

POWER PAGES

ISSUE #51



A FREE MAGAZINE FOR
YOUTH IN & FROM CARE
AND THEIR ALLIES



OCEANSIDE
THE FED'S BRAND NEW LOCAL

**TALKING ABOUT
MENTAL HEALTH**

FROM THE 2016 YOUTHSPEAK REPORT

**THE CODE OF CONDUCT
RE-IMAGINED**

**PLUS MORE OF
YOUR ARTWORK,
PHOTOGRAPHY
AND STORIES!**



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

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f FEDERATION OF BC YOUTH IN CARE NETWORKS



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POWER PAGES

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VIEW OR DOWNLOAD PAST & CURRENT EDITIONS AT FBCYICN.CA

BE A POWER PAGES CONTRIBUTOR!

WHAT'S POWER PAGES?

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

HOW DO I SUBMIT STUFF?

To make sure *Power Pages* keeps representing the diverse interests and voices of young people in and from care, we need to hear from YOU! If you are a youth in or from care between the ages of 14 and 24, you will receive an honorarium (\$\$) for each submission printed in *Power Pages* (up to a maximum of \$50/issue), so please include either the submission coversheet or the online form (both can be found on our website) with EVERY submission and submit often! You can submit anytime. We publish two editions per year.

For more info about *Power Pages* submissions and deadlines — and to submit your stuff by fax, mail, email or in person — get in touch with us: Toll-Free: **1.800.565.8055** | Fax: **604.527.7764** | Website: fbcyicn.ca | Email: powerpages@fbcyicn.ca

FBCYICN EDITORIAL POLICY:

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

- Youth can request that their submissions not be edited for spelling, grammar and clarity. We feel it is important to print what young people have to say without censorship..
- Adult submissions are subject to edits, which we share with the contributor before printing. We do not print submissions from adults or youth not from care unless they are relevant to young people in care and youth friendly.
- Printing contributors' names:
 - Under 19: unless they request to appear anonymous or indicate a pen name, first name and last initial are printed with each submission;
 - 19–24: unless they request to appear anonymous or indicate a pen name, first name and last initial are printed with each submission; if their submission reveals no overly personal information, they can request to print their last name with their submission (i.e. an award announcement, a recipe, an advocacy article). However, this remains at the editor's discretion;
 - Alumni of the Fed: unless they request to appear anonymous or indicate a pen name, both first and last name are printed with each submission unless otherwise appropriate; and
 - Community partners and allies over 19: first and last name will be used unless otherwise appropriate
- When we receive more submissions than we are able to fit in one issue, we prioritize submissions from BC youth in and from care.
- We will print submissions from every contributing youth in or from care unless their content does not fit with our Values Code (see fbcyicn.ca for more details). For example, conflicts with the Fed Values Code 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 the Fed.



ON THE COVER:

See youth & alumni profiles on pages 22, 24, and 26

- Fed Updates
- A Message From Your Board
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- Volunteering at the FBCYICN
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- New Local Profile: Oceanside
Local Youth Highlight: Campbell River
- AgedOut.com News
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- Youth Retreat Photos
- More Holiday Photos
- Truth & Reconciliation Tour Wrap-Up
- Profile: Ashley J
- Profile: Destiny P
- Profile: JT
- Photos by Samia D
- Photos by Thomas S
Paintings by Mallory W
- Q&A on Mental Health
Mental Health Resources
Drawing by Tabitha M
- Congratulations
- Unceded by Karmella BDB
- Paintings by Jaz Scuff
Thoughts, Tequila, & a Knife
- Paintings by Liana K



announced that Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) will be funding this year's round of Take the Wheel.

June 8: Ministers Conroy and Mark announced a \$250,000 contribution to the Youth Futures Education Fund.

Ministry announcements aside, BCCYICW was a success, as always, because people across BC came together to celebrate the children and youth in care in their communities. Some of the stand-out events were a beach barbecue in Powell River, an awards ceremony and barbecue in Surrey, and a positivity-focused party in Campbell River.

The Fed's own BCCYICW celebration was great fun. This year was extra special for us because we're marking 25 years of celebrating and supporting youth in and from care. Youth, alumni and community partners came out to party with us, and Minister Conroy announced the funding for Take the Wheel. Elder Bruce Robinson from the Nisga'a Nation welcomed us to the festivities, and hip hop artist Manik performed. We'd like to thank the Broadway Youth Resource Centre for hosting, feeding us a delicious dinner and baking a beautiful 25th birthday cake.

We'd also like to extend our thanks to the other partner organizations, including Indigenous Perspectives Society, First Call, the Federation of Community Social Services of BC, Adoptive Families Association of BC, Public Guardian and Trustee of BC, and of course the Ministry of Children and Family Development for proclaiming the week and celebrating children and youth in care.

FUND DEVELOPMENT

Raising money through fundraising is always an interesting process. We all know the important work that the Fed does with youth in and from care. The thing is, so many organizations also do great work and lots

COMMUNICATIONS

At the October retreat, Stephanie will be holding a workshop to figure out how we can provide more ways for youth to share their voices and get more involved in the Fed's communications. Stay tuned for an update in the next *Power Pages*!

TAKE THE WHEEL

The Fed is excited to announce that with financial support from MCFD, we will be running three additional rounds of the Take the Wheel bursary program. If you are a youth in and from care between the ages of 16 and 24 who is wanting financial support to help get your license, this is the bursary for you! The official relaunch of the updated Take the Wheel program happened in September and the application deadline for the first round of bursaries was October 18, 2018. Deadlines for the remaining two rounds of the bursaries will be March 8, 2019 and July 5, 2019. We are still working to find sustainable funding for this program and are hopeful that we will. To find out more about the Take the Wheel bursary program, check out our website for information and application packages at fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/take-the-wheel or contact Shannon Dolton at shannon.dolton@fbcyicn.ca or (604) 527-7762.

UPCOMING RETREATS

After a longer-than-usual break between SCMs we are really excited to announce that planning is underway for upcoming SCMs. Join us for:

SCM #76: February 1–3, 2019
at Loon Lake, Maple Ridge

SCM #77: June 2019
at the University of Victoria campus
(official dates coming soon)

BCCYICW RECAP

The eighth annual BC Child and Youth in Care Week (BCCYICW) ran from June 4–10 this year, and the committee partners would like to thank everyone who came out and made the week an amazing celebration.

This year, BCCYICW was full of announcements about improvements to government services for youth in and from care:

June 4: Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, announced that the provincial tuition waiver program will provide support to former youth in care to access training programs delivered by union trainers in the construction trades.

June 6: Minister Katrine Conroy

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR BOARD CHAIR

It has been said that every challenge creates an opportunity. This has certainly been the case for the Fed this year.

We said goodbye to Rebecca, Brittany, Emily, Gabby and Jules and welcomed Ian, Stephanie, Preeti and Jeff to the Fed family.

Ian Mass, a long-time ally of the Fed, helped out as Executive Director during Jules' medical leave and returned as Interim Executive Director until we filled the role. With his experience as the Deputy Child Advocate and Executive Director at Pacific Community Resources Society, Ian has supported Shannon, Stephanie, Preeti and Jeff as they planned the October Youth Retreat, developed *Power Pages*, implemented Take the Wheel and helped build and connect the Locals.

During this time, Board Co-Chair Gary Tennant also stepped into a temporary management role to help lead and support the Executive Director transition.

The Board feels fortunate to have a forward-looking staff team and Ian and Gary's leadership that moved us into the work of the Fall.

Despite all the changes, the Fed has accomplished a great deal in the past year.

We launched the Youth Leadership Council to make sure the voices of youth in and from care are heard by policy and decision-makers across the province, renewed Take the Wheel for another year thanks to \$100,000 in additional funding from MCFD, and met with Indigenous youth and adult supports on the Truth and Reconciliation Tour to gather insight into the issues and challenges facing Indigenous youth.

This spring and summer, staff and members played a leadership role in organizing and hosting BC Child and Youth in Care Week. As part of the celebration, we had a 25th anniversary cake for the Fed at the Broadway Youth Resource Centre. MCFD Minister Katrine Conroy cut the cake and announced funding for the Take the Wheel Program.

And that's just the beginning of our 25th anniversary celebrations. We continue to mark this amazing milestone at the Fall and Winter Youth Retreats. Staff are also



working to create an extra special 25th Anniversary edition of *Power Pages* that will look back over the years at the Fed and forward to the next chapter.

I look forward to seeing you all at the retreat in October!

Debbie Cox
Board Chair

have the money to hire staff whose job it is to tell everybody how great they are. They know important people who have large amounts of money who also know other important people who have large amounts of money. Okay, it's not always like that, but it does take a lot of staff and a lot of time and dedication to raise money. The Fed has the dedication but not the staff to really take this on.

This makes the donations we receive from our funders extra special, because by helping us they show that they genuinely want to support youth in and from care. They have given us money to make sure our Dream Fund can reach as many youth in and from care as possible, to make our holiday celebration as wonderful as it can be, and to ensure youth from all over British Columbia can attend our Youth Retreats.

Our thanks to Vancouver Fire and Radius Security, ICBC, Canadian Federation of University Women, 100 Men Who Care, UBC Medicine Gala, and our other amazing donors.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Leadership Council was created to bring forward the perspectives and lived experience of youth from every region in BC: the Interior, the North, Vancouver Island and the Coast Fraser region. The goal was to ensure that youth voices were included in all levels of the Fed organization. The council started off strongly in December, 2017 with 10 successful youth applicants between the ages of 14 and 24 joining. The council held monthly meetings throughout late winter and early summer.

Members oversaw the rewriting of the Fed Code of Conduct, now called the Fed Values Code (see below!), gave feedback on various issues impacting the organization and participated in a meeting with Minister of Children and Family Development Katrine Conroy. Members were also supported in participating in other leadership building opportunities happening for youth in and from care in BC.

Due to many of our council members participating in a variety of other important and time-consuming work, as well as the impact that staff transitions have had, the Youth Leadership Council went on hiatus in August, 2018. Over the fall, the Fed has worked to hire a new Executive Director, who will hire a few more staff. With those positions filled, our goal is to have the Youth Leadership Council up and running again in early 2019. Please stay tuned for updates and information regarding the council as its relaunch gets closer.

FEDERATION OF BC YOUTH IN CARE NETWORKS VALUES CODE

The Fed Values Code is an evolving document that is a collection of values that all youth members, participants, staff and adult supports are accountable to when attending or participating in Fed run programs, events, outings, and social media. Disregard for the Values Code will have consequences that may include removal from an event or activity and future events or activities. The Fed staff are committed to ensuring that Fed events are safe and comfortable for all youth to participate in.

THE FED VALUES: Acceptance & Tolerance
Accept people for who and what they are

and their experiences. Recognize that even if we disagree, we can still have positive and meaningful connections.

THE FED VALUES: Kindness & Consideration
Respect inclusive and preferred pronouns and avoid the use of derogatory language. Express yourself with respectful words. Hate speech, offensive language and discrimination of any kind (gender, race, sexuality, age, religion, ability, size etc.) is not tolerated and will result in one warning, followed by removal from the Fed event or space if the behavior continues.

Examples of derogatory language:

- “That’s so gay” — offensive to the LGBTQ2S Community
- “You guys” — offensive to gender non binary and gender non-conforming youth
- “That’s crazy” — offensive to those with mental health struggles

THE FED VALUES: Participation & Cooperation
While participating in a Fed event, engage in the ways you are able to, stay on site for the duration of the event, listen to staff/adult support instructions and ask for a break/space if you need it.

THE FED VALUES: Discretion
Respect the boundaries, privacy and personal space of others. Sexual contact is not appropriate while at Fed events. Physical contact and taking photos of someone can make them uncomfortable; let’s minimize this by asking before touching each other and asking before taking photos.

THE FED VALUES: Gratitude
If you appreciate someone for their words or actions, let them know!

THE FED VALUES: Honesty
Lying and stealing create an adverse and unsafe environment. Please help maintain the positivity of Fed events by employing honesty. Always feel free to express your honest opinions or concerns.

THE FED VALUES: Spaces Free of Prohibited Substances
Leave alcohol and illicit drugs at home and sign

in all medication to staff. Be mindful that there are folks in recovery, and they should not have to be worried about exposure and relapsing in this environment. Be mindful that there are underage youth at Fed events. The use of prohibited drugs or misuse of prescription drugs will result in immediate removal from the Fed event with a follow up meeting to decide participation in future Fed events. Please note that while attending Fed events no members, alumni, staff, adult supports or board members can enter age exclusionary establishments like bars and clubs.

Example of prohibited use or misuse: being in possession of marijuana/alcohol, dosage abuse, selling or sharing prescription medication, selling cigarettes, consuming energy drinks.

THE FED VALUES: Unity
We come together to make connections and great memories. Make an effort to include everyone and empower one another to do our personal best. Be willing to meet people where they are at. Work to understand that our individual experiences and trauma impact us all differently.

