



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

EDITION #56



SELF-CARE TIPS FROM YOUR FED FAMILY!

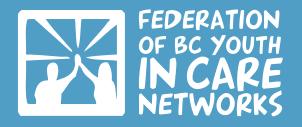
BC CHILD & YOUTH IN CARE WEEK REFLECTION

YOUTH IN ACTION!

PLUS ART, PHOTOGRAPHY, POETRY AND STORIES FROM YOUTH IN AND FROM CARE!



CONNECT WITH US!



FBCYICN is a youth-driven, peer-based, 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! Charity #: 85751 6702 RR0001 Phone: 604.527.7762 Fax: 604.527.7764 Toll-free: 1.800.565.8055 500 - 625 Agnes Street New Westminster, BC V3M 5Y4 info@fbcyicn.ca

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You Tube The FBCYICN

Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks



Rebeckah Bird Youth Intern

Lorena Bishop Executive Director

Shannon Dolton Program Coordinator

Ornella Essa *Youth Intern*

Jessy Neal Program Coordinator

BOARD OF

Athena Nixson Youth Intern

Preeti Prasad Administrative Coordinator

Steve Smith Program Coordinator

Stephanie Thompson Program & Communications Coordinator Pam Costello Treasurer

Debbie Cox Board Chair

Katelyn Crabtree Member at Large (on leave)

Kim Lee Member at Large

Gary Tennant Vice Chair

Ryan Wong Secretary

Kathy Wright Member at Large

CONGRATS TO OUR NEW ALUMNI!

Jai T Katrina P Cammy L Josaya R Niki B

Gerald B Quincy A Karmella BDB Adaline G Tyler C Chynna F Star M Louise B Vaughn P Marcey A



EDITION #56 BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

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VIEW OR DOWNLOAD PAST & CURRENT EDITIONS AT FBCYICN.CA

WELCOME TO THE BOARD!



We had our Annual General Meeting over Zoom in October, where we welcomed Ryan Wong and Kathy Wright to the Fed's Board of Directors! Special shout out to the Youth Members who took the time to come to the AGM and vote!

HOLIDAY CARE KITS

Thanks to the generous support of our Fed Family, including MCFD staff, adult allies, businesses and more, we were able to provide Holiday Care Kits to 300 youth in and from care this year, more than our goal of 250! We were also able to expand our reach this year and send kits to youth all over BC!

Thank you to all of you who helped make this magic happen!! Many youth in and from care find the holidays hard, and this past winter was especially difficult. By supporting us to send so many kits to youth in so many communities, you helped to remind youth in BC that their Fed Family was thinking of them and sending them love this holiday season.



"Our sibling', this has me in absolute tears of happiness. I have felt so isolated lately and this made my day." – Holiday Care Kit Recipient

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The Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks (FBCYICN, or the Fed) is a youth-driven, peer-based 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!



*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, or homelessness.

"Personally I have found another place to call home at the FBCYICN. It is the one place I can turn to and be completely understood without question. They have given me the strength to say, yeah I'm a former youth in care and I'm freaking awesome. I can't speak for all foster kids, but from personal experience, not all of us are gifted with a family, and many of us struggle to build a chosen family and a support network, but the FBCYICN has made this so much easier for not just myself, but countless others."

LOUISE B, ALUMNI MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER







WHAT WE DO

O 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. Find out more about our programs and services throughout the magazine!

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, skill-building activities, such as Food Safe, fork lift certification, and sports and recreation fees, or other expenses that are keeping you from achieving your goals.

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.

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.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS LOCALS (YOUTH GROUPS)

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.

FED CONNECTS

Fed Connects is a virtual space that offers youth in and from government care a place to come together, build skills, and access information. Fed Connects hosts a variety of events, programs, and resources like Fed Family Chat, skill-building workshops, consultations, cultural teachings, talent shows and more using a variety of online platforms.

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. *Please note that Youth Retreats are on hold during COVID-19*.

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.

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.

ADVOCATE, CONNECT, EMPOWER ICONS DESIGNED BY ALUMNI MEMBER JT

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO!



O volunteer hours were contributed by youth!





youth won Dream Fund Bursaries!





new youth became Fed Members!





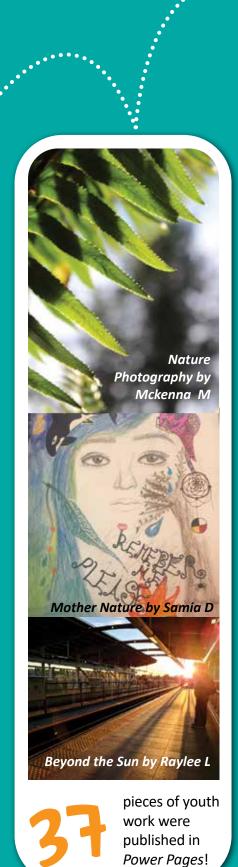
workshops, events, hang outs and cultural teachings were offered in Fed Connects!



