place. Our brokenness had become our ticket of admission, and our scars, badges of honor. We learned to live with the pain, to embrace it, and inevitably we learned to love it.

We had felt so powerless to the iniquity that our young selves had to face; growing up in circumstances which made us feel small and weak. Not anymore though... for once we had an option. We had the choice to become empowered, and we chose this so-called

empowerment swiftly. We were twisted and turned until we were wrapped tightly by dozens of concrete roads, like a whirlwind of avenues, and they all whispered sweet romance into our ears. To be or not to be, that was the question. It was Shakespeare... it was f*cking poetry.

We were like cowboys in the Wild West, or Al Capones from Chicago. We did what we wanted, when we wanted, and no one was going to take that power from us ever again.

Dimly lit gazebos and playgrounds became our kingdoms when midnight came. Street corners were our community centres, and parks became a gladiator school where we fought for our honour.

There we were, 12-13-14 year old royals, reveling in the autonomous empire that we had built for ourselves. Peter pan had nothing on us... we had created our own Neverland

"I REACHED FOR MY INNOCENCE AND WAS QUICKLY REMINDED THAT I HAD GIVEN IT AWAY. SOLD TO THE LOWEST BIDDER FOR A PLETHORA OF KNOWLEDGE WHICH I WOULD NOW PAY A HEFTY PRICE TO UNLEARN."

and the pirates were any adult that tried to bring us home. The joke was on them though because we were already home. Why would we choose to be cooped up in small cells where the vastness of the mind gave space for demons to play? We would rather walk the plank and take our chances with the sharks.

We had no clue, nor did we ever think we would need one. We didn't know that our kingdoms would not last forever. We thought they would be eternal, like our youth, and we romanticized our untimely deaths as if we were discussing a great future achievement. I remember my friends and I had created a list of songs that we wanted played at our funerals. We made sure to let each other know, so when the time came, we could be sent off to the spirit world bumpin that good stuff one more time.

Mine was:

2pac — How long will they mourn me

2pac — Pour out a little liquor

2pac — Life goes on

Geto Boys — 6 feet deep

I guess you can imagine how shocked some of us were when we did make it. When we came out of the shadow, almost blinded by the light, and when we finally got a chance to really look at ourselves in the mirror. The years had aged us, and changed us. We looked into our own eyes and saw a thousand different stories, all playing simultaneously, like a massive cinema of trauma. Those stories created a mosaic of suffering that tormented us into madness. Where was Shakespeare now? Where had our romance gone?

I reached for my innocence and was quickly reminded that I had given it away. Sold to the lowest bidder for a plethora of knowledge which I would now pay a hefty price to unlearn.

I wish my soul was a dilapidated building. Maybe then I could simply gentrify it by tearing it down, and I'd build a nice new condo in its stead. I could pave these streets anew and put a coffee shop wherever a scar had been. Unfortunately, souls don't work that way, even if my neighbourhood does.

I journey down the same roads that used to be my haven and I am reminded every few blocks of some unfortunate incident or of fallen comrades whose memory still lingers in the pavement... immortalized in their youth forever.

I now look around and see a new generation of young ones who are about to embark on this same journey. They are every bit as stubborn and broken as we were. I sometimes see them and smile at their courage. Other times I am filled with dread at what I know will come... Or will it? I know they'll have something we did not... they will have the chance to be shown a better way by people who understand firsthand the allure of the concrete. The quiet beautiful lies that the whispers tell us. I however will tell them the truth! The truth is that the romance didn't leave us, it isn't gone... the truth is it never was.



PHOTOS BY CHRIS T



UNTITLED BY VALEEN J

In the midst of my favourite season, I have been losing my mind in hopes of finding myself. Have you ever noticed how the leaves take the time to change colour and then they fall so swiftly to blanket the ground? What a perfect metaphor. Some days I'm Skywoman falling, some days I'm the Turtle holding the Earth on my back. Today my leaves are changing colour and they will fall gently to blanket the Earth and support our feet. Last week I broke down and told my mom & a couple friends that I'm going crazy. They all agreed that it sounds like superhero training. I change with the seasons.

