

# POWER PAGES

A MAGAZINE FOR  
YOUTH IN & FROM CARE  
AND THEIR ALLIES



FEDERATION  
OF BC YOUTH  
IN CARE  
NETWORKS



YOUTH PROFILES:  
JARED, VALEEN  
& SARAH!

HONOURING LOVELY LACY  
GATHERING OUR VOICES REPORT  
BC CHILD & YOUTH IN CARE WEEK!  
YOUTH SPEAK 2015  
JESS B'S ADVOCACY LETTER  
SKILLZ4LIFE: GOAL SETTING



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

IT'S  
FREE  
SO TAKE  
ONE!

SUMMER 2015

#44



FBCYICN is a youth-driven, provincial, non-profit organization 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

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## 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](http://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 ages 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 three editions a 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 by phone 1.800.565.8055, by email [powerpages@fbcyicn.ca](mailto:powerpages@fbcyicn.ca), or visit us online: [fbcyicn.ca](http://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 and last initial are printed with each submission
  - 19–24: unless they request to appear anonymous or indicate a pen name, first 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) at the editor's discretion
  - Alumni of care: unless they request to appear anonymous or indicate a pen name, both first and last name are printed with each submission unless otherwise appropriate
  - 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 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](http://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.

## THANK YOU LOCHDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL!



The Federation would love to thank the staff at Lochdale Community School for their generous donation in memory of long-time youth-in-care champion and FBCYICN member, Lacy Morin-Desjarlais. Your donation will help fund our Dream Fund Bursaries providing youth in and from care funding for education and training. Lacy knew how important education was and in her own ways she was a teacher to many of us. Your contribution to this work in her memory means so much to all of us.



♥ Lovely Lacy ♥

## THANK YOU FOR 10 AMAZING YEARS LYNN!

After over a decade of service to the Federation, our long-time HR consultant Lynn Curtis recently left the fold as she moved back into a full-time role with her employer. Lynn is a passionate individual committed to our mission and figuring out how our culture informs how we approach HR work like hiring, payroll and benefits and managing complaints. Through and through, Lynn demonstrated the highest levels of professionalism and knowledge to help steer the Fed through our growth and to set up cutting edge policies and procedures. We wish Lynn well on journey and the next adventure! Thank you so much, Lynn!

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SEE YOUTH PROFILES OF SARAH, VALEEN & JARED ON PAGES 12, 16 & 17!

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# POWER PAGES

EDITION #44: SUMMER 2015  
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AND CURRENT EDITIONS AT  
[fbcyicn.ca](http://fbcyicn.ca)

Dear Fed Members!

Time sure flies by between *Power Pages*... WHOA! We've sure been busy, with our Annual General Meeting, welcoming the new board members, planning events for the 5th Annual BC Child Youth in Care Week and the second annual Guardianship Forum, attending Gathering our Voices in Prince George, planning for our SCM North and working with communities across BC to open up Locals. Get comfy and read on for all the details!

## 2015 BC CHILD AND YOUTH IN CARE WEEK JUNE 1-7!

Our youth members advocated for this week, now in its fifth year, so their diverse brothers and sisters in care could grow up feeling celebrated for their talents and accomplishments, surrounded by a supportive community who stands with them. They also wanted to raise awareness about the barriers facing youth in care and to fight the stigma that comes with being a "foster kid." As you're reading this, BCCYICW will have just been celebrated in communities all across the province (we've counted 26 events so far!), with support from youth advisors KT and Nichole and a team of provincial partners. We hope you were able to attend and join in festivities online as well! View the youth-made promo kit, videos, awards, events and more on the new BCCYICW website: [bcchildandouthincareweek.com](http://bcchildandouthincareweek.com) and stay tuned to our next edition for photos and details from this year's festivities!

**#bccyicw #youthincareareawesome #standwithyouthincare**

## BRAND + COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE!

You may notice that this *Power Pages* looks a little different. At the February SCM, Outreach Group youth Caz and Mary plus staff Margaret and Lisa hosted a consultation with members to get feedback on the OG's plan to update the brand (what an organization looks and sounds like). Members chose the direction of a more photo-filled, colourful, comic-book-style look. We've developed new brochures and are now updating the rest of our branded materials to

reflect our updated fonts, colour palette and overall look. Keep your eyes peeled for these fun developments and cool stuff!

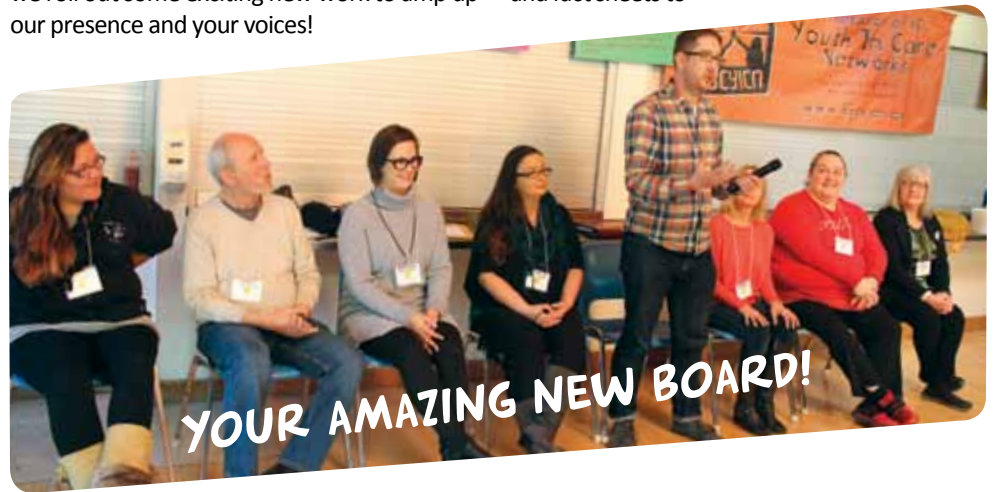


Lisa's been updating our Communications Strategy, with input from youth, staff and board! The Communications Strategy outlines in lots of detail what we share with members and the world—and when and how to make sure we're doing our best to let everyone know what we're up to, amplify youth voices, and inspire change and community action. Keep your eyes peeled as we roll out some exciting new work to amp up our presence and your voices!

Youth in Care Issues, and ten youth will also be emceeing and hosting the workers during the two days. Check out our next addition of *Power Pages* to see how it went!

## "AGED OUT" WEBSITE LAUNCH!

The Adoptive Families Association and MCFD — with some support from us — have spent the past two years gathering feedback from youth out of care to find a way to better support their needs as they transition into adulthood. An exciting new website, [AgedOut.com](http://AgedOut.com), will be launched during BCCYICW aimed at providing youth with online resources, life-skills learning and fact sheets to



**YOUR AMAZING NEW BOARD!**

## GOV (GATHERING OUR VOICES)!

Every year the BC Federation of Aboriginal Friendship Centers hosts an amazing conference that celebrates Aboriginal young people and culture — plus tons of really cool workshops about pretty much every topic you can think of. This year the conference was held in Prince George and we brought five youth reps. Find out more about our amazing trip on page 8! **#GOV2015inPG**

## PERMANENCY GUARDIANSHIP FORUM

We have partnered with MCFD Guardianship, Adoption and Permanency Planning team and MCFD Aboriginal Services to host a two-day Guardianship forum called "My Key to the House: Permanency Now, Connections Forever" this June 9–10. The forum theme is: achieving permanency for every child and youth in care, bringing 200 social workers, foster parents, team leaders, practice consultants and community service managers together to learn about innovative and successful practices from around the province through youth and adult-led workshops. Our amazing Outreach Group will be delivering their presentation on the Fed and the Top 5

help navigate some of the challenges they face leaving care like housing, nutrition, and mental health — just to name a few. Stay tuned for online updates about this amazing new resource! We encourage you to sign on and explore. By the way did we mention that using this site will give you access to real world goodies like gift cards???

## IS A LOCAL YOUTH IN CARE NETWORK COMING TO A COMMUNITY NEAR YOU?!

This past year program manager Chris has been touring the province and meeting young people and adult allies who are really excited about starting Local Youth in Care Networks in their communities. Our goal is to have eight official locals by the end of the summer! If you are interested in finding out more about Locals in your community or how to start a local please, contact [chris.buchner@fbcyicn.ca](mailto:chris.buchner@fbcyicn.ca)

**Current Locals:** Victoria and Kelowna  
**Communities who have applied:** Prince George  
**Communities who've started the application process:** Nanaimo, Kamloops, Surrey, Vancouver and Port Alberni

## PLAN YOUR PATH TOUR & YOUTH SPEAK!

As you all know Chris has been traveling the province with our wonderful community partners, the Representative for Children and Youth and the Public Guardian and Trustee. On this tour we have met with over 200 youth who are involved with 21 of the 23 Delegate Aboriginal Agencies across BC! He has been hosting YouthSpeak consultations where over 200 youth shared their needs, issues and ideas around their experiences being in care. Their input will become our 2015 YouthSpeak report after creating a survey to hear from even more youth. We'll be meeting with decision makers and youth to create a plan to make positive changes in the system. Stay tuned for our survey and report!

## POWER PAGES

You are lookin' at it silly :P Continue reading to see all the amazing things the Fed and youth in and from care around the province have been up to. Check out page 1 if you are a young person from care and would like to submit. You are eligible for an honorarium of up to \$50/edition!

## WE ♥ OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Our Board Nominations Committee have been hard at work finding us amazing people to join our board. At the SCM, our greeters, photographers and MCs led us through the weekend in great spirits! Our distribution assistants mailed *Power Pages*, and our Dream Fund Selection Committee awarded inspiring young people with bursaries.

We also recruited new members for both Fed youth leadership teams, the Outreach Group (OGs) and the SCM Extreme Team! There are also two youth advisors sitting on the BC Child and Youth in Care Week planning committee. Stay updated via Facebook and our website for lots of interesting and meaningful opportunities coming up!