Youth Interns worked at the Fed! Your Fed Family



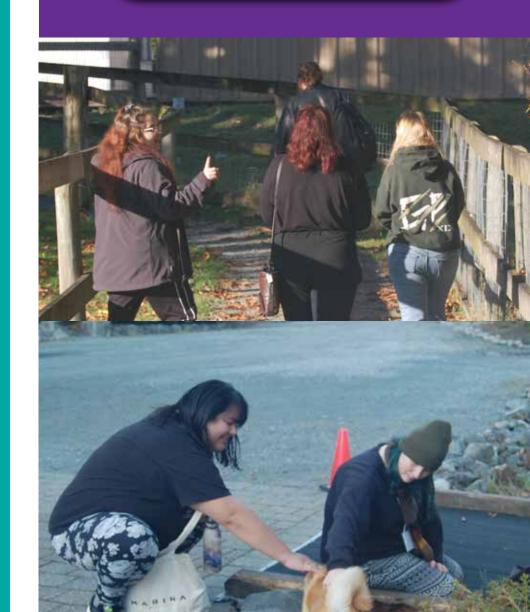
Holiday Care Kits were sent to youth across BC!



COMING UP!

BC CHILD & YOUTH IN CARE WEEK is coming up on May 31 to June 6, 2021!

The next deadline for the **DREAM FUND** is July 2, 2021!



MÉTIS COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF BC





The Métis Commission for Children and Families

of BC has a Youth Connections Finder!

For more information, contact Chantel at: Phone: 1-250-372-8688 Email: c.macmillan@metiscommission.com

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/chantel.macmillan.98



Opportunity for youth aged 18 to 20 to take part in a youth-led survey about transitioning out of care

Please consider completing this survey if you are:

18 to 20 years old and are currently in government care or an alternative to care (including if you have had your supports extended)?

https://form.simplesurvey.com/f/l/YouthTransitionTIME1

19 or 20 years old and were previously in government care or alternative to care?: https://form.simplesurvey.com/f/l/YouthTransitionTIME2

McCreary Centre Society's Youth Research Academy* is conducting a study about youth transitioning out of government care in British Columbia. It includes a series of surveys, completed around six months apart, and all eligible youth get a \$20 gift card for each valid survey they complete. It includes questions about youth's background, education, employment, access to services and supports, strengths and

needs, and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of how to best support young people transitioning out of care. The results of this study will be used by policy makers and service providers.

Participation is anonymous, confidential, and voluntary (e.g., you can choose to stop at any time)



If you are interested, please fill out the

SURVEY.

The study will be open through 2023. If you have any questions about the study. please email garrett@mcs.bc.ca or call 604-291-1996 (ext. 222).



*The Youth Research Academy is a group of youth aged 16 to 24 with experience of the government care system who are trained to conduct research projects of interest to youth in and from government care and the agencies that serve them. To learn more about the Youth Research Academy, please visit www.mcs.bc.ca



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.

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 can provide you with up to \$1,500 for tuition at a post-secondary school. You can use this

"This bursary will make the world of a difference in my pursuit of my dreams." Education Achievement Bursary Recipient **Reach for Success Bursary**

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

Are you working towards a goal but there's an expense getting in your way? The Reach for Success Bursary can provide you with up to \$500 to overcome barriers you might face

"Thank you so much for the great news! This means the world to me! Thank you again!" - Reach for Success Bursary Recipient

in achieving your goals. Reach for Success Bursary recipients have used the money to pay for photography lessons, driving lessons, yoga memberships, sports team fees, Canadian citizenship applications, BCIDs, certifications like FoodSafe and Serving it Right, and even dental work. If you need money for anything you don't see listed here, get in touch with us and we'll do what we can to help!

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 between the ages of 14 to 24 years old
- Must have a cumulative total of one year in government care
- (Education Achievement only) You are currently enrolled or planning to enroll in a secondary, post-secondary academic, technical or vocational program, a recognized public postsecondary institution, or a registered private post-secondary institution.

Thanks to another generous donation from Radius Security, we were able to award additional Reach for Success bursaries!

WINNERS **JULY 2020**

REACH FOR SUCCESS Evanna W Victoria BH Victoria J

Therren D Lily V Kayla M

EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT Josie H **Tyler D Kimberly B Heaven H** Fatima H

OCTOBER 2020

Travis I

Maria B

REACH FOR SUCCESS Zahra H **Florentina U Dominic C** Alyssa S Alison M Star M Hayden H

Issabelle T

EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT Dylan K

Nicholas T Tara B

The deadline for the next Dream Fund is July 2, 2021.

Apply at fbcyicn.ca/what-weoffer/programs/dream-fund

#STANDWITH XOUTHINCARE GAT THE

Thank you so much to the incredible volunteers who helped run Locals in their communities, helped raise awareness in the Outreach Group, chaired our Annual General Meeting, supported the Fed's Holiday Care Kits, and sat on Dream Fund Selection Committees and BC Child and Youth in Care Week's Working Groups and Advisory Committee!

"I am honoured to work with all of you amazing people and I'm extremely grateful for the opportunities you have given me! I am truly so lucky to be a member of the Fed." – Youth Volunteer

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 aged 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!

VOLUNTEERS YOUTH		
Athena N CJ L Diego C Fatima H	Gwyn C Jade R Kayla J Landon P Raylee L	Rose E Sami N Tagen M Victoria J
	ALUMNI	
	Jai T Nena E	

OUR VOLUNTEER HONORARIUMS HAVE CHANGED! EARN \$25 FOR EVERY 5 HOURS OF VOLUNTEERING — AND YOU CAN GET YOUR HONORARIUM IN A CHEQUE OR E-GIFT CARD!

BECOME A MEMBER!

Do you see yourself as part of a passionate community of young people who care about each other and work to create 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.

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, or call us at 1-800-565-8055!

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.
- The Fed is youth-driven, so you'll be a part of the organization's decision-making.
- Be part of a chosen family that celebrates you, your accomplishments and your milestones.
- You get first dibs on cool opportunities, like representing the Fed, travelling to conferences, and accessing our programs and bursaries.
- Membership is free!

