

# POWER PAGES

ISSUE #52



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

**JOB SEARCH TIPS**

**POLICY SOLUTIONS DAY  
IN VICTORIA**

**A MESSAGE FROM  
MINISTER DARCY**  
MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS

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





# FEDERATION OF BC YOUTH IN CARE NETWORKS

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

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Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks

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*Local Development Coordinator*

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**Stephanie Thompson**  
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**Alexis Martin**  
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**Pam Costello**  
*Member At-Large*

## CONGRATS TO OUR NEW ALUMNI

**Guy Bonneau**  
**Liana Kelly**  
**Caz Duchesne**

# POWER PAGES

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VIEW OR DOWNLOAD PAST & CURRENT EDITIONS AT [FBCYICN.CA](http://FBCYICN.CA)

# A MESSAGE FROM YOUR BOARD CHAIR

**ON THE COVER:**  
Get the know youth member  
Ally P on page 20

Dear members and alumni,

This has been a year of positive change for the Fed: new staff, new executive director, three new board members, new locals, many new youth members and alumni, and a renewed sense of energy and purpose.

All youth retreats are amazing, but the one in October was particularly important. At this retreat, we were fortunate to gather at Sasamat Outdoor Centre to welcome the new and celebrate how far we have come.

In the midst of paddling, climbing and connecting, we had a lot of business to do. Fed members voted on new board members and resolutions required by the new Societies Act.

I would like to thank you, the members, for exercising your right to vote and for your warm, warm welcome for our newest board members: Alexis Martin, Pam Costello and Kim Larson (returning!).

With backgrounds in youth leadership and government care, these new board members help to strengthen the board in its critical areas of business, finance, law, human resources, member participation, and supports and services to youth.

We have heard from members and alumni this year about ways to maintain and



strengthen the Fed Family. In this, as in all things, we hope to continue to learn from you. Please keep your comments coming!

I hope to see you all at the next youth retreat in June!

Debbie  
Board Chair  
debbie.fbcyicn@gmail.com



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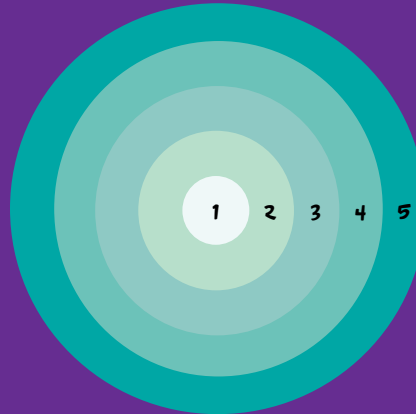


# WHO WE ARE

The Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks (FBCYICN, or the Fed) is a youth-driven, provincial, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of young people in and from care\* in BC between the ages of 14 and 24. We were created by a group of young people in care who saw the need for more supports for their peers. That was in 1993, and today we still stay true to their vision.

## WHAT'S YOUTH-DRIVEN?

Youth in and from care are at the core of our work. Your ideas, needs and issues drive what we do. We encourage you to get involved in a way that meets your needs and works for you. We're excited to connect with you, wherever you're at!



## YOUTH ROLES

- 1 Leaders (staff, board members, council members)
- 2 Volunteers
- 3 Members (can vote)
- 4 Program participants and service recipients
- 5 All youth in and from care across BC

*\*At the Fed, government care includes foster homes, group homes, residential mental health and addiction facilities, custody centres, youth agreements, independent living, extended family placements, whether through the Ministry of Children and Family Development or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency.*

*I have been told many times over how quickly the Fed becomes like a second family for most, the place where you can totally be yourself and be 100% loved and accepted. The Fed has been the one place that has helped me grow mentally and emotionally. It's helped me to open up my eyes to strengths I never thought I had.*

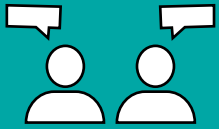
NATASHA S, ALUMNI MEMBER & ADULT SUPPORT





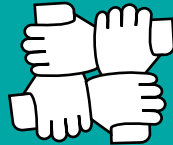
## WHAT WE DO

Together as youth, alumni, allies, staff and board members, we provide programs and services that:



### ADVOCATE

Learn about your rights. Unite your voices and actions to create positive change in the system.



### CONNECT

Come together in a safe, fun environment to make friends and meet supportive peers and adults.



### EMPOWER

Explore and develop your skills, passions and talents. Get support to achieve your goals.

## PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Our programs and services are open to youth in and from care in BC between the ages 14 and 24. We are here to support you and help you overcome any barriers you might face in finding the resources you need to achieve success.

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



#### LOCALS

Fed Locals are groups in communities around BC where you can have fun, learn skills and build supportive connections. Locals are supported by the Fed and run by youth and adult allies.



#### YOUTH RETREATS (SCMs)

At our SCMs (Steering Committee Meetings, also known as Youth Retreats) you'll meet youth from all across the province, learn life skills, have fun, build lasting friendships, and influence the work of the organization.

### YOUTH VOICE & LEADERSHIP



#### POWER PAGES

We produce a magazine twice a year called Power Pages, and it's a place for you to share your voice. We publish the stories, art, poetry, photography, articles and opinions of youth in and from care.



#### YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Youth Leadership Council is a way you can grow and practice your leadership skills and make sure the voices of youth are heard by the Fed staff team and decision-makers across the province.



#### VOLUNTEERING

When you give your time as a volunteer, you make a real difference. You help us do important work and stay youth-driven. You also help grow your community of peers and adult allies.

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT



#### DREAM FUND BURSARY PROGRAM

With the **Reach for Success Bursary**, you can get up to \$500 to use for workshops, courses, passion projects and other skill-building activities, such as Food Safe, fork lift certification, and sports and recreation fees.

With the **Education Achievement Bursary**, you can get up to \$1,500 to put towards post-secondary school. It can be used for all accredited schools, not just the designated post-secondary schools.



#### TAKE THE WHEEL BURSARY PROGRAM

With the **Driver Training Bursary**, you can get up to \$1,500 to cover the cost of a professional drivers training course or package.

With the **License Support Bursary**, you can get up to \$250 to go towards covering the cost of a Learner's (L) test and license, a Novice (N) road test and license, or to help pay off outstanding transit fines that prevent you from getting your license.

### ADVOCACY & SUPPORT



Over the years our youth, alumni, staff, board and allies have created a big, supportive community and movement. Wherever you are in BC, you can connect with our compassionate and knowledgeable staff in person, online and by phone. We can support you to identify goals, advocate for yourself and create plans that support your well-being.

#### BC CHILD AND YOUTH IN CARE WEEK

Fed youth members were a driving force behind the launch of BC Child and Youth in Care Week in 2011. Every year since, the Fed has worked as a partner with youth, adult allies and agencies to organize the week and celebrate BC's amazing children and youth in care. **#STANDWITHYOUTHINCARE**  
**#YOUTHINCAREAREAWESOME**





FEDERATION  
OF BC YOUTH  
IN CARE  
NETWORKS

# TAKE THE WHEEL

The Take the Wheel Bursary program supports youth in and from care by removing barriers that prevent them from getting their license in BC. Take the Wheel consists of two bursaries: the Driver Training Bursary and the License Support Bursary. Special thanks to the Ministry of Children and Family Development for funding this bursary program.

### Driver Training Bursary

The Driver Training Bursary provides youth in and from care support to get their Class 7 (novice or N) license in BC. The bursary awards youth up to \$1500 to cover the cost of a professional driver's training course or package.

### Driver Training Bursary Eligibility

Applicants have a cumulative total of at least one year of experience in BC government care under one or more of the following:

- Continuing Custody Order (CCO)
- Temporary Custody Order (TCO)
- Voluntary Care Agreement (VCA)
- Special Needs Agreement (SNA)
- Youth Agreement (YAG)
- Applicants are between the ages of 16 and 24 years old
- Applicants are a Canadian Citizen or Landed Immigrant
- Applicants have a valid Learner's (L) license with a minimum of 6 months before it will expire



### License Support Bursary

The Take the Wheel License Support Bursary provides youth in and from care support to get their Class 7 license by awarding youth up to \$250 to go towards covering the cost of a Learner's (L) test and license, Novice (N) road test and license, or help pay off outstanding transit fines that prevent a youth from getting their license.