UNTITLED BY CAROL-ANN DW

People say that drugs and booze make you happy. They lead you to believe that everything's ok. They trick themselves into believing that the drugs and booze will help them cope in life. But once they wear off they will be right back where they were before. So they will do more and more and more until eventually they lose grip on reality. They become angry. Angry at the world, friends, family. They make reckless decisions to get back at the people who they blame for their problems. To the people who judge them. The people who don't approve of their habits or decisions. They become emotionally detached and hurt the people they know and people they love without resentment. When they quit the drugs and pull their lives together the memories of the things they have done while they were an addict will stick with them and haunt them for the rest of their lives. Some worse than others...some too hard to even bear to think about. Because when they do, the feelings, the guilt, sadness, anger, humility, and shame will rush through them and it feels like their soul is being crushed. Like they can't breathe. The pain in their chest almost makes them cry. Some do cry. Some are stronger than others and can make it through life. Others turn back to the drugs because they just can't handle the pain from the things they have done or the consequences of the decisions they have made.



MADE OF DECOLONIAL LOVE BY VALEEN J

Tell me,
did you dream in the womb
of a world perhaps unlike this?
Because you bring that
5-dimensional fire
you bring extraordinary explosions
of passion
I've seen your eyes sparkle with love like
the shining stars above
and sometimes they pierce through
the souls of men like lightning bolts!
I wish I was there for your birth
I imagine you approaching Earth
like a wave
you look small in the distance
yet your arrival proves to be powerful
They say you're just a drop in the water
well baby your drop creates great ripples
And I have met many days
but darling, you are a century
Staging sit-ins on our minds
Occupying our hearts
You are LOVED
You are CHERISHED
You are SACRED
The Creator took time with you!

BALANCE BY VALEEN J

I have friends who sit and plan
For the next seven generations
Committing to leave more than their story
Every teaching in mind for those children.

I have friends who stay in the present
And at most have plans for Friday night.

Balance.

FEAR BY MALCOLM O.