BY COMING TOGETHER. WE ARE NOT ALONE.

Join the FBCYICN today by filling out a membership form! **fbcyicn.ca/become-member-form**





WHAT'S POWER PAGES?

Power Pages is a provincial magazine connecting youth in and from care, service providers and caregivers across BC. Power Pages is a platform for young people aged 14–24 to share their talents, their voices, and connect with a provincial network of youth in and from care and their allies.

WHAT DOES POWER PAGES PUBLISH?

Each issue has updates from the Fed and information and resources from community partners, but the heart of *Power Pages* is the voices and talents shared by young people. If you're a youth in or from care, you can send us your:

- Art
- Photography
- Stories
- Opinions
- Letters to government
- Poetry
- Reflections
- Lyrics
- And lots more!

If you're not sure if your work is right for *Power Pages*, contact us and a staff member will help you.

HOW DO I GET MY WORK INTO POWER PAGES?

To make sure *Power Pages* keeps representing the diverse voices and interests of youth in and from care, we need to hear from you! There are lots of ways you send us your work:

- Fill in our online submission form
- Send us your work via: Email: info@fbcyicn.ca Fax: 604-527-7764 Mail: 500-625 Agnes Street New Westminster, BC V3M 5Y4

For more information about how to submit work, our Editorial Policy, and upcoming deadlines, visit our website at fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/ programs/power-pages





WINTER INTERNS

The Fed welcomed Athena N, Rebeckah B, and Ornella E as Interns over Winter 2020. They worked together to create two new videos for the Fed, supported Fed Connects programming and connected with young people in and from care across BC. The work they accomplished over their internships will have lasting impacts on the organization and we were so grateful to have worked alongside them.

"I can walk away from this internship having had a really rad experience and knowing the worth of the work I am doing." – Athena N Youth Intern

FED CONNECTS

Since the pandemic started we've had to shift how we stay connected with one another. Just about a year ago, the Fed team put their thinking caps on and created Fed Connects! This is a virtual space that helps young people learn new skills, stay connected with familiar faces, expand their network and build new connections.

Fed Connects has Fed Family Chat, which is a drop-in space for young people to come hang out, casually catch up with youth and staff and play a game or two.

Fed Connects also offers more structured events like craft-making workshops, skillbuilding workshops and cultural activities. This year we've held over 100 different opportunities for young people to come together and learn new skills!

Check out the cute snowpeople folks made in Fed Connects for the holidays!

Find out what's coming up in Fed Connects at fbcyicn.ca. You can also join the Fed Connects Facebook group! Just search 'Fed Connects'!



HUGE THANK YOU TO NEW ALUMNI MEMBER LOUISE B FOR ORGANIZING A FACEBOOK FUNDRAISER FOR THE FED FOR HER 25TH BIRTHDAY!



BC CHILD AND YOUTH IN CARE WEEK Way back in BC Child and Youth in Care Week last year, Fed Youth Member Caitlyn M

shared some of her thoughts about having a chosen family of youth in and from care.

REFLECTIONS I MADE DURING BC CHILD & YOUTH IN CARE WEEK By Caitlyn M, Youth Member

June 5, 2020

This year's BC Child & Youth in Care Week was different than any other year I have participated in. I spent it with my partner and friend who had gone through care. During our social distanced meet up, we reflected on what being in care was like for each of us and what things helped us make it through.

For me, being in care meant I was safe, I was fed, and I was cared for. However, I was away from my siblings and community which made me feel alone. Sometimes I didn't always feel like I had a voice in care. Often, I would feel ashamed to tell people I was from care.

After aging out of care in 2018, I researched for resources or groups for people like me, and I stumbled upon the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks (FBCYICN). This non-profit organization is provincial and supports youth in care and from care aged 14–24. They provide help



with accessing resources, and they offer bursaries and youth retreats. In September of 2018, I attended my first Youth Retreat. I met 50 other amazing, resilient, unique, and incredibly gifted individuals that came from care. Suddenly, for the first time, I didn't feel ashamed of coming from care because I was surrounded by my family, my youth from care family.

During this BC Child & Youth in Care Week, I wanted to give thanks to the kind organization that supported me for who I am. Moreover, I want to remind all youth in and from care that they are among the strongest individuals.

"I can be changed by what happens to me, but I refuse to be reduced by it." —Maya Angelou

BC Child and Youth in Care Week is coming up again! Celebrate and honour the incredible children and youth in and from care in your life from May 31 to June 6, 2021 (and every other day of the year, too)! Visit bcchildandyouthincareweek.com

to find out more.

• Follow the campaign on Facebook (fosteringchangebc) to stay up to date with campaign activities

Attend our virtual public gatherings like the 19th Birthday Party and Aging Out Webinar



Youth-Led Youth-centered

Connect in with questions or if you know a youth in/from care who would like to start an advocacy journey today! susan@firstcallbc.org Our vision is that every youth looks forward to turning 19.