### License Support Bursary Eligibility

Applicants have a cumulative total of at least one year of experience in BC government care under one or more of the following:

- Continuing Custody Order (CCO)
- Temporary Custody Order (TCO)
- Voluntary Care Agreement (VCA)
- Special Needs Agreement (SNA)
- Youth Agreement (YAG)
- Applicants are between the ages of 16 and 24 years old
- Applicants are a Canadian Citizen or Landed Immigrant

## OCTOBER 2018 WINNERS

### DRIVER TRAINING BURSARY

Breyden H	Muhaned S
Shaylyn O	Yukho T
Tim P	Angela E
Delaney F	Cammy L
Halie H	Grace B
Jermaine C	Calvin H
Kylla D	Luiza S
Khyna D	Rolanda B
Anna S	Darien J
David W	

### LICENSE SUPPORT BURSARY

Akaysha M	Cas B
Angelya P	Noko T
Muffy D	Austina C

**Application deadlines for the next two rounds of Take the Wheel are March 8 and July 5, 2019**

To apply for Take the Wheel visit [fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/take-the-wheel](http://fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/take-the-wheel)



FEDERATION  
OF BC YOUTH  
IN CARE  
NETWORKS

## DREAM FUND

Our Dream Fund supports young people in and from care to pursue their careers and achieve their goals through education, skill building, hobbies and self-care activities. The Dream Fund includes the Education Achievement and Reach for Success bursaries. They are distributed three times a year: in October, March and July. We are excited to announce that there was an additional Education Achievement bursary specially funded by our community partner Vancouver Fire and Radius Security in October 2018. The VanFire Radius and NFSP (National Fire and Safety Planners) Community Scholarship awarded an additional \$2000 bursary to a youth. Partnerships like this allow the Fed to provide more resources and supports to youth in and from care. Thank you for your continued support and commitment, Vancouver Fire and Radius Security!

### 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 \$5000 among successful Education Achievement applicants per round of Dream Fund (three rounds a year).

### Reach for Success Bursary

Music lessons 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. This bursary can also be used to help pay for Canadian citizenship applications. The Fed distributes \$1500 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.

## OCTOBER 2018 WINNERS

**VANFIRE RADIUS AND NFSP  
COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP**  
Breanna H \$2000

**EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT BURSARY**  
Wesley B \$900  
Sarah O \$1000  
Kayla R \$1000  
Savannah G \$580  
Breanne H \$1500

**REACH FOR SUCCESS BURSARY**  
Zoe F \$1000  
Darrien J \$1000  
Nicholas D \$1000

**Application deadlines  
for the next two rounds  
of the Dream Fund are  
March 8 and July 5, 2019**

To apply for the Dream Fund  
visit [fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/  
programs/dream-fund](http://fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/dream-fund)



# VOLUNTEERING AT THE FED

Thank you so much to all our incredible volunteers who worked on the Extreme Team, helped run Locals in their communities, took amazing photos and greeted people at Youth Retreats and the Holiday Open House, worked as Distribution Assistants to help us get *Power Pages* out into communities, and so much more!

Interested in getting involved? By giving back you are getting back! You can discover new interests, build on skills, make new friends and guide the Fed as we move forward in our work.

We offer volunteer opportunities for youth in and from care 14 to 24 who live in BC. Through our volunteer program, we can match you with opportunities based on your interests and skills to make your volunteer experience fun and meaningful. Get in touch!

**GET \$100 FOR EVERY 20 HOURS OF VOLUNTEER TIME!**

## VOLUNTEERS

### YOUTH

JT  
Darian N  
Kami S  
Cammy L  
Karmella BDB

Athena N  
Destiny P  
Liana K  
Ashley C  
Angel L

Caz D  
Wheeshay M  
Jermaine C  
Ally P  
Caitlyn M

### ALUMNI

Aaron C  
Ashleigh M  
Natasha S

Amanda P  
Stephen C

### ADULT ALLIES

Monica White  
Taylor Gee  
Ryan Wong  
Danielle Weisner  
Roland Gurney

Alex West  
Megan Sauliner  
Courtney Babcock  
Curtis Hewlett  
Mark Bishop

Samantha Prakash  
Kim Larson  
Vancouver Fire and  
Radius Security



# 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 [fbcyicn.ca](http://fbcyicn.ca) under Get Involved. If paper copies are more your speed, email [info@fbcyicn.ca](mailto: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.
- 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.
- You get first dibbs on cool opportunities, like representing the Fed, travelling to conferences, and participating in our programs.
- Membership is free!

**BY COMING TOGETHER,  
WE ARE NOT ALONE.**

Join the FBCYICN today by filling out a membership form found on our website:  
[fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/become-member](http://fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/become-member)

## NEXT RETREAT

# SCM #77

May 31 – June 2  
Zajac Ranch  
Mission BC

**JOIN US THERE  
TO KICK OFF BC  
CHILD AND YOUTH  
IN CARE WEEK!**



# CONGRATULATIONS

**Timothy and Lakiesha B**  
on their one-year  
wedding anniversary!

**Chris Tait** for completing  
the BC government's  
Indigenous Youth  
Internship Program!

**Malvin N** on completing  
her Health Care  
Assistant program!

**Olivia M** for  
getting her N!

# FED LOCALS UPDATE



FEDERATION  
OF BC YOUTH  
IN CARE  
NETWORKS

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. Two new locals have started up over the winter in Pemberton and Abbotsford. Find a local near you!

## PRINCE GEORGE

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

## KAMLOOPS

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

## PEMBERTON

**Host Agency:** Sea to Sky Community Services Society  
1357 Aster Street, Box 656  
Pemberton, BC V0N 2L0  
**Contact:** Crystal Tonkin  
604-894-6101  
[crystal.tonkin@sscs.ca](mailto:crystal.tonkin@sscs.ca)

## KELOWNA

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

## CAMPBELL RIVER

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

## PARKSVILLE

**Host Agency:** District 69 Family Resource Association  
PO Box 965, 198 Morrison Ave  
Parksville, BC V9P 2H1  
**Contact:** Danielle Weisner  
236-936-2031  
[Danielle.Weisner@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Danielle.Weisner@gov.bc.ca)

## VICTORIA

**Host Agency:** Youth Empowerment Society  
533 Yates St.  
Victoria, BC V8W 1K7  
**Contact:** Maria Ebenal  
[yicn.vyes@gmail.com](mailto:yicn.vyes@gmail.com)

## 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](mailto:ksattler@nsnh.bc.ca)  
Priya Brar [pbrar@nsnh.bc.ca](mailto:pbrar@nsnh.bc.ca)

## SURREY

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

## ABBOTSFORD

**Host Agency:** Abbotsford Community Services, Foundry Abbotsford  
2420 Montrose Ave.,  
Abbotsford, BC V2S 3S9  
**Contact:** Nicole Clarke  
604-217-1428  
[Nicole.Clarke@foundryabbotsford.ca](mailto:Nicole.Clarke@foundryabbotsford.ca)





# FOSTERING CHANGE POLICY SOLUTIONS DAY

The youth from care community is celebrating! In October, dozens of our current and former care siblings came together. We pushed our elected parents to change policy. We were so successful! We had 25 meetings with dozens of elected officials in Victoria, community organizations, and government leads.

For us youth at Fostering Change, this was an empowering moment. It showed us that the government, our parent, is willing to listen to our needs. It showed us that a team of young leaders, from teens to aged-out adults, can sit down with politicians and directors of influential organizations, and say, "Hey, we deserve better." We paved a road to justice for youth from care.

Folks came from across BC to make a difference for youth in and from care. We heard consistently that so many youth were incredibly committed to making the lives better for youth that come after them; we've already aged out, but there are so many chances for us to do better.

Advocacy is important, and organizing is an essential part of systemic change that requires youth to show up. The community showed up! We went to our parents, the ten Cabinet Ministers, twenty-five MLAs, and aunts and uncles from the system, sharing our need for universal and comprehensive Agreements with Young Adults.

We want to keep the pressure on our 'parents' to take better care of us! In December, we visited mayors' offices in the Lower Mainland. Our idea was simple: host 19th Birthday Party events to show politicians and the media how scary and stressful it is to turn 19. There were balloons, cake, protest signs, and our full-on foster kid attitudes.

In the New Year we were back in action lobbying the provincial government, strategizing as a group, and building community together. We have lots of ideas for actions and workshops where you can learn the skills to talk to politicians and make change happen. We want to support each other to be

loud, proud, and able to fight for our rights.

Watch for us in the media! We want government and regular people to remember that foster kids exist.

If you are a current or former youth in care interested in helping us Foster Change, please get in touch! We advocate for a better care system through creative political action.

The Fostering Change Community Organizers will continue to push. We share experiences for better lives and so future generations of youth will not have to face the struggles we go through. One day, we will all be given a chance to thrive, regardless of our challenging experiences in care.

But until that day, we will continue to Foster Change.