THE FED VALUES: Safety & Privacy
Fed events are a safe space for all. Weapons and violent or aggressive words, actions or threats will not be tolerated. We respect everyone’s right to privacy. Youth cannot enter rooms/cabins to which they are not assigned.

THE FED VALUES: Confidentiality
The Fed respects folks’ confidentiality and consent. Be mindful when taking photos and sharing stories at Fed events. Not everyone consents to having their photos and/or stories shared publicly (i.e. social media). Our goal is to create an environment where youth feel empowered to share their stories without fear of it being shared without their consent.

THE FED VALUES: Respect for the Shared Space & Land We Use
The Fed acknowledges that many of our events take place on unceded territories in BC. We will honor the land we use by leaving it as we found it, and respecting others that use the space.

DREAM FUND

Our Dream Fund supports young people in and from care to pursue their careers and achieve their goals through education and skill building. The Dream Fund includes two different bursaries that are distributed three times a year in October, March and July. The Fed is happy to announce that we have recently partnered with Vancouver Fire and Radius Security and, through a generous donation from their Community Matters Team, have been given an extra \$2,750 to support more Reach for Success Bursaries this year. We were also excited to welcome two members of the Community Matters Team to sit on our Dream Fund Selection Committee panel for the July and October 2018 rounds. Partnerships like this allow the Fed to provide more resources and supports to youth in and from care. Thank you Vancouver Fire and Radius Security for your support and commitment.

Education Achievement Bursary

Want to go back to school but wondering if you can afford tuition on top of everything else? The Education Achievement Bursary provides financial support for youth in and from care attending post-secondary school. Young people can use this bursary for all accredited schools, not just the usual designated post-secondary schools. The Fed distributes \$5,000 among successful Education Achievement applicants per round of Dream Fund (three rounds a year).

Reach for Success Bursary

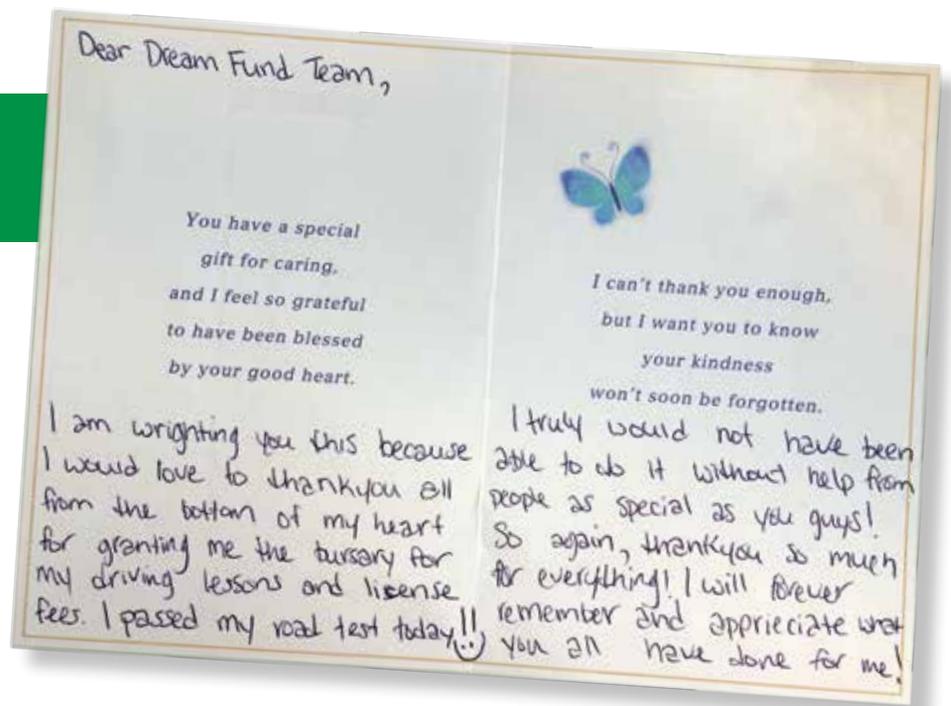
Music lessons, driver's courses, and sports and recreation programs can be expensive. The Reach for Success Bursary helps young people achieve their goals through skill-building and extra-curricular activities. The Fed distributes \$1,500 among successful Reach for Success applicants per round of Dream Fund (three rounds a year).

Dream Fund Eligibility

You are currently in care or a former youth in care either under a continuing custody order (CCO) or temporary custody order (TCO, Voluntary Care Agreement or Special Care Agreement) or Youth Agreement in BC under the Child, Family and Community Services Act.

- You are a Canadian Citizen or a Landed Immigrant.
- You are between the ages of 14 to 24 years old.
- Must have a cumulative total of 1 year in government care.
- (Education Achievement only) You are currently enrolled or are planning to enroll in a secondary, post-secondary academic, technical or vocational program, a recognized public post-secondary institution, or a registered private post-secondary institution or (Reach for Success only) You are currently enrolled or are planning to enroll in a personal or professional development course or activity.

For more information and our application packages go to fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/financial-supports



OCTOBER 2017 WINNERS

Education Achievement Bursary
Zoe F \$1,000 Camosun College
Spencer S \$1,000 UBC
Antonio HC \$750 Vancouver Film School
Chavi K \$750 Vancouver Island University
Kirnpriit SK \$750 UBC Okanagan
Jordan D \$750 Discovery Community College

Reach for Success Bursary
Kayla R \$500 Drivers Training

MARCH 2018 WINNERS

Education Achievement Bursary
Joshua W \$1,500 UVIC
Shoshannah R \$1,000 Emily Carr
Stephanie P \$1,500 Camosun College
Caitlyn M \$1,000 Douglas College

Reach for Success Bursary
Stephanie J \$500 Drivers Training
Amber D \$500 Music Camp
Breanna H \$500 Drivers Training
Terel B \$500 Football Camp

JULY 2018 WINNERS

Education Achievement Bursary
Stephanie J \$2,500 Vancouver Career College
Kiana C \$1,500 Vancouver Island University
Noah F \$500 Nimbus School of Recording & Media
Gaelyn G \$500 Okanagan College

Reach for Success Bursary
Dalyce K \$350 Drivers Training
Ethan W \$350 Junior Golf Membership
Cheyenne J \$1,250 Drivers Training
Sarah R \$500 QuickBooks Training

VOLUNTEERING AT FBCYICN

Thank you so much to all of our incredible volunteers who have helped out at events, worked on developing locals in their communities, worked as part of the Youth Leadership Council and the Truth and Reconciliation Tour, and so much more!

VOLUNTEERS

YOUTH

Dylan C	Caz D	Matthew SP
JT	Darian N	Natasha S
Robyn R	Darren D	Nokomos T
Ally P	Destiny P	Rodney C
Angel R	Holley D	Tre R
Athena N	Josh B	Trent J
Cammy L	Kami S	Wheeshay M
Candy F	Karmella BDB	Kirsten L
Cas B	Marcela A	

ALUMNI

Amanda Poirier	Jessy Neal
Ashley Jakob	Sarah Dawkins
Jess Boon	KT Matheson

ADULT ALLIES

Ryan Wong	Meredith Graham	Kian Ghanei
Monica White	Rhiannon Teegee	Kate Ritchie
Ivy Richardson	Kayla Brownscombe	Gary Tennant
Alexandra West	Debbie Cox	Chelsea Turpin
Roland Gurney	Katelyn Crabtree	Rachael Raven Wright

INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED?

BY GIVING BACK YOU ARE GETTING BACK! YOU CAN DISCOVER NEW INTERESTS, BUILD ON SKILLS, MAKE NEW FRIENDS & GUIDE THE FED AS WE MOVE FORWARD IN OUR WORK!

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

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

HOW CAN I HELP OUT?

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

YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Youth Leadership Council is a place for you to practice your leadership skills and make sure youth voices are heard by the Fed staff and board and decision makers across the province.

LOCAL YOUTH LEADER

Fed locals need youth leaders to provide youth voice and make sure the locals are meeting the needs of the youth in their communities. Every local is different, so every Local Youth Leader volunteer role will be different. If you're interested in becoming a Local Youth Leader in your community, you can find contact information for each local on page 8 and on our website at fbcyicn.ca/get-involved/local-networks.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Do you have an eye for the bigger picture? Do you like helping to connect the dots towards a

brighter future? Consider applying to be on one of the three Fed board committees: Mission, Vision, Values; HR & Governance; or Finance.

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!

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 youth retreat? 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!



BECOME A MEMBER!

Do you see yourself as part of a passionate community of young people who care about each other and make positive change in BC? Then Fed membership is for you! It's free to join, and membership means that you are eligible to vote on important decisions about how we operate.

We have recently updated our membership form to better reflect the diverse gender identities of the youth we work with. Along with added gender identity categories we are also asking that people let us know what ancestry they identify as having. Having this information will allow us to ensure that the programs we offer, the information we share and the resources we suggest cover the vast diversity of our members.

You can sign up to be a member on our website www.fbcyicn.ca under Get Involved. If paper copies are more your speed, email info@fbcyicn.ca and we can send you a hard copy of our membership form.

WHY JOIN US?

- By uniting our voices, we are part of a movement and we're able to impact decisions affecting the needs, issues, and ideas of youth in and from care.
- You get first dibs on cool opportunities, like representing the Fed, travelling to conferences, and participating in our programs.
- Membership is free!
- We are youth-driven, you will have an influence in decision-making.
- As a member, we see you as family and celebrate your accomplishments and milestones.

"By coming together, we're not alone."

Join the FBCYICN today by filling out a membership form found on our website:
fbcyicn.ca/get-involved/become-member

FED LOCALS UPDATE



We were excited to see the Oceanside Local in Parksville, BC get started over the summer.

Nanaimo and Pemberton have shown interest in starting locals too, and we're working on getting them up and running before the New Year. This will bring our total number of locals to 10! We are very excited about our new and current locals and are looking forward to expanding to even more communities in 2019.

The mission of a local is to create an environment for youth in and from care aged 14–24 to come together for support so they don't feel alone in their experiences.

Locals give young people an opportunity to meet new people, do fun activities, develop skills, and unite their voices to create change in the systems that affect them.

Local youth leaders are supported by host agencies and Fed staff. Each local is unique to the community of youth that builds it. Some are fun activity based, while others focus more on life skills, and some are a combination of both. Youth shape the local to best meet their needs. Find a local near you!

CAMPBELL RIVER (VANCOUVER ISLAND)

Host Agency: Sasamans Society
680 Head Start Crescent
Campbell River, BC V9H 1P9
Contact: Monica White
monicaw@sasamans.ca

PARKSVILLE (VANCOUVER ISLAND)

Host Agency: District 69
Family Resource Association
PO Box 965, 198 Morrison Ave
Parksville, BC V9P 2H1
Contact: Ashley Frerichs
(250) 752-6766

VICTORIA (VANCOUVER ISLAND)

Host Agency: Youth
Empowerment Society
533 Yates St.
Victoria, BC V8W 1K7
Contact: (250) 383-3514

NORTH SHORE (COAST/NORTH SHORE)

Host Agency: North Shore
Neighbourhood House
225 East 2nd Street
North Vancouver, BC V7L 1C4
Contact: North Shore Neighbourhood
House Youth Outreach Workers:
Kyla Sattler ksattler@nsnh.bc.ca
Priya Brar pbrar@nsnh.bc.ca

SURREY (COAST FRASER)

Host Agency: Options
Community Services
9815 140 St
Surrey, BC V3T 4M4
Contact: Priya Singh
priya.singh@options.bc.ca

KELOWNA (INTERIOR)

Host Agency: The Bridge
Youth & Family Services
#8-2604 Enterprise Way
Kelowna, BC V1X 7Y5
Contact: Danielle Venne
Danielle.Venne@thebridgeservices.ca

PRINCE GEORGE (NORTH)

Host Agency: Prince George
Native Friendship Centre
Contact: Roland Gurney
(250) 564-3568

KAMLOOPS (INTERIOR)

Host Agency:
Interior Community Services
765 Tranquille Road
Kamloops, BC V2B 3J3
Contact: Renata Saat RSaat@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca
Kristina Splane ksplane@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca
Carrie Davis cdavis@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca

NEW LOCAL PROFILE

OCEANSIDE

The Oceanside Local in Parksville, BC was officially launched on July 24, 2018. Read what Ashley Frerichs, the Youth Outreach Worker who started the process, had to say about getting the Oceanside Local started and what it does for the youth in her community.

How did your local get started?

The Oceanside Local began as a partnership project between Family Resource Association and the Parksville Ministry of Children and Family Development office. A few staff went to the MCFD office's management and requested their support to work with youth and complete the application to have a local in our community. The application process for our local began in March, 2018 and the Oceanside community was officially approved for a Fed local July 24, 2018. Despite the initial steps being started by adult supports, the application process was completed with meaningfully engaged youth every step of the way.

Who were the original people involved in the local, and how do you see their roles evolving?