CONNECT AND BUILD

EARN HONORARIUM VALUED LIVED EXPERTISE ADVOCACY SKILLS COMMUNITY MEDIA INTERVIEWS WORKSHOPS CONNECT WITH DECISION MAKERS

YOUTH WILL CHANGE THE FUTURE

CAMPBELL RIVER

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

COURTENAY

Host Agency: Comox Valley Family Services Association 1415 Cliffe Avenue Courtenay, BC V9N 2K6 Contact: Elena Geneau 250-218-5363 elena.g@cvfsa.org

PARKSVILLE

Host Agency: Sources Community Resource Centre PO Box 965, 198 Morrison Avenue Parksville, BC V9P 2H1 Contact: Charlotte White 250-954-7835 cwhite@sourcesbc.ca

NANAIMO

Host Agency: Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre 2595 McCullough Road Nanaimo, BC V9S 4M9 Contact: Ruby Barclay 250-668-2595 rbarclay@nanaimoaboriginalcentre.ca

RE RKS KA

Locals support youth in and from care aged 14–24 to come together for support in their communities 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. Youth have the opportunity to shape the local to best meet their needs. Find a local near you!

PRINCE GEORGE

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

PEMBERTON

Host Agency: Sea to Sky Community Services 1357 Aster Street, Box 656 Pemberton, BC VON 2L0 Contact: Crystal Tonkin 604-894-6101 crystal.tonkin@sscs.ca

KAMLOOPS

Host Agency: Interior Community Services 765 Tranquille Road, Kamloops, BC V2B 3J3 Contact: Renata Saat RSaat@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca Krista Sherwood KSherwood@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca

KELOWNA

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

ABBOTSFORD

Host Agency: Archway Community Services, Foundry Abbotsford 2420 Montrose Avenue Abbotsford, BC V2S 3S9 Contact: Nicole Clarke 604-217-1428 Nicole.Clarke@ foundryabbotsford.ca

CASTLEGAR

Host Agency: ARC Programs Ltd. 625 Columbia Avenue Castlegar, BC V1N 1G9 Contact: Joyce Johnson 778-460-5174 JJohnson@arcprograms.com

SQUAMISH

Host Agency: Sea to Sky Community Services 38024 4th Avenue, Squamish, BC V8B 0A7 Contact: Kyle Horvath 604-815-3179

SURREY

Host Agency: Options Community Services 9815 140 Street Surrey, BC V3T 4M4 Contact: Ashley Lee ashley.lee@options.bc.ca Stacey Sterne stacey.sterne@options.bc.ca

MAPLE RIDGE

Host Agency: PLEA Ridge Meadows Youth Services #200-22420 Dewdney Trunk Road Maple Ridge, BC V2X 3J5 Contact: Rolfe Hilger 236-688-4983 rhilger@plea.bc.ca

SCM MEMORIES



25 Years of Fed Family Awesomeness!



One of the hardest things about this past year for the Fed Family was not being able to come together at our SCMs (Steering Committee Meetings, or Youth Retreats). SCMs are magic! We've heard from so many of you that they're a place where you belong

Since we don't have any new SCM memories to share from 2020, we're re-sharing some photos from the last few SCMs. We also received a lovely piece from alumni member, KT, about her time at SCMs and how they helped her grow and become who she wanted to be.

We hope some of these older memories will remind you of awesome fun times together with your Fed Family. We can't wait to make more SCM memories when it's safe again! Until then, you can join us virtually in Fed Connects! Visit **fbcyicn.ca** to find out more.

UNEXPECTED TRIPS By KT Matheson, Alumni Member

Placing my bags in the back of my foster mother's van and making my way to a free seat, I sat down and buckled in. The feelings of fear, anger, anxiety and irritation began to flood over me. Only a few days prior did my foster mother tell me that I would be going on a weekend camping trip with a group called the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks (FBCYICN). Once all packed in the vehicle, we began to make our way down the winding, crowded, and lively streets. I can remember thinking to myself, "I don't want to go. I won't know anybody or have any friends." In the end, I did not expect to enjoy the camping trip.

teenage girl forced to go camping with a group I didn't even know existed. With that, I was extremely displeased as I felt I was old enough to make my own decisions about going camping or not. Shortly after arriving at the campground, I noticed that these people were a lot like me; we had roughly similar feelings and experiences. Once I found that out, I was able to let go of all those insecurities and negative feelings that I had. A number of retreats later, I found that I could be free from all my insecurities, doubts, anxieties, and anger. Letting all of the negative emotions go, I noticed that I was beginning to become the person that I, as a youth, had wanted. It was not just for myself but for the other youth as well; I never really had a person that I could trust and turn to

Over the years, with the help of the FBCYICN, I became more confident in who I was as a person. I had the courage to decide to branch out and try new experiences, to test my personal boundaries bit by bit. I put myself into the Outreach Group, the SCM (Youth Retreat) Extreme Team, and I even attempted to be an MC for one of the days during some of the many other retreats that FBCYICN would have. With each of the different tasks I had pushed myself to try, I found that I was a lot more resilient than I thought I was.

I always used to say, "I can not do public speaking to save my life." No matter how small the group was, I would be incredibly terrified to speak. Something inside me clicked one day and I became tired of not being the best I could be. Since going to these retreats and volunteering with FBCYICN, the group has helped me find the substantial and secure leader that I have become today.



TANDU







Tell us a bit about yourself.

I am a former youth in care. I consider myself two-spirit. I spend a lot of my time doing land defense stuff like fighting the pipeline and doing community work on the Downtown Eastside.

I really like any kind of art like music and poetry. I like to walk around a lot listening to music. I just like to keep it moving.

How did you get involved in the Fed and what has being involved with the Fed meant to you?

I first got involved with the Fed when one of my youth workers hooked me up with the SCM (Youth Retreat) application. I had been wanting to get out of the city, but it had felt impossible to go camping while living in a group home.

I went to the SCM and it was really amazing. I really quickly felt like I belonged there and I met like-minded young people that I could be myself around.