Join us at [FosteringChange.ca](http://FosteringChange.ca), [facebook.com/fosterchangeBC](https://facebook.com/fosterchangeBC), and [@fosterchangeBC](https://twitter.com/fosterchangeBC)

Anita, Tengis and Dylan  
The Fostering Change Community Organizers

## A Message from Carolann C, Youth Advocate and Fed Member

I wanted to participate in Fostering Change's 2018 Policy Solutions Day because I am currently a youth in care. In about two years I will age out of care which means I will no longer receive any support. People have set unrealistic expectations of kids who have been in foster care. I think it's important for youth in care, and youth who may have been in care previously, to feel that they will still be supported when they transition from being a youth to a young adult. The government ends supports as soon as the youth turns 19.

The day started at 11:30 when everyone met in front of the legislative hall. We were put into groups and each group was made up of different stakeholders. As advocates in the meetings, we talked about getting comprehensive and universal support for kids who have aged out of care. We shared our concerns for continued support of youth, especially for those who have not had consistent people in their lives to rely on.

In the beginning I wasn't very comfortable with the idea of sharing my story or even revealing that I am a foster kid, because I was worried that people would look at me differently and judge me. However, when I got there I immediately felt comfortable

because there were other youth my age and even older who have been in or still are in care. Everyone was sharing their stories about the need for continued support even after they turn 19.

I want to share my story with youth because I think that it's important for us to be able to advocate for ourselves and make the world a better place. Kids in and from care have had experiences that no one should have to experience, and they shouldn't have to do it alone. It's important to advocate and it's inhumane to stop caring about youth as soon as they turn 19. We still need to have all the care, such as counsellors, funding, support, and social workers that we were used to having. We aren't shown how to live by ourselves, or even how to do a lot of the basic things other kids would have learnt from their parents. As youth in care, are we supposed to learn how to be young adults all by ourselves? And not have any support? It's unfair! We do not have the benefits that many children who are not in care receive. We deserve to be treated like any other child and shouldn't suffer or be without just because we are in the foster care system. It is our basic human right to be treated as equals and not to simply be cut off once we reach a certain age.



# A MESSAGE FROM JUDY DARCY

BC MINISTER OF MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS

We don't have to look far to see the importance of connection. Time and time again, we see that strong connections to care providers, to family and friends and to co-workers are a lifeline for so many — a lifeline that helps people living with mental health and addictions challenges begin their journey towards hope and healing.

It has been 19 months since I was appointed BC's first — and Canada's only — Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. In that time, I have had the opportunity to meet with people throughout our province, including youth who have shared their experiences navigating a system of care that has let them down for far too long.

This past October, I had the pleasure of meeting with members of First Call — BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition's Fostering Change initiative, and with youth

representatives from the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks. I heard again how difficult it is for young people to access the services they need after aging out of the foster care system, especially for youth who aren't ready to access post-secondary education supports. I learned about some of the challenges you face in your everyday work, and that many homeless youth are former youth in care who didn't get the support they needed. I learned how far we still have to go. Listening to your experiences, and witnessing the courage it takes to share these struggles, is a privilege and a responsibility I take very seriously.

Your voices matter, each and every one of you, and we are taking your experiences and working hard to improve mental health and addictions care in BC so that it works for everyone, no matter

their circumstances. We're working to transform the system with a central focus on children and youth and in partnership with Indigenous people. We're committed to building a system that is seamless and co-ordinated, where every door is the right door.

One way we're doing this is by expanding the successful network of Foundry Wellness Centres throughout the province. These centres provide young people access to all of the supports they need under one roof, in a compassionate and judgment-free environment. There are currently seven centres open, with four more on the way. Another step we've taken is providing Dan's Legacy Foundation with the funding to double the number of therapists who can provide mental health and addictions counselling for youth.

We are also building awareness and creating communities that understand the devastating impacts of stigma and shame. We're communicating this message in all our work: mental health issues and addictions are not signs of weakness or moral failure. They are health issues, period. And people living with these challenges deserve our compassion, understanding and support, not moral judgement.

I want to thank everyone who has shared their voices with me. Your stories drive me to push harder for changes that will make a real difference in the lives of all British Columbians. Please continue to share your ideas for positive change with me. I know that together, we can achieve important and meaningful change.







## A MESSAGE FROM THE PGT

The Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) shares guardianship for children and youth who are in the continuing care of the province with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Delegated Aboriginal Child and Family Service Agencies. As your property guardian, the PGT works hard to protect your legal and financial interests. Our job is to investigate potential legal claims and make sure that you receive any financial benefits that you are entitled to. Instead of social workers, the PGT has Guardianship and Trust Officers. Any money that we collect for you goes into a safe account called a trust account and is released to you in full when you turn 19. We also provide training in financial literacy, an important skill for youth who are transitioning from care because it helps you learn how to save money, how to spend wisely and how to plan for the future.

### MONEY SENSE QUEST

Have you heard about [AgedOut.com](http://AgedOut.com)? It's an interactive website filled with practical resources, advice and tools to help young people learn how to live an independent life. It covers all

sorts of big life topics like education, housing, money and income, health and wellness, personal identification and personal issues.

[AgedOut.com](http://AgedOut.com)'s interactive, animated Money Sense quest developed by the PGT and the Adoptive Families Association of BC follows the story of two young adults who have just started living independently as roommates and have some problems with money. You can follow the characters through each activity and make choices and solve puzzles on their behalf. The quest helps you improve money management skills, and looks at values, money goals, how to track spending, and the importance of budgeting. Complete the quests to earn "badges" that you can exchange for real world perks like gift cards. There are lots of great reasons to check out the site at: [agedout.com/money-income/](http://agedout.com/money-income/)

Contact us at **604-775-3480**, [cys@trustee.bc.ca](mailto:cys@trustee.bc.ca), or check out our website [trustee.bc.ca](http://trustee.bc.ca) to learn more about the services we provide.

## MCCREARY'S YOUTH RESEARCH ACADEMY UPDATES

The Youth Research Academy (YRA) is a group of youth aged 16–24 with experience in the BC government care system who work on research projects to improve the lives of youth in and from care in BC. YRA members learn community-based research skills like how to create surveys, analyze data, write reports, and facilitate workshops.

The YRA runs every year, with a new group starting each spring. This year's group has been working really hard on a literature review, building data entry and analysis skills, learning about naturalistic observation, creating our own clay-animation (which can be viewed at [youtube.com/user/mccrearycentre](https://youtube.com/user/mccrearycentre)), and taking part in work- and life-skill building workshops, including a trip to Galiano Island. We are also looking forward to helping McCreary share the results of the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey starting in the spring of 2019.

If you are interested in joining the Youth Research Academy or want to know more about our work, you can contact Katie Horton at [katie@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:katie@mcs.bc.ca) or **604-291-1996 ext. 236**.



## MEET YOUR NEW REP!

Hello everyone!

I am thrilled to have this opportunity to introduce myself in *Power Pages* as your new Representative for Children and Youth. I've been working in BC in service of children and youth for many years (like, more than 40 years, so a pretty long time!) and I actually go way back with the Fed.

I was one of the adult founders of the National Youth in Care Network in 1986 (I told you, way back!) and then was an adult supporter as the BC network started — which later morphed into the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks, so I have been committed to the values of the networks and to the importance of amplifying youth voices for a very long time.

In fact, when a small group of six of us child and youth care workers pitched the idea that we needed to have youth with lived experiences at the First International Child and Youth Care conference back in 1985, there was a lot of surprise and concern. But that conference represented the dawn of a profound cultural shift. The young people who attended from each of the provinces delivered a panel presentation that left hundreds of people speechless, and inspired them to listen to youth voice. Now, of course, there is widespread awareness of the critical importance of listening to youth, and I am so thankful for that. That presentation is one of my favourite memories from any of the conferences I have been to over the years.

One of the reasons I am so delighted to have this position is that it enables me to continue working on amplifying your voices and making sure government and policy makers hear you. In the various roles I have had over the years, I've enjoyed working with the Fed and have attended many gatherings, and am planning to attend more in 2019, including a youth retreat. I am so looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible and hearing about your priorities. I literally cannot do this work without you.

In the meantime, even though the Rep has changed, I want to remind you that some important things don't change. Our advocates are still available wherever you are in the province to help you deal with government. Not sure if you should call? Call anyway, and we'll do everything we can to help. **1-800-476-3933**, Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. It's free and it's private.