We had five youth and two supporting adults who came together to complete the application to become a Fed local. Some of these youth may choose to join the local's leadership team.

What are your favourite memories from being involved in the local so far?

Seeing the youth come together and their excitement about having something in our community that is specific for youth in and from care where they can have a sense of belonging and a place to create connections.

What does your local want to focus on in the next year?

Over the next year the Oceanside Local will be focusing on establishing ourselves within our community, expanding our membership, creating connections with youth in and from care in our community and other communities on Vancouver Island, learning some new skills, and ultimately having a lot of fun!

Why do you think it is important to have a local in your community?

What we heard again and again from the youth while completing our application is that they wanted more connection to the youth in and from care in their community, as well as across Vancouver Island and the province. We heard that they wanted a place to belong and connect in an environment where people understand their unique lives. In this writer's opinion, the opportunity for connection, meaningful youth engagement, a sense of belonging and supportive adult relationships is why it is important for not only the Oceanside community, but for every community in the province to have a local.

What would you like people to know about your community?

Not only is the Oceanside Community a great place to be a tourist, it is also a great place to work, live and play. With the diversity of the different communities that make up the Oceanside area there is always something for everyone and something different to do and see each day.

What advice do you have for communities interested in starting up a local?

Just do it. Find a few youth, connect with a local youth serving agency if you're not already and just start walking through the process. And don't underestimate the resource that your local Ministry of Children and Family Development or Delegated Aboriginal Agency office can be.

What would you want a youth who was interested in joining the local to know?

Our local is for youth by youth, and is hosted by Family Resource Association in the Parksville Community. However, our local has youth members from across the Regional District of Nanaimo, including Parksville, Qualicum Beach, Errington, Nanoose Bay, Coombs, Nanaimo and other surrounding communities. As noted above, one of our main focuses is connection and a sense of belonging, so if connection and fun is what you're looking for then come and check us out!

LOCAL YOUTH HIGHLIGHT

Read what the youth in Campbell River have to say about their local!

What are your favourite memories from your time being involved in the Local?

Our social events and outings, being able to connect with people who somewhat understand what we are going through or what we've already been through.

Youth in care picnic.

CAMPBELL RIVER

What would you want a youth who was interested in joining the Local to know?

We do not bite, we do not judge, and everyone and anyone involved in and from care are welcomed.

It's a fun group and makes it easier to meet other youth.

What's your favourite thing to do at the local?

Activities and food.

Just hang out and be together.

What was your favourite local activity over the past year?

Mini-golfing so far I think.

What would you like people to know about your community?

It's an accepting group where you get to be yourself and prove to people that just because you are in or from care doesn't mean you are a bad person.

AGEDOUT.com

HAS EXCITING NEWS!

This Fall we will be launching two new quests called Permanency and Re-Connect. Stay tuned for the launch announcement!

AgedOut.com is a youth-focused one-stop warehouse for information and life skills to support the transition from government care to independence. This website is based on information that former youth in care identified as important, such as housing, education, health, money and income, personal life, and ID needs.

AgedOut.com provides quick and simple answers, and rewards aged out youth for their efforts! As you learn information on the website, you earn perks. If you're a youth in or from government care in BC and your care status has been verified, you'll receive a real world perk (a \$25 gift card) for every three badges you earn. You earn badges by doing activities on the website. For example, if you watch five videos you'll get a Video Buff badge. You can also earn badges through completing quests, earning lots of collectibles and more. See if you can collect them all! You can earn up to \$150 in gift cards to spend at retail stores, restaurants, and on groceries. Plus, if you sign in on **AgedOut.com** on your birthday, you will get a \$25 gift card!

Find the answers to your life skill questions on **AgedOut.com**.

Don't forget to follow us:

[Facebook.com/AgedOut1](https://www.facebook.com/AgedOut1)

[Twitter.com/Aged_Out](https://twitter.com/Aged_Out)

[Youtube.com/agedoutcomBC](https://www.youtube.com/agedoutcomBC)

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter to receive the latest news and community announcements across BC at:

bcadoption.campayn.com/contact_list_form/signup/75482

A MESSAGE FROM MÉTIS NATION BRITISH COLUMBIA

Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) is an organization that creates and improves opportunities for Métis people in British Columbia by providing programs and services that are grounded in Métis culture and history. The Ministry of Youth, also known as Métis Youth British Columbia (MYBC), is an MNBC department that delivers programs and services to Métis youth across the province. These programs and services are guided by the MYBC Committee, which is made up of eight elected Métis youth volunteers who work together to represent and advocate on behalf of Métis youth at the community, provincial and national level.

Here are some of our past and present MYBC provincial programs and services from 2017–2018.

- An annual Provincial Métis Youth Forum
- A Métis Community Support Worker (MCSW) Program
- An Annual Youth Meeting for Métis Youth interested or involved in Métis governance
- The MYTRU Experience Program at Thompson Rivers University (TRU)
- The Cultural Kinnections Forum for Métis Youth-in-Care

There are more programs and services that we deliver throughout the year, and many other programs and services that we hope to create in the future. Follow us on Facebook or check out our website for more information about other Métis programs happening around the province. www.fb.com/metisyouthbritishcolumbia
www.metisyouthbc.com

WORKING WITH STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

New Strategic Initiatives Program Officer and former youth in care Raven McCallum shares her experience working with the Strategic Initiatives team, and talks about how they're working to improve programs for youth in and from care.

My first experience with the Strategic Initiatives team at the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) was through the Provincial Youth Advisory Council in my Youth Advisor role (I'm a former youth in care). They invited our council to offer feedback on the System of Care, Caregiver Rates, and Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) programs. When they first presented the System of Care project to us, it was such a blank slate that it was almost hard to even know where to begin! The team was patient with us, and allowed us the time to share our thoughts. They understood that it was a lot to take in, and let us know that we could continue conversations with them (via email and future meetings). The engagements with them were meaningful, thoughtful, validating, and authentic.

The System of Care is as big as it sounds: it involves basically everything that affects kids from the moment they come into contact with the Ministry. It covers many concepts, and the team is specifically looking at two projects:

1. Caregivers and how they support children in and out of care. The project gets right down to the small details, like how much money is required for toothbrushes, for example.
2. The Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) project is about shaping AYA in a way that will help youth age out of care and into

community with ease and accessibility (a.k.a. make AYA new and improved).

The voice of youth in and from care is required to make sure the System of Care and AYA are reimagined to reach their fullest potential.

I was recently hired onto the Strategic Initiatives team as a Program Officer (so exciting!). My past experience engaging with them played a role in my decision to apply for the position. I felt a genuine sincerity about their commitment to changing the System of Care and AYA. They are innovative, listen with open minds, and they are motivated to support the people they engage with. I really wanted to be a part of that!

Strategic Initiatives is working on some upcoming engagement sessions where youth collaboration will be very much needed! We'll be looking for feedback, ideas, solutions, stories, and thoughts youth have about the Caregiver Payment Model and AYA. Your experiences and ideas are extremely valuable and are essential to this work! We'll be hosting one of these sessions about AYA at the October SCM, and I hope we will get a chance to meet each other in person. We hope you'll join us and we can make some change together.

All the best,
Raven McCallum
Haida, British, Métis
27 Years Old

NEW SERVICE FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF CARE A MESSAGE FROM THE PGT



The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) protects the legal and financial interests of its property guardian clients. These clients are children and youth who are in the continuing care of the province, have no legal guardian or are undergoing adoption. As your property guardian, the PGT's job is to investigate potential legal claims and ensure that you receive any financial benefits you are entitled to. This work is done by a Guardianship and Trust Officer, who makes sure that any money we collect for you is put into a trust account for safekeeping until the money is released to you in full when you turn 19.

For a lot of youth aging out of care, the transition into adulthood can be difficult, particularly when it comes to money management. Leaving care can mean you don't have guidance and support from family and other trusted adults about how to manage your money, which means you could become vulnerable to financial abuse.

For many years, the PGT has advocated for law reform that would allow youth aging out of care the choice to continue receiving support from the PGT in managing the money held in their trust accounts. On December 3, 2018, legislative amendments to the Infants Act and the Public Guardian and Trustee Act will give you the option to have the PGT continue to hold and manage your money as your trustee until you turn 27.

This change will address many of the concerns held by the PGT's Guardianship and Trust Officers, who have heard former youth in care say they regret not having a plan in place when they received their money at 19. Sometimes family and friends can put pressure on youth aging out of care to spend their money in ways they may not want. Other times, youth aging out of care have found their money quickly spent with little to show for it. While the PGT is actively engaged in providing financial literacy training to youth before they age out care, for some youth, the option to continue receiving support from the PGT after they turn 19 will allow them to feel more comfortable and prepared when they make the decision to have their money released to them.

The PGT is also hoping to start meeting with you sooner, well before you turn 19, to provide you with information about your trust account and the options available to you about how to manage your money. The PGT is also looking at ways to provide this option to former property guardian clients (people who were in continuing care of the province, but may have had guardianship transferred to someone else, or who may have been adopted), as well.

If you have any questions, please contact us by email at cys@trustee.bc.ca or by phone at **604.775.3480**.



Fed staff and board at our BC Child and Youth in Care Week party.

UPDATE FROM THE REP!

BC'S REPRESENTATIVE
FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Hi everyone,
It is with mixed feelings that I write my final article for *Power Pages*. As of August 31, I have retired from my position as BC's Representative for Children and Youth and am returning home to New Brunswick. By the time you read this, a new Representative will be in place. In July, Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth was recommended for the position by the all-party government committee to which our Office reports, and reaction to her appointment has been celebratory. She is a wonderful and committed person with a long history of working in service of children and youth in BC and she is eager to get started and meet as many of you as she can.

I want you to know that my decision to leave RCY was not made lightly. It was a decision based both on family and the need to finish some work I started before coming to BC. I have enjoyed meeting so many amazing and admirable youth in BC, and I leave with a heart full of hope and inspiration.

It's important for you to know that the services of the Representative's Office will continue without interruption. If you ever need help, you can call our advocates at 1-800-476-3933 or email rcy@rcybc.ca. We can advocate for you until you turn 19, or — if you are receiving CLBC services — until your 24th birthday, so please don't hesitate to call. Even if you're not sure if you should call, call anyway and we will do our best to help.

We're on social media, too — on Facebook [@rcybcyouth](https://www.facebook.com/rcybcyouth) and [@rcybc](https://www.facebook.com/rcybc), on Instagram [@rcybcyouth](https://www.instagram.com/rcybcyouth) and on Twitter [@rcybcyouth](https://twitter.com/rcybcyouth). You can also find our contact info on our website: www.rcybc.ca. If you need us, please get in touch. That's what we're here for.

In the meantime, carry on following your path and doing the good work you do, and thank you for your warm welcome during my time in BC.

All the best,


Bernard Richard
Former Representative for
Children and Youth



STAFF UPDATES



SHANNON DOLTON

ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

At the Fed office I can usually be found at my desk with a cup of tea to my right and my headphones in my ears (never be afraid to poke me to get my attention). I have the pleasure and honour of working on the following Fed projects and programs:

- Dream Fund Bursaries: Reach for Success and Education Achievement
- Take the Wheel Driver's Training Bursary
- Holiday Party Grants
- I plan and lead the organization of our SCMs/Youth Retreats
- I organize and track volunteers and volunteer hours for the Fed, as well as membership information and updates, and our internal database
- I currently lead our 121 resources and supports
- I supported the 2017 relaunch of the Youth Leadership Council

Favourite Pizza: I am a more is more kind of pizza person. I think my dream pizza would be a thin crust with pesto instead of tomato sauce and then ALL THE VEGGIES!!! Including pineapple — because pineapple DOES belong on pizza. Then I would throw some goat cheese on top because I like to live on the edge.

STEPHANIE THOMPSON

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Hi everyone! The past few months have been keeping me pretty busy. I started as the Communications Coordinator in May and it's been a lot of fun so far. I get to nerd out over grammar and margins (two of my favourite things), and I got the first glimpse of all the amazing work you submitted to *Power Pages*. Some stuff I've been working on:

- Increasing the Fed's social media presence
- Creating Annual Reports
- Managing *Power Pages* production
- Identifying more places for you to share your voices

I also do a lot of support work for other staff's programs by creating posters, forms,



infographics, ads, logos, documents, and updating the website.

Favourite Pizza: Arugula, figs, prosciutto, blue cheese, and balsamic reduction when I'm feeling fancy, and pepperoni and mushroom with ranch on the side when I'm not.

PREETI PRASAD

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

I'm still somewhat new to my position, so some of my time since I've been with the Fed has involved familiarizing myself with my new role and responsibilities. A typical day for me consists of:

- Managing the front desk by greeting visitors, answering the phone and receiving mail
- Providing operational support like organizing meetings, keeping an organized filing system and maintaining office equipment
- Accounting duties such as keeping track of accounts, ensuring bills are paid and preparing payroll

Over the last few months, I have been working on putting together documents for our year-end financials, as well as supporting both the Take the Wheel program and SCMs/Youth Retreats in an administrative capacity. I see my role as Administrative Coordinator as helping to ensure that from an operational standpoint, the organization runs as smoothly as possible.

Favourite Pizza: Technically, and some may say this is cheating because its two pizzas combined into one, I have to go with half margherita style and the other half with dried fig, goat cheese, olives, arugula salad and balsamic drizzle.



JEFF O'NEILL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

I am new to my role so I am taking my time to really figure out what exactly it means, and ultimately how I can help our youth locals be as successful as possible. My day to day consists of reshaping how locals are operated and connecting with local leaders to see how things are going and what I can do to help. I have been looking at all the forms we have and seeing how they can be more efficient when a community expresses interest in applying to become a local, better defining what a local is and what benefits they can offer youth in and from care. Basically my job is to focus on the youth locals and help them thrive.

Favourite Pizza: Hawaiian. Now I know that there is much debate about this topic. Does pineapple belong on pizza? In my humble opinion, it tastes delicious and I am very happy someone was bold enough to invent this pizza. If you don't think it belongs on pizza, I am very happy to talk with you about it, and then we'll go for some Hawaiian pizza.





JULES SAYS GOODBYE

Thank you for the lessons, the blessings and smiles.

Champions of the heart. This is what I say when people ask me about what the youth in and from care community means to me. A group of people with some overlapping experience who, when allowed to feel safe, blossom bright. Sharing insight, passion and dreams to move their lives forward and to help supporters become allies in the movement of improving the lives of youth in government care. Tirelessly working, through action and living honestly, to move our thinking as a society of system parents from survival to equality, from equality to prosperity.

In my time at the Federation you encouraged the supporter in me to emerge as an advocate of change and a forever ally. You taught me more about love, resilience, and healing than I could have studied in books. You let me witness your ups and downs, your celebrations and your decisions, your trauma and your dreams equally. You took time to not just share about you, but to create space for me to share about me. You supported my journey as a parent as much as you did my role as a leader. You offered compassion and comfort when it appeared that days were long. You worked at my side to create the system you see today that benefits your peers in government care.

So, as I transition to supporting youth with developmental disabilities in and from care, I have this wish for you: stay focused on the journey ahead, embrace the light and the dark, and believe that every moment is meaningful and will serve a greater role and purpose in time. You are brilliant, you are strong, you are loving. This is who you are. Not a diagnosis you may have received, not a three letter computer code that categorizes your time in care, not a label you've been given, not the things that didn't go the way you hoped. Reflect with support and see who you are inside. Hold onto that dearly and with pride, for it is your true nature and the gift you offer the world.

The day is yours for the taking. The organization is yours to design and guide. Be mindful in how you use these opportunities and resources to create a better experience for the next generation of those in and from care.

Wishing you all the best.
A humble ally for life,

Jules



HOLIDAYS WITH THE FED



On December 9 the Fed office was filled to the brim with youth, alumni and their families, staff, board, and community partners and allies. We were happy to have Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and New Westminister's MLA Judy Darcy in attendance, and we appreciated the time her and her team took to talk with many of the party goers. There was an abundance of food and treats, activities and crafts for kids, and our winter themed photo booth was a huge success. Santa (aka Gabby Clause) visited the event giving out stockings and good cheer. We think it's fair to say that a good time was had by all and we look forward to this year's celebration.



FED HOLIDAY DINNER GRANTS

Last November the Fed was able to distribute 13 holiday grants to organizations and community partners around BC. Each recipient threw a holiday themed-event for youth in and from care. Between them, all 419 youth participated in some holiday activity or event.

- Interior Community Services — Kamloops
- John Howard Society — Campbell River
- MCFD — Port Hardy
- Powell River Child, Youth and Family Services Society
- Staches and Lashes Collective
- Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition
- The Youth Space Alexandra Neighbourhood House
- Victoria Youth in Care Network
- VIU Tuition Waiver Post Care
- Youth Advisory Council Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre
- Youth Room Queen Elizabeth Secondary School
- Foster Nation — Misfits Christmas



VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY POST-CARE TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM

This year the Post-Care Tuition Waiver Program hosted a Winter Social gathering for students on December 17. This is one of the busiest times of the semester for our students, and so it we hosted drop-in style. We hosted our gathering at Shq'apthut, our Gathering Place on campus. Students arrived, brought their friends and families to enjoy hot chocolate and homemade goodies and connect with one another. Providing opportunities for students to connect, especially during times like the holidays, is one our many focuses; it would not be possible without the openness of our cohort. One of the many things we admire about our students accessing our program is the community they create when they are together.

Not only did we host a social gathering, but we were also able to provide our cohort of 90 holiday self-care packages. Out of 90 we had 46 students choose to participate. We are aware of the challenges that holidays can bring, and we also know that the end of the semester is the busiest

for our students, so our care packages are about supporting our students in accessing and engaging in self-care practices. Each care package had a VIU sweater for our students, homemade holiday goodies, candles, laundry soap, dental care items, fuzzy blankets, gift certificates, and then items chosen by the students that would help them engage in an activity that serves as self-care for them. Some received gift certificates to yoga classes for the semester and yoga mats to go to class, some to go rock climbing, and some to go snowshoeing or hiking with our campus recreation. We had numerous family movie passes and swim passes go to our students with families. We had a number of colouring books and baking supplies in our care packages too!

Ensuring our students feel welcome, valued and celebrated is important to us, especially during the holidays. We are very grateful for the number of partners who supported us in creating a culture of support and fun at VIU, and grateful to have received support from the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks to host

another opportunity for our students to come together!

VICTORIA YOUTH IN CARE NETWORK LOCAL

This Annual Holiday Dinner with the Victoria Youth in Care Network (VYICN) was full of fantastic food, laughter, and friendship. Seven youth and six alumni and adult supports all came together to enjoy the event which was organized by members of the VYICN. A snow day almost prevented this event from happening but with perseverance and determination, the group pulled it off on schedule! They made the evening special by meticulously putting together beautiful gifts and signed cards for each adult support to show their appreciation. The group swapped stories and jokes while strengthening friendships and forming new ones, surrounded by the glow of Christmas lights and the warmth of compassion. The event was a huge success and Victoria Youth in Care Network is grateful to the Fed for the Holiday Dinner Grant and will look forward to next year's Holiday Dinner with great anticipation!

KAMLOOPS YOUTH IN CARE NETWORK LOCAL

The Kamloops Local of the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks held their 3rd Annual Christmas Party on December 20, 2017. Our team of youth leaders met throughout the week to make a budget, plan the event, make games, and fill all of the stockings for the youth who would be attending. We had 17 youth come out to enjoy the event and were very excited to see both our regular youth and several new faces. We were also very excited to have another youth join our local leader's team to help plan this event. We enjoyed a delicious Christmas dinner and were lucky to, once again, have one of our local foster parents donate and cook us two deep fried turkeys and homemade desserts. There were plenty of leftovers for youth to take home for lunch the next day.

Youth participated in several fun challenges over the evening including fun picture games, icebreakers, pin the carrot nose on the snowman, and a gift unwrapping challenge (unwrapping gifts with oven mitts). At the end of the evening youth were given their own stocking full of goodies to take home. The Kamloops Local youth leadership team was also able to ensure the youth who were spending Christmas at our youth shelter and some youth who access our outreach services had a stocking to open Christmas morning.



students faces as some tried egg nog for the first time. The room was filled with chatter, laughter, and smiles and the overall mood was nostalgic! We appreciate the bursary from the Fed, as it helped to make this event possible. We hope that this could become an annual event for the students at Queen Elizabeth Secondary School!

competitive!), played some holiday themed games, and teamed up for several lively rounds of Mad Gab by the glow of the tree. We are grateful to the Fed for making it possible for everyone to come together with food, fun, great company and friends, and we look forward to the holiday party growing even bigger next year!

THE YOUTH ROOM — QUEEN ELIZABETH SECONDARY SCHOOL

Queen Elizabeth Secondary School hosted their first holiday lunch thanks to bursary funding from the Federation BC Youth in Care Networks. This special holiday lunch was hosted out of the school's Youth Room. The youth care workers at the Youth Room are always exploring different ways to support students socially, emotionally, and behaviourally so students can be successful in the classroom.

The special holiday hot lunch was held on Wednesday, December 20, and it brought together staff and around 50 students. The room was buzzing with excitement as students enjoyed gourmet sandwiches that were cooked to a tender perfection by the youth care workers. The vegetarian sandwiches were piled high with coleslaw and sauces. There were also some veggies and yummy treats to have as side dishes. It was fun to watch the enjoyment on

MCCREARY CENTRE SOCIETY'S YOUTH RESEARCH ACADEMY

On December 28 two cohorts of the Youth Research Academy (YRA) at McCreary Centre Society got together for a holiday celebration thanks to the generous support provided by the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks. Ten members of the YRA and YRA alumni attended the two-part event, along with McCreary staff. To kick off the celebration, the group shared a holiday feast at Tacofino where they chowed down on festive tacos, burritos, flan, and lots of guacamole.

The group returned to the McCreary office to unwrap gifts awaiting them under the tree and to watch *The Emperor's New Groove* (chosen by the YRA as a nod to their work to address power imbalances and social inequities—and also for the blast-from-the-past entertainment value!). The group built creative and delicious gingerbread houses (which got only slightly

CONNECTING COMMUNITY TO SURREY YOUTH LEAVING CARE

On December 25 the Connecting Community to Surrey Youth Leaving Care held their first ever holiday dinner event. The event offered a cozy and warm atmosphere for our festivities. We had 25 attendees including youth, alumni, adult allies and staff. We were able to host this event with the support of several local donors and the Fed holiday dinner grant. The grant allowed us to provide stockings, gifts, dinner and games for the festivities. Along with the support and well wishes from our community, we had a very successful event and plan to continue this in the future. Without the dedication of youth, staff and volunteers this event wouldn't have been possible. A BIG thank you to the Fed and their generous support of our event to support Surrey youth. Thank you for your support, and we look forward to future collaborations.

THE YOUTH SPACE — ALEXANDRA NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

The Youth Space hosted our first-ever holiday family dinner on Friday, December 15, planned and pulled off by the hard work of our wonderful Youth Collective and with generous support from the Fed. The Youth Space brought together youth and adults to sit down and connect over a warm, inclusive family dinner in the winter season, even if they didn't have blood relatives to share a dinner with. The event was very successful, as many members of the community, both regular and non-regular Youth Space visitors, showed up to celebrate the spirit of the holiday season! Youth pitched in to decorate the room with twinkling fairy lights and garlands, and set the table with candles and goody bags for all to take home. Everyone had fun enjoying the wonderful Italian-inspired dishes lovingly prepared by Youth Space staff and youth volunteers, including lasagna, garlic bread and Caesar salad. We finished the party with sugar cookie decorating and a small raffle for gift cards, and everyone left with smiles.

POWELL RIVER YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE

On December 21, 2017 the Powell River Youth Resource Centre (YRC) hosted its 3rd Annual Winter Solstice Dinner Event. The merrymaking began with a meet-and-greet where appetizers, hot chocolate and apple cider were served. Activities included decorating gingerbread cookies, creating Christmas tree treats from ice cream cones, icing and candies, preparing Christmas bark, and making paper Christmas ornaments. There was also a photo station with hats, antlers and other holiday props.

Staff from Powell River Child, Youth and Family Services Society (PRCYFSS) worked diligently to put together a traditional holiday dinner complete with turkey, mashed potatoes, vegetables, stuffing, gravy, homemade cranberry sauce and desserts. Dinner was served in an open area with a projector screen playing the movie *Elf*. After dinner, all guests participated in the White Elephant Gift Exchange game. This year a few extra gifts were added as door prizes for some additional excitement. Twenty-nine people attended in full festive spirit making for a joyful and memorable occasion. Two youth

commented on how happy they were to be invited and how they were glad they came as they had so much fun! In fact, many guests left saying how the dinner was amazing and how much they enjoyed playing the White Elephant Gift Exchange game and making Christmas bark. Thank you so much FBCYICN for your gracious support and in making this all possible!

NANAIMO YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

We're happy to share that our first Youth Advisory Council Christmas event was a huge success. We started our evening together under a heated tent with chandeliers, Christmas lights and decorations! We shared a delicious turkey dinner with all the fixings! Santa came and we had a gift exchange. After dinner we went to the movies for the opening night of *Jumanji*. I am constantly amazed by the group of heroes that I get the honour of spending time with. Laughter is key for healing, loving and playing together! What a great way to wrap up 2017!

FOSTER NATION — MISFITS CHRISTMAS

Dear friends, donors, supporters, youth, and members of our personal and professional communities: We are incredibly happy to share that Foster Nation's Second Annual Misfit Christmas was a complete success! Last year we had a total of 40 people attend the event and this year we had just over 120 people come throughout the day to connect and share space with their friends, family, and community! This number does not even count the folks who generously chose to give their time and energy in the morning to set-up, as well as those who came after the event to help us hand out leftover food downtown.

The day started with a relaxed energy as a moderate amount of people came through in the early afternoon, and by dinner time the WISE hall was buzzing with Misfits playing games, eating food, making connections, and creating all kinds of art! After dinner we handed out presents and then hosted an open mic where some awesome folks shared their talents! At the end of the night, after we had cleaned up, an energetic and invested group of us headed down to Hastings and Columbia where we shared the rest of our leftover

food and treats with our fellow Misfits in the DTES.

The word "amazing" is an understatement to describe the success of the day. We are unendingly grateful for the support so many people contributed. Witnessing and experiencing your thoughtfulness, generosity, and intention gives us a renewed sense of hope that bringing community together can ensure that everybody can experience a small piece of Christmas joy and a large piece of turkey during the holidays.

We are blessed to have support, trust, and encouragement from the community. We look forward to our next event and we're currently brainstorming how we can create more misfit-type get-togethers throughout the year. Stay tuned, friends!

STACHES AND LASHES

We are still buzzing from how much fun we had at the sold-out show, *Runs in the Family 2*, a queer variety show for everybody! *RITF2* showcased Victoria's premiere entertainers and amazing youth performers at the Metro Studio Theatre in Victoria, BC on January 20.

What made this event so special was the opportunity to hold a VIP program for youth in and from care before the show. Approximately 30 youth, their friends and family members came for pizza, chicken wings, veggies, and a legendary candy bar, then hung out with performers and saw behind the scenes in an exclusive tour of the theatre.

We were also privileged to have three community leaders come and talk to the group. Speaking about the importance of community were Shelley Volante, Legacy Princess 39 with the Greater Vancouver Native Cultural Society — Two Spirit, and Laurie McDonald, Two Spirit Elder and social work instructor at Indigenous Perspectives Society. We also had Boy Idol, one of Victoria's beloved drag performers and former youth in care, talk about his own journey with celebrating identity and expressing his experiences through art and performance. Afterwards, everyone settled in for an extraordinary night of short film, dance, song, poetry, comedy, and drag! So many thanks to our sponsors and especially to the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks for supporting this venture!



SCM





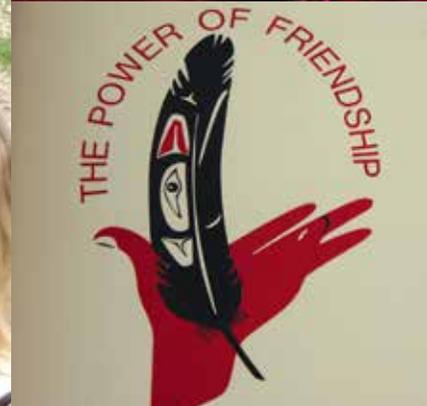
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**MORE FED HOLIDAY
DINNER GRANT PHOTOS**





TRUTH & RECONCILIATION TOUR WRAP-UP

The Truth and Reconciliation Tour was a youth-driven initiative created with the desire to increase awareness and understanding of the topic of reconciliation and the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released a report in June 2015, with 94 Calls to Action, or recommendations, to address the historical injustices against Indigenous people such as Indian Residential Schools and the Sixties Scoop. During consultations at youth retreats and a meeting with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), youth expressed a desire to learn and explore the topic of reconciliation, the TRC, Indigenous peoples' rights, the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and the lasting impacts on youth today.

With funding from Canada 150 and INAC, and in partnership with the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY), the Fed's Indigenous program had the privilege of visiting 11 communities across BC. Eight Youth Ambassadors for Reconciliation between the ages of 16 and 24, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, from Fort Nelson, Kelowna, Merritt, Prince George, Victoria, Pemberton, Chilliwack, and Surrey, were trained to facilitate community conversations. In September, 2017, together with an adult advisory group made up of community partners and an Elder, the Youth

Ambassadors and Fed staff participated in the Walk for Reconciliation in Vancouver. The team then created the content, timeline, and action plan for the Truth and Reconciliation Tour.

Fed staff members Emily Muth, Research and Engagement Specialist, and Gabby Hillis, Indigenous Programs Manager, travelled through Prince George, Terrace, Fort Nelson First Nation, Kamloops, Kelowna, Campbell River, Nanaimo, Songhees Nation, Boston Bar, Pemberton, and Shxw'há:y Village, from October, 2017 to March, 2018 to co-facilitate (with Youth Ambassadors) conversations about reconciliation in these communities.

Community conversations were held in a circle, and typically started with an opening prayer and welcome by a local Elder or knowledge keeper from the community. Circles included Elders, knowledge keepers, youth, alumni, adult allies, and community partners. After introductions, where we shared our names, heritage, preferred pronouns, and unique "fun facts" about ourselves, each circle created group guidelines, and stories were shared by all who were comfortable with participating.

We watched *The 7th Generation* our Ancestors Prayed For, "a short documentary style film that features the voices of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and non-Aboriginal children and youth. The film makes up part of the Reconciliation Film Project, which

is a collaborative initiative between the Caring Society and Productions Cazabon on a multi-media children and youth response campaign to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action," according to the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. Staff from the Indigenous Strategies and Partnerships department and the Advocacy department at RCY joined us on our tour through the Lower Mainland. They facilitated rights and advocacy-themed activities focused on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Participants had opportunities to reflect on what they learned, share their perspectives on reconciliation, and if they were ready, discuss how they could continue reconciliation work in their communities. At the end of the sessions, youth completed a voluntary survey prepared by McCreary Centre Society's Youth Research Academy, to evaluate whether youth left with increased knowledge in the topics we discussed, and if they had a desire to continue learning.

In August 2018, some of the Youth Ambassadors reunited to talk about their experiences with the project, its successes, challenges, and potential for future reconciliation work. Youth left with a desire to continue meeting with others to discuss reconciliation and facilitate reconciliation work in their communities.



ALUMNI PROFILE

ASHLEY

You might not guess it from Ashley's even-keeled demeanor, but she's a person of strong convictions. As a former youth in care, she's passionate about equal opportunities for youth from care. And, she turns her passion into action. In the last year she has given a speech about where the government has failed youth in the child welfare system, taken part in a brainstorming session about journalism projects that could help change the system, and starred in a video for the Youth Futures Education Fund. Her passion for change extends to the healthcare system, where she sees a lot of opportunity for improvement. She's currently working toward her nursing degree at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (Kwantlen) so she can help make the changes she envisions.

From the University of the Fraser Valley to McDonald's to the Fed to Kwantlen and her job as a booking clerk in a hospital, follow Ashley on her journey to the great place she is today!

Tell us a little about yourself.

My name is Ashley, I was a former youth in care from the age of 12 to 19. Currently I work at a hospital as a booking clerk. It's a casual position so I cover people who call in sick or go on vacation and now I'm going back to school for the nursing program at Kwantlen.

How did you get involved with the Fed?

I got involved with the Federation when I was looking for places to volunteer. A few years ago it was kind of hard to get a job or even

just to volunteer, and I saw online that the Federation gives preference to former youth in care and it was actual community. I didn't know about it until I searched it up and I just decided to give it a shot one day and just pop in and they recruited me from there.

What was your volunteer position?

I was in a group called the Outreach Group, or the OGs. We would do presentations for different programs and youth groups like the Strive Living Society in Vancouver and the Ministry. I would also pop in once a week to just do secretarial work. I would assist with that, make posters, help with Power Pages, assemble Power Pages; a lot of office work and stuff like that.

What made you want to start volunteering in the first place?

I guess when I had spare time I just wanted to do something. I didn't know how rewarding it was either. I got way more out of it than I put in, certainly. I met lots of people that I'm still friends with three years later, I go to their houses all the time and stuff. I enjoy helping out and also I got a good reference letter from the staff at the Fed.

How did you get where you are today?

When I graduated high school I didn't know what I wanted to do. I had no guidance so I took random courses that weren't the right fit for me at the University of the Fraser Valley because I still lived in Langley at the time and I was just exploring and working at McDonald's. After that I was working two minimum wage jobs at Burger King and McDonalds, so I was working five days a week at McDonalds and the sixth day I worked at Burger King, and I volunteered at the Federation on Mondays.

After a while I just got sick of it and stressed out all the time. I decided to go back to school for a certificate program, and my foster mom stressed, "Why don't you do the nurse unit core program?" because she works as a clerk and scheduler at Fraser Health. I didn't even know what it was but she talked me into it and she told me it's a union so they can't just kick you out once you're in. So I took the course and I didn't get a job right away. I applied everywhere in person, even though they say apply online, I still applied in person to stand out.

Finally, a year later I got the job where I'm working now as a casual booking clerk for

medical imaging. After working there for about a year or two, I enjoyed working in the hospital. I enjoy helping patients and I'm not grossed out by the gory parts of it. When my biological mom and my grandfather (her dad) passed away, I watched them pass away in the hospital. If I could deal with that I feel like I could deal with a lot of stuff like that.

How good did it feel to be able to quit McDonalds and Burger King?

Oh it feels much better because you're always on your feet all the time. They work you really hard for minimum wage. A lot of young adults now only qualify for minimum wage jobs because they don't have a certificate or diploma or degree to qualify for living wage jobs. I feel much more grateful for where I'm working. I get to sit down and the pay is better so I have more job security. They bully you around in a lot of those minimum wage jobs.

What kind of nursing do you want to go into?

I was looking into it and I think I want to do community nursing and mental health. I was looking at jobs for that yesterday. I don't qualify for anything like that yet though. Nursing is a very versatile degree so I think I'll find something I like.

What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

Right now I am doing pretty well at school. I was a B+ average. Getting my unit clerk certificate because it was kind of a difficult course. Volunteering at the Federation because they always make you feel really good about yourself with the volunteer appreciation thing at the SCM. I also did some track and field in high school and elementary school, and got a green belt in karate. I wish I had finished it but I didn't at the time.

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

Other people see it like I accomplished stuff. I try not to focus on it that way. When I keep going and I keep looking forward to something it keeps me distracted from certain things that happened in my life that aren't so great. I think that's why I just like to work hard because it just keeps my mind off of other things. I always like to be busy. And I guess everyone deals with stuff differently and has had different experiences. Maybe for them it's going to school, studying a lot,

working a lot. Or some people, if they don't have a lot of guidance, turn to addiction or their friends. I was always kind of a loner so I enjoy being alone and doing my own thing. I don't like to feel like I'm better than anyone else or anything like that so I'm just neutral about it. Not that I'm not proud. I'm happy when I accomplish my goals.

What inspires you?

At the hospital I go out of my way sometimes to help the patients and stuff. I see a lot of errors and issues in the healthcare system that could easily be fixed if things were done in a proper order. I wish I could have a more integral part in helping the healthcare system and patients in general. If I was a nurse more people would listen to me because I'd have a degree and a higher stake in it.

After working in the hospital and talking to people and learning so much about the profession, that's when I was like, this is the right fit for me. Before I didn't know anything about nursing. I just thought they worked in hospitals. You know some people know what they want to do their whole lives? I thought nursing was that kind of thing. I didn't think I was one of those people who was cut out to do that kind of stuff. But after talking to people I learned that I actually am probably good enough to do something like that and it would be the right fit for me.

What are some of the biggest life lessons you've learned that you'd want to share with youth who are coming out of care and transitioning on their own?

Continue to advocate for yourself. Change has happened along the way because youth in care were standing up for themselves. Access the resources available to you so you have the same opportunities to accomplish your goals as youth outside of care. I would also advise them to try and connect with other youth in care in the community. I think that's a big one too. To try and make friends. I know a lot of them after 19, like myself, feel alone in the world. I think that would be one of the most important things actually. To stay connected with other youth in care, to join the Federation, to come to at least one SCM. I made great friends that are basically family.

You're a very together person. Are there any tools that you use to keep things together that other people might be able to use?

The only thing I do is try to keep myself busy all the time. But sometimes that doesn't work

for everybody. Sometimes I watch Noah Elkrief's* YouTube videos on how to deal with your emotions. I realized that it helps a lot with self-esteem, depression and how to look at life differently. It totally changes your mentality that's why I have a lot more peace in my life now from watching. It sounds silly but it teaches you a different way to think. When I did my homework and stuff I'd just play the video in the background so I'm half listening to it, half doing my work. I don't like it when it's really quiet when I do work, it's too boring. He has free videos online and teaches you how to think about things differently. Like for example he teaches the concept that words cannot hurt you unless you believe them. Like it's not okay to verbally abuse someone or intimidate anyone else or anything like that but, for example, if some person out on the street who doesn't know you tells you you suck at your job, you're probably not going to feel anything. You might feel a bit offended but that person doesn't know you so it has no meaning. But if your boss tells you you suck at your job, then you might feel something because you believe it because your boss knows you and sees you work. So the words are being said to you but you only believe one person not the other, so just sort of proves that words can't hurt you, it's only if you believe them.

What are some of your goals for the future?

I kind of just take things in life as they go. After finishing school I'll start working and then I'll probably travel more. I kind of want to get back into martial arts stuff. In my very long long-term goals, I'm thinking once I'm established I would probably consider adopting at some point. Right now I'm just focused on completing my degree and then after that I'll have more options.

Where do you want to travel to?

Probably Australia, Europe, I think everywhere. I've been to Mexico when I was a really little kid. I'll just go where anyone else is willing to go with me.

Tell us about the advocacy work you've been doing.

I did a video for the Youth Futures Education Fund to promote and talk about how the scholarship benefitted me. And I went The Discourse's brainstorming session [on journalism projects that could impact the child welfare system]. A lot of people are on the same page. I was happy to find out that journalists were interested in attending

so they could portray former youth in care more accurately. I'm very involved in that kind of stuff so it was a good refresher. How everyone tries to understand the bigger picture rather than assuming things about people or groups of people. Everyone there was very open-minded.

What made you want to do advocacy work for youth in and from care?

I feel like most young adults who are former youth in care are already severely disadvantaged and not by choice at all. They're just not getting opportunities in life. They're forced into poverty at age 19. Not a lot of 19 year-olds are supporting themselves nowadays. Young adults from care are held to a higher standard of independence than young adults outside of the care. Young adults are staying with their parents longer. If prices increase, most young adults I know at least, stay at home longer because they can't afford to move out. But what do people without family support do? At 19 they're basically levelled off at minimum wage because they don't have enough work or volunteer experience to accumulate a living wage. They don't have a college education yet. Also before, the AYA it didn't cover throughout the summer months so they would just be cut off. There are no full-time secure jobs that were guaranteed going to wait for them as soon as they finish their final exams. I thought that was really unfair. I feel like there's a huge double standard.

Minimum wage is not living wage, it's a poverty wage. If the government expects people to be independent by 19, especially if they're youth from care or young adults in general, it's their responsibility to maintain affordability and enable them to be independent. The government's letting the economy get out of control and isn't compensating the victims of their poor management accordingly or adjusting support accordingly. It expects former youth in care to accommodate their poor management. A lot of youth from care don't go to school or use the resources available to them, but I feel like if there was extended support it would give them time to work or volunteer. Even if they don't want to go back to school and they like their job, it would give them time to save money, to move up in their current profession so that they are established by the time they leave care. Not to mention there are waitlists in a lot of post-secondary programs. There's waitlists for

continued on next page



YOUTH MEMBER PROFILE

DESTINY P

the nursing program, like three-year waitlists, so what are you supposed to do until then? A lot of youth are 19 and young and vulnerable. They can be stressed out and uninformed, and I think they're just being taken advantage of. It gets very unfair.

What changes would you like to see happen for children and youth from care?

Definitely for them to get the same adequate supports as most young adults are getting today. I'd like to see youth from care get adequate support at least until age 25. After that the AYA can be adjusted if they want to go back to school.

I don't think it's about age, I think it's about affordability. If everything was cheaper I wouldn't be saying 25, I'd be saying 21. But 30 years back people would drop out of school, get a job, and everything was cheap enough that they could afford things. No one can afford a three million dollar house.

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

I have a cat, a stray one, and he has a personality. His name is Toby, and he has a dog-like personality. He'll play fetch. I was shocked. I'll throw the ball, and he'll pick it up and drop it right by my feet. I'll do it about three times then he'll get lazy. He'll be waiting at the door for me when I come home from work. He hears my car pull in.

Before I didn't like cats, I thought they were cute but I thought their personalities were boring. Then I met this cat and they all have different personalities. They're like people, people can be boring and lazy sometimes too. He's a tuxedo cat, so he has black and white patches. As soon I come home I'll feed him and he'll run to the food, eat a bit, and then come back and say hi to me and get pet and sit on me, then go back and finish the food. It's not like, I have my food now, go away. It's funny how he'll stop eating just to say hi. He's really cute.

What's your favourite crayon colour?

Blue.

*Noah Elkrief is not a medical or mental health professional. While his videos have helped Ashley, they are not a substitute for professional mental health advice.

Though quiet and reserved, Destiny has a strong presence wherever she goes. She surrounds herself with people who support her great efforts in school, work, and home community of Shxwhá:y Village. There is no doubt that youth and community members alike look up to Destiny. She's a role model, leader, and just a joy to be around. She was a youth ambassador for reconciliation on the Fed's Truth and Reconciliation Tour, where she planned and facilitated a circle conversation about reconciliation in her home community. Destiny was the 2018 BC Child and Youth in Care Week recipient for the 12–16 year old Superstar Award. She was nominated in multiple categories by supportive adults in her life. She recognizes others' struggles and is eager to learn how she can help. When asked to join the Fed's Youth Leadership Council, she did not hesitate and has sat on the council since early 2018. Destiny jumps on every opportunity to support others and create a better future for her peers and community.

Tell us about yourself.

I'm from Shxwhá:y Village which is in Chilliwack on Stó:lō territory. I've been there my whole life, basically. It's a little reserve, and we have a factory on it. It's a toilet paper factory. I'm on the youth council there and we do a lot of work with the kids. We've recently been trying to get on our game for the youth program.

Tell us more about the youth council.

It's called Shxwhá:y Village youth council. We plan events and fundraisers. Half of the funding goes to us, and for the other half we pick a charity we want to give it to. We have loonie auctions and car washes and dinners and stuff. There are six of us. We used to meet every other week, but lately we've been really busy.

How did you get involved with the Fed?

I was at Ignite Your Spirit conference and they told me they were doing an SCM in February. They said it was like the same



achievement awards, and it was the first time that we've done that one, and it was a surprise to me because I helped plan the education ceremony. They didn't tell me I was getting an award. It was weird. I also did a speech where we honour the foster parents. I did a speech to them, so everyone already knew me when I went up there. There were a lot of people so I was nervous.

Had you done public speaking before that?

Not like that. I was pretty emotional because I did it for my foster parents.

What do you think helped you reach that achievement?

I think the people around me really showed me that they supported me, and that they trusted me. Tony nominated me — one of the youth counsellors.

What inspires you?

I think just like all the people around me. They're all so good and they've succeeded a lot. I wanted to be like them. Like my older brothers, despite what they had to go through, they still gave everything their 100%. My parents.

What are your goals over the next few years?

To graduate high school. I have a couple more classes to do for Grade 10. If I keep doing the things I'm doing, just cause they make me feel happier and I feel better when I do them, then I'll be able to work harder.

What do you do to help motivate yourself and keep you going?

I'm scared of letting other people down because I have a lot of people looking up to me, being on the youth council and stuff.

What message would you like to share with the Fed community?

Never give up and don't listen to the people that try to bring you down because you're the only one that knows how strong you are and what you can do. It's your job to show them.

Tell us something about yourself that might surprise people.

I'm a pretty quiet person so I think people think I'm too scared to do anything on my own, but a lot of the things I do, I go out and do by myself.

Do you have any pets?

I have a dog. She's a chihuahua pug. She's, like, so ugly but she's cute. Her name's Neesa — my sister named her after an Ewok because she looks like an Ewok. She's six. I have a lot of fish. We have a huge tank that's filled with a bunch of goldfish.

Are you into any sports or teams?

I recently started canoe pulling. They've been wanting me to do it for a while, but I didn't want to. Then I went and found out I really enjoy it. My bio-dad is apparently a legend. We go to races on the weekend and it's really intense because there's a lot of canoes out there. I've been doing it for a few months. I was originally training with one team, then I kinda just switched. They're from a bunch of different communities. Next week, July 21, I'm going on a canoe journey for 10 days. It starts in Lummi Nation and then we go to a bunch of places.

How do you feel about it?

I'm nervous. I train every day at 5 AM. It's 8 hours a day in the ocean. I'm going on the family canoe, so I'll be on there with older people from Shxwhá:y.

What sort of things do you need to do to prepare for staying in different communities?

We do a thing called canoe protocol. They show us their song and dance and then feed us, and we go to sleep. I don't know how many communities we'll be going to, but there are 150 different canoes registered. I think they all start in two different places on the same day.

What's your favourite crayon colour?

Probably yellow. It's like a bright colour and it's happy.

What kind of changes would you like to see for youth in and from care?

I don't want the stereotype to be that they're dropping out of school or doing drugs. I want the stereotype to change. I want them to be known for being strong.

How do you think you've gotten where you are today?

It's something I genuinely want to do and I'm pretty passionate about. I have all these people who support me, and when I've doubted myself, they made me feel like I could actually do it.

thing as Ignite Your Spirit. I wanted to see what else I could do and be more involved.

Why did you want to get involved with the Fed?

I wanted to see what else I could do to help with youth in care because at the Ignite Your Spirit conference we made a report and talked with social workers.

What has been a highlight so far?

Hearing about all the activities in the youth in care community, like youth in care rallies. That was my favourite one. I just went and supported them and I liked seeing everyone else there supporting each other. It makes me feel, like, happier knowing that and seeing everyone else, too. It was last summer at the parliament building. I heard about it from my friends, but I went with my coworkers.

Tell us about your most recent achievement.

I got an award at my band's education ceremony. They did two special



YOUTH MEMBER PROFILE

JT

Quiet and thoughtful, JT speaks with intention. Whether they are discussing their favourite quote, or how they have overcome obstacles in their life, their sentences unfold slowly and are often punctuated with a pause as they express their thoughts and feelings. In their 20s, JT is a student, an activist and a self-described “crafty” person who believes in fighting for human rights and the environment. JT has quickly become a strong youth voice at the Fed and has been involved most recently as a member of the Youth Leadership Council. JT was the driving force behind the recently updated and newly named Fed Values Code, was a youth representative at our June, 2018 meeting with Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development, and sat on the Executive Director hiring panel. When talking about their feelings about being featured in *Power Pages*, JT says, “I’m hoping that someone reads this and finds something in it that is useful and maybe inspiring.” We have no doubt about that at all, JT. Continue reading to learn more about this amazing advocate, good human and hopeful future member of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Tell us a little about yourself.

My name is JT, I use he/him/they/them pronouns, and I’m originally from the traditional territory of the T̓silhqot’in Chilcotin peoples, but I’m currently situated on the territory of the Snuneymuxw Nanaimo peoples. I’m in my 20s and in post-secondary finishing a bachelor’s degree, and hope to

be off to law school in the next few years. I was in the foster system for three years, and started getting involved in the youth in care movement about two years ago.

How long have you been involved with the Fed?

The last SCM [November, 2017] was my third one, I’m trying to think about how far back my first one was. The one at UBC was my first one [the UBC retreat was held June, 2017].

How did you find yourself involved in the Fed?

I think Ruby [former Peer Navigator at VIU] told me that there was a retreat for youth in and from care. That’s probably where I first heard about the Fed.

Was the first retreat you went to in June, 2017 your first introduction to anything Fed-related?

Yes, that’s right. I think the retreats are the most predominant thing about the Fed. I didn’t know at the beginning that there was anything more to the Fed until I chose to look into it following my time at the retreat.

What makes you passionate about the youth in and from care movement?

The success of my foster siblings really pushes me to care about and continue to care about the system now that I am not in it. They are very young and I want them to have a better experience than I did.

Do you have recommendations for how to change the youth in care system?

I would like to see cultural training for all foster parents and social workers and quite honestly a better recruitment process of social workers. We need to have a low barrier,

streamlined system to get mental health and addictions support for youth in care, and overall this system needs to be changed to create a more community-focused mandate. I hope that I get to see and participate in the complete overhaul of MCFD one day.

What communities do you identify as belonging to?

It’s interesting. To be completely honest I don’t identify as a youth in care. Part of me feels jerky for that, and some people may feel that I don’t want to be associated with youth in care because of the people and that is not it at all. It’s just a personal choice. If I was trying to describe myself I would say that I identify with the queer community, and that includes the gender variant community. I often tell people I am German, I like to brag about that. I am hoping in a few short weeks to identify with the military community. I identify with the fact that I am a university student as well. I’m looking at all the crafty stuff around me, I guess I’m a little bit artsy, but I don’t want to say that because I am not good at it (laughs).

What are some of your proudest accomplishments as a person?

I think graduating high school was definitely one of the biggest highlights of my life. I dropped out and failed three grades and then had to go back, and I only ended up graduating one year behind. I think that’s probably my number one, ‘good job, JT.’

What motivated you in the end to return to school and work towards your graduation? Was there a person who said, ‘you can do this’?

I had dreams and I figured I could reach them. I never wanted to stay at a minimum wage job for the rest of my life. I realized that I could

do a lot more than what I had been told I was allowed to do. I wanted to prove to myself I could do it and to feel accomplished.

We often hear from youth in and from care that they feel they are consistently fighting against the limitations that other people put on them. Often times there is this narrative that if we could have one person believe in us we can achieve anything — but there isn't always going to be that person. So how do you find that drive internally?

I think it was definitely in my own head. When you've been told you can't do anything you take one of two paths, either you agree with them or you disagree with them. For the longest time I agreed with those who said I wasn't capable of anything and I believed I would never do anything. I reached a period in my life where I decided to make really big changes and started to see myself with a clearer mind and becoming healthier. Returning to school to graduate was a part of that.

What did you learn from your decision to return to school?

I learned the process of self-validation. I had a different attitude when I was in school from a lot of people. Everyone was working really hard to get an A+, and for me it was just about passing, my goal was to pass my classes. I think it's just important to be able to validate your own achievement. It was important for me to learn that I didn't need to compare myself to everyone else to know that I am being successful. Successes are going to look different for each person.

What does success look like for you? How do you define success?

I made small goals for myself and I didn't have a big picture dream to begin with when I went back to school. I started back in alternate education, and from there decided I wanted to go back to a quote unquote regular high school specifically because I wanted to experience a prom. My little dream to attend prom pushed me to get back to the regular education system. I did end up graduating, and it was so surreal. I was so focused on having a prom experience that it took a moment for me to recognize I had also obtained my high school degree. I had to remind myself that was also a thing I did.

Was the prom worth it?

No, not at all, it sucked (lots of laughs here). It was pretty useless.

But it motivated you at the time.

That's all that matters.

It's really important to have you share your experience and your truth around motivation and success. It can be terrifying and overwhelming to break down huge life decisions. I love that the path you took was simple and clear. Your ability to set realistic and manageable goals played a role in your success.

It can be really overwhelming and you can almost set yourself up for failure if you only consider the big things. There are things that are hard to measure your success in and that can be frustrating and make you give up.

How do you stay motivated when you come across barriers to achieving your milestones and goals?

It's tough. I think step one is being determined. There is something I am dealing with right now that involves me keeping on pushing forward because other people will be impacted. Others feel the conversation has ended, and I feel I have to keep the conversation going. The determination to not give up is step one. Then it's giving yourself little talks. For example, I received a letter from the military recently saying they can't decide if I should join or not because they are missing some information from me. This was hard because I thought, "I am going to get an acceptance letter," and then I didn't. I was really upset by this, and it occurred to me that I could just leave it and assume I won't get it regardless of if I sent them the information they wanted. In the end I decided that I can send them the letter with the complete information and it's not that big of a deal. I have decided I am good enough to get in and that's what is important. It's tough, it really is tough. Like many people, I struggle with getting into depression and staying there. Sometimes I have to work to remind myself that this is not the worst thing in the world to happen. I remind myself that awful things are going to happen and that sucks but I can't give up. I wouldn't give up those shitty moments, you know? I am growing as a person, and in the end I believe there will be a positive outcome to these shitty moments.

Do you have a favourite quote, or book or person that helps you motivate yourself?

Before I do anything that's really unnerving or gives me anxiety there is a quote I like to think of: "Life is scary. Get used to it." When I am

in the midst of feeling depressed or am afraid to continue with something or feel run down because things haven't worked out the way I wanted them too, there's a part of a song I always go back to. The lyric is, "I wouldn't take back a moment, not one miserable moment." This reminds me that at the end, all of this will be worth it.

Tell us a bit about some things that you're passionate about.

I am passionate about human rights. I try to do as much fundraising and campaigning as I can to be involved in that movement. I have an interest in environmental issues as well. I am not in a position to protest against the expansion of the Kinder Morgan Pipeline but it's something that I have been interested in and am involved in locally.

Who or what inspires you?

I think my biggest inspiration and my biggest motivator is myself to be quite honest. I have really taken on this sort of mentality of never being complacent with my current level of knowledge. There is always ways to better and to work towards a better version of yourself. But it's pushing yourself and realizing that I can do these things that I never thought I could do. It reminds me to dream my dreams and chase after my dreams too.

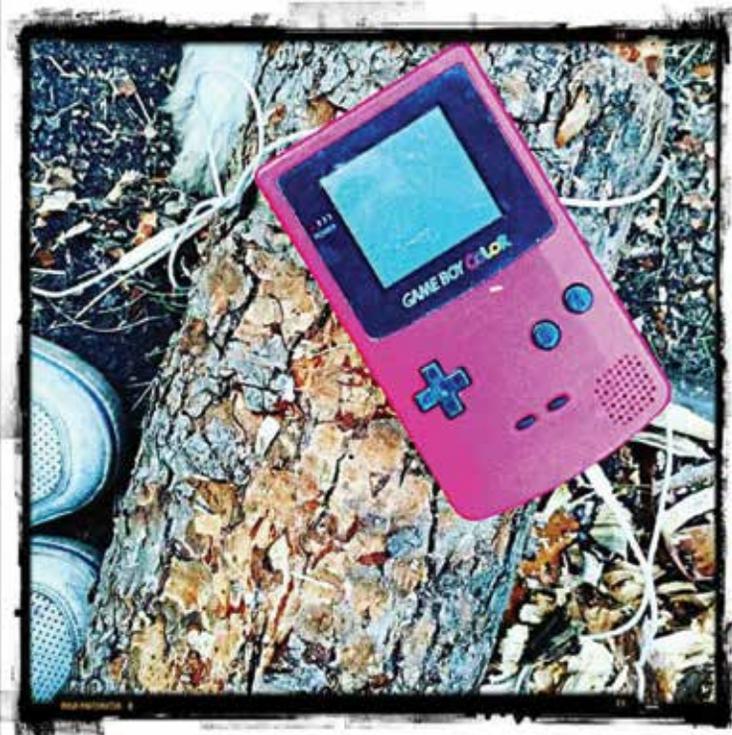
How do you take care of yourself?

Prevention is big. I no longer allow myself to be overworked. With scheduling, I don't try to fit everything into one day. Spacing activities out helps to ensure I don't get overwhelmed to the point that I can no longer do anything at all. I work to make time for myself. If I have had a long day I'll go outside. I like to go for walks near bodies of running water. I have this mentality that if I don't have anything scheduled past a certain time and I am home, I am committed to staying home. I don't try to plan, or fit in things I haven't done today. That is a boundary I have set. It allows me to stay home and relax and clear my mind. I do a lot of cleanses and rituals a well. I like being conscious and clear in my spirituality. It helps keep me grounded and calm in my surroundings.

When you are looking at how you schedule your time and what you decide to take on, how do you know when to say no?

It depends on how much human interaction the things I am looking to do include. I am a really introverted person and that

continued on next page



PEACE (left) and Live for Today (right)

impacts how I spend my time. If I know that I am going to volunteer at an event that's going to be large and have a lot of people, I will try to not plan to go out for dinner with friends or commit to doing more social things to help balance that out. People need to be able to measure their own capacity when it comes to being a part of opportunities. If you are super outgoing and love doing all of your errands and running around all at once, and you can do that, that's fantastic. But you also need to understand what you and your body need and not lie to yourself about it. Be honest with yourself around what your capacity is. If you overshoot your capacity then inevitably you are going to hurt yourself. You might set yourself off, or get too tired and crash. You have to keep it real with yourself. It's okay to not want to go outside after you've had a long interaction with people. It's okay to have boundaries. You do not have to be ashamed of those.

It's important for people to hear that you can be a student, have a job, and be involved in things as an activist, and that there still needs to be room for self-care. It's the worst thing when you overshoot your capacity and then become a flaky person.

What are some suggestions or wisdom you've learned that you would like to share with youth that are currently in care or transitioning from care?

The number one rule I would say is to always be your own best advocate. If you are unable to advocate for yourself, reach out to someone who can and will fight for you. In my experience there is a lot of power tripping and overruling of the decisions and choices youth want to make when they are in care. As a youth, you don't always have a say in your own life. If you allow others to make decisions for you, you will not be happy. If there is something that you really want to do and your social worker or someone tells you no, advocate for yourself and don't give up. When I was in care and when I first left care I was really on the side of doing everything on my own. I became too independent. I didn't know how to trust people to help me, and I didn't know how to ask people to help me. I know there are people who leave care and are the opposite of me and are completely dependent on supports. I want to let people know that advocating for their rights is really important while recognizing that there are people who will not be comfortable asking for help. If you do end up reaching

out for support you start to learn things like asking to speak to a team leader or an ombudsman instead of your social worker. There is always someone who can help you get access to the things that you deserve.

What are some of your goals for the future? Are there goals you would like to speak to a bit more?

My most immediate goal is to get into the army, that's number one. Another goal after that is figuring out what I am doing in university, I'm in my third year and still don't know. I have a long-term goal of being accepted to law school, and have a dream to become a lawyer that is paid well.

You would like to change the world? Yeah!!

What is something interesting or surprising about you that no one would guess?

I was born with 11 fingers.

If personalities were crayon colours what colour would you be?

Purple.

Why purple?

It's a mixture of blue and red.

CAMPBELL RIVER BY THOMAS S



Baby the Pom by anonymous

PAINTINGS BY MALLORY W



Mother



Shrooms

Q&A ON MENTAL HEALTH

In the 2016 YouthSpeak Report, youth named mental health as one of the top five issues facing youth in and from care. Specifically, that trauma and instability require long-term healing and it's rarely available. That's a big issue, and while we can't change the system with one article in *Power Pages*, we wanted to find answers for some of the individual-level issues that were identified in the YouthSpeak Report (we did have a meeting with Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions in August! Read more on the next page). We interviewed child and youth care practitioner and counsellor Mark Littlefield to talk about anxiety, depression, stigma, what you can do to help manage your own mental health, and how you can help a friend who might be struggling with theirs.

Mark has been working with children and youth for 29 years. He's worked in group homes and with youth in care around the province. He has bachelor and master's degrees in Child and Youth Care, and his master's thesis was on what makes youth feel included in their care plans, and what makes them feel excluded. He also works on contract with the BC Schizophrenia Society and MCFD, and teaches in the Child and Youth Care department at the University of the Fraser Valley.

One of the most common reasons youth report on missing out on mental health services was that they thought or hoped the problem would go away on its own. What advice do you have for youth who are reluctant to find support?

Reaching out is a difficult thing to do, but try to do that first with friends. If you have one or two friends that believe in you then it's easier for you to advocate and they will advocate for you too, because if a friend is concerned about you, they'll generally step out in front and they'll raise their voice.

A lot of people are using social media to share their experiences and I think that's a great way for young people to not feel as if they're the only one living with a mental health concern. That's often where people start to feel shame and self-stigma, and then they don't reach out because they're ashamed of what's going on.

As human beings, we all experience mental health issues to some degree. It's the level and the degree to which we experience them that tends to move it into a mental health concern. All of us are worried sometimes. Sometimes we're concerned about presenting in a class or worried about asking for a raise or we're worried about going to a new place or meeting new people, and that's what

anxiety is about. When it starts to impact your life so you stop doing things, that's when you can really start thinking that there's something weird or wrong with you. It's not that's there anything weird or wrong with you. You're expressing something that's human, it's just that it's gotten to a point where accessing a little support to learn how to manage it can make it so that it doesn't cause you as much pain or difficulty.

What can youth do to help manage their mental health?

I think becoming a part of something like the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks, feeling like you belong to a community that gets you and makes you feel like you're important. Being able to be a part of a team, being able to be a part of a baseball team, a soccer team, do dance, be involved in the arts community, and find balance in your life.

And, learning about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the fact that you do have rights. Learning about the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY) and to be able to self-advocate. You have a right to have a quality life while you're in care. If you can do that and you

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GLOSSARY

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)

CBT teaches you how your thoughts, feelings and behaviours work together. CBT can help you identify thought patterns that lead to anxious thoughts or harmful behaviours. It can also help you build helpful strategies to use instead of harmful behaviours. In CBT you work with a mental health professional who helps you learn about your mental health concern and build the skills to work through it. CBT has been proven to help a number of mental health concerns including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and substance use issues.

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)

DBT is based on CBT, but also helps you learn to manage your emotions, build and maintain healthy relationships with other people, handle

stress or problems, and accept who you are. In DBT you work with a mental health professional who helps you learn about your mental health concern and build the skills to work through it. DBT was originally developed to help people with personality disorders, but research is showing it can be helpful with other mental health concerns like self-harm.

Situational Depression

Depression that's related to an event that happened or situation you might be in.

Organic Depression

Depression that's caused by your brain chemistry not working the way it should. Organic depression usually needs to be treated with medication, just as you would take

medication if you had a medical health problem like diabetes.

Fight or Flight

The fight-flight response (which now includes 'freeze') is your body's natural response to keep you from danger. For example, you might duck really fast if something comes flying at you or you might stop and be super quiet if someone breaks into your house. But fight-flight-freeze can also be set off by anxiety when there isn't any actual danger. For example if you leave a party (flight) when you don't know anyone there because talking to people you don't know makes you nervous.

— HeretoHelp, Canadian Mental Health Association



WE MET WITH MINISTER DARCY!