Being part of the Fed has helped me realize what matters to me and what drives me to succeed. I want to do for kids what was done for me when I became part of the Fed. After getting involved with the Fed, I went back to school. I wanted to be able to get the certification I would need to be in a position like that.

The Fed has also meant rediscovering the importance of community and chosen family and just how important that can be for anyone.

What's a recent accomplishment of yours and how did you get there? I would say a recent accomplishment of

mine is graduating from high school. A year late but it happened!

Honestly, I don't know how I got there. I think a big part of it was learning how to take care of myself so that I could be at school. Learning how to listen to myself when things aren't working for me and working on what I need to address or change things to make it work better. I definitely got there with the help of many people like youth workers. It helped having people who wanted to find solutions when things weren't working for me.

I also learned the importance of asking for help. Don't just bang your head against the wall. There is always a chance you could work something out. Learning to focus and remembering why I wanted to finish high school. That goal for my future faded at times, but I always had something that could bring me back to centre.

What are some of your goals for the future?

At this point I don't have many big or longterm goals. My goals are to figure out what my goals are. I would really like to get into dancing, any kind including traditional dancing. Grow more as a person. Gain deeper understanding of myself and the world around me and how those things work in relation to each other. To stop the pipeline: all the pipelines, and resource extraction in general. I want to be a youth worker in the future. I want to grow and understand more so I can help people and do more good than harm. My partner and I have wanted to get some land and build a big lodge — a place where people can come and interact with their inner child and their culture. A lot of swing sets everywhere and people painting.

What are some of the biggest life lessons and wisdom you have learned that you'd like to share?

I think that one of the biggest and most important things I've learned which is important to share is that you never stop learning. You'll always need guidance. There will always be someone who can assist you, who will know more than you. You will never learn it all, so always be open to learning.

I think it's important to put out there: you never ever know what someone else is going through so don't make judgements. Treat everyone with kindness.

One of the things that's really helping me in my life right now is remembering that a lot of things that seem important don't really matter in the long run. Don't stress about it all.

In the grand scheme of things everything is good, do what makes you happy and don't compare yourself with other people.

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

In BC, more supports for kids who have aged out of care. More opportunities to connect with a person's culture. There is a lot of broadened opportunities (like bracelet making). I also felt like a lot of kids and people like me were not interested in connecting with culture which is sad. If youth got the chance to participate in actual ceremonies not just bracelet making, it would make these moments more meaningful and impactful. More resources like the Fed. The Fed is the only one doing what they are doing.

Around the world, I think that kids need a chance to connect with someone who is not going to go away. I just hope that people will come into their lives to help mentor them and guide them. People do come into my life a lot, I'm blessed. Some kids don't have aunties or grandmas, people they trust to guide them. It sucks when you have the person that you see weekly or every other week and then once you turn 19 that person goes away, and you are not able to contact them. You don't magically become an adult at 19. Being connected and established into communities before aging out could make a lot of difference for youth aging out of care.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

Hi, I am Tagen Marshall. I am a 20-year-old youth from care with a disability. I am a 3rd year philosophy student at VIU. I would consider myself to be a person who enjoys learning and advocating and encouraging people to rise above challenges, to meet their full potential.

How did you get involved in the Fed and what has being involved with the Fed meant to you?

Being involved with the Fed means you have an opportunity to walk alongside people, to create experiences for your fellow youth who are or were in care. I got involved in the Local in my community, Parksville. My guardianship worker at the time saw leadership in me and saw the Local as an opportunity.

I think being involved with the Fed means being able to, even for one person, create a community where they feel like they are not alone so they feel like it is not just their struggle. Making it known that other people share those feelings of anxiety and sometimes frustration and creating a support network to try to be there for them. There is actually a community of youth who have gone through similar experiences, which helps youth realize they can be whoever they want to be.

What's a recent accomplishment of yours and how did you get there?

A recent accomplishment of mine was that I made the 2019/2020 Deans Honor List for Academic Achievement.

This would not have been possible without leaning on my support network, which consists of my family and friends, who push me to do the best I can. It is only because of the support that I was able to (even amidst the challenges of this past year) pursue my goals and aspirations.

What are some of your goals for the future?

As I prep for post-university work, I know one of my goals is to pursue my PhD at some point in the future. That's a major academic goal. I'm trying to develop strategies so that is more attainable.

I continue to work towards being emotionally free to experience the fullness of life, and eventually have a family of my own!

What are some of the biggest life lessons and wisdom you have learned that you'd like to share?

One of the biggest life lessons that I have come to really appreciate, despite the fact that this is a lesson that can take years to fully discover and understand, is that you are able to create the life you want. The most freeing thing to realize, is you are not always responsible for what is happening to you, but you are responsible for how you react to it.

Even though we go through challenges, we are not meant to do so alone. Lean on your support groups.

In realizing who you are, you realize your potential, but don't hesitate to ask for help when needed.

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

In BC the changes I would like to see are not physical but more perceptual changes. What I felt when I came in to care when I was 12, all those years ago, was just that I felt like I had done something wrong or I was at fault. I would like there to be an opportunity for children and youth to sit with their guardianship workers. The key part to this is really building a relationship instead of just care plans and an update on how you're doing. Coming into care, I suspect for a lot of people, is very emotional, including myself. There was this sense of shame that I was not like the other kids.

There needs to be a deeper focus on mentorship opportunities with former youth in care and community. They know that they have someone who has gone through it, the same journey of discovering and healing. Someone that they can talk to and bounce ideas off of, as well as assist in creating meaningful relationships with their guardianship workers. The hope is that with that connection they will be more engaged in their community.