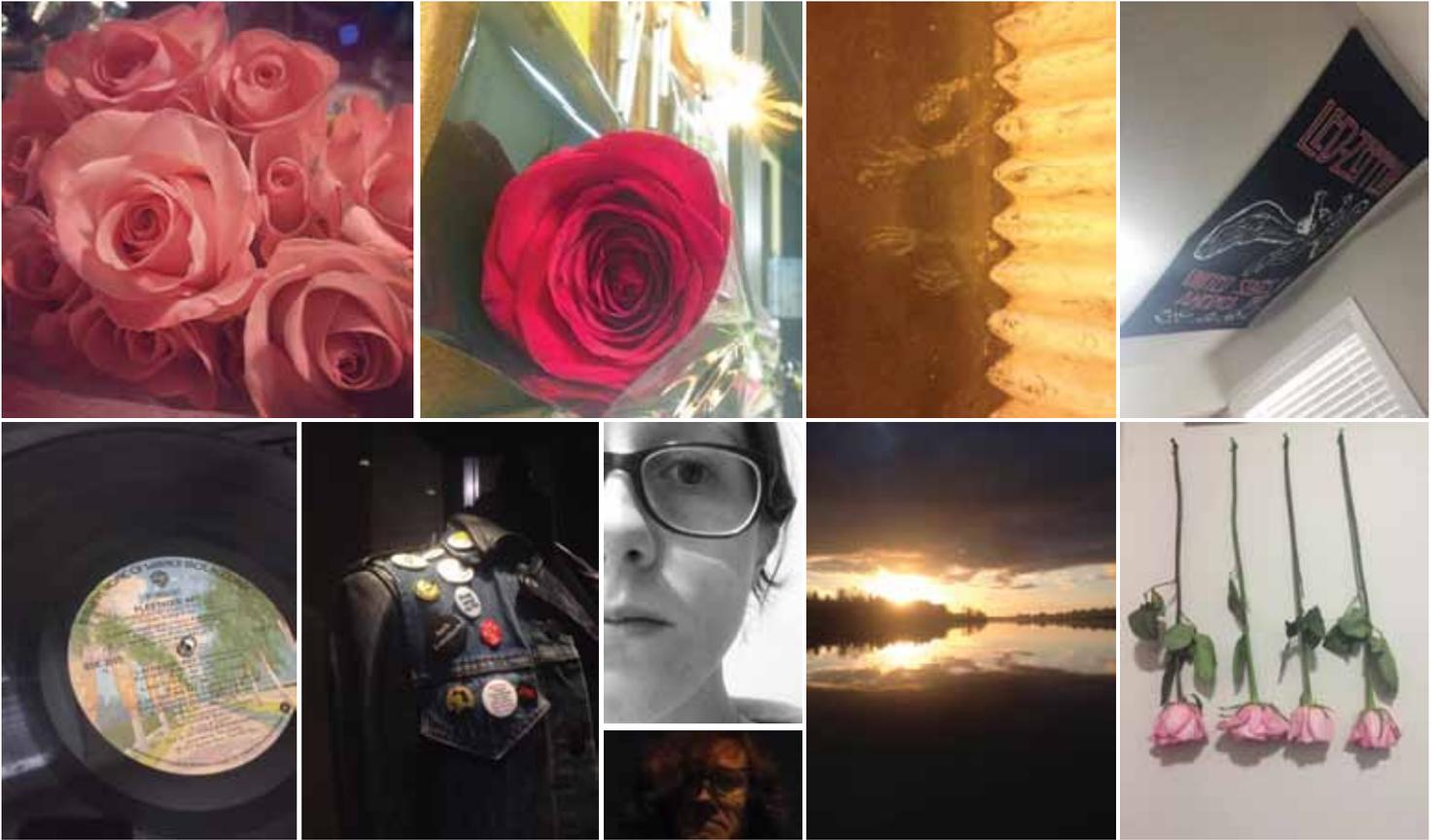
If you have anything to fear other than
death you're fearing life.
Are your fears going to stop you from living?
If you have a fear of falling, you fall and get
back up.
You have a fear of spiders? They are smaller
than you. Crush them and you will crush
your fears.
If you have a fear of heights don't look down.
Will it stop you from living your dreams and
living your life?
Accept fear as a fact not a force.
A fact that it will be a part of life, but not a
force that's going to get in your way!
If you let something stand in your way, how
will you ever get past it?
Let's say you're on a mountain and there's
an old, real rough looking bridge over a gap
and between both parts is about 1000ft.
You have a fear of heights but there's no
way around.
What are you going to do? You've got two
options: go back which is a full two days
walk, or cross the bridge.
Behind you is a life that was terrible. You
were barely making ends meet and you're
never happy there.
And across the bridge is this place that
you've never been to, never heard about
but there's a chance that it may be better
than your last life.
What do you do? You don't know what's
going to happen over there, you don't
know if it will be better or worse.
But still you have a glimmer of hope deep
inside your heart.
It's almost like a voice inside your head
saying take that first step.
Will you listen or will you walk back home
with your tail between your legs? Back to the
crummy life you just came from back to the
job that you hate, the house that you're sick of.
Or do you cross and take a chance?



HALLOWEEN PARTY

On Halloween the Fed invited members to come to the office during work hours to indulge in treats, horror movies, and a whole lot of laughter. Members and staff had fun dressing up in their costumes, featuring everything from a werewolf to a fox to a demon. What a great way to begin Halloween!





photos by Melinda H

MIRROR MIRROR

BY BRYANT DORADEA

When I stand in front of a mirror I can see you staring back at me. I see your disappointment, your judgments, your hatred. I see your dark eyes skimming my face searching for every imperfection. "Too many scars, too overweight, features that are too harsh, and a look that is too foreign". I can see your mind piercing my own; delving into my deepest insecurities. You make a list of my failures, my fears, of every bad event in my life, and you attach it to my name as if it was my identity. You know that dysfunction has been passed down to me like a family heirloom and you would love to see it destroy all that I am.

I admit it would be easier that way. If I could just forget the light, and become the shadow, I would never question the darkness again... Instead I stand here, in front of this mirror, and watch you watch me.