Fed youth, staff and board members met with Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, at her MLA office on August 28 to talk with her about how her ministry can better help youth in and from care. The youth asked great questions about how to make accessing services easier for youth and young adults, and gave effective feedback to Minister Darcy about how organizations like Foundry can help youth access services. The Minister also asked the youth how they felt her ministry can better engage youth about the opioid crisis. Overall, the meeting was incredibly positive and Minister Darcy was very thankful she was able to hear from youth how she can help better serve them.

YOUTH ASKED — MARK ANSWERED

If you don't want to take meds, what are some useful evidence-based ways to fight depression?

There are really two kinds of depression. One is called **situational depression**. There are times in your life when things are really overwhelming, and it could be to do with anxiety or something else in your life. That depression is related to a situation or an event. **Dialectical-behaviour therapy (DBT)** and **cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT)** are effective ways to develop skills and strategies to manage your thinking, your emotional experience, and to build positive coping strategies. You might also need to take a look at some possible trauma issues and have some therapy or counselling that's trauma-informed. However, I would never rule out medications as a support for the development of skills, because sometimes you need temporary medications to help your brain learn skills in CBT and DBT.

The other kind of depression is **organic depression**, where the chemistry of the brain means that you need medication to help create balance in the way the brain chemistry is working. Similar to when you need to have medication if your pancreas isn't working or you have a blood chemistry issue, you need medication so that you can balance the sugar levels in your blood. It doesn't matter how good your lifestyle is. Lifestyle can help improve those things but you still need to recognize that the organ of your body is not functioning. So it's important to recognize that medications are required sometimes.

And the other thing about depression is that when people are depressed they tend to isolate themselves. Depression whispers, it has a quiet voice, so when you isolate it's really easy to hear the negative thinking and the negative voice of depression. But when you're around people that love you and care about you, because depression has a quiet voice, and they're talking in a normal voice about how great you are, you tend to not feel your symptoms as much. Being connected is really important, and physical exercise is one of the best known ways for us to improve the quality of our mental health. Being able to get out there, make the best food choices that you can, have a good amount of physical exercise, all of those things are natural ways of supporting your body through pain, difficulty and challenge.

How come there is so much more mental health awareness now?

The Mental Health Commission of Canada did a really good job of making that part of their agenda, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, when it started looking at inter-generational trauma and the impact of residential schools, helped normalize the conversation about trauma. I think we've also had some significant Canadians that are either professional athletes or actors that have talked about their experiences of living with significant mental health issues. We also had the F.O.R.C.E. Society for Kids' Mental Health (Families Organized for Recognition and Care Equality) in British Columbia that has really done a good job in creating a conversation about mental health and families' involvement in mental health service delivery. I think we've had some corporations, like RBC, that have made it their responsibility to communicate about mental health and mental illness. I think as a community we've really started to talk about it a lot more because it's become socially acceptable, and we've seen that because of the leadership of multiple layers of government and citizens of Canada.

How come some people are able to let things go and others are not (in relation to getting pissed off)?

That's a great question. If your life is in a situation where you have fewer things, and you have less consistency and predictability, then sometimes things really matter a lot. When they really matter a lot, and someone is going to change something, they're going to either remove it or adjust it, or you don't have a voice in it, anger is a natural bodily response. Anger comes from fear, frustration or hurt. It's built into us to say that we want to change something around those three primary emotions. So if you're feeling fear, frustration or hurt a lot, or you're feeling vulnerable about those three things, then sometimes anger is going to be your response.

If someone has experienced trauma it can affect how they deal with anger. Trauma creates a **fight or flight response cycle**, and if you're constantly in a high level of fear, and your body is getting ready to defend itself or run away, then anger is going to be quick as your response. That anger might be there because of underlying trauma or underlying lack of supports and care and compassion in someone's life.

can have someone support you in that, whether it's an adult in your own life or someone from RCY, it enable so many more opportunities for you.

What can youth do to support a friend or family member who's struggling with their mental health?

Trying to avoid the phrase "mental illness" is a really good thing to do. Listen to how a person feels about themselves and their life, and if you really listen to someone, they'll tell you what they're missing and where their concerns are. Be patient and reflect back what you see and hear. Express concern not from a place of demand, but from a place of empathy and respect and dignity. When you do that well, people feel heard and then they start to talk to you about what they're really scared of. And when people tell you what they're really scared of, the number one thing we need to do is realize that even if it's not scary for us, it's scary for them and we have to understand that. We have to respond to that in a validating way.

What are the biggest issues you see in the mental healthcare system?

I do think that we're improving, but until we get to a publicly-funded system where people can get the kind of care that they need, we're going to continue to be in a difficult place where we're responding to crisis. The other thing too is mental health crisis can look like crime. A number of people with mental health issues end up in jail. Mental health issues and chronic mental health issues can also look like substance use issues, accidental poisoning, and those kind of things. Some of the crises we're facing right now are happening because we're not servicing mental health the way we should be. It would be great if we were looking at health above the neck equally to below the neck. If you have a heart condition there are so many tests you can get, you can get medication, you can access all of those kinds of things, but we don't do that for mental health. So if we have a national mental health policy where we actually treat mental health as a health issue, that would go a long way to creating a situation where we're not talking about tragedies anymore.



PERMANENCY POST BY TABITHA M

PERMANENCY IS HAVING A
KEY TO THE FRONT DOOR



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

The resources below are just a few places you can start looking for mental health supports. This list is also available on our website at fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/resources/mental-health-resources. If you know of any other mental health services that you think would be helpful for other youth in and from care, let us know! We can add them to the list on our website. Email info@fbcyicn.ca to send us your suggestions.

Foundry

Foundry has centres around BC, plus a website, FoundryBC.ca, accessible anywhere with information about a number of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, substance use, stress, and more. FoundryBC.ca provides tips for dealing with mental health concerns, lists apps and tools available, and helps you find resources you can access online, over the phone, and in your community.

FoundryBC.ca

310 Mental Health Support Line

310.6789. No need to dial 604, 778, or 250.

This number will connect you to your local BC crisis line 24/7. Crisis line workers are trained to help provide emotional support, as well as mental health information and resources.

HealthLink BC

Dial **811** any time of day or night to speak with a navigator who can connect you with services.

BC Schizophrenia Society (BCSS)

The BC Schizophrenia Society isn't just for people with schizophrenia. They also provide support and information about other severe and persistent mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, psychosis, and mood disorders. BCSS has offices across the province. You can find the programs they offer for people over and under 19 around BC on their website, including BRIDGES Education and Support Program, Kids and Teens in Control, online family support, and local referral and support.

www.bcss.org

Provincial Office (call for local referral and support): **1.888.888.0029**

HeretoHelp

Heretohelp.bc.ca is a great resource if you want to learn more about mental health. You can find information on a lot of mental health issues, including co-existing mental health and substance use problems, eating disorders, grief, self-harm, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, depression. You can also find articles about specific mental health challenges



FEDERATION
OF BC YOUTH
IN CARE
NETWORKS

CONGRATULATIONS

Caz D and Trevor W on the birth of their son Zashton
— March 21, 2018

Wheeshay M on the birth of her daughter LueElla
— July 21, 2017

Ally P for winning Most Improved in Math and completing her grade 11 year with an A in math!!!

Destiny P for winning a BC Child and Youth in Care Week 2018 Superstar Award

Cammy L for winning a BC Child and Youth in Care Week 2018 Leadership Award

in Indigenous and LGBTQ2S communities. HeretoHelp has online screening self-tests to help you look at your mental health or wellness. The self-tests are not the same as a diagnosis from a doctor, but they can help you look for signs of a mental health concern and identify thought or feeling patterns.

heretohelp.bc.ca

AnxietyBC

AnxietyBC can help you understand anxiety and find ways to cope with it. Anxietybc.com has self-help tools, including information about the MindShift app, a kind of “portable coach” designed to help teens and young adults cope with their anxiety. AnxietyBC also recently launched My Anxiety Plan (MAP), a free online anxiety management toolkit and step-by-step guide.

anxietybc.com

You can get the free MindShift app on Google Play and the App Store.

AgedOut

AgedOut.com is a great overall resource for youth who've aged out of care. It has a whole section on health and wellness, which covers mental health issues and walks through the process of finding support.

agedout.com/health-and-wellness

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

Kelty Mental Health (along with providing general information about mental health issues, substance use, medications and healthy living) can help you navigate the mental health system. The Help Finder Tool and System Navigation videos are available on their website. You can also access their help over the phone, via email, or in person.

Toll Free: **1-800-665-1822**

Email: keltycentre@cw.bc.ca
keltymentalhealth.ca

bc211

bc211 provides information and referrals to community, government and social services in BC. They provide a number of helplines for different issues you may experience, and a search engine on their website that can help you find affordable mental health services. Make sure you use keywords like ‘free’ or ‘sliding scale’ (where you pay based on your income) in your search.

bc211.ca

Kid's Help Phone

The Kid's Help Phone provides 24/7 counselling online or over the phone. Call **1-800-668-6868** or visit kidshelpphone.ca to chat with a counsellor.

1-800-SUICIDE

If you're having suicidal thoughts or you're concerned about someone who is, call **1-800-784-2433**. The service is available 24/7 in over 100 languages.

Canadian Mental Health Association — British Columbia Division (CHMA—BC)
CHMA—BC is a national charity that supports recovery of people experiencing mental health issues, substance use issues and/or addiction. The CMHA—BC website has a ton of great information about different mental illnesses, and you can find a CMHA—BC office in your area.

cmha.bc.ca

Toll-free phone (BC only): **1-800-555-8222**

For mental health information, referrals and support: help@cmha.bc.ca

Bounce Back

Bounce Back is a free program geared towards people 15 and up with mild to moderate anxiety or depression. Bounce Back teaches how to manage worry, anxiety and unhelpful thought patterns. It's available as a self-guided online course or as coaching sessions done over the phone or video conference.

cmha.bc.ca/programs-services/bounce-back/



"I know nothing
of great mysteries



Know less of creation



I do know that the
farther backward
in time that I travel



the more grandmothers
and the farther forward
the more grandchildren

UNCEDED



I am obligated
to both."

- Lee Maracle

BY KARMELLA BDB

PAINTINGS BY JAZ SCUFF



THOUGHTS, TEQUILA, AND A KNIFE

BY BRAYDON-LEE SANDERSON

It normally starts with a thought. Mostly the type of thought that leads to what if this or what if that. These thoughts make you think what's going to be the next step. We have a choice to take a positive approach, or a negative one. My choice was simple and easy: tequila. The first drink was god awful; nasty, bitter, and damn right hard to digest, but give it a little time and its so called magical powers start to work. Now the thoughts are becoming easier to understand; I must have another drink of this awesome new remedy for my very confusing thoughts. Who would have thought that tequila can solve almost anything? Now it makes sense why that person said this, oh and why that happened the way it did. Funny, how all it took was a simple little drink of tequila. Must have another one to see what else I am missing.

As time passes I'm sitting here laughing at all my mistakes I made and how I could've changed them. Hmm, very strange now that I think about it. What's this strange feeling of regret now that's starting to form? Oh maybe that's my problem: not enough tequila. Silly old me for making a simple and small mistake like that. By now I would've

lost my own head if it wasn't screwed on. It's especially funny how even the taste of tequila turns into water. Now my wonderful thoughts are showing a better way everything could've happened, and to make it even worse, I already knew that without the help of tequila. This is terrible now to realize I still did it even though I knew it was wrong. Wait, another part of me is saying it wasn't. I don't understand anymore, maybe sip of tequila will help. No! A bigger gulp would do the trick to solve everything. Everything is starting to feel heavy; my thoughts are coming at me all at once like they want a sip of tequila too. If that's the case then maybe I should finish the bottle, so my thoughts will be pleased and will leave me alone.

With the bottle finally finished, now something in me is telling me that was a big mistake, another part of me is telling me I am no different from my parents, and another part is saying I'm a mistake. If it wasn't for me being there in the first place none of this would ever have happened. Now all my thoughts decide to talk all at once. Everything is starting to feel even heavier, and my vision is cutting out here

and there. Oh shit! I'm in the back seat now and my thoughts have full control over me. I can only see a glimpse of what's happening next. My thoughts are at war where they don't even know what to do anymore. Then it went silent.

At that point a new thought formed and they all agreed to follow this thought for it could solve this conflict. Thank god an opening to see what's happening came up. During this opening I discovered I was looking in the mirror crying, so I took the time to look around to discover a note was there, too. Oh no, there goes my opening, and now I'm in the back seat again. What did the note say, why was I crying, and what is this new thought that every thought was pleased with? I need to get back in control now. Too many things are happening without my consent. Finally another opening; wait a knife. Why do I have a knife? At that very moment everything made sense now to why the knife was there, the note, why I was crying, and why a new thought was formed. I can't do anything to stop it now. It's pretty hard to control a car from the back seat. If I do get back in driver's seat I'll tell you this, I'm taking the positive approach next time.

PAINTINGS BY LIANA K



**THIS IS A
COLLECTION OF
PORTRAITS OF
MY BEAUTIFUL,
RESILIENT SISTERS
IN OR FROM CARE.**