Globally, more strengthening of communities and individuals. When youth are going through challenging times, they can be open and honest and get the support they need, as well as seize any opportunities that they wish to in the future, if they are supported on a community and individual level.



YOUTH PROFILE RAYLEE

Tell us a bit about yourself.

Hi! My name is Raylee, I'm 21, and I'm an activist, youth research assistant and nerd. I love video games, anime, music, art, linguistics, and philosophy.

How did you get involved in the Fed and what has being involved with the Fed meant to you?

I first got involved with the Fed by reading Power Pages! I was moved by all the beautiful submissions from youth, and I wanted to be a part of it. The Fed means so much to me. The wonderful staff are so kind and caring, they're What changes would you like to see always there for you no matter what, and they always know what to say. I am truly so lucky to be a member of the Fed.

What's a recent accomplishment of yours and how did you get there?

I am currently attending college, which I always wanted to do since I was a kid. I guess it's especially noteworthy for me because of the numerous challenges I experienced throughout elementary, middle, and high school, which is unfortunately an all-toocommon experience for youth in care. I suppose I got here by remembering that nothing lasts forever, not even high school;) And by never losing sight of my ultimate goal.

What are some of your goals for the future?

I would like to become the best version of myself. I would like to continue advocating for my peers and doing whatever I can to help and support them. Eventually, I would like to write many things, for instance, fictional stories, articles based on my experiences, and poetry and songs.

What are some of the biggest life lessons and wisdom you have learned that you'd like to share?

The map is not the territory. Labels are placeholders for more words; by themselves, they don't tell the whole story. You are more than a collection of labels. You are a person with an infinitely complex past, present, and future. Abstractions are useful for brevity, but don't be afraid to describe things in full colour.

On the other side of the coin, your story is yours alone to tell or not tell. No one has a right to hear it, and they should not coerce you into telling it, regardless of their authority or position. In my experience, if someone tries to do that, it's a red flag that this person is not going to give you the care and compassion that you deserve. In my opinion, hearing someone's story is a privilege, and it will take time for them to feel safe enough to share it with someone. Even then, they get to choose which parts they tell.

Similarly, try not to let people take advantage of your kindness and aversion to conflict. Unfortunately, you are likely to encounter this at some point in life, so I would recommend being prepared for it. That may help you respond more assertively in the moment.

happen for children and youth in and from care in BC and around the world?

Locally, I would like to see Fostering Change's ask implemented: comprehensive and universal AYA (Agreements with Young Adults) support after aging out. I would also like to see universal basic income that actually scales with household size, and in addition to that, unconditional cash transfers for families who are struggling. No child should go into care solely because their family is poor. Furthermore, social workers' caseloads should be drastically reduced. This will be possible by reducing the number of children who go into care. Anti-oppression training and trauma-informed care training should also be mandatory for all social workers, foster parents, and group home staff.

Globally, I would like to see the root issues addressed. Improving other parts of a society will have ripple effects in the child welfare system. For example, ending the war on drugs, ending birth alerts, providing free trauma therapy and other mental health services, and building more affordable housing.





WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

Self-care looks different for everyone. Self-care can help when something bad happens or when we're struggling, but we can also practice self-care as part of our regular routine. Committing to small acts of self-care every day is a great way to build the resilience and energy you need to handle tough things when they come your way.

Plus, practicing self-care regularly means you get to spend at least a little bit of time every day doing something that you enjoy or that makes you feel good!

Check out some self-care tips from the Fed Family!

Landon P, Youth Member

My self-care tip is to be creative. Do crafts and learn new ones. And virtual craft nights!

Zak M, Youth Member

- Drink water
- Light a candle
- Take a nap
- Pray
- Cry it can relieve stress

Fatima H, Youth Member

Listening to body scan meditation is really helpful. Relaxing and walking by the water are my self-care tips.

Natalie W, Youth

Dim the lights, put essential oils in the diffuser, put on relaxation music, back massage and face mask.

Taylor Gee, Local Leader • Eat warm, delicious foods!

- Bake cookies
- Yoga
- Nature walks
- Nature Walks
- Snuggles with my puppers!
- Smudging
- Practice my daily gratitudes
- Meditation
- Reading, writing, journaling. Lots of self-reflection!

Jessy Neal Program Coordinator

- Get lost in a favourite or new book
- Listen to your favourite music
- Take a drive and listen to a book or crank the music (as loud as your speakers can take without blowing)
- Sing
- Dance like no one is watching
- Get lost in a video game
- Call a friend
- Write poems or stories
- Cook for yourself, Talways reer much better after I make myself a good meal instead of eating junk food.
- Try to do any sort of physical activity that you like doing as little or as long as you like everyday.

Ornella E, Youth Intern

- Spending time with your pet.
- Treating yourself to your favourite food or drink.
- Practice different breathing techniques to decrease stress.
- Chat with an old friend, spend time with the people you like.
- Explore a new way of working out, get out of your comfort zone!
- Giving yourself a hug, say something nice to yourself.
- Create a playlist for your favourite music.
- Get plenty of sleep
- Watch funny YouTube videos.
- Start reading a big book. Learn a new language. Take a free online college course, or just learn something new online.
- Declutter and or organize a part of your home.