Why do you hate me so much? Is there

not good in me also? Have I not fought with every particle in my being to become a citizen of the light? In a journey where so many have traversed and failed I have overcome, yet you still beat me down with your expectations like a father that is impossible to make proud. I spent so long trying to please you that somewhere along the line I lost myself. For a long time I thought I was you, but I am not you, I am nothing like you. I am not my negative thoughts, I am not my misconceptions, I am not the iniquity of my past, or my family's past, I am not my inability to please you because all of these things, all of these ideas, came from you not from me.

You are the unquenchable world... The evil that forever seeks to drink from the souls of the vulnerable in order to validate and honor your own greatness. I am the warrior spirit that breaks chains and faces monsters. I am the seed of love

that has sprouted up through the cracks of the concrete. I am the silence between thoughts; the beautiful potential that the creator breathed life into.

I realized that when I look in the mirror I hate what I see. Not because I see me, but because I see you. I hate it because mirrors are built for the world of oppression, and I refuse to see myself through the eyes of a world that hates me. A world that doesn't even love itself.

If I want to see my reflection then I will see it in the smiles of my family and friends when we greet each other. In the eyes of those I lend an ear or hand to. Sometimes I may even catch a glimpse in placid lakes or streams where I also find my peace.

I imagine the greatest person that my mind could possibly conceive, and I strive every day to try and be this person. That journey is who I am... that is what I know but a mirror can never show me.



photos by Bayleigh P

LEST WE NEVER FORGET

BY GENEVIEVE?

I am 18 years old and I find myself hurt yet again.
Writing to be Zen.
Why is life so hectic now?
Is it because my people were forced to bow?

What I resent most in my life could very well be the only thing that led to my existence. I love my life but hate that I was nearly birthed into extinction.

You see,
I am not all that meets the eye.
Despite my pale complexion and hazel eyes,
With dirty blonde hair, how could it be,
I'm Aboriginal.
I know — where are my feathers? — how unoriginal.

My mother being a native girl who fell in love with a white man,
After residential school I am surprised she can,
Not only did the xwlaytens take our land,
And abused children every f*cking way they can,

THEY HAD THE AUDACITY TO GIVE IT A TIME SPAN?

“7 generations to overcome this hurt.”

That ones who survived it & did not get put into the dirt will pass down “residual residential school side effects”

“Homogenize addiction & abuse”

Because that is all they had in their childhood and soon it became all they knew?

We are far too brilliant to be anything other than resilient
Even after all that we've been through
We should try to cherish what we used to.
I am talking about our teachings.

How the chief was the poorest — because he gave the clothes off his back to his people.
How we used to dance,
And even smudge when now given the chance,
Sing about everything.
Carry our tradition through teaching how to teach.

Will someone please tell me why are we listening to their life span on residual side effects anyway? After all why trust the words of those who took our children away.

This time when they say I am “DIRTY”.
With riddled residential school side affects I will show them how wrong they are
In life I will avoid the bar and go far!
They're just the immigrants complaining about their own kind.
They won't control this young mind.

Placebo effect can be reversed it is called law of attraction.
With a complex mind like the one in our head — it's more than capable.
They must have known our potential.
Why else would they create residential?

Like the ones we write,
This is a story,
You can hold the pen
And re-write everything this time around,
& make our ancestors proud.

We do need to keep at least one thing with us from the past.
How will our ancestors hear our prayers
If our language does not last?

TUITION WAIVERS: GAME CHANGERS

BY RUBY BARCLAY

What do you want to be when you grow up? At one point in my life that was an easy question. I wanted to be a doctor, nurse, teacher or paramedic, and a mother. As I got older my dreams and aspirations changed, as did my life situation. Leading up to my time in care, this question was one of the hardest things I was asked. During my time in care, this was still a hard question for me to answer. Instead of coming up with answers, I would come up with more questions. Questions like how would I pay for school? How will I even afford to live when I age out? Where would I go? Who would accept me and my poor high school grades? Can I even graduate high school? What would my purpose be? What do I still believe I can do? Who can help me even fill out the application? At one point being in care was daunting enough day to day, which made thinking about getting through the weekend overwhelming, and my questions were more, would I even make it through to tomorrow. In other words, how could I even think about the future?

As I am writing this I would like to express that I sincerely empathize with all youth in and from care who are asking and searching for the same answers I was (and am still searching for now). It was not easy then, but I can at least say that now the path has a few more opportunities which provide the answers so much easier than it did before.