And remember to stay tuned to our social media to keep up to date on the latest: on Facebook [@rcybcyouth](https://www.facebook.com/rcybcyouth) and [@rcybc](https://www.instagram.com/rcybc), on Instagram [@rcybcyouth](https://www.instagram.com/rcybcyouth) and on Twitter [@rcybcyouth](https://twitter.com/rcybcyouth). Hoping our paths cross soon!

*J Charlesworth*

Jennifer Charlesworth  
Representative for Children and Youth



## LORENA BISHOP

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am so excited to be back at the Fed and catching up with our members, alumni and allies! It is an amazing time for us. Can you believe that we just celebrated our 25th birthday this year? This has been and continues to be a great opportunity to celebrate and honour our rich history as an organization and a community of people. We are also using this opportunity to reflect on our achievements and dream about what the next 25 years will look like for us. We would love to hear your favourite Fed stories and memories, or what your dream is for improving the lives of youth in and from care!

### What was your favourite part of SCM 75?

The entire youth retreat was amazing but I loved seeing people participate in a way that worked for them! I also loved getting to see people letting their awesomeness shine during the talent show. And who can forget about the costume contest? There were so many great and creative costumes!

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## SHANNON DOLTON

### ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

My desk is my happy place, I am surrounded by things that make my heart joyful and often times that means my desk is organized chaos, with tea cups everywhere and unicorns in random places. It also means that I am constantly surrounded by memories and reminders of the amazing work I get to do here at the Fed.

These past few months have been super busy — I have had the privilege of running the Fed bursary programs and have awarded 34 youth all over BC funds to put toward getting their driving licenses, and achieving post-secondary and trades education goals. We have awarded funds to cover activities like yoga and golfing, and was also able to award our 2018 Holiday Dinner Grants to 17 amazing organizations in BC.

With the support of the Fed staff and the amazing Extreme Teams I have planned two successful SCMs and I am underway in planning our third SCM in less than a year. We are on a roll with securing dates for upcoming SCMs. SCM #77 will be happening May 31 to June 2 in Mission.

I look forward to what lies ahead in the next few months and cannot wait to update everyone on what I have been working on in the next issue of *Power Pages*.



### What was your favourite part of SCM 75?

The entire weekend was amazing but I think the moment that stands out the most for me was a very specific moment during the talent show. There was a youth on stage performing and it felt like for a moment every single person in that room was connected. Everyone was present and supportive, and it's a moment that I will never forget.

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## JEFF O'NEILL

### LOCAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

It has been a busy few months for me! I met with new communities on the mainland and completed a four-day tour of Vancouver Island. We are excited to see two more locals in Abbotsford and Pemberton join the Fed family. We are now officially at 10 locals! As we move further into the New Year we will be starting up more locals across the province.

I have also taken over as the staff lead of the Youth Leadership Council. A strong leadership council helps the Fed stay youth driven. Please stay tuned for updates and information!

### What was your favourite part of SCM 75?

My favourite part of SCM #75 was hanging out by the fire. It was awesome to see everyone's creative ways to make s'mores and have everyone being disappointed with



me because I forgot to buy ketchup for the hotdogs. It's the first thing on my shopping list for SCM #76!

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## PREETI PRASAD

### ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

In November 2018, I sat on the Dream Fund selection committee to decide the winners of the Education Achievement and Reach for Success bursaries for the October round. It was an incredibly challenging but rewarding experience determining the winners. Reading young people's stories and how much receiving a bursary would mean for them was quite humbling. I feel so grateful to have played a small part in supporting young people pursue their educational or personal development goals.

### What was your favourite part of SCM 75?

Attending my very first SCM was definitely a highlight for me. It was an incredible experience and I feel so honoured to have met and connected with such talented and inspiring young people there. Speaking of talented, my favourite part of SCM 75 was definitely the talent show. I felt all the feels during that talent show! I'm so grateful



to have been able to witness all the gifts young people had to share, be it dancing, poetry, singing or spoken word. It was all so amazing! It also made my heart happy to see all of the folks in the crowd being so supportive and encouraging of each other through the entire show.

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## STEPHANIE THOMPSON

### COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

It's been a busy few months! I attended my first SCM in October. It was such a heart-filling and eye-opening experience and a privilege to meet and get to know so many of you.

We've done some work to streamline our social media, which included closing the Fed's Facebook group and just having our public page as our Facebook presence. We wanted you folks to be able to find and share information more easily.

I produced my first issue of *Power Pages* last summer and it was so great to be able to provide a space for you folks to share your work. The next issue (to be released in June) will be a special edition to celebrate the Fed's 25 years as an organization. Stay tuned for the deadline to get your work in!

Thank you to all of you who sent in your work and made this issue of *Power Pages* an amazing collection of youth voice, passion and talent!

### What was your favourite part of SCM 75?

That's a tough question, there were so



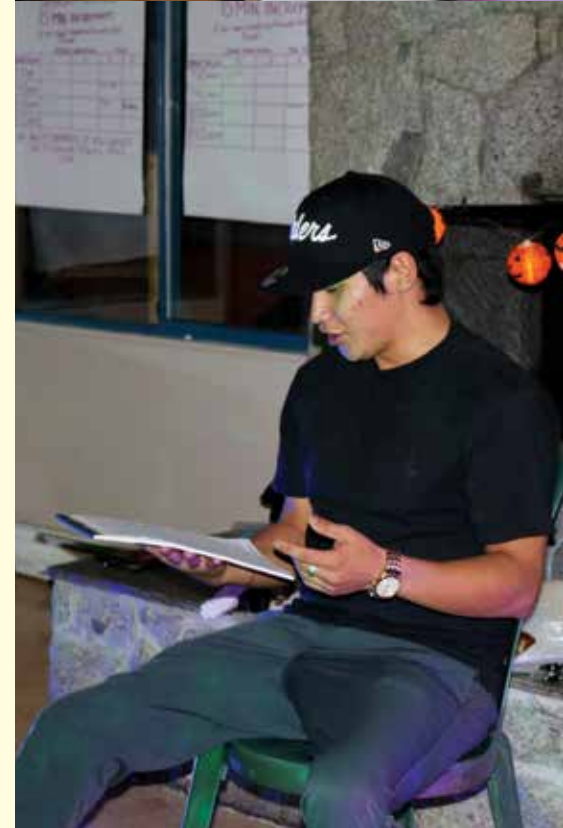
many. It was probably a moment during the talent show. There was a youth who I was worried wasn't having a good time or getting much out of the weekend, but then that young person got up and performed and it was magic. I was so proud of everyone for creating a space where that person felt like they could make magic.

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# MEET THE EXTREME TEAM

Have you ever wondered what goes into planning an SCM (youth retreat)? Who chooses all the activities? Who gets to decide that we need to have waffles for breakfast?

The Extreme Team is the Fed's youth Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) planning team. With the support of a staff member, the Extreme Team work together to plan SCMs, the weekends of fun, community and life skills that many of you consider your favourite Fed program.

We talked with JT, Darian and Athena, all two-time Extreme Team members, and Kami, a five-time Extreme Team member to hear why they wanted to be a part of the team, what they have gained from being on the team and what they would say to anyone who is thinking of joining.

## What is the Extreme Team and what do they do?

**JT:** *The Extreme Team is a fun way to get more involved in the SCMs, and it allows you to have your thoughts and opinions heard on things like the schedule, games, meals, snacks, and pods. Basically, you become a party planner for a party that lasts a whole weekend. I would recommend joining the Extreme Team to anyone who wants a fun, challenging way to learn and grow by doing something that you don't have the opportunity to do in your day-to-day life. The time commitment is also reasonable. There are meetings once a week for two months*

*or so leading up to the SCM, the SCM weekend itself, and a debrief meeting following the SCM. It can be hard to balance the work with other things in your life, but the space is there to ask for support and help if you need it.*

**DARIAN:** *I would say that when you join the Extreme Team, think of it as signing up to be a camp leader. You get to be involved in a lot of meetings, and you are a part of planning the entire SCM and everything that happens at it. It's a lot of fun.*

**ATHENA:** *Some of the tasks are simple, and some of them are a bit more time-consuming, but all play a crucial part in the weekend. Being a part of the Extreme Team is most certainly a learning experience, it gives you valuable skills if you plan on going into the field of social work or want to continue to work with the Fed in the future.*

## What made you want to join the extreme team?

**JT:** *I wanted to work with a bunch of really cool people. I wanted to work on some skills that I felt I was lacking and figure out how to better use skills I already had.*

**DARIAN:** *Previously I had been a leader at a summer camp. When I learned about the Extreme Team and what they do, I thought that it sounded like a great way to combine the knowledge and skills I already had in a*

*way that connected me to the youth in and from care community. I just had a feeling that I would really enjoy being a part of the Extreme Team, and I was right.*

**KAMI:** *At my very first SCM I volunteered to be a photographer. From that I decided that I wanted to be involved more and joining the Extreme Team made sense.*

**ATHENA:** *Honestly, I wanted to join the Extreme Team because some of my friends were on it and it seemed like a lot of fun.*

## Were there any specific skills or abilities you strengthened as a member of the Extreme Team?

**JT:** *Being a part of the team challenged me to come out of my shell. I was also able to work on my leadership skills, organization and team work.*

**DARIAN:** *I would say being able to strengthen my skills as a member of a team, and specifically how to communicate with a team has been super beneficial for me. The connection that Extreme Team members form with each other through planning is amazing. The teamwork and support that come from that connection is intense — in a good way, in a very good way.*

**KAMI:** *I have learned how to use my voice. I have worked to share my ideas and*

suggestions and speak up when I have something to say. I am not used to public speaking and don't like to be up in front of people. Being on the team has helped me with that. I have been able to challenge myself and step outside my comfort zone while knowing I was supported. I can say the same thing for taking on a leadership role. Being on the Extreme Team gives me the chance to challenge myself and grow.

### What would you say is the best part of being on the Extreme Team?

**JT:** I think all of it is the best part. I had a lot of fun getting to know the other Extreme Team members better, and working with them on creating something that was so positive and high energy. Aside from the honorarium\* you earn for your time and effort, you learn a lot of life skills and values when working on the team. I learned a lot about boundaries, how to be more patient, how to communicate better, how to run an event for over 40 people, and I improved my teamwork skills. I joined the Extreme Team because I wanted an opportunity to build on my leadership skills in a safe space, and I feel that I really had the chance to grow from my experience on the team.

**DARIAN:** I would say the best part of being on the Extreme Team is getting an opportunity to connect with youth. I didn't have a chance to attend SCMs when I was in care and being a part of planning this amazing opportunity for others is something that is important to me.

**KAMI:** The best part of being on the Extreme Team is being able to connect with youth from all across BC. I also really enjoy our team meetings as we plan the SCM, and during the event. They create space where we connect as a team and really support and get to know one another.

**ATHENA:** I would say the best part of the team is getting to meet new people, and having the ability to offer support to your peers! It's definitely not for everyone, but if you have the capacity to do it I would recommend it.

### What is the most challenging part of being on the team?

**DARIAN:** The most challenging thing is the actual SCM weekend can be really tiring. It's more emotionally exhausting than most

work. The flip side of that is that there is an equally big reward from being a part of the work. Knowing the work is always beneficial is so amazing. It's always a positive thing, and you know that you're helping folks to be heard and to have fun. Seeing the same youth come back year after year and watching them grow and make connections is amazing. I get to know that I am a part of making that happen.

**KAMI:** There are times as well where it can be hard to find time to connect with other folks as much as I would like to. Your first responsibility is your role and that can be hard to balance. Even though it can be challenging sometimes, every part of it is worth it. The work we get to do, the planning and things we get to a



part of, the connections we do get to make — those are the best rewards and that is what makes me keep coming back as a member of the team year after year. It's the best kind of challenging, and it's always a good feeling at the end when you can look back at what you accomplished as a member of the team.

**ATHENA:** For me the more challenging aspect of being on the team is the planning stuff prior to the SCM weekend. While I enjoy that work, I'm just not connected to my fellow youth at that point. I really like the interaction aspect of being on the Extreme Team.

### What kinds of support do you receive as an Extreme Team member?

**JT:** It's phenomenal. At the retreat you have the staff, adult supports and your fellow team members. With the Extreme team members, if you aren't really close or if you didn't know each other before, and even if you don't become super close while you are on the team, you know without a doubt that

you have each other as support throughout the process. It's impossible to even feel like you're alone through any of this, or that you need to deal with something on your own. Throughout the SCM planning process there are also one-to-one meetings with staff. These are meetings with just you and a staff member, it's a good way to decompress and debrief and ask questions one on one if you aren't comfortable asking in the group meetings. If you need to ground yourself or you aren't really clear on what you're doing it's really good for solidifying ideas and getting more comfortable in your position.

### What is your favourite memory as an Extreme Team member?

**DARIAN:** I think my favourite memory is the meetings, and the support I receive as a member of the team. I also love planning and running the games, whether people participate in them or just watch. It doesn't matter because everyone has a good time.

**KAMI:** You can't make me choose one favourite memory, there are too many. One of my favourites are always the check in meetings where as a group we meet with a staff member to connect, debrief and check in with how everyone is doing. The check in meetings at SCM 75 at Sasamat were definitely a highlight for me.

**JT:** My favourite memory is having been acknowledged as a good person and a good leader by my peers. It was a very draining weekend, but knowing that others thought that I was doing a good job while I was a little too busy to notice that in myself was very fulfilling.

**ATHENA:** If I had to choose one, it would probably be a meeting we had on a rock by the lake at the last SCM. It was a great experience to get to share what my headspace actually was, and not being coddled but encouraged in a genuine way.

\*For every 20 hours of work you do as a volunteer you receive a \$100 honorarium. Most Extreme Team members earn between \$200 and \$400 for the work they do planning an SCM.

If you are interested in joining the Extreme Team contact Shannon at [shannon.dolton@fbcyicn.ca](mailto:shannon.dolton@fbcyicn.ca)





## HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE 2018

On December 14 the Fed office was the place to be for holiday cheer and festivities. Throughout the evening we had over 70 people stop by the office for food, activities, gifts and a visit from Gabby Clause. Holiday music played while alumni, youth, community partners and staff celebrated and continued to build memories. The office was decked out with more decorations than it has seen in a few years. We would like to give a special shout out to Caz, Trevor and Zashton, who spent the three days leading up the holiday party decorating the office. We would also like to give a special thank you to members of Vancouver Fire and Radius Security who helped stuff stockings, set up, decorate and prepare the children's craft area. We are so grateful to have spent yet another holiday event with some of the amazing people that make up our Fed family.

We gave out 100 stockings!







## HOLIDAY DINNER GRANTS

We received our highest number of Holiday Dinner Grant applications this year, and we are happy to be able to share that we were able to award grants to every organization that applied. The 17 holiday grants supported over 455 youth to come together and share in holiday activities. Every region of the province was represented and there were celebrations happening in Vancouver, New Westminister, Surrey, Sechelt, Powell River, Nanaimo, Campbell River, Kelowna, Kamloops, Cranbrook, Mission, and Burnaby.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING RECIPIENTS OF THE 2018 HOLIDAY GRANTS:

**455 youth went to holiday dinner events funded by the Fed!!**



- Nanaimo Youth Advisory Council — Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre
- VIU Tuition Waiver Program — Vancouver Island University
- Youth Advisory Committee — Vancouver Aboriginal and Child Family Services Society
- Surrey Youth in Care Network Local — Options Community Services Society
- Powell River Child, Youth and Family Services Society
- Foster Nation
- Youth Services — Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
- Burnaby Youth Hub — Lower Mainland Purpose Society
- Mission Youth House — MY House
- Kelowna Youth in Care Network Local — The Bridge Child and Family Services
- Youth Space — Alexandra Neighbourhood House
- Campbell River Youth in Care Network Local — Sasamans Society
- Aunt Leah's Place
- McCreary Centre Society
- Kamloops Youth in Care Network Local — Interior Community Services
- Josh W with support from Aunt Leah's Place
- Surrey Youth Advisory Committee and Connecting Community







## YOUTH MEMBER PROFILE

# ALLY P

Dynamic and outgoing, Ally speaks with an awareness and maturity beyond her 17 years. She also isn't afraid to speak her mind. Ally's participation with the Fed all started from her desire to create a project that would help to reduce the stigma and shame that surround youth in and from care. Now involved with the organization for two years, Ally has attended multiple SCMs (youth retreats), has volunteered as both an MC and photographer and we are happy to share that her photographs are featured in the Fed's updated 2018 organizational brochure. Whether talking about the weather in Fort St. John where she lives, her excitement and pride at being a few months away from graduating high school, or the close bond she has with her younger sister, Ally approaches everything with energy and a determination that leaves no doubt that she will achieve all the things she sets out to do. Continue reading to learn more about this waffle-loving advocate for youth in and from care.

**There are discussions of suicide and overdosing in this interview. Some may find it triggering or difficult to read.**

**How did you get involved with Fed?**  
*In grade 10 I needed to do a research project and decided that I wanted to make a video to raise awareness about the foster care system. I interviewed my social worker as part of the project and they said I should see if I could do a phone call with the Provincial Youth Advisory Council.\* I was able to have a phone call with a few members of the provincial council and that started the beginning of me*

*being more involved with other youth in and from care. A little while later my social worker was like, "Hey, there's this thing called an SCM where you go away for the whole weekend and kids from care get together, and you should be our guinea pig and go." She then told me she had the application filled in and that I should sign it. I was definitely volun-told to go to my first SCM.*

**And what was that experience like for you?**  
*I was scared and nervous and I didn't want to go but I am really glad that I did. Going to the SCM gave me the chance to build quite a few relationships, I have made a lot of great friends. Having the chance to connect with other youth from care has made me more passionate, and has motivated me to want to help out and change the care system.*

**What would you say to a youth who is also being volun-told to come by a social worker, foster parent or guardian?**  
*To someone who is nervous about coming I would say it's awesome and YOLO (you only live once). Don't let your nerves get in the way of going. I know the thought of going is scary and frightening. But it's also a super amazing opportunity and you will be super glad you decided to come once the weekend is over. The Fed is a really great organization, and connecting with them is awesome.*

**Do you have a favourite memory connected to the Fed?**  
*The first talent show I saw at SCM #73 is a favourite one. That entire first SCM is always going to be my favourite memory.*

*It was the year that we all sang around this little fire. We all got together and sang songs, I really connected with people that year. I just feel like that was my best one.*

**What would you say is the best thing about being able to connect with other youth that are in and from care?**  
*We understand each other. At this past SCM in October I was able to talk to people a lot and some of the things we talked about were so personal. It was really eye opening for me to realize, wow, they actually get it. It's incredible how much we can connect on such a deep level with only knowing each other for such a small amount of time. It's amazing. It's finding family.*

**How do you define family?**  
*Family isn't blood. You create family with things like the SCM. I feel really strongly about that. I have a really hard time dealing with not having any blood family. The Fed has really helped me to be okay with it. I know that the Fed is my family.*

**You have talked a little bit about connecting with youth in and from care. What specifically makes you passionate about the youth in care movement?**  
*I want others to know that they are not alone and there are supports out there for them. I want them to know that together we are strong. Youth in and from care stand together, yo!*

**What are you most proud of having accomplished or achieved?**  
*Finishing high school. It means I proved people wrong. A lot of people told me I wouldn't get it done, and that I was going to turn out like my mom. Now I am seven months away from graduating. It's a pretty big F you to those who didn't believe in me.*

**What helped you to get to the point where you are so close to graduating?**  
*I set my mind to it, and at some point I decided to face the problems that surrounded me instead of running away from them.*

**Last year you won an award for math right? It was for best math student. I hate math.**

**On days where you are like, "Nope, don't want to go today," how do you motivate yourself to keep showing up?**



*Do you want the truth? On those days I come to school but don't actually go to class. Or I go to class and don't do anything. I connect with a teacher or support worker and let them know I am not in place to do work today.*

**You're in a school where you have the flexibility to create that space for yourself?**

*Yeah, I'm in what's called the Senior Alternate Program. So there are 60 students and we have three classes and three teachers and youth workers. It's an open program and we all work at our own pace. The teachers and youth workers are really good with me being honest about where I am at each day. If I am having a bad day I can go up and say, I am not okay today, I want to be alone, or I need to sit, or I need to talk, and that's what we do. Our mental health is more important than the school work in that program and it allows me to be successful.*

**How did you find that alternative school environment?**

*I've always really struggled to sit in an actual class. I don't like how big they are. If we are doing a test with the whole class and I see someone finish before me then I will write random answers down just so that I am finished and not the last kid done. I also struggle with reading comprehension and not having one on one support to go through things line by line has always been hard for me. All of those things led to me to skip class, not hand in work, and hate school.*

*In grade 6 I was in a projects-based learning program and my grades were phenomenal, I had never had such good grades before. I found out there was a projects-based learning school I could go to for my grade 10 year. I worked hard to make sure that I got into the program. I had a really good counsellor in grade 10 who made sure that I got into the senior alternate program at the school. She knew I would get the one-on-one support I needed. She also knew with some of my personal struggles it would be a good environment for me to do well. The senior alternate program is super open and the teachers want to make sure you are okay. If you need help they will sit down with you one on one or we will go into what are called pods.*

**What would you say to someone who is struggling in the traditional high school system?**

*I would encourage them to talk to a counsellor. Express how you feel and really*

*push on them that you know you need something else. Stand up for yourself and use your voice. Make sure you are heard, push for what you deserve and don't take no for an answer. It also helps to have someone that can advocate for you. You have to be firm on what you need to be successful in school.*

**What would you say to youth who may have some shame or embarrassment around being in an alternative or projects-based school program?**

*What's better? Failing school and not graduating or stepping out of your comfort zone and getting the help that you need?*

**If you could give younger Ally some advice or wisdom based on what you know now what would it be?**

*Don't care so much about what others think of you. I would tell myself to not let others opinions of me dictate how I feel about*

**“Having the chance to connect with other youth from care has made me more passionate, and has motivated me to want to help out and change the care system.”**

*myself. I did everything to impress others and was super cautious and aware of what others thought of me. If I am honest, I still struggle with it, but I can also be like, “Oh, you don't like me? Well, F you, I don't care.”*

**You're in school about to graduate, you work, you are connected to the youth in care community, and you're in a healthy relationship. What things have led you to this point?**

*Trial and error. I feel like for me I had to be one of those people that hit rock bottom before anything could get better. It was then that I realized that I wasn't happy and wanted to change. I had to get to the bottom of myself and have that eye-opening realization that shit is bad and shit needs to change. I need to get myself together. A big motivation for me was my little sister. She's a really big push for me.*

**Is that connected to you wanting to be a good example for her?**

*Yeah, I struggled a lot in grade 10. It was super hard, I was at the point where I didn't care about anyone else, I didn't want to be*

*here anymore, and I wanted to be released from everything and only cared about myself. I wanted to be okay, and not feel the way that I felt anymore. I ended up overdosing that year and that was my bottom.*

*I was in the hospital after my overdose, and the psychiatrist came and talked to me and he was asked me if I had any siblings. We started to talk about my sister. He was like, “Can you picture what it would have done to her if you had succeeded and overdosed?” And that right there was the moment. My sister's mom left her and her dad left her at one point. She probably feels like I left her at some points because we were separated sometimes. I realized that I needed to be there for her, I needed to be okay. My sister is older now and I don't want her to have to deal with the pain that I've gone through. I know that she will have pain based on her own experiences, and that's a big thing for me. I want to be there for her, and if I am not okay with myself, then I can't support her when she needs it. She's a*

*really big rock for me. She's my go-to. In those moments where I struggle I think, you can do this, you've got this, Ally. She's a big, big part of why I have come so far and why I am where I am today. I still have days where I want to give up, and where things feel hard. Instead of giving up I think of her.*

**Do you have any hidden talents?**

*I can spread my toes apart really well.*

**If you could be any colour crayon what colour would you be?**

*Lime green.*

**Lime green? You didn't even skip a beat, why lime green?**

*That's my favourite colour. Do you want to know what animal I would be?*

**Yes, what animal would you be?**

*A monkey.*

\*The Provincial Youth Advisory Council informs, discusses and provides recommendations to the Provincial Director of Child Welfare and other ministry program areas and working groups regarding services and policies impacting children, youth and families in BC.

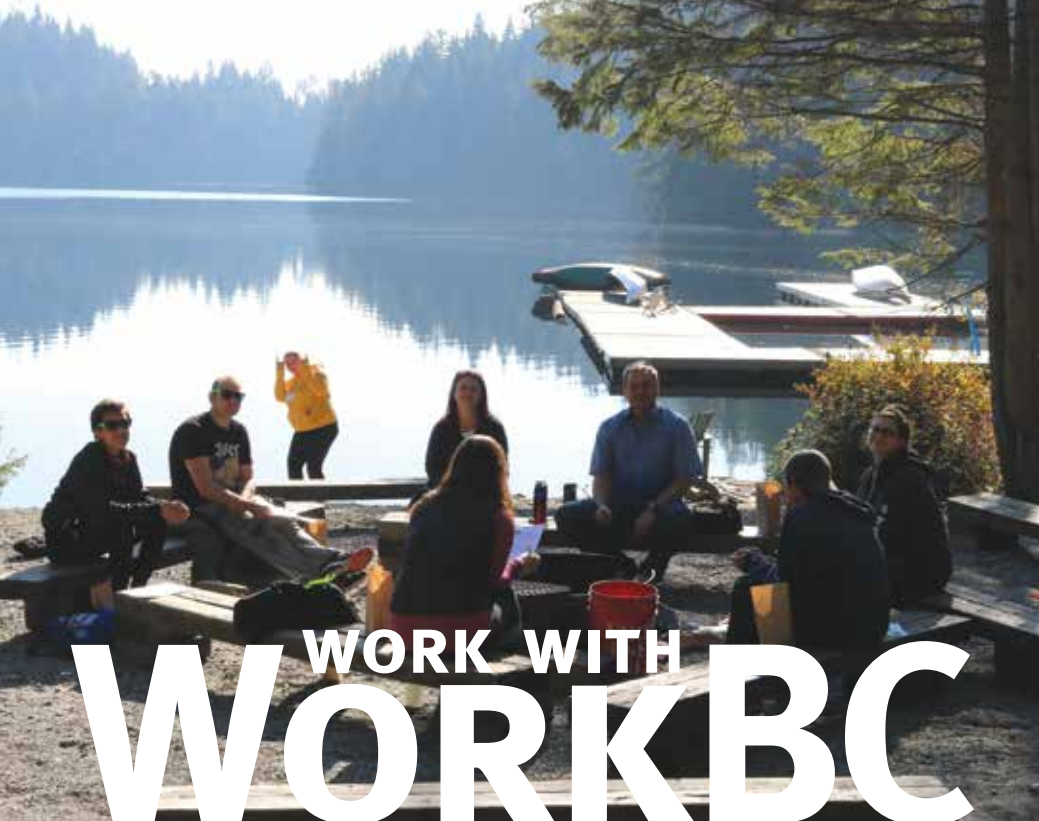


**PHOTOS BY JERMAINE C**









WorkBC workshop at the October youth retreat.

so we'll look at providing counselling as one of the things that helps them reach their employment goal. Maybe we'll look at doing an assessment because they want to go back to school but they've always struggled in school so maybe there's a learning disability. A common one with youth is that they don't know what they want to do, so we can send them to workshops or assessments that can help them figure out what kind of work they're suited to. There's a lot of exploration that we like to do in the process. I might work with a youth for a year, maybe more. We don't have the expectation that you come in and in three months you have a job and your WorkBC service ends. It's a lot more flexible than that.

If you're not eligible for case management, there are still plenty of resources WorkBC can provide, like help with resume and cover letter writing, interview skills, and job search information.

### **Do I need to be below a certain income level to get financial support from WorkBC?**

Absolutely not. A new policy came out in April, 2018. Before that, if you were working 20 hours or more you weren't allowed to come and work with us. That was considered to be sustainable employment by someone's estimation. Now you can technically be working full time and you can still access services. And I think the idea behind that is to get people out of that vicious cycle of poverty where they're working full time, they might be making minimum wage or working multiple part-time jobs and they don't have time to explore other options.

However, you usually do need to be eligible to work with a case manager to get financial support (see above), and the case manager will then determine what financial supports you can get. The exception to that rule is if you're offered a job but you need financial supports to accept the job and work until you get your first full pay cheque. These Job Start Supports can include things like transportation supports (gas or public transit), clothing, equipment, tools, supplies, and daycare costs.

### **Will getting financial support from WorkBC affect other financial supports I get, like disability?**

Absolutely not. You can definitely come

Have you ever had trouble writing a resume? Not been able to get clothes to wear to an interview? Felt stuck in a job you hate? Finding a good job is a struggle for many people, so we sat down with Brenda Richmond, former youth in care and current Youth Case Manager and Outreach worker with the WorkBC Employment Services Centre in New Westminster. We talked about all things job-related, and how WorkBC can help address the issues and barriers that youth in and from care can face when they're looking for work.

### **What kind of support does WorkBC offer?**

WorkBC is a gateway that can help you access different programs, services and funding supports so you can get the training you need to get the job you want. When you work with us, you set an employment goal and WorkBC can cover training and certifications that match your employment goal. We can also help you with other costs like transportation and day care. We tend to do everything case by case, individual to individual, but some common certifications are:

- Warehouse / Forklift
- WHMIS
- Fall Protection
- Food Safe
- Serving It Right
- First Aid
- Responsible Adult In a Child Care Setting (Child Care)

WorkBC can cover the costs of short-term

certificate training, like First Aid, and sometimes longer-term training. For longer-term training like a post-secondary program, training coverage can include tuition, books, supplies, living supports, transportation, daycare, assistive technology (hearing aids or tutoring, for example) and other supports.

### **What does getting support from WorkBC look like?**

Because every person is unique, so are their needs when they come to a WorkBC Employment Service Centre. We usually start by seeing if they're eligible for case management (a FREE service). Case managers work with people one-on-one to help them figure out their employment goal and how they can reach it. To be eligible for case management, you must:

- Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or documented refugee.
- Not be a full-time student. You can work with a case manager if you're a part-time student.
- You usually need to be over 16. If you're under 16 we would need a letter from a guardian and we would look at why you're looking for work and what are some of the alternatives out there.

Your ultimate goal should be getting a job. But that doesn't mean that if you come in we're going to expect you to go straight into a job search. I have youth who come in and they have a lot of psychological issues or trauma



in and work with us if you're getting other financial supports.

### **Can I get financial supports from WorkBC if I'm on an Agreement with Young Adults (AYA)?**

You can absolutely receive financial support from WorkBC while being supported by an AYA. The only requirement is that you're not attending school full time (as a full-time student you can still access resources for help with resumes, cover letters, applications, that kind of thing). If you're on an AYA and you still need services with us, one doesn't cancel out the other. If you wanted to upgrade your education to get into a program or finish high school and you didn't want to use your AYA because it is limited, we can support you with that.

### **Do you cover the cost of things like tools, transportation, or interview clothes that I need to look for jobs?**

Case managers can potentially help you cover the costs of:

- interview clothes
- transportation supports
- daycare costs
- disability supports

Once you get a job, they might also be able to help you with:

- work clothes
- tools
- equipment
- other supplies

### **What kinds of upgrades or support do you offer that can help me get out of a job I don't like?**

The supports each Employment Service Centre offers can vary depending on the region they're in. For example, we can refer you to different programs in your area. They might be youth-based programs that can help you find work while supporting you with one-on-one assistance, financial supports, and life skills training. Different regions also sometimes have fully-funded training programs like Medical Office Assistant or Early Child Education (the kind of program would depend on which industry skilled workers were needed in) that WorkBC could refer you to.

WorkBC can also provide job placement support. Case managers can refer you for Job

Development services to help you find a job based on your interests, skills, personality and values. We can also help you with basic and essential skills training if you need to upgrade your skills and education for a specific training program or want to complete your high school education, for example. Sometimes WorkBC can support youth with longer-term training of up to two years for longer programs.

### **What if I have issues with my mental health, like anxiety or short term memory loss?**

Absolutely no problem whatsoever. All WorkBC Employment Service Centres offer case management supports and services to youth with unique needs. We can offer Customized Employment Services to people who need more specialized supports than case management can provide, including financial supports for things like training, assistive technology, assessments, and many, many other services. Customized employment turns the typical job search process on its head. Rather than tailoring ourselves to fit the job, we tailor the job to

fit the person. A customized employment specialist might spend months with you really getting to know you, looking at your strengths, your skills, figuring out what kind of support network you have, even right down to, are you taking medications, are you getting other supports in the community, and how can we all work together to help support you? Do you want part time or full time? Do you want to work alone or with others? It's very needs based, very individual.

And when you come into case management, we don't just look at what we can provide, we also look at what the community can provide. We look at different organizations and programs and services out there that you might not know about. Some of them actually require that you get formally referred through us. So if we can't provide the support directly, then we can look at working with another organization to get you that support. We can provide personal counselling for youth, and I've done that with a number of young people and they've made tremendous strides.

### **Do all Employment Service Centres offer the same services?**

There are some services that every WorkBC office will offer, it just might vary as to how they're offered and who offers them. Case management, resume writing, interview skills, resources, all of those things would be offered through most regions. In more remote areas you might have one or two people working in a satellite office and they do everything, whereas in bigger areas you'll find more staff at a WorkBC office who specialize in different things like case management, Customized Employment or running workshops.

### **Are there any online or distance services you offer if I can't get to an Employment Service Centre?**

In some more remote regions, there are satellite offices. Some of them may only have certain hours and may only be staffed by one or two people. Some may even offer mobile services during specific days of the week or month. I recommend going

***"You don't need to fit in some box that we've created in order to get services. We meet you where you're at."***

to [WorkBC.ca](http://WorkBC.ca) and looking for the office closest to you. You can just type in your postal code and the closest office to you will come up. Contact them for how to access their Employment Service Centre and what programs they have available.

Right now there are a lot of tools and info that people can access on the WorkBC website (check them out on page 26). There are sections on self-employment, or accessing trades or apprenticeship services. There are a lot of resources on there for youth specifically, and I think that's only going to grow. You can't beat face to face help, but the reality is that if you're in a remote community or you're living with anxiety that keeps you from leaving the house and you may not be able to get face-to-face help, we want you to be able to access some services and know that we can still work with you. Maybe we can get you into counselling to deal with that anxiety. You don't need to fit in some box that we've created in order to get services. We meet you where you're at.

# BRENDA'S JOB SEARCH ADVICE

## How do I make a resume if I don't have any work experience?

I would recommend starting with a list of skills you have acquired over the years. Look at skills you might have developed in school, while volunteering, at home, with hobbies, skills you might have picked up helping out in the kitchen or in the garage. Maybe you're really artistic or love helping your friends with their problems. Whatever it is, just start writing a list. Then, think about what type of job you might like to do. Maybe you want to work in a restaurant or warehouse, maybe retail or something more administrative. Once you have an idea of what you would like to do, go online and search for a job description for it (Indeed and Monster often have examples). Then look at the job description and try and match your skills. Make sure your resume is targeted to the specific job. Avoid sending one resume for every job.

## What if I've been sending out a lot of resumes but not hearing back or getting interviews?

There could be any number of reasons you're not hearing back, and we can't always know for sure, but there is a definite possibility that it's your resume. If you've got one resume and you're sending it out to 15 different employers, that's probably not going to work for you. It could be that someone is looking at them when they're at work late and they're

tired, so even if you have the right skills but the formatting is messy and the person has a hard time reading it, they probably won't look too closely at it. The top half of the first page is usually what they look at first. If something grabs their attention they'll go back for that second look. Give them a reason for that second look.

Any WorkBC office can help you with your resume. I recommend finding your nearest Employment Service Centre and asking them if someone can review your resume to start.

## If I was fired from my last job, how do I talk about that in an interview?

There are a few different ways you could handle that. First, give yourself a break. You're young. You're learning. It happens. Second, avoid lying. You run the risk of the truth coming out later on and potentially losing your job. That said, **you definitely don't need to offer this information voluntarily if no one asks.** Still, it's important to be prepared if you do get asked why you left your last job.

Some possible things you could say (if they also happen to be true):

- The company was downsizing and your position was eliminated
- New management took over and replaced you with their own staff
- The hours didn't work for you, the location was too far, etc.

- (A personal favourite of mine) The job (or company) weren't a good fit. That's it. That's all you need to say unless you're asked for more detail.

One of my favourite recommendations, however, is simply to be open and honest if **you're asked and if you feel comfortable.** Keep your explanation short and to the point: "I was let go and informed that I wasn't punctual." Next (and this is important!!), tell them what you learned: "After losing my job, I realized that being late so frequently affected my ability to do my job and to be there for the other staff and the company. I don't think I realized at the time how much I was letting everyone down." Then tell them how you will now make sure that you will be on time in the future: "Knowing how important it is to be on time, I now make sure that I wake up an hour earlier and leave half an hour earlier so I catch the earlier bus in case something happens. That way I'm always on time."

By being open and honest, you're actually showing an employer that you know how to take ownership for your mistakes (a very important quality) and that you are capable of learning from them and making changes to be a better employee. And that's admirable!

You can get help with all those tough interview questions at a WorkBC Employment Service Centre. A case manager or an advisor will be able to practice them with you.

## WORKBC ONLINE RESOURCES

These are just a few of the tools and resources you can find at WorkBC.ca. Learn more about them (and lots more) at [workbc.ca/Resources-for/Youth.aspx](http://workbc.ca/Resources-for/Youth.aspx)

### BLUEPRINT BUILDER

With the Blueprint Builder you can find all kinds of information on career exploration, education, and job searching, and save it all one place. [workbc.ca/blueprintbuilder](http://workbc.ca/blueprintbuilder)

### CAREER COMPASS

With Career Compass, you can take quizzes on your abilities, your work preferences and your best school subject to help you figure out what kind of job you'd enjoy and be great at! [workbc.ca/CareerCompass](http://workbc.ca/CareerCompass)

### UPGRADEBC

This tool can help you find tuition-free upgrading courses so you can finish or upgrade high school courses and get into the post-secondary program you want. [upgradebc.ca/map](http://upgradebc.ca/map)

### TRADES TRAINING BC

Find trades programs about BC, learn more about education in trades, search job boards and lots more. [tradestrainingbc.ca](http://tradestrainingbc.ca)

### WORKBC JOB SEARCH

Search thousands of jobs throughout BC. [workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers.aspx](http://workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers.aspx)

### POWER UP YOUR JOB SEARCH

Get great tips for resume writing, getting ready for interviews, finding ways to network and using social media in your job search. [workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Find-Jobs/Power-up-your-job-search.aspx#anchor2](http://workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Find-Jobs/Power-up-your-job-search.aspx#anchor2)





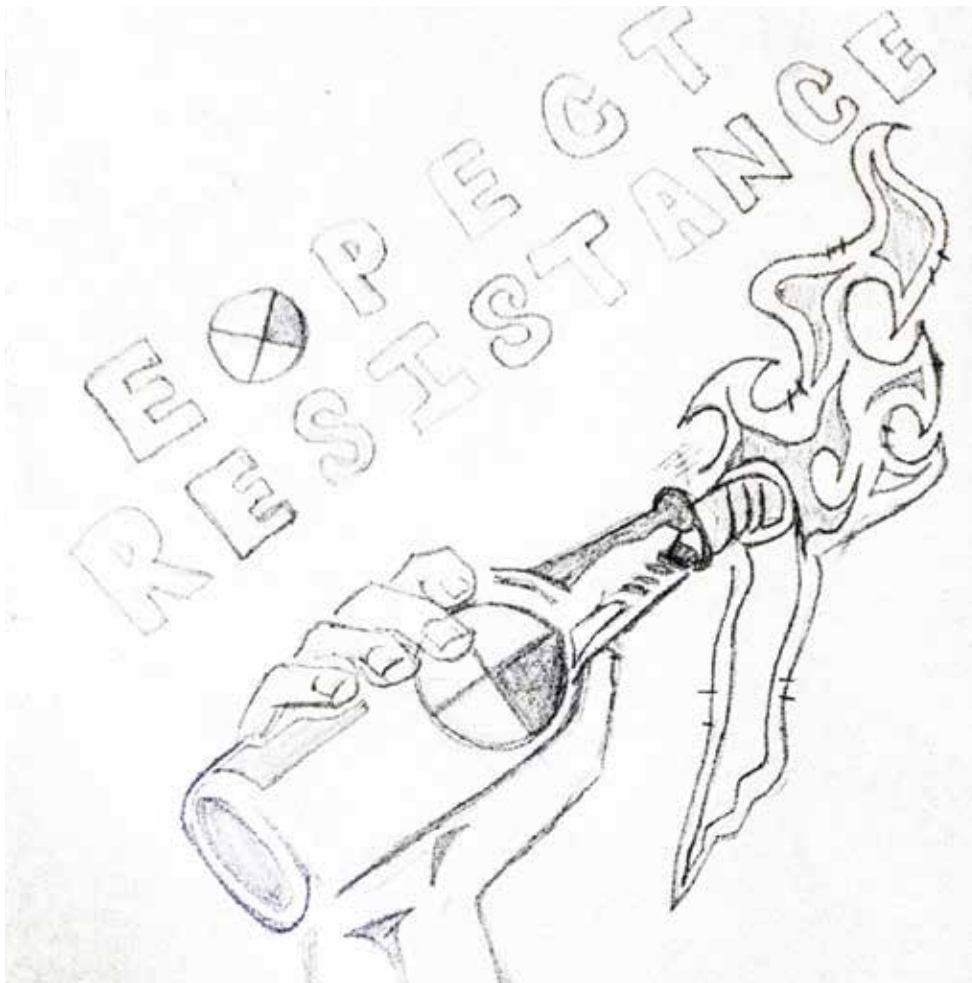
**GREER CREEK WOMAN BY HOLLEY D**



**POWER IN COMMUNITY BY KARMELLA BDB**







**DRAWING & PHOTO BY JAZ SCUFF**

## 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](http://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](http://fbcyicn.ca) | Email: [powerpages@fbcyicn.ca](mailto: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](http://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 of the Fed.





**BABY'S ADVENTURES  
BY THERESA T**







**PAINTING BY TIANNA W**