## ARE WE GOING TO BECOME A CHARITY?!

We've been reviewing the advantages and challenges that Registered Charitable Tax Status would bring with the board, staff, members and alumni. Recently, at the February SCM, we discussed with members the idea of pursuing Charity Status which would enable us to get funding from more sources, like foundations and donors; we would become a charity in addition to being



## MESSAGE FROM YOUR



Dear Members,

*Whew! You elected a new board team in February, including some returning directors, and we hit the ground running! In addition to taking some time to get to know each other, we've focused on reviewing our finances, leadership roles on the board, introducing our board/staff/member/alumni committees and the next steps on our journey towards Registered Charitable Tax status. We've decided to use this journey as a way to start our committee work all together. I'm hoping that by the time you're reading this edition of Power Pages, you will all have had a chance to hear and/or read about the benefits and costs of obtaining registered charitable tax status, and cast your vote!*

*Would you like to know more about your amazing board members, and why they are serving on your board? Check out their bios [fbcyicn.ca/about/board/current-board-members/](http://fbcyicn.ca/about/board/current-board-members/) and meet them in this short video [youtube.com/watch?v=DZk7zUP7z1U](http://youtube.com/watch?v=DZk7zUP7z1U).*

*Are you curious about what goes on at board meetings? Check out our meeting minutes [fbcyicn.ca/about/board/board-of-directors-meeting-minutes/](http://fbcyicn.ca/about/board/board-of-directors-meeting-minutes/) for more details. And, know that you're always welcome to attend a board meeting — in person or by phone — any time. Feel free to contact me at [lynellanderson74@gmail.com](mailto:lynellanderson74@gmail.com) to make arrangements, or with any questions that you might have.*

Respectfully,  
Lynell

a non-profit. We've relied on just one source of funding for the bulk (80–85%) of our budget (the Ministry of Children and Family Development) since our start in 1993! We've not received an increase in our core MCFD contract in over six years and during that time a lot has changed and expenses have increased.

Youth members made it clear they are excited about this change but wanted us to give more members the opportunity to learn about this issue in June at a Special General Meeting (SGM) to provide their feedback again on whether or not to move forward with a Registered Charitable Tax Status application—great inclusive and thoughtful decision making, members! A committee of youth, alumni, staff and board is now assembled to engage our membership and support the best SGM voting turn-out possible, including distance voting by email, phone and mail! Please check our website for updates on this decision.

## STRATEGIC + ANNUAL PLANNING

Like most non-profits these days, we have a tighter budget to do the same things we've always done. We also have to work more in some areas than we have in the past to make sure MCFD will keep giving us money! That means we have to adjust and add some things

to stay on budget and make sure we continue to get funding! We've created a plan to do this, and will be getting input from youth just before this magazine goes to print, and then we'll be off working hard with our plan for the year! See page 9 for a more detailed update about our planning!

## TRANSITION & DREAM FUND BURSARIES

Check out page 5 for updates on our bursary distribution. Our bursaries support youth to overcome key barriers in pursuing their goals.

## SCMS (STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS)

We've been working hard with extreme youth members Caz, KT, Nichole, Tanner, Jeremiah, Braydon-Lee and Raven to plan our first SCM in the north on the traditional territory of Lheidli T'enneh-Prince George. We're excited to spread the love and engage more youth across the province. See page 4 for more about SCMs.

*Now enough from us...read on for the good stuff—creative and brilliant magic from our members!*

*Much love and hugs,  
The Fed Staff*

# SCM #67 SHENANIGANS!



Balloon messages released for Lacy



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 ★ ★

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FBCYICN

#YOUTHINCAREAREAWESOME  
#STANDWITHYOUTHINCARE  
#JOINTHEVILLAGE

## 2015 SCMS

SCMs, or Steering Committee Meetings, are weekend retreats for youth in or 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 or from care, share common experiences and have fun! Attending an SCM can be very rewarding — and there are always tons of new youth attending, and tons of staff and allies there to support a safe and inclusive weekend. ☺

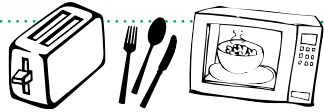
NEXT ONE:

# SCM #69 OCT 2015

DATE & LOCATION TBD

To apply to attend or if you have any questions or concerns about upcoming SCMs, please contact Steve at [steve.smith@fbcyicn.ca](mailto:steve.smith@fbcyicn.ca) or 1.800.565.8055

# FBCYICN EDUCATION & TRANSITION BURSARIES FOR YOUTH FROM CARE!!



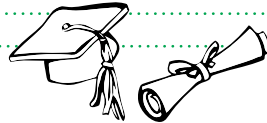
## ARE YOU TRANSITIONING OUT OF CARE???? TRANSITION KIT BURSARY!

GET THINGS YOU NEED TO HELP WITH LIVING INDEPENDENTLY!

Three times a year, we offer a Transitions Kit Bursary for young people (14–24) who are about to age out of care or those who have aged out of care.

This province-wide bursary provides youth in or from care (14–24) with a \$150 transition kit — items that will support young people who are transitioning or have transitioned to independence. FBCYICN’s “in care” definition includes: continuing custody orders (or permanent ward), temporary custody orders (temporary ward), youth agreements, kith and kin agreements (now out of care placements), voluntary care agreements, correctional facilities (secure and open custody) and various specialized government agreements.

Be sure to check out the deadlines, application and eligibility here [fbcyicn.ca/programs/transitions/](http://fbcyicn.ca/programs/transitions/) If you have any questions about this opportunity, please don’t hesitate to contact Steve at the FBCYICN (604) 527-7762 or at [steve.smith@fbcyicn.ca](mailto:steve.smith@fbcyicn.ca)



## DREAM FUND BURSARY!! WHAT’S THE DREAM FUND?

Did you know that if you have any questions about school, like how to get into post-secondary school, which funding is available, 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 around 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 separate bursaries. One of the bursaries is our Education Achievement Fund; this bursary awards recipients up to \$2,500 for post-secondary education. The other bursary we have is called our Reach for Success bursary; this bursary provides youth up to \$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](http://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 \$2,500 to three awesome applicants pursuing post-secondary education through the Education Achievement Fund, and another \$1,500 to five wonderful young people through our Reach for Success bursary to help them with skill building and extra-curricular activities.

#### REACH FOR SUCCESS:

Aisha M \$500 towards driving lessons  
Brian P \$192 towards driving lessons  
Brittney G \$460 towards driving lessons  
Travis P \$348 towards assistant water safety instructor course

#### EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT:

Caitlin D \$1,000 towards Thompson Rivers University  
Keely C \$500 towards Ryerson University  
Kayla L \$1,000 towards University of the Fraser Valley

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

Every selection process we always 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 our website: [fbcyicn.ca](http://fbcyicn.ca) #ittakesavillage #jointhevillage

## UPDATE FROM THE REP



Hello to all,

I hope you are enjoying the start of spring!

I wanted to share a resource available for those of you with post-secondary education aspirations. Back in 2013, I issued a challenge to BC’s publicly funded post-secondary institutions — to waive the cost of tuition and help eliminate a major barrier to higher education for former youth in care. Education affects almost every measure of well-being — from financial independence, to family functioning, to health. I know that tuition waivers can make all the difference in inspiring young people and helping them to meet their career goals.

Vancouver Island University was the first to meet that challenge and about one-third of BC’s universities, colleges and institutes have followed suit. I believe that there are even more ready to step forward. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to share your support and to read about any developments as they happen.

Recently, my office launched a new mobile app, Rep4Rights, to help us reach out to children and youth in their preferred channel. The app is easy to download by going to the iStore or GooglePlay or by visiting my website at [www.rcybc.ca](http://www.rcybc.ca) Rep4Rights includes a lot of useful information about how you can stand up for your rights and interact more effectively with your caregivers and service providers. It also provides key contact information for my office and explains how we can help. There is even an interactive game through which you can test your knowledge about your rights. We encourage everybody to download it and try it out.

Thank you for the opportunity to stay in touch. If you need to talk to an advocate, please contact us at 1-800-476-3933. You can also check us out at [www.rcybc.ca](http://www.rcybc.ca)

Sincerely,  
Mary Ellen Turpel-LaFond  
Representative for Children and Youth

# VOLUNTEERING AT FBCYICN!

GIVING BACK & GETTING BACK!

*"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."*  
— Edmund Everett Hale, American author, historian, and minister

At the 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 February 2015 (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.



## YOUTH MEMBER VOLUNTEERS (14-24)



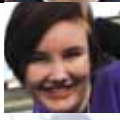
Adam W  
Andy A  
Ashley J  
Bliss G  
Braydon S  
Cammy L  
Cazlynn D  
Ivan W  
Jared E



Josh B  
Joshua W  
Katrina S  
KT M  
Mary E  
Matthew S  
Miche C  
MJ Z  
Nate L



Nichole N  
Sandy K  
Stephen C  
Theresa O  
Theresa T  
Tre T  
Valeen J  
Wheeshay M  
Zack Y



# INTERESTED IN GET BY GIVING BACK, YOU

YOU CAN DISCOVER NEW INTERESTS,  
AND GUIDE THE FED AS WE LOOK TO

We have volunteer opportunities for everyone 14 and older who is living in the Lower Mainland or other parts of BC. Through our volunteer program, we match you to opportunities according to your interests and skills to help ensure your volunteer experience is as fun and meaningful as possible.

As a youth volunteer, you will receive a \$100 honorarium for every 20 hours of volunteer work completed. 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! We train volunteers for all positions.

## WHERE CAN I HELP OUT?

It's important to remember that the Fed's work could not be done without people volunteering their time for the roles we have listed below. Each one 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 Holiday Cards, *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.

## ALUMNI MEMBER VOLUNTEERS (25+)

Aaron Chew  
Jessy Neal

Raven Wright  
Sarah Dawkins

## ADULT ALLY VOLUNTEERS (19+)

Agnes Varona  
Andrea Thibodeau  
Andrew Szabo  
Britta Peterson  
Chelsea Turpin  
Corie Potter-Lowden  
Danielle Vienne  
Debbie Cox

Gary Tennant  
Jane Woolends  
Jeff Schiffer  
Joey Fearon  
Kaitlin Crabtree  
Kim Lee  
Laura Fritz  
Lynell Anderson

Mary Ann Leo  
Michelle Hourie  
Roland Gurney  
Ryan Jorgensen  
Ryan Wong  
Tanika Dodds  
Tara Skobel

## INTERESTED? QUESTIONS?

Contact **Jessica Chu**, Youth Participation Coordinator, [jessica.chu@fbcyicn.ca](mailto:jessica.chu@fbcyicn.ca)  
Phone: 604-527-7762 (ext. 104), Toll-Free: 1-800-565-8055 (ext. 104),  
Cell/Text: 604-353-3495 and Facebook: Jessica Chu at FBCYICN



# BECOME A MEMBER!

## NOT BEING INVOLVED? ARE YOU GETTING BACK!

**BUILD ON SKILLS. MAKE NEW FRIENDS.  
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 a 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 care; group homes; mental health, addiction, and custody facilities; youth agreements; independent living and extended family care. 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 as family 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 family today by filling out a membership form found on our website:  
[fbcyicn.ca/programs/membership/](http://fbcyicn.ca/programs/membership/)





GOV learning & fun!