Being in care did change my life, and in most ways for the better. It was challenging of course, but in the long run it really did change my direction of where I was going. Being in care provided me with opportunities I would not have had before, because of the healthy relationships I was able to make. I remember one of those pivotal moments when I was 17: during a moment of crisis a great thing happened. I found out that university would actually be a possibility for me. How? TUITION WAIVERS for youth from care. My amazing youth worker (insert shout out here) who is extremely educated on opportunities for

youth showed me one day. She believed university would be somewhere great for me, and knew I had the ability to do it (insert teachable moment for all social workers, youth workers, foster parents, and youth connected supports here). What did I do with the information? My youth worker supported me into looking into universities offering tuition waivers, programs, and then she and my social worker helped me apply. I also told all my friends in and from care about TUITION WAIVERS!! And then I got accepted (that was a great day). Honestly, one of the best days of my life (I even framed the letter). The amazing thing was, on that day I got the letter it was not just my youth worker who believed I could do this thing called university, but also that my school (a lot of people who read applications) believed I could too. In a weird way, I felt like I got a team cheering me on.

Where am I now? Currently, I am a first generation university student, also a former youth in care, and in my third year of my Bachelor of Child and Youth Care at Vancouver Island University. I spend most of my time carrying around really heavy books, living and breathing student life, drinking caffeine related beverages, studying, researching, and also plotting to change the world. Just kidding (but I'm kind of not). But in all seriousness, I have been given the opportunity to complete a Bachelor's Degree at a fantastic institution that is constantly working to provide more for students in and from government care. In fact, I have been able to advocate for many youth in and from care in my third year practicum project, Fostering Success. I am working to build a campus that is educated, informed, and fosters a campus of resiliency for students formerly in care accessing the Tuition Waiver Program. Vancouver Island University is the first university in BC to have a Tuition Waiver Program, and the first to have a project like Fostering Success run by a person (me) who is an alumni of care. Which is just another reason to come to university everyone, because this university is super supportive,

and I am here making it cool! Stay tuned for more to come on that sweet project!

What is a Tuition Waiver? Well, here is the quick version: Tuition Waivers are essentially free education. If you have been in government care this applies to you. You have to apply for them, usually alongside your application to the university and then the university credits your student fees with the amount of your tuition for that semester. You can even take one class, FYI. Some universities also offer money for books and supplies, and other supports if needed. You can also access a Tuition Waiver, YEAF, and AYA (heck, even hold down a part-time job if you want) at the same time! If you don't know what any of the above is, we should talk, or talk to your social worker (insert tangible practice moment here). Overall, Tuition Waivers are one of the ways that transitions for youth aging out of care are improving.

Remember when I said being in care changed my life? So did university. Tuition Waivers are opportunities for people in and from government care to continue to grow and do amazing things. Some of my friends are doing Child and Youth Care like me, but you are not limited in the programs you can take. Depending on your university you can take anything from trades to majoring in science, and even exploring your studies. You can also complete upgrading and professional development. Some Tuition Waivers offer different opportunities, so check it out! Not only did I get an education at university, but I also have learned so much about myself, my purpose, my passions, made some of the best friends of my life, learned from some amazing teachers, gained mentors, found relational permanency and wicked job opportunities. I can also now answer the hard questions, like what do you want to be when you grow up? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? I can also reference them in APA if you'd like. The questions that used to be challenging are not so hard anymore because of game changers like Tuition Waivers. So, my question is: what do you want to take in university?