Shannon Dolton Program Coordinator

- Unplug!!! Put down your phone, step away from social media.
- Take your medications!!!!
- Create something
- SAY NO sometimes saying no to something is the best form of self-care
- Dance in the rain, lounge in the sun or walk in the snow
- Ask for what you need
- Call or video chat with someone that makes you feel seen and heard
- Eat the thing that you want to eat
- Feel the feelings and name them



When we get stressed or when things are chaotic or uncertain, it can be hard to make time for self-care. When our minds are focused on the things we're worried about, it can also be really easy to fall out of our regular self-care practice and forget what we can do to take care of ourselves.

It's helpful in those moments to have a physical reminder of the signs that we're stressed and the self-care practices we can do to help.

There's space on this page for you to answer the questions below for yourself. Cut the page out and put it somewhere you can see it so you have your Self-Care Reminders when you need them.

What does it feel like when you're stressed or struggling?

Do your muscles tense up? Do you have trouble sleeping? Do you feel extra annoyed at everything? Do you just feel overwhelmed? If you're not sure, next time you're stressed, take a moment to check in with yourself. Notice how you feel when you're stressed, and how you act in response to the stress.

What are some of your self-care activities?

Write down a few self-care practices that help you feel better. Maybe you re-watch a favourite movie, make a list of ways to solve problems, meditate, journal, go outside and get some fresh air, or talk to a friend.

Who can you ask for help?

Maybe they can help with what's stressing you out, or maybe you just need someone to listen. You can also include people like your doctor, youth worker, counsellor or Fed staff.

Are there any other helpful reminders to get you through these feelings?

Maybe a piece of wisdom or advice from someone you care about.

MY STRESSY FEELINGS

MY SELF-CARE PRACTICES

WHO I CAN ASK FOR HELP

MY OTHER REMINDERS

OPEN LETTER TO MCFD

By Anonymous

Dear MCFD,

It's been a while since we've last spoken. Do you remember me? I was one of your children. One of the many children you swore to take care of but ended up traumatizing and scarring. It still boggles my mind every time I see you doing new consultations, for the mere simple fact that nothing ever changes anyway. Furthermore, there is no way you don't know what the issues in your system are when I know for a fact that lists, data and information have been consistently been shown to you addressing what can be done. I'm so sick and tired of hearing the same old, "We're working on it, but we can't say what we're doing yet," because that's not good enough anymore. I refuse to be silent in the face of my oppressor.

When I was put into care by my biological mother at the age of fifteen, you promised to take care of me. How do you support a child by placing them into a group home? The revolving door of underpaid staff, who most the time burned out, are not capable of providing a home to young people who do not have one. A group home does not help mental health and trauma. I remember being bullied by one of my group home's staff at sixteen and her calling me names and throwing my shoes out. How is that conducive to stopping the trauma and abuse you took me away from and swore to do better than? How am I supposed to heal in time for the deadline of my nineteenth birthday when my "home" environment continues to break my spirit? Invest in every single group home, foster home, etc. in being more trauma informed so we can make these young people feel safe. Instead of putting money into consultations, you could invest it in recruiting and training foster parents so we can work towards having no more unnecessary group homes.

Your frontline workers are burning out quicker, with the lack of funding and properly-allocated resource. Your "children" are suffering. Frontline workers work hard with truly little to do so. The reason so many frontline workers are burning out is because you as the system are failing these young people repeatedly. It is hard to watch the system oppress the very own people it's supposed to be serving and protecting. Invest in your workers and foster parents, and you will see how much better they will be able to serve the young people you are legally responsible for. You would not just hire a random babysitter with no background check, would you?

Let's talk a little bit about lowering social workers caseloads. How do you expect a single legal guardian to take care of 60-80 kids only between the hours of 8:30AM to 4:30PM Monday to Friday? With my first official social worker, I only saw her twice in three years outside of our ICM meetings. When I was switched to the Youth Outreach and Empowerment team, I met my favourite social worker, who was able to go above and beyond for me. This was because he had a lower caseload. He was able to meet me in community and help me out with rides and set me up within the best of his ability for success. But all he is allowed to do after my nineteenth birthday is give compassion and a bit of emotional support once in a while. I am still human. I still need my "parents'" support at twenty-one years old. Parents do not abandon their own kids on their nineteenth birthdays. So why do you?

How many consultations does it take to address the issues we've repeatedly stated? There is no one size shoe that anyone and everyone can wear, and we need to stop assuming that one system will work for all kids in care. We are complex creatures who have had trauma and deserve support just like other people who have the privilege of having family to rely on. Most people who have had healthy and stable childhoods do not lose support from their parents at nineteen. Frontline workers, who are these young people's families, deserve to be fairly compensated, treated equally and given adequate resources to properly do their jobs, and best set up young people to thrive instead of survive.

PERFECTIONISM

by Khatira

A broken glass bottle, holds darkness No breathing, no light. Confining cave I feel there is no way out. I look at people Expecting all A-pluses, not As I've been granted life. I must perform.

But they look at me With eyes closed Their art of love is already defined. Lies without hesitation. You must be perfect For you've been granted life.

Perfectionism Makes us believe Life is magic I've been granted life. So I am seen as Ablaze with possibilities.

Once you've been saved The story must end happily. It must end there. But I want people to love me for my goofiness. For all the things outside The bell curve.

I want to cultivate my imagination. Travel to heaven and back I need people's love So I wanted to be their idea of perfect. But I also want to be understood. It is a lonely life.

Perfectionism doesn't allow me. To dress intolerable wounds. It deactivates true worth. Perfectionism pushes away The true heart It puts out the flames in our minds.

