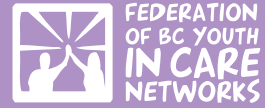


POWER PAGES



FEDERATION
OF BC YOUTH
IN CARE
NETWORKS

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

EDITION #55



**YOUTH VOICE:
WHY BC CHILD & YOUTH
IN CARE WEEK MATTERS**

**BECOMING A MOM:
A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE**

**A GUIDE TO
EDUCATION RESOURCES**

**PLUS YOUR OPINIONS,
PHOTOGRAPHY, POETRY,
ARTWORK AND MORE!**



CONNECT WITH US!



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!

Charity #: 85751 6702 RR0001

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CONGRATS TO OUR NEW ALUMNI

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Caden L
Charlie C
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Nichole N
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POWER PAGES

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VIEW OR DOWNLOAD PAST & CURRENT EDITIONS AT FBCYICN.CA

THE BOARD IN ACTION!



IT WAS GREAT TO HAVE BOARD MEMBERS GARY, KIM, DEBBIE, PAM, KATELYN AND KATHERINE AT SCM #78 IN OCTOBER! THEY ORGANIZED OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MAKING SURE YOUTH MEMBERS COULD VOTE ON IMPORTANT UPDATES TO OUR BYLAWS!

ON THE COVER:
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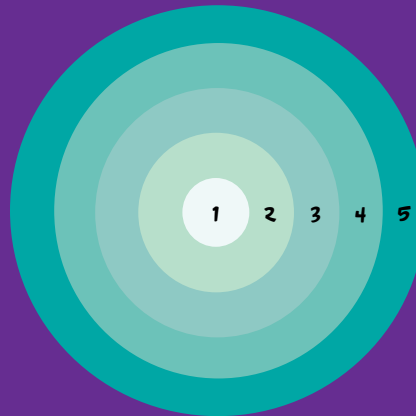


WHO WE ARE

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, 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, YOUTH MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER





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

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.



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.

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.

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.

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.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO!



41

volunteer hours were contributed by youth!



26

youth won Dream Fund Bursaries!



39

new youth became Fed Members!



47

youth came to SCM #78!



4

Youth Interns have been working at the Fed!



65

Fed Family members came to our Holiday Open House!

COMING UP!

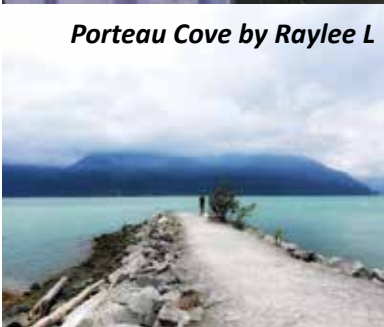
- ✓ **SCM 80** will be at Zajac Ranch from October 23-25, 2020!
- ✓ The next deadline for the **DREAM FUND** is July 3, 2020!



Addiction by Kristina H



Going Back Home by Rose E



Porteau Cove by Raylee L

47

pieces of youth work were published in *Power Pages!*





HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

On December 18, the Fed office was transformed into Santa's workshop for the Holiday Open House. We had 65 Fed Family members join the festivities. In addition to festive games, guests enjoyed food, stockings filled with gifts, raffle draws and a visit from Gabby Clause! It was a lovely evening with youth, alumni, board members, community partners and staff connecting and celebrating the holiday season with chosen family.

We would like to give a special thanks to staff from Vancouver Fire and Radius Security who came to Santa's workshop early to decorate and build stockings, and to local Ministry of Children and Family Development offices who donated gifts for the stockings! We are so grateful to have spent another holiday event with some of the incredible folks that make up our Fed Family.



DREAM FUND

Our Dream Fund supports young people in and from care to pursue their careers and achieve their goals through education and skill building. The Dream Fund includes two different bursaries that are distributed three times a year: in October, March and July.

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 \$1500** for tuition at a post-secondary school. Young people can use this bursary for all accredited schools, not just the usual designated post-secondary schools. The Fed distributes \$5,000 among successful Education Achievement applicants per round of Dream Fund (three rounds a year).

“This means the world to me! I am very grateful to be receiving this bursary! Reaching my goals is so important to me and this amazing opportunity you have given me will allow me to reach them a lot sooner than I would have! This has given me so much more confidence and hope for my future. Words can’t fully describe how happy I am right now!! You all truly made my dreams come true.”

— Reach for Success Bursary Recipient

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 in achieving your goals. Reach for Success Bursary winners 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 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 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.

DREAM FUND RECIPIENTS OCTOBER 2019

REACH FOR SUCCESS BURSARY

Nikita D	Lene M
Dylan K	Kayla J

EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT BURSARY

Victory S	Timme Z
Darien J	Jessica L

**NATIONAL FIRE AND SAFETY
PLANNERS EDUCATION BURSARY**
Corrinna K

MARCH 2020

REACH FOR SUCCESS BURSARY

Faith JC	Hayley C
Jasmyn A	Michael P
Makayla A	Nathaniel FM
Samson P	Randi K
Arianna P	Shegofa R

EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT BURSARY

Alicia S	Sage H
Keely C	Trevayne H
Kurt D	Victoria Y

The application deadline for the next round of Dream Fund is July 3, 2020.

To apply for the Dream Fund visit fbcyicn.ca/what-we-offer/programs/dream-fund



VOLUNTEERING AT THE FED

Thank you so much to the incredible youth volunteers who helped run Locals in their communities, took amazing photos and emceed at Youth Retreats, helped get *Power Pages* out into communities, sat on Dream Fund Selection Committees and BC Child and Youth in Care Week Working Groups!

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

Louise B
 Kayla J
 James B
 Gerald B