POWER SNACK! HOMEMADE GRANOLA BARS

INGREDIENTS

- ★ 1 Cup Rolled Oats
- ★ ½ Cup Honey
- ★ 1 TSP Vanilla Extract
- ★ 2 TBSP Creamy Peanut Butter

OPTIONAL ADDITIONS

- ★ ½ Cup Almonds Whole or Sliced or,
- ★ ½ Cup Peanuts or,
- ★ ½ Cup Shredded Coconut or,
- ★ ½ Cup of basically any nuts or seeds you deem fit
- ★ (Or chocolate chips, because... chocolate chips)

(You can add just about anything, so go ahead and mix and match. If you add more than a half cup of any one of the optional items, you may need some more honey)

DIRECTIONS

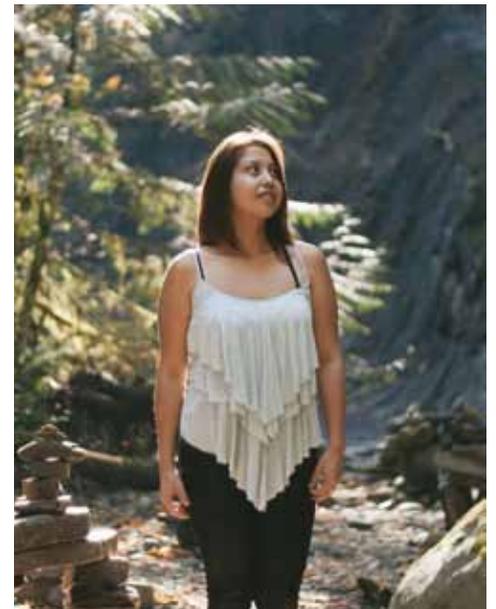
1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Grease a 9-Inch square baking sheet/dish.
2. Spread your oat and nut mixture evenly across the baking sheet. Toast the mixture until browned (roughly 10 minutes) then empty contents into a mixing bowl.
3. Mix honey, peanut butter, and vanilla extract in a small pot over medium-low heat. Cook until smooth.
4. Pour honey over the oat and nut mixture, in the mixing bowl, and stir to coat everything.
5. Spread the mixture evenly into the baking sheet/dish.
6. Bake in the oven for about 7 minutes for chewy granola, and 15 for crunchy.
7. Enjoy!

IGNITE YOUR SPIRIT

BY JAYE S

Over a weekend in October, myself and a team of other members of the MCFD's Youth Advisory Council joined the RCY at their pilot weekend Ignite Your Spirit, an event to create a report to help change and forge structural and systemic changes in the system. Over the course of four days, Indigenous youth in care attended workshops, activities and support. This unique opportunity was tirelessly planned by both the RCY and their magical Aboriginal Youth Team. The whole time I got to witness magic over and over again, the youth making connections, naming so many valid emotions and feelings, as well as reclaiming culture, language, song and ceremonies. I was so amazed by the youth attending; their resilience and their ability to see what was happening gave me the courage to fight even harder for them. On the last full day, the youth got the chance to present their findings from the workshops, activities and their time on Stia'les territory. In supporting the youth, we got the chance to bring up the issues that youth faced and how although the youth have suggestions, it's going to take everyone working together to create the change needed. I was so impressed by all the youth and their courage and strength! I am so honoured to have gotten the opportunity to participate and witness it. I would happily go again and get another chance to witness!

Photos by Josephine U; bottom left by Mich C; bottom middle by Bayleigh P; bottom right by Carley E





FEDERATION
OF BC YOUTH
IN CARE
NETWORKS



ANNOUNCEMENT BOARD



Congratulations to those who recently turned alumni: Andy Avik, Chris Tait, Hari Sun, and Janice Tourangeau. We're so excited for you!



Congratulations to alumni Sade Scott on the birth of her new baby Colin!

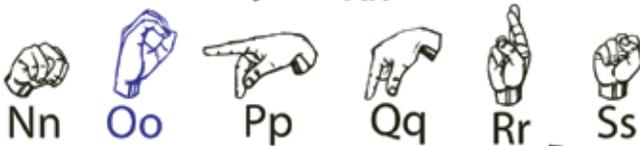


Congratulations to Nokomas T who started attending Thompson Rivers University and is enjoying her studies!

Congratulations to Youth Staff Star Martin for starting the American Sign Language & Deaf Culture Studies program at VCC!