I must say no to perfectionism. At the risk of losing my patrons As long as they seek perfection And I try to give it We will remain strangers, Passing on a cold street.



By Gabrielle R

As a mother it's hard to believe that there is a deadly virus that can kill you and you might not know that you have it. The start of the year I had lots of doubts about COVID-19, I'm not going to lie. I just thought, "This will be over in two weeks, it's whatever." Little did I know I was wrong.

Once it started getting serious, I started to think about my family and my son's health. He has always been healthy, but if you have a child, you know toddlers can go from being healthy to being the absolute worst and that was my fear. My poor son was at home 24/7. I didn't let him out and I was always stressed because I didn't know if I could pay the full rent or if I would have enough food. It was a constant struggle for me and my partner. We were always fighting. And was at the point we didn't feel like we could continue together. COVID-19 is like a wrecking ball coming at you 150km/h! And it's up to us how we control it.

I thought, this can go in two ways. I can leave him and deal with my son, work and finances on my own, or I can fix the ways that I think and consider his feelings and his thoughts and work it out together. Now I'm not the type of girl who thinks, I'm like the girl who goes 1 to 100 real quick. Is that good? Well, no. But at least I admit to it. I chose the second option.

My partner and I had to not only budget our spending, but we had to work harder than ever. That was until my partner lost his job in construction. There was almost no work and no one was hiring! Now I was more stressed. I decided to start working and leave school. I started cleaning from March to June. We managed to keep rent and bills paid and have food on the table for the three of us. Awesome! We are getting by, 2020.

We had lots of help from others and we are grateful for that, but in August something happened. I was not feeling well and I thought, "Oh no, I have COVID!" I was scared for my life and for my son's life! I got tested and it came back negative. "Hmm, then why am I feeling like this?" I thought. Nausea, cold chills, headaches, tiredness and fatigue. Could I be pregnant?! Sure enough, I was 10 weeks pregnant!

I was happy but scared. 2020 was already bad, and now I had to think, can I do this financially? I told my partner and he was happy. He wanted a baby girl, so he was praying and hoping for that. But then a few days later it sunk in: another baby and a toddler and we're in a pandemic we are barely getting by. He kept his cool and came to me and told me, "I am excited for the new baby. We can do this together we just have to stay strong for our son." I smiled and agreed with him. I took better care of myself and stopped working to prevent me from getting COVID and to keep my son safe. I stayed home while my partner got back to work.

Everything was good until we hit October. My landlord gave me the bad news. He said to us, "We have family coming to Canada and we need the basement suite, so we need you guys to find a new place," and gave us until November 30. Now we had to find a cheap place for the four of us, pay more rent and most likely more utilities as well. Burnaby is not cheap, let me start off by saying that. But we moved out on October 31 and into our new place. We are happy and still have good communication with our new and old landlord. Everything is going good. I'm healthy and I'm having a baby girl, YAY! My son and partner are all good.

COVID is a test in our life. And only we are responsible for the way we take that test. We can pass it with flying colours, or we can fail it by ignoring and not following the rules. Your life may seem like you are going from bad to good, back to bad, or it can stay good. What I'm trying to say, is that the choices we make affect us on a day-to-day basis and can help the lives around us stay happy and healthy. 2021 can be better if we stick together.



WHAT'S THE POINT?

By Anthony L

TRIGGER WARNING: This piece talks about despair and suicide.

let me ask a question

when your laying in bed at night beneath the covers on the brink of sleep

Do you ever just stop and wonder why? Why should you get up this morning?

go to school?

Why should I do anything, but stay in bed and sleep? if you were me would you? get up and fight? why? with all the SHIT! you've been through and you think you reach the end and look around and nothing's changed,

what's the point of getting up in the morning and dealing with those kids and risk the disappointment of another failure

the barbed words from your classmates

When the world becomes a battleground and life the war, the school the trenches what makes you get up and fight?

when even at home you are made to feel like a slave to the world

where you crawl through the wasteland of your own mind and follow the x on the treasure map, made of the hope you have built to keep yourself sane but someone beats you to the gold.

The end, the prize

and your left all alone with nothing but the memory of all you've given up the reach this point as your only prize

this is it my life as best i could tell and it's getting to the point.

Where I'm no longer the soldier in those trenches crawling in the mud, but a prisoner of war in my thoughts

captured by my own despair

Knowing the only way to escape is the cyanide pill hidden in my sleeve

A nectar to put me to sleep and hide me from the war and its terrible dictators

the monsters on either side

with this escape here

so easy as a breath I to have wonder why I'm still here

I ask you this.

what would you do?

waging a war for all eternity

knowing that no matter the outcome you cannot win

the chain holding you too tight and prison to real what's the point ?...

If you're thinking about suicide or you're otherwise in crisis, you're not alone. Call the Crisis Centre of BC at **1-800-784-2433** for non-judgmental support. Open 24/7.





ART BY KHATIRA

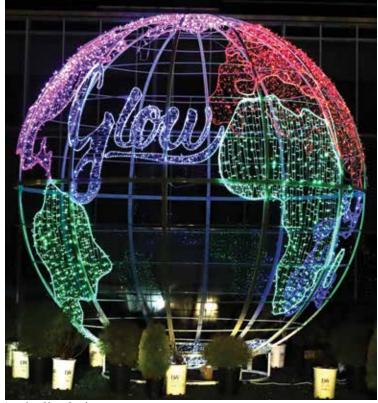












Langley Glow Gardens

PHOTOS BY RAYLEE L



Bailey



Boogoos