# THE FED DOES GATHERING OUR VOICES 2015!

The Fed brought five youth to Gathering Our Voices that was held on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation in Prince George. Nothing beats being in a room full of 1000 Aboriginal youth screaming Native Pride — the energy was incredible! Read on for updates from some of our Fed Youth Ambassadors and check out some of our photos! #GOV2015inPG

*My time at Gathering Our Voices... Attending all the workshops really inspired me to actually be more active. I also enjoyed meeting new folks and seeing everyone have such an awesome time. I loved my workshops because they were active and fun. I also enjoyed some of the elders talking about their life stories because it reminded me of my life and how to change my life and do better. I would like to thank you wonderful folks for this awesome opportunity for this fine trip. Also I had a great time at the dinner for Aboriginal Youth in Care, especially receiving our wonderful masks. — Andy*

*My experience at GOV was great, I had lots of fun. My favourite workshop was the*



*fitness workshop. It was fun while you were still exercising. If I could, I would want to come back for another GOV. I liked to meet new people, hear their stories and know where they are from. — Andre*

*My name is Jocelyn. I went to GOV with Steve. I liked it because we had so many fun workshops and met so many new friends. — Jocelyn*

*This GOV was great; I met awesome new people and made great new friends. I had fun with the people I came with and learned lots of new stuff having to do with projecting our voices, and what is power. I bonded with my family, cousins, sisters, brothers, etc. It's a great experience so if you ever want to be heard or need to collect who you really are, then you should sign up to go. — Isaac*

*My name is Tawni and this was my first time attending GOV conference. This conference was really awesome. It was really great to meet other youth from all over the province and I enjoyed all of my workshops they were really fun! I would attend GOV conference again. — Tawni*



Some of our amazing VYICN peeps!

## UPDATE FROM OUR VICTORIA LOCAL!

Here's what's been happening with the Victoria Local over the past few months:

Since January we have hosted a number of our Youth Transitions and Support Program workshops that include "Advocacy in Action," "Beyond the Classroom — Employment Readiness," "Learning Through Loss — The Good Grief Workshop," "Communicating with your social worker and the MCFD Complaints Process." Our upcoming workshops include "Suicide Prevention," "How to Cook series" and "Youth Financial Empowerment." Plus, we have hosted our Annual Winter Celebration and Glow in the Dark Mini Golf Adventure.

The Foster Parent Support Service Society is our new host agency! We are very honoured to be connected with them and believe it is going to be an awesome fit. We thank them very much for their ongoing support of our Network and appreciate all they do for youth in care.

We are very sad to say "until next time" to our longtime adult facilitator Corie Potter-Lowden and wish her the best of luck in her new adventures! She has been an amazing part of our team and is going to be very much missed. Thank you Corie for your hard work, commitment and energy that you have brought to our network. Until our paths meet again <3

We are looking forward to the next few months as we celebrate BC Child and Youth in Care Week with our Annual Ice Cream Social and our 3rd year anniversary on June 19th. Again thank you to everyone one that makes it possible for Victoria's Youth in Care Network to support youth in and from government care. A special thanks to the FBCYICN, Lex Reynolds Permanency and Trust Grant, the Foster Parent Support Services Society, Pacifica Housing Advisory Association, Fairfield Gonzales Community Centre and of course the network mentors, Chelsea, Cammy, Jared, Aaron and Tara.

In Friendship,  
Tara

## STRATEGIC AND ANNUAL PLANNING UPDATE

The staff at the Federation have been hard at work since January trying to put together a balanced budget and annual plan for this fiscal year (April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016), based on the number of hours that staff work. Every year this process is challenging as for the past few years our budget and expenses have been larger than the core contract dollars we receive from our primary funder at MCFD. This has placed us in the position to have to go back to the table each year and think carefully about how we spend our time and to balance (A) the things our primary funder needs us to do in order to keep getting money from them each year with (B) the areas that our members have highlighted as the best ways to support our province's amazing youth in and from care.

**It's tough because our priority is being youth driven, but we also need to make sure we keep getting money so we can exist for our youth!**

Over the years we have built up a series of programs and services that have balanced the priorities of both the youth and our funder in large part because our members' and MCFD's goals for us to be as provincial as possible and to focus on valuing local development have been the same.

This year, the Ministry has highlighted two areas they'd now like us to focus on: (A) preparing a logic model (which just means outlining why we do what we do in

each program and service, what outcomes we hope to achieve, how we show that we have achieved our goals and what the total costs are for with each program and service) and (B) expanding the number of local networks we have up and running to 6–8 across the province.

In order to accomplish this and secure future MCFD funding (we are in the last year of our current contract) this year we have shifted a chunk of our staff time and resources over to local development and statistical tracking (this is the work of the logic model). This has meant finding work that could be put on hold for a year and/or ways to do what we typically do in less time and in some cases with a bit less money.

**We have put together a proposal that will be taken back to youth for discussion and feedback soon before we finalize our plan for the year.**

For an update on what this means for our programs and services, please see our website and Facebook for an update. That said, we are also setting up a strategic planning process to help us set up a game plan to continue to balance the needs of our members with our funder's over the next three to five years. If you have any questions, as always, connect any time with me, Jules, your Executive Director:  
jules.wilson@fbcyicn.ca or 778-389-9492



LACY, YOU ARE NOW DANCING WITH THE ANCESTORS AND IN OUR HEARTS.



Beadwork: Tobi Mitchell

Photo: John Bellerose



Art: Lacy Morin-Desjarlais



# HONOURING LOVELY LACY

Like so many of us in our community, we are grieving the devastating loss of long time Fed Youth and Alumni Member Lacy Morin-Desjarlais' whom we lost in February to a car crash outside of Regina. We have lost a profoundly compassionate, loving, brave, strong and creative leader, mentor, support, colleague, friend and all-around rockstar. We send our deepest condolences and love out to all those in her family, immediate, extended and chosen. She has been an absolutely vital and powerful force in shaping and nurturing our organization and community for more than 15 years, during which she generously shared her infinite energy and gifts. We are so proud and honoured to know her and it is absolutely an understatement to say that this has been a devastating loss for our immediate and extended Fed family and community.

All of us who have had the honour to know her—whether for a lifetime or a few moments, or who've felt her presence through her work and leadership in our community here in BC, Saskatchewan and beyond—have felt her beautiful presence and will be grieving and processing many difficult emotions. It has been a difficult year for our community. Please know

that we are all right there with you, that whatever you are feeling is right, and we will all be feeling and processing this loss for a long, long time in our own ways and as a community. Perhaps the only solace we have is the beautiful support and words we witnessed extended by so many of our members, alumni and allies to each other online, at memorial services and at our Honouring Ceremony in February. We were so moved by the beautiful outpouring of love, support and appreciation for this magnificent woman from members of our extended Fed community. We are so grateful and proud of the love and support echoed throughout our community. You guys are seriously awesome.

Lacy is and will always be at the heart of our organization. While there really are no words powerful enough to capture this loss, we are always here to talk and be here and encourage everyone to continue reaching out to supports within and outside our community and do what feels right to take care of you. Be in touch if you'd like to know about available grief support.

With all our love, hugs and deep sadness,  
The Fed Staff





# LOVE AND FAREWELLS (NOT GOODBYES!) FROM AWESOME FED STAFF LISA!

We've had the privilege of working with Lisa Mickleborough for over six years! As our Communications Coordinator, she has worked hard to amplify our members' brilliant voices through *Power Pages* and the OGs, educate and engage the community through campaigns, news and social media, help the staff look their best in their work and connect and support our Fed Fam with lots of love and laughs. Thank you so much for your dedication over the years and we are so excited for the next steps of your journey. We'll miss you lots and know you won't ever be too far. With Love,  
The Fed Team

Dear Members and Wonderful Fed Community, I'm writing ya'll to share some bittersweet news: I'll be returning to Toronto this July after more than six awesome years in Vancouver and with the Fed. I'll still be connected, doing some consulting work, but of course it's not the same as being here.

As some of you know, Ontario is home for me and I've always planned on returning... eventually. I came to Vancouver as a short adventure which turned into a life and a love for this province and the incredible people in this community we call the Fed. But after lots of discussions—and our recent wedding in Toronto—my partner Joey and I decided it's time to move home and be closer to the bulk of our (chosen and related) family, including young nieces, nephews and aging relatives. I also have grad school plans in the years to come. It has been a super difficult decision but we know it is right for us.

I have stayed in BC for years longer than I planned in large part because of each of you and our work together. This makes leaving very difficult. Even though it's normal and healthy for people to come and go in organizations—and people stick around here longer than most workplaces—it's so hard because the relationships we develop at the Fed are real and touch our hearts and lives forever and beyond 9:30–5. There is something really special and magical here. The good news is, that has always and will continue to be the case. Our staff, board and members will come and go as we navigate

our own journeys, but it is this community's passionate, loving soul and our shared commitment to improving the lives of youth in and from care that lasts.

There will be so many amazing memories I get to take with me thanks to all of you: 18 life-changing SCMs, 19 inspiring Power Pages, the amazing Outreach Group's development, growth and advocacy; watching BC Child and Youth in Care Week grow from your ideas to a major awareness-raising celebration; seeing media coverage about youth in care grow and shift to a more justice-oriented, empowering and less stigmatizing place; not to mention IFCO, GOV, holiday parties, and office shenanigans.

Most of all, I'll carry with me the close relationships I've built with many of you. I have been beyond proud to see our community grow into thousands of youth and allies building connections, growing as leaders and pushing for change across the province. To see young people take on more leadership roles than ever before, volunteering thousands more hours each year. To see so many of you soar and become advocates, peer-supports, mentors, scholars, strong community members, take on bright careers and raise loving families. I've learned from you how infinite our potential is.

From you I've also learned or deepened my learning in so many ways:

- ★ We all do best when we're supported to do our own thing, whatever that thing is
- ★ Youth have all the answers, when asked
- ★ Youth fight tirelessly for others with the hugest hearts, if allowed
- ★ Youth can do absolutely anything, but that youth from care have to be superhero-resilient
- ★ Being an adult means accepting the hand you were dealt—however crappy—and taking responsibility for your future and your community, not because it's fair, but because that's the only way to be happy
- ★ To "keep our cool pants at the door"
- ★ Wearing your heart on your sleeve (AKA vulnerability) is true strength and leadership
- ★ The importance and power of chosen family and the many forms permanency and belonging takes

- ★ The wisdom and strength found in learning, celebrating and reviving ancestral cultural teachings
- ★ There are never too many group hugs, or emojis
- ★ That it's all going to be okay
- ★ That I wish more people were like our members...

Here's what I know FOR SURE about our members (and why the stigma youth in care face is BS): I don't wish more young people had to come into care or go through all the trauma, instability and barriers it typically brings. I'd rather see our province learn from our ancestors who knew how to be "the village" it takes to raise a child and support loving families to raise their children. **But I can't ignore the fact that our members are the strongest, most empathetic, compassionate, empowered, wisest and most generous young people I've ever met.**

This stigma is also sooo completely wrong because all I've seen is, when youth from care have even a sliver of the support and community behind them that other youth have, they SOAR. The youth in care movement is about equality and justice, not charity.

The "foster kid" stigma also doesn't make any sense because, like all youth, you all have such incredibly different stories and identities. The label "in care" absolutely does not define you and is just one part of your journey. You are each important and deserving of all the success, respect and joy in this world.

I'm going to take all this learning with me and I will always be an advocate for and with youth in and from care. Thank you from the very bottom of my heart for patiently allowing me to learn so much from you and work as an ally in this movement. I know our members, board and staff have strong, exciting plans to continue all our work, including all our communications, and I'm excited to create more room for new people and new ideas. I'll be cheering you on wherever life takes me.

Check out our website for updates on my transition and how you can stay in touch.

With all the gratitude, love and big, squishy, embarrassing hugs in the world,  
Lisa

### SARAH: HONEST, LOYAL & LOVING YOUTH CHAMPION!

Sarah embodies so much of what we love about our Fed community, our volunteers and our alumni members. Dedicated, passionate about youth in and from care, loving, real, big-hearted and always willing to help out in any way she can to support her younger peers from care. Perhaps what stands out most about Sarah is her humility and ability to constantly learn and grow. She sets an example to us all of self-awareness and growth. Sarah has overcome a lifetime of obstacles and has emerged a strong, beautiful, empowered and compassionate woman and mother whose laugh is almost as big as her heart. Read on to learn more about someone who inspires many.

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

A youth worker, Tatiana, brought me to the Fed's 12th birthday celebration—at least I think it was, it was so long ago! I was 17. I was really nervous and I wasn't sure about what it meant and what everyone was there for. I really just came for the free food! She told me about the weekend thing—the SCMs—and I got a babysitter and went with my friend Cody, which made me feel more comfortable. I thought it was super fun. I'm not sure everyone else thought I was fun, because I spoke my mind and butted heads with people. I guess I was a bit of a handful, even though I was trying to be helpful! But now it's great, I don't know what I'd do without the Federation—with this community, I've learned such important life skills, especially with relationships. Now, the way I approach things and people has changed because I've learned tolerance, acceptance, patience, empathy. Honestly without the Federation, I wouldn't be the person I am, because I didn't grow up around those life skills.

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

Being an alumni is about setting an



"I DON'T THINK KIDS FROM CARE NEED SPECIAL TREATMENT OR EXTRAS. I JUST THINK KIDS FROM CARE DESERVE THE SAME CHANCES, SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES ALL OTHER KIDS HAVE."

example for new and younger members, and share the wisdom you've already learned from the Federation. For me, it's about acceptance, patience, tolerance, understanding that everyone is in their own place on their journey and you can't approach everyone the same. It's all about connecting with different young people where they're engaged and make them feel at home, because the Federation is a second home for a lot of kids from care.

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

Because I was a youth in care, I understand what kids in care go through on a day to day basis. I just want for them to have better opportunities and options and a better understanding of their rights. I think all people should want that for them, but I guess I'm so committed because I suppose I have a big heart and I have a special place in my heart for kids in care. I want to get kids involved with the Federation because if they don't have a family in their lives at the moment, we can be there for them, and I want them to know they're amazing and they are not alone. When I was in care, I didn't know I needed those supports but the fact is I now know that there are people who really care about you, I want them to know that because I learned that later. I

want them to know they can feel loved and safe in our community, and the kids who need to know it the most are the ones that seem they don't care.

#### What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

Something I've always been proud of is that, even though I was raised in care and got pregnant at 15, I've been able to keep all four of my amazing kids (and one on the way) in my care. Even though I've made mistakes like everyone else, my kids, in the end, are always my top priority and I love them more than anything. I feel proud to end that cycle. I made sure I was always working hard to work through mistakes and be the best mom I could be. **The biggest thing that I've accomplished can't be seen — it's my own personal growth. If it weren't for the Fed, and skills development, leadership training, volunteering, learning from staff and other members, I wouldn't have changed my ways of thinking and opened my mind—I wouldn't always be striving to be better.** I was one of the members who helped develop the Your Life, Your Rights book—a manual that was given to all youth in care and caregivers. I was a founding Outreach Group Member and co-wrote and co-created the presentation that has been delivered for three plus years in the Lower

Mainland and is now expanding to other communities across the province. I'm proud to be asked to be in adult support roles with the Fed, as a chaperone, night staff, picking up young people. I know not everyone gets to do that and I love it. I got the Achievement Award from the Fed for Outstanding Personal Achievement, and now I'm on the Power Pages cover. This June will be 10 years of dedicated membership and volunteer work with the Fed!

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

Realistically, I did because I had to—I had kids. I guess a lot of people don't do that, but I made the choice to step up and do my best for my kids!! That led to having a youth worker which I would never wanted if I didn't have kids, and that led me to the Federation, where I've learned so many life skills that have helped me move past my upbringing and see the world in a different way. **I'm at my best when I'm giving back to others and feel needed, and that's what has kept me going and getting stronger.**

### **What inspires you most?**

My friend Sade, and people like her, who have managed to overcome and pull themselves past anything they think they can't overcome—any potential roadblocks, like maybe having kids—they just push past it and keep going. Also, every time I go to an SCM I feel inspired and motivated—not sure exactly what it is, just seeing everyone's growth, I feel committed to do better and be better when I come home.

### **Tell us about anything going on for you outside of the Fed you're excited to share.**

My husband and I are pregnant and I find out the sex next Saturday! I'm really excited for where my family is at now; I am proud to have a partner that is so awesome and is someone me and my kids deserve.

### **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?**

Whether you're in care or not, everyone deserves the same opportunities, love and respect. I want all kids in care to know that. Anyone from care should be involved in the Federation in whatever way they can. Also, especially when you're in care, you should educate yourself on your rights and

opportunities, like education opportunities and bursaries and stuff—because 24 comes quickly and you want to take advantage of all that stuff. And if you need help, don't be afraid to ask. Finishing school is so important. And get a savings account! I want everyone to know they're worth all the happiness and love life has to offer. That just because they're a foster kid, that's not their fault, and they deserve every success and joy. It doesn't have to define you. You deserve the best things in life!

### **What are some of your goals for the future?**

I do want to finish school. I want to work with youth and young moms or young female offenders. I also love working with animals. I want to bring my big heart to beyond my family and friends, and work with anyone who feels unloved or undeserving to help them see their worth.

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

A lot. **I don't like the bad stigma that surrounds foster kids. I would like people to have more awareness of the trials they go through, and that it's not their fault.** There needs to be more cultural education and connection for all cultures for kids in care. We all need to feel connected and proud of where we come from. A big one is bigger support and more preparation before leaving care and after. Life skills training—most teenagers don't know they need it, but they sure as hell will find out later on! I don't think kids from care need special treatment or extras, I just think kids from care deserve the same chances, supports and opportunities all other kids have. Especially without supportive families, those supports are very important.

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

I already tell everyone everything about me! Oooh, wait, I love Little House on the Prairie. I love family stuff like Full House—it makes me feel warm and fuzzy. I don't seem corny, but I am.

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

Like a Virgin!

### **Anything else you'd like to share with us?**

The Federation is my family, and I love everyone in it!

## **MESSAGE FROM THE PGT! TRAVELLING & TALKING ABOUT TRANSITIONING**

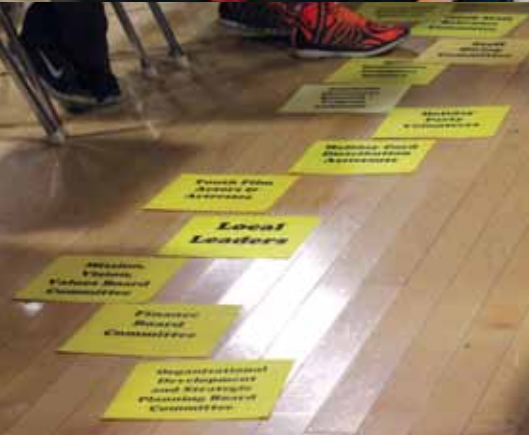
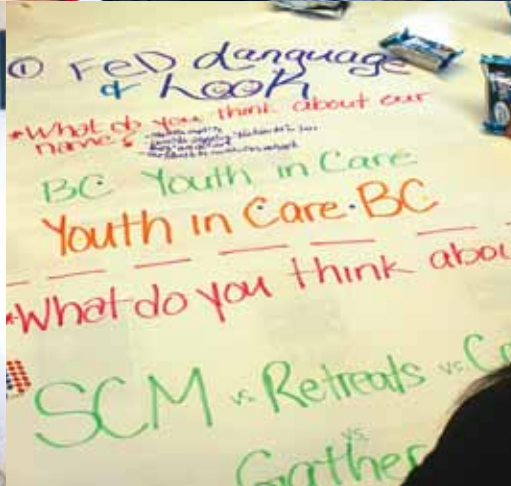


For several months now members of the Public Guardian and Trustee's Child and Youth Services team have travelled the province, meeting with Aboriginal youth to discuss their rights and the supports and skills they need as they transition to adulthood. **The Plan Your Path Tour was an exciting opportunity for youth serving organizations passionate about improving the lives and outcomes for young people to get out, meet and talk with young people directly.** Coordinated by the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) and hosted by 22 of the 23 Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, the workshops were facilitated by the RCY, The Federation for BC Youth in Care Networks and the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT). The workshops were interactive, informative and fun, with the goal to educate, inspire and empower young people in or from care who too often don't have the same access to information and ongoing supports as other youth preparing for adulthood.

Transition and change of any kind can be exciting and scary all at the same time. It is important to learn the skills needed to take care of yourself, and to know who you can depend on for information and support. On the tour the PGT talked about how to manage money and why that matters. We need money to take care of ourselves. We need to know how to budget so we have funds for food, safe shelter, clothing, transportation and medical care. We also need money for fun stuff, and to realize our bigger hopes and dreams: education, travel, owning a car or home and starting a family. Workshop participants were given financial literacy tools and information and advised where they could learn more about how to manage their money. Knowledge, skills and trustworthy relationships are power.

It was a pleasure and an honour for the PGT to be so warmly welcomed by all of the communities we visited. We strengthened relationships, made new friends and had a lot of fun. Thank you!

**MORE  
SCM #67 HIJINKS**







## VALEEN: WISE, AMBITIOUS & COMPASSIONATE ACTIVIST!

Though we've only had the pleasure of knowing her for a year, Valeen has wowed so many of us in our community with her drive, commitment to decolonization and justice, and her wisdom that's way beyond her 18 years on this earth. Valeen is a courageous, driven warrior who leads with her heart and who seeks to find harmony and connection with all people. She approaches her activism and social justice work with love, gratitude and understanding for all, even those who oppose her views—a beautiful and mature balance! In addition to pursuing her career goal of becoming a physician who incorporates Indigenous teachings, Valeen participates in activist movements like the Burnaby Mountain Kinder Morgan protests and has started an Indigenous youth empowerment campaign with slogans like "Watch Me Rise. Decolonize." Read on to learn more about this brave young woman and her beautiful vision of a more just and loving society.

### Tell us about yourself and how long you've been a Fed member??

My name is Valeen, I'm 18, from Turtle Island, and I've been involved since August, 2014.

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

When I moved to the Lower Mainland last summer, my sister brought me to the Fed office and I decided to go to the SCM, which made me want to stay connected. I love all of the workers here; it's really important to have good workers in this field. And with the youth, I felt I could relate to them in many ways. I've made friendships with a lot of the youth already and it's been absolutely positive thing in my life.

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



**"I WANT TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO TAKE HOLD OF ANY OPPORTUNITIES BROUGHT TO YOU. TAKE RISKS. GET CONNECTED. BECOME FAMILIAR WITH DECOLONIZATION AND LEARN TO LOVE YOURSELF. YOU ALL DESERVE THAT. 100%."**

*I can relate to the youth in many ways, and recently I found out how strong I truly am; because of the intergenerational struggles I have lived, I have found that the strength is there to rise out of it, and I want to rise out of it with the youth, and inspire them as much as they inspire me.*

### What are some of your proudest accomplishments??

*I'm proud of rising out of the struggles me and my sisters have been through together. I am glad that I allowed my curiosity to take over and made the decision to go to Burnaby Mountain when the protests against Kinder Morgan were occurring. I'm proud of my self-education. I have avoided the topics of economics and politics my entire life, but I challenged myself and did a project on it, which lead me to the Indigenous Revolution. These actions have brought me to an inspirational journey of learning, love for justice and for the future. I was really proud to perform my revolutionary poetry at Gathering Our Voices that launched a youth empowerment campaign; now I have a friend in Australia who's bringing the campaign there. #watchmerise*

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

*I am really passionate about many things,*

*but it's also mostly the inspiration that I've absorbed and have been open to throughout my life. I've allowed all of the inspiration that surrounds me every day to affect me and to lift me up. I always preach this to a lot of people: everyone's unique, but we all have strength inside of us, it's in our DNA, our internal strength is something no one can take away.*

### What inspires you most?

*A lot of things inspire me, but one of the biggest things is the overall movement I've been a part of. I've been blown away by all the people in it and their strong hearts. It's a movement of big dreamers that makes me speechless, a movement for justice, equality and unity. We focus on climate justice, decolonization, revival of our cultures, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. It's for everyone from all walks of life. I have a quote I want to share with you that I've been thinking about a lot:*

*"For all of us becoming Indigenous to a place means living as if your children's future mattered, to take care of the land as if our lives, both material and spiritual, depended on it." — Robin Wall Kimmerer from Braiding Sweetgrass*

*I love this because it's about how anyone can become Indigenous in this way. I feel strongly about inclusivity.*

## YOUTH PROFILE

### JARED: DEDICATED & TALENTED COMMUNITY BUILDER!

#### 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?

*Try to trust that everything will be okay. That was a big thing for me, just trying not to worry about the little things. I believe that self-care and self-recognition is an important journey early on and throughout your life. Balance yourself and overcome any challenges or obstacles that may try to get in your way.*

#### What are some of your goals for the future?

*One big dream I want to go through with is to become a family physician that combines Indigenous wisdom with scientific knowledge as my way of decolonizing the medical system. Another goal of mine is to continue to fight for justice. I want to help create a world where we do not need written rights to get through the day.*

#### 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 is challenging the stigma of being in care. I want to redefine minority and show and encourage the youth to rise out of any type of struggle that they've been through. The other thing I can really relate to is, definitely, we need a lot of support during the whole process of being in care and leaving care. Our early years direct us through our entire life, and everything we experience growing up in our lives affects us.*

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

*I feel like I'm a mystery but also people know everything about me by now! I creep people's social media pages, like often. Like at least one person every time I check my Facebook! I think we all do this, but I still kind of feel like a creep!!*

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

*Dazed and Confused by Led Zeppelin!*

#### Anything else you'd like to share with us?

*I want to encourage young people to take hold of any opportunities brought to you, take risks, get connected, become familiar with decolonization and learn to love yourself. You all deserve that, 100%.*

Jared has been fully dedicated to his work supporting the Victoria Youth in Care Network (one of the FBCYICN's local youth in care networks—groups of youth who gather in their community for support, learning and fun) for more than two years. He helps with strategic planning, promoting and community engagement, and works really hard to help run super fun activities and workshops for his peers from care. He is always willing to help out in any way he can and has a huge sense of pride for the Network. At Fed gatherings and events, we can always count on Jared to bring tons of positive and fun energy, to help out with anything that needs doing, and to dazzle us with his sweet breakdancing skills! Outside of his Local work, Jared is graduating high school and working toward living independently. Read on to learn more about this amazing guy!

#### Tell us about yourself and how long you've been a Fed member??

*My name is Jared, I am 17 years old and live in Victoria, BC. I think it's been two years now since I have been involved.*

#### How did you get involved in the Victoria Youth in Care Network?

*Tara, the person that runs the Victoria Local, invited me to the bowling event, which is when I started to get involved.*

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

*To make a difference!*

#### What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

*Becoming a break dancer, and travelling to compete in the Dance Off competition in Hamilton, Ontario—my home town!!!*

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

*Because I had help behind me and I had great support from people around me.*



**"HAVING YOUTH BE ABLE TO CONNECT REALLY WELL WITH THEIR FOSTER PARENTS IS WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN CARE."**

#### What inspires you most?

*Dance inspires me because it gives you lots of different feelings. Break dancing style inspires me most.*

#### 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?

*Really learning how to work with other people and keep those feelings back so you don't hurt someone else.*

#### What are some of your goals for the future?

*Becoming a successful mechanic and a breakdancing teacher!!!*

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

*That's a hard question to answer, being a youth in care right now, having youth be able to connect really well with their foster parents is what I would like to see happen for children and youth in care.*

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

*I used to, when I was seven years old, be a lead singer for a heavy metal band called Too Fly!*

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

*Haha, I like this one, it would have to be Caleb Johnson's Fighting Gravity!*

# THE OVER REPRESENTATION OF FIRST NATIONS CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT CARE

JESS BOON, ALUMNI MEMBER

Dear Premier Christy Clark,

My name is Jess Boon and I live in Vancouver, BC. I am a student at the University of British Columbia, child welfare activist and former youth in government care. I am writing you today to voice my concerns about an ongoing crisis in British Columbia's child welfare system. **Today in BC, First Nations children and youth are vastly overrepresented in the government "foster" care system.** It is crucial the government addresses this issue as the outcomes for many youth "aging out" of government care are generally very grim. In a recent study linking foster care to homelessness scholar Michelle Patterson (2015) reports, **"One of the earliest identifiable precursors to homelessness may be placement in out-of-home or foster care.** Studies of youth "aging out" of the foster care system indicate that between 11% and 36% experience street homeless and approximately one-third live with family, friends or acquaintances because they cannot afford permanent housing...In addition to challenges around finding stable housing, many youth exiting foster care do not complete high school and have difficulty finding employment" (p. 2). These issues are compounded for FN children and youth in/from care. FN children and youth are not only overrepresented in the child welfare system but also often struggle with intergenerational trauma caused by the historical events of colonization, residential schools, and "the sixties scoop" within Canada. In my letter I would like to present evidence of the issues at hand. **I would also like to advocate for the provincial government to create a pledge to reduce the number of FN children and youth in care and poverty reduction plan.** This action would have a positive impact on the lives for First Nations families, children and youth.

In the province of B.C the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) is the delegated agency responsible for

investigating incidences of abuse and neglect involving children and youth. MCFD is also responsible for providing care (such as shelter, food, clothing and support services) for some of the province's most vulnerable children and youth. I do not argue that many front-line social workers try their best to provide quality care to children and families. However, **when we look at the statistics of which families are being investigated and who is being brought into care we see a worrisome trend in the child welfare system.** Scholar Sarah de Leeuw (2014) reports, "The 2010 MCFD service plan reported 53 percent of 8677 children in the ministry's care were Aboriginal and the 2008 Canadian Incident Studies Report on child protection notes a rate of 49.69/1000 of Aboriginal families reported for investigation compared to only 11.85/1000 reports on non-Aboriginal families" (p. 66). **When provided with such evidence we can argue that the child welfare system in British Columbia generally discriminates against First Nations peoples.**

There are two compelling arguments brought forth by scholars to why First Nations children and youth are more likely to be apprehended and placed in care. The first argument to why First Nation's children and youth are over-represented in the government care is because of the history of colonial violence in Canada. **It is reported that acts of assimilation and cultural genocide, like the residential schooling system and the sixties scoop, have led to the crisis of over-representation in BC's child welfare system.** Nico Trocme (2004) provides a historical account in her scholarly work, "For more than a century, education for on-reserve Aboriginal children was primarily provided through church-run residential schools designed to assimilate Aboriginal children into both Caucasian culture and the churches. The children were forbidden to speak their own languages, practice their spiritual

## PowerPlaylist

Songs that Matter to Us!

BY KARLI D

Certain songs mean a lot to us, and there's not always a good explanation why. Often they're songs we listened to when going through rocky times, or they're songs that have lifted us up. Here in the PowerPlaylist column we share with each other some of these special songs.

In this edition we feature a playlist from Karli D:

*"I listen to these songs sometimes to help me calm down when I'm mad. Sometimes when I listen to them it makes me feel happy when I've been bored or sad. When I'm happy, I hear these songs and then I feel joyful and jazzy"*

**Jeremih** — *Don't Tell 'em*  
**Wiz Khalifa** — *Black and Yellow*  
**DJ Khaled** — *All I Do Is Win*  
**Nick Jonas** — *Jealous*  
**Iggy Azalea** — *Fancy*  
**Rihanna, Kanye West & Paul McCartney** — *Four Five Seconds*  
**Usher** — *DJ Got Us Fallin' In Love*  
**Maroon 5** — *Sugar*  
**Fergie** — *L.A. Love (la la)*  
**Taylor Swift** — *Style*

If music has meant a lot to you in your life, submit a PowerPlaylist column to us at [powerpages@fbcyicn.ca](mailto:powerpages@fbcyicn.ca) with a list of up to 10 songs with brief description of why. You just may see it in the next Power Pages!

traditions, or maintain their cultural traditions” (p 578). Halfway through the 20th century residential schools began to shut down. It was during the 1960s child protection workers then began conducting mass apprehensions of First Nations Children and placing them into predominantly non-First Nations foster homes. Trocme (2004) continues in her report, “Similarly, child welfare services for Aboriginal families relied heavily on adoption into non-Aboriginal families. Aboriginal children were often placed outside the province and sometimes outside the country. Over 11,132 children of Indian status were adopted between 1960 and 1990.” (p 579). It is clear that this horrific trend of mass apprehensions of FN children and youth that started in the 1960s has continued on until today.

The second argument for overrepresentation is that **First Nations families are disproportionately investigated by protection workers for neglect often related to poverty.** Child welfare experts and scholars agree that FN children and youth are more likely to be placed in care because of parents struggling to provide resources and are less likely to be apprehended for incidences of familial violence and child abuse. Cindy Blackstock, an indigenous social worker and fierce child welfare activist, has written extensively on the issue of over representation of First Nations children in care. Blackstock (2011) states in her scholarly work, “Research suggests that the overrepresentation of First Nations children in child welfare care cannot be accounted for by differences in substantiated child sexual, physical or emotional abuse reports between First Nations and other children. It is neglect that fuels the over-representation of First Nations children in child welfare and this form of maltreatment is highly associated with poverty” (paragraph 1.2). **With the evidence we can see that First Nations families are not receiving adequate services with a holistic approach that reduces poverty and encourages parents and children to stay together.**

I argue that it is absolutely essential the provincial government pledge to reduce the number of First Nations children and youth in government care. In order to resolve this issue the provincial government must first acknowledge the

ongoing history of colonial violence FN communities’ face. Currently there is no poverty reduction plan in British Columbia or any plan to reduce the number of First Nations children and youth in care. There are many FN programs and 23 Aboriginal Delegated agencies that are funded by the provincial government but none are equipped or adequate enough to resolve the issue of overrepresentation. These programs and agencies act as band-aids for a system in crisis. **I highly urge the provincial government of British Columbia to engage FN leaders and communities to create, implement and commit to a concrete poverty reduction plan that would strengthen First Nations families.** A multi-faceted poverty reduction plan would greatly benefit First Nations families and would in turn greatly reduce the number of FN children and youth being placed in government care. A comprehensive plan could include investing in initiatives such as employment training, education support, raising income assistance rates, easily accessible mental health/addiction services, affordable and adequate child care, youth services and leadership/mentorship training programs. It is also essential that the planning of these initiatives involve FN communities and be FN driven.

We must understand that the overrepresentation of First Nations children and youth in BC has adverse and negative effects on families and communities. When FN families are separated, children lose culture, a sense of identity and overall happiness and well-being. We have seen these horrific effects in the past with the residential schooling system. **It is simply unacceptable that families continue to be separated over issues such as inadequate support services and poverty. We must not repeat the past.**

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my letter and consider my concerns about the overrepresentation of First Nations children and youth in government care. I hope the provincial government will make the right decision in investing in children, youth and our province’s future.

Warm regards,  
Jess Boon

# NEVER GIVE UP!

MARY ANN LEO  
FBCYICN PRACTICUM STUDENT  
AND ALUMNUS OF CARE



*Hello, my name is Mary Ann Leo from the Homalco Nation, Coast Salish people, from a reserve called Church House in Campbell River, BC. I was a practicum student with the Fed from Douglas College earlier on this year.*

*I grew up in a foster home, but first lived in the hospital the first year and half of my life. Due to me requiring medical attention in my early years, I required a stable home. My biological parents were both alcoholics and the rest of my siblings were also placed in care. I am the second oldest, and I never grew up with any of my biological siblings. My foster parents were Dutch and had three of their own kids, all older than me.*

***I don’t remember much of my childhood, but what I did grow up with, I thought was normal. Did you know that you can request your Ministry files through the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act? That’s what I did in my later on years. And that’s where I learned what I went through as a child.***

*I learned that I had over ten social workers throughout my in care years; I learned that they thought I was mentally retarded, that I was always slow, among other stuff. What I do remember is always walking on eggshells, always getting into trouble. I am sure there were positive times, I just don’t remember them. I don’t remember any social workers coming by to ask how I am doing, or how I like living there. I never grew up with my culture, and I suppose I knew I was First Nations, but I guess I wasn’t interested in learning about it until later on in life. This is the briefest summary of what it was like for me growing up in care. I could go on for more but time and space is limited.*

***In saying all this, I write to you youth and children in care, that you may feel alone, rejected, not belong anywhere, or have nothing to offer, when really you have perseverance, resiliency, adaptability, and strength just from coming from in care. Surround yourself with positive people, have a dream and goal in life and achieve it, because you can do anything! Believe in yourself. Ask for what you need. Stay in school. Respect yourself and others. Use your voice for positive change. It took me awhile to learn that I have a voice and that I matter.***

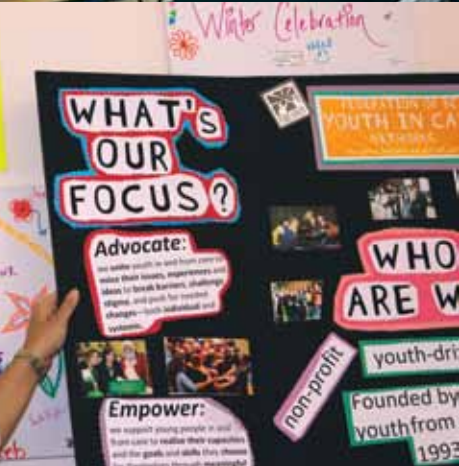
*The Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks is an awesome organization to stay connected to and the people that work there are very caring and fun to be with.*

*Thank you for the opportunity to work with you guys, and keep up the good work!*

Mary Ann Leo  
Child & Youth Care Counsellor



**OG TRAINING WITH THE VICTORIA YOUTH IN CARE NETWORK!**



# PHOTOS BY MELINDA H



# LIGHTS KT M

I grew up in care from when I was two years old until I was 18. I don't really remember a lot of my first foster home or much of my childhood. I experienced abuse and ended up getting PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). I do remember though moving into my grandparents' house where I was until I was 12. It was then that my other disabilities where beginning to show and it was getting hard for my grandparents to take care of me as I began not to really know how to express myself or my feelings. I was then put into another foster home where I didn't mind the people too much but I didn't understand why I was being moved from where I lived. I ended up locking myself in the closet or car for hours pouting/crying about how I just wanted to go to my grandparents again and live there. Occasionally I would end up running away at first and walking all the way from North Burnaby by Sperling to South Burnaby by Edmonds. I can sure tell you it wasn't a pretty or easy walk but I was determined to get to my grandparents' house. Eventually I came to terms that I had to stay in the foster home and over the years the family and some of the foster kids that came through were like my family. Now as an adult I still consider my foster mom like my "mom." She has helped me so much in my crazy life and helps with little suggestions about being a mom as I am now a mom myself, too. Overall my experience in care was a bit rough but there were some lights in the darkness and it's helped shape me into the beautiful independent woman that I am today.



ART BY JEN C

PHOTOS BY MJ Z





# CLARITY

MJ Z

I don't know what this means,  
I guess I shouldn't speak  
Words just won't do this justice.

Rest my head,  
A faint memory  
I hold in my heart  
I hold it tight

I'm blessed that you see me  
I'll cling to that purity.

I pray for clarity,  
Truth,  
Reason,  
A clear direction.

## WE ARE NOT WHO WE USED TO BE

JACK K

Sleeping fiddles riddle me  
Chalking hope as thistles dry  
Bind by quartered light of theme  
As I lay awake at night

Your rubber band now on my wrist  
Standards lowered than gracious heights  
Kissed your love with a memory gash  
And brought is back with aid and time

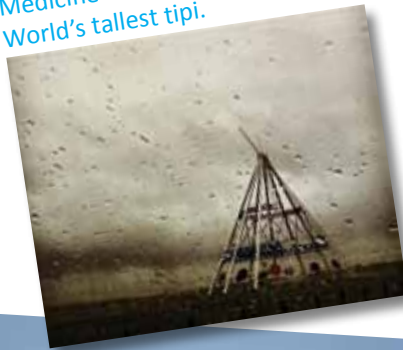
But say my name once more, please  
So I can walk like a fading sun  
Say it so I won't ache again  
And walk until my walking's done  
Slandered by your true esteem  
Wrap a rope around your hand  
Persistently focused on being afraid  
Until that rope shows who I am

I miss you like thistles dry but  
I don't want you around no more  
You won't read the words from me  
Aveces yo no voy te escribir con amor

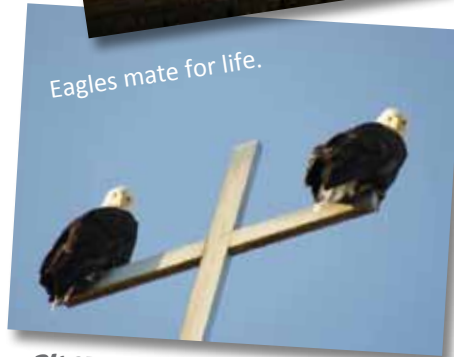
You will love him now I'm gone  
As I push heavy weight away  
Kindred from my fallen star  
I will win 'cause your pain will stay

Deeply cut blood to roots  
Cornered village riddles rhyme  
We are not who we used to be  
As I lay awake at night

Medicine Hat, AB  
World's tallest tipi.



Eagles mate for life.



PHOTOS BY MARGARET JOSEPH

"REVOLUTIONARY ME, I WAITED  
FOR YOU. REVOLUTIONARY ME,  
I LOVE YOU."

## RESTLESS NIGHTS

KRISTINE B

Why my mind won't shut off at night...  
Here's a poem for you, even if it will be  
better handwritten.  
All I need from you is an open mind,  
and for you to listen.  
So many things I want to tell you, but  
I'm afraid of how you'll react.  
Not sure if it will lead you to leaving me  
behind, like so many others before you.  
I'm sorry if I'm not open enough to you,  
even when you ask.  
It's simply not easy, with what I've gone  
through in the past.  
So I ask you to please be patient, be  
kind and give me time.  
Because these walls I built are tough,  
and taking them down is rough.  
I don't want to scare you away, I can't  
bear the thought.  
Just know that I truly care about you...  
a lot.

## LEARNING TO LOVE MYSELF THROUGH POETRY

VALEEN J

Sometimes I cry tears and sometimes I cry  
anchors.

Drifting within radius I slowly begin to  
forget freedom.

Our songs travel wherever the waves bring  
them.

Yet I float in waters more calm than my  
voice Unconsciously conscious I hear your  
hopeful call.

I release the depression that I have held  
hostage And I learn how to breathe with  
intention.

I remember that I am a descendant of the  
lovely Skywoman In decolonial love they  
announced my birth: "On the 504th year a  
revolutionary is born!" Revolutionary me, I  
waited for you. Revolutionary me, I love you.

## WHY DO I LOVE YOU?

MJ Z

Why do I love you?  
Well it's simple.  
It's your laugh  
Your gentleness —  
That when you hold me I feel the safest  
I've ever been.

Why do I love you?  
It's your beauty  
Your essence  
Your mind —  
That when I'm with you I feel special  
and important.

Why do I love you?  
It's your humor  
Your authenticity  
Your gentleness —  
That when we talk I'm understood  
and accepted.

Why do I love you?  
Because you think I'm amazing.  
You point out my beauty,  
Your joy —  
That whenever you greet me it's like  
I haven't seen you for a while.

# HER

MELINDA H

Every time you see her, you fall in love.  
 She's always changing — a different look  
 every day.  
 She knocks on a door, and you don't let her in.  
 Sometimes it's a tap, other times it's a bang.  
 When she taps on the door, it's easy to ignore,  
 Sometimes she keeps banging, so you let her in.  
 She always comes with him, he follows her.  
 Whenever they're around, bad things happen.  
 You can't handle the ruckus they make.  
 You can't kick them out, and they won't leave.  
 So you leave, and you go to your friends.  
 He teaches you some tricks to keep them away.  
 A couple months go by, they visit a couple times.  
 They come knocking, but it's only a tap on  
 the door.  
 One day they start to bang on the door.  
 You can't handle it so you let them in.  
 You look at her beauty, you start to stare.  
 Take a deep breath, and then breathe out again.  
 There's another knock at the door, and it's loud.  
 You open it; and a man is standing there waiting.  
 From the darkness you walk into the light.  
 You leave, but they just moved onto the next door.

I lie here waiting for your call but I guess  
 it's never coming.  
 I lie in my bed at night, all I think about is you,  
 I wonder sometimes, if you think of me too.  
 I'm so confused are you confused too?  
 We used to smile, now it's a rare occurrence.  
 Every word I say is wrong, every lie you tell  
 is right.  
 And yet, I can't stop thinking,  
 Thinking about the past,  
 Thinking about the future.  
 I have one wish, a wish to walk beside you,  
 through the good and bad.  
 Why? I don't know.  
 She walks like a zombie, depression is pulling  
 her down.  
 Her mind won't stop racing, and it's driving  
 her crazy.  
 She stubs her toe, she starts crying, from the  
 pain she feels, the emotional and physical pain.  
 She wants to be held, so she can feel relief.  
 It always feels better, when she's in his arms.  
 Every day she longs, to see her friends, to  
 see her enemies, she just wants to go home.  
 When she goes back, she has nowhere to go.  
 So she stays in her spot, waiting for a miracle.

# DOCUMENTATION

KRISTINE B

For most people,  
 I am the person with all the random  
 recordings,  
 Unnecessary videos,  
 And too many pictures.  
 I admit I am quite obsessive in  
 documenting every single aspect of  
 My life.  
 Although, I'd like to say that I am  
 passionate about documenting  
 Everything in my life  
 Why?

Well to place it simply,  
 I don't want to forget.

In more explanatory terms, the following  
 will deal with this aspect. Most people will  
 say "cherish the moment and let it linger  
 in your memories." Unfortunately, with  
 people like me who constantly move and  
 undergo change, most memories become  
 tainted with emotions and what not.

I no longer remember the pure happiness  
 in that moment. I feel resentment for a  
 person in this moment I cannot cherish  
 this moment. In both situations, current  
 emotions upon viewing that moment ruins  
 the memory. Whereas, if I were to record  
 sound and sight in that exact moment,  
 negative emotions will soon pass and that  
 moment can be relived again and again  
 with full appreciation. On a more personal  
 note, I have traveled too many times, met  
 too many people, and created too many  
 connections. All of them which I vaguely  
 remember. I can't remember the thousands  
 of classmates and hundreds of best friends  
 I have made. This is not due to an illness of  
 some sort. It is simply because life moves  
 on and your mind can only handle a certain  
 amount of data. We're limited flash drives,  
 unfortunately. I fear the day when I try to  
 reminisce and I cannot anymore. I wish I  
 could have documented my life then. I wish  
 I could still relive even in my memories any  
 moment from the past but I no longer can.  
 It is because of this that I wish to document  
 my life. I want to be able to reminisce.



## YOU, A MASTERPIECE

MJ Z

You are different.

I've known no other to show so much care,  
More gentle than snow fall,  
More passion than a symphony.

You are safe.

I've known no embrace to bring such comfort,  
More affirming than definition,  
More natural than organic.

You are beauty.

I've known no other with such a myriad  
of good,  
More captivating than mountains,  
More pleasing than clear blue waters.

You are joy.

I've known no other transform a gathering,  
More laughter than comedy,  
More exciting than a drive through the  
country.

You are incredible.

I've known no such combination of character,  
More indescribable than the clouds,  
Just as good as love.

You were created, by a God full knowing,  
A masterpiece,  
You were meant to be.

## PROMISES

DIANE N

You promised me  
Many things  
Yet never kept your word  
I promised you  
Only one thing  
That I was certain of  
My love for you  
Only that wasn't enough  
Or maybe just not what  
You wanted  
But you still promised me  
More things you couldn't give  
When all I ever wanted  
Was the truth



PHOTO BY JAZ W

## BEAUTY IN DARKNESS

KT M

Nobody understands the beauty in my darkness. Ten million stories, most of them misleading. Another war, another battle not left alone. They light the fire of my vitality; I will survive. I will show who I am and all that I can be. Taking the vow of variance, standing against the liars.

*Chorus:*

Kiss it all goodbye, forget about the moon daisy. Even when my life is a war, I'm stronger than before. I will shed those faded memories, this won't be my curtain call.

Don't have time for your lies and goodbyes.  
I will live without your infliction.

*Chorus:*

Kiss it all goodbye, forget about the moon daisy. Even when my life is a war, I'm stronger than before. I will shed those faded memories, this won't be my curtain call.

Listen carefully, try telling me who I am.  
I've risen with my broken wings. I'll never look back, won't give in. I won't bleed for you, you're not worth it.

*Chorus x2:*

Kiss it all goodbye, forget about the moon daisy. Even when my life is a war, I'm stronger than before. I will shed those faded memories, this won't be my curtain call.

*Bridge:*

Another war, I'll take this vow of variance.  
Take my broken wings and stand strong.

## TOMAHAWK

SARAH R

Blue sky  
Green City  
Water is crystal clear  
I can see my stoned eyes  
It's a mirror  
When I was seven  
I once prayed to god  
To vanish me to heaven  
But now I spin a bowl  
So I don't spin out of control  
And my history  
Was misery  
Cuz the Ministry  
Couldn't solve the mystery  
Because of drugs  
I chill with drugs  
I chill with thugs  
Then I'm broke  
Panhandle  
Looking like a straight joke  
Foster lifestyle  
Only been in a home for a little while  
But foster parents  
They never get fired  
Mine were doing overtime  
On getting retired  
Once upon a time  
I bought an ounce and a dime  
Welcome to my life  
Walking around with a knife  
They call me tomahawk  
They know I'm solid as a rock  
But snitchin' down the block  
What they do is talk  
So hi, my name is Sarah  
I'm an addict  
People say it's a problem  
That it is very tragic  
And every night  
When I go to sleep  
I have a nightmare  
That is why I smoke speed  
Man this life is unfair  
Crystal meth  
A pistol to the head  
Called death  
I call it my struggle  
For the puddle  
It's all in my head  
But I feel 'em on my  
Shoulder  
I'm riding on their saddles  
But they're taking over fighting colder  
I'm tired of the game  
Playing pass back and forth  
With a flame  
But I don't see the problem  
I'm fine  
So I'm a move on  
Carry on getting high  
But this is not the end  
And this story, it ain't pretend.



# IN A PANIC? PLAN!

...USING OUR STRESSBUSTING GOALS STRATEGY

Do you ever feel completely overwhelmed and stressed OUT?! Of course you do! Everyone does, and being from care brings all kinds of pressures and challenges most other youth do not have to deal with. We start to freak out thinking about allllll the things that we know we have to do or feel like we should be doing—some of them urgent, like finding our next meal, and some of them less urgent but super important, like working on our health or figuring out what we're going to do with our lives. Under that pressure we may react in scary ways, like uncontrollable breathing and crying, feeling like self-harming, feeling

hopeless, no sleeping or oversleeping, numbing our anxious feelings with sleep/food/gaming/Netflix, feeling like we want a break from it all or even end our lives. All these reactions make perfect sense—life pressures are overwhelming at any age, but especially when we're moving toward or starting adulthood, even more if we don't have much of a support system, and even MORE if we have mental health stuff like depression or anxiety or addictions. It really can feel like too much.

If we find ourselves in an emotional crisis, the best thing is to NOT try to figure anything out right away, and connect with

support. **The BC Youth Crisis line is open 24/7: 1866-661-3311.** You may also find you can calm down and get centred in other ways like a good sleep or a walk.

Once we feel grounded and ready to tackle the pressures, you are ready to create a plan. You can't figure everything out at once, but you can break these jerky pressures down into small, realistic steps and cross them off one at a time. Once you cross even one off, you'll start to feel better. Eventually, you'll find you're getting closer to your goals and, most importantly, feeling more in control and calm. Whenever the panic comes back, that's a signal to start a new Goals Strategy Session.

## SAMPLE STRESSBUSTING GOALS STRATEGY:



## HERE'S HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN STRESSBUSTING GOALS STRATEGY:

1. Write down each thing that's stressing you out in a bubble—add more bubbles until you've got each stressor in a bubble. Every single one. Get bigger paper or white board if needed!
2. These stressors are now your goals. Rank each goal-bubble in order from urgent to less urgent. Things like where you're going to live and how you're going to get food would be ranked higher than, say, getting a driver's license.
3. Look at each goal and identify any specific and clear next steps that can be taken to address them (if they're really general, they can be too overwhelming; break down the general in to smaller next steps. For example, "apply to schools" could be broken down into "research schools with social work programs — make a list of all relevant programs and application deadlines — apply in order of due dates").
4. Once you've completed that, you fill in your "next steps" to-do list, listing some of those next steps surrounding each stressor in order of urgency—what can or should be done next.
5. Assign realistic deadlines for each task—if you try to get everything done right away you'll probably disappoint yourself and end up back at #1 pretty quick.
6. As you start to cross off some tasks, you can create a new next steps list with other items from your goal-bubbles, or follow-ups that are needed as a result of completing your first tasks.

### NEXT STEPS

### COMPLETED

- |   |   |                |
|---|---|----------------|
| 1. Go to Income Assistance office and apply   | → | Friday         |
| 2. Make appointment with housing worker       | → | Next Wednesday |
| 3. Make appointment with AYA worker           | → | Next Friday    |
| 4. Phone clinic for doctors taking patients   | → | Next Friday    |
| 5. Make appointment with doctor               | → | Next Friday    |
| 6. Visit Agedout.com to find free counselors  | → | July 20        |
| 7. Make appointment with counselor            | → | July 20        |
| 8. Visit Elder George                         | → | July 25        |
| 9. Apply for subsidized community centre pass | → | Aug 1          |
| 10. Research electrician programs             | → | Aug 5          |

## CHALLENGING CORE BELIEFS

Byron Katie has created a method we can all use to challenge some of those beliefs we have that hold us back — those times that we assume how something will turn out without actually knowing. An example could be that you believe your boss won't listen to you, or that your partner will criticize something you've done. Katie suggests that we have these types of thoughts everyday, and they can keep us from our goals and happiness. In order to challenge these beliefs, approach these situations with strength and confidence (you know just showing up with honesty and vulnerability) she outlines four questions that we can ask ourselves when we find ourselves anxious, afraid or feeling "stuck:"

1. **Is it true?** (Answer Yes or No. If you answer "no" move to question 3)
2. **Can you absolutely know that it's true?** (Yes or no — basically is there any chance you decided too quickly the first time and there is room to challenge this?)
3. **How do you react — what happens, when you believe that thought?** (Think of how your body feels physically when you visualize the scenario happening, what happens to your breathe, your shoulders, your posture, your speaking, your tone of voice, what actions do you take as the scene plays out, etc.)
4. **Who would you be without the belief?** (If you didn't believe this and believed something else, how would you feel, what would your attitude be like, how would you describe your body's reaction to the scenario, etc.)

Next Katie suggests that the goal is to explore at least three alternative beliefs to experience the opposite of what you believed would happen. For example if your belief is "my boss won't listen to me" the turnarounds to explore may be: a) I don't listen to myself, b) I don't listen to my boss, c) I don't communicate clearly and with confidence.

The goal of the turnaround approach is to fully embrace your life without fear and being open to new possibilities. From there we can turn our opposition and fears into positive statements about how we will approach the world — really is this all we have control over anyway, how we choose to approach and react to the situations that cross our path? May you find exploring the work challenging and meaningful and may it leave you inspired, confident and in control of your destiny!



## ALUMNI DAJANA'S NEW BOUTIQUE!

DAJANA AMBURY

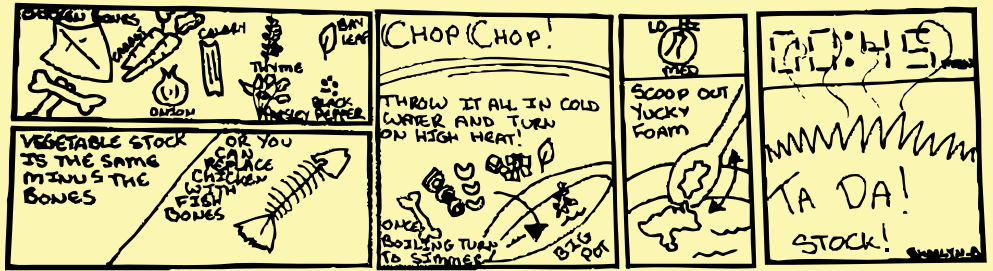
Hi everyone my name is Dajana Ambury and I'm an FBCYICN Alumni Member. I wanted to share an exciting update in my life in hopes that, if you relate to any part of my foster care story, you may find it inspiring.

I am a married stay-at-home mom of four kids—two boys and two girls—currently living in Aldergrove where I will be finally opening up my Boutique called Dajana's Boutique!

This has been a dream of mine for a long time. I came to Canada when I was 10 with my mom, brother and father speaking a different language and adapting was hard. My high school years were spent struggling with addiction and placement in foster care and having a difficult time with family. Through all that I managed to come out on the other side and complete college with a Business Administration Diploma, giving back to the community and so much more.

I have been running Dajana's Boutique from home since 2011 and have gained some awesome friendships, return customers and it has helped me stay home with my kids. Since my older three kids are now in full-time school and my youngest is two years old and in full-time daycare, I have turned a new leaf in my life and am opening up a store front. I share this all out of lots of excitement and as a reminder that we can all pursue our goals, no matter how far away they seemed while in care.

If you'd like to learn more about my store, and if you would like to support my new venture, visit "Dajana's Boutique" on Facebook.



## POWERCcipe



## MAKE YOUR OWN STOCK

SHAELYN B  
YOUTH SCM COORDINATOR

The goal is to make as clear a stock as possible. You accomplish this by sticking to the recipe above and scooping out the foam that gathers on top. Do not stir the stock or the residue on top will mix with the clear stock. With a vegetable stock you can add any vegetables

you like. The 45 minutes cooking time is from the time the pot begins to boil. Stock can be stored in a container in the freezer for up to two months and in the fridge for up to three days. You can buy bones at T&T and some other supermarkets or collect raw bones if you take them out before you cook your meat.

## MMM... SMELLS GOOD!!!

## BE YOURSELF!

KT M

Hey ya'll I'm KT and I'm here to talk to you about being comfortable in your own skin and accepting who you are. I have struggled with this my whole life and still do some times; it's a struggle you don't really get over. There are times you and even myself feel like you don't belong or you don't really fit in with society as hard as you try. What I have learned recently is that we can say "screw society" because they don't have the right to tell us who we are and how to be you.

YOU ARE NO BARBIE! I learned that over trial and error that the person who I am and style is more of goth/punk/free spirit type. I have been through every type of style and persona, I have found though that I have been more confident in the goth/punk/free spirit. That being said I don't want to be the one who is forcing you to do something, be something you're not, hide who you really are. I want you to show your true colours, stand out, be proud, and most of all BE YOURSELF.



Congrats Mary on your practicum and graduation!



FEDERATION  
OF BC YOUTH  
IN CARE  
NETWORKS



# Announcement Board

Huge Congrats to Joshua W who completed his High Five: Principles of Healthy Child Development Certificate!

Hoorays and yays to Ruby B on her amazing new position as the YMCA-YMCA of Greater Victoria: Camp Thunderbird as an Outdoor Education Instructor and Specialized Needs Counsellor!!

Congratulations to Miranda P on welcoming her adorable new daughter Alessia Anastasia to the world!

Kudos to Valeen J on launching her inspiring Youth Empowerment Campaign at Gathering Our Voices! #watchmerise #decolonize

High Fives to our Alumni Member Annie Stanyer for landing the Bakery/Kitchen Assistant position at a catering company! Keep up the good work!

More high-fives to Alumni Member James Copping on his new job as a Home Depot Asset Protection Specialist!

Celebrating our wonderful Douglas College Child and Youth Care Practicum student Mary Ann Leo on graduating with her CYC Diploma. We'll miss you, Mary!

BIG Congrats to Kaeli on graduating from the University of Victoria with Advanced Honours in her Bachelor of Child and Youth Care AND will be finishing her Yoga Teaching Training June 21st!

Congratulations to Fed staff and alumni member Steve Smith on graduating from Douglas College with the Child and Youth Care - Aboriginal Stream diploma!

We're so proud of you 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

# CELEBRATE

BC CHILD & YOUTH IN CARE WEEK!

JUNE 1 - 7 2015

BRITISH COLUMBIA

STAND

WITH



CHILDREN & YOUTH  
IN CARE

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