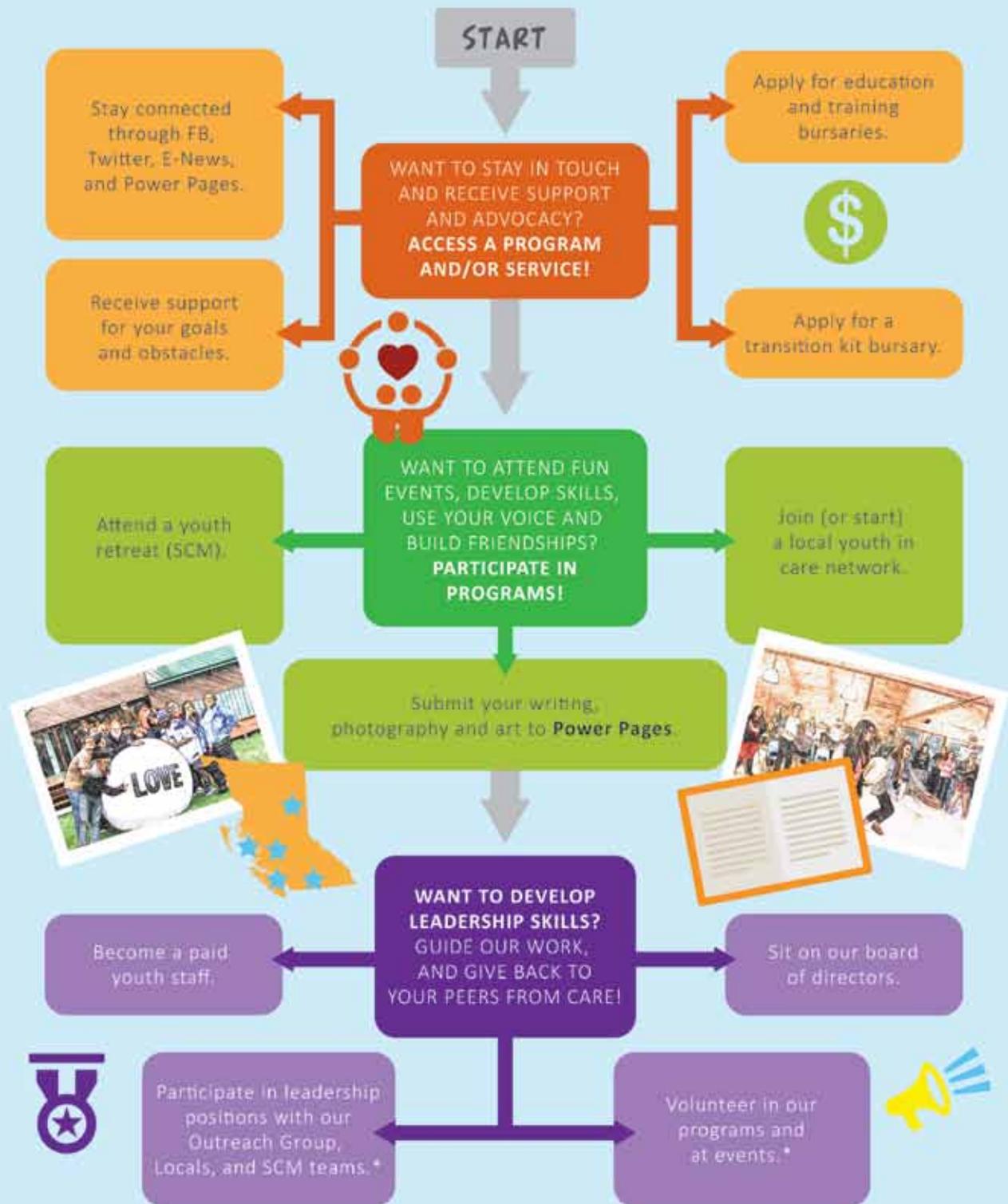
WE'RE SO PROUD OF ALL OF YOU!
#YOUTHINCAREAREAWESOME

If you or a young person in or from care you know has reached a major milestone, accomplished a goal or has something incredible to celebrate, please contact us!
powerpages@fbcyicn.ca



CHOOSE YOUR OWN FED ADVENTURE!

IF YOU ARE A YOUTH IN OR FROM GOVERNMENT CARE* IN BC BETWEEN THE AGES OF 14 AND 24, HERE ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN BECOME INVOLVED IN OUR FED COMMUNITY...



*Youth who volunteer earn honorariums (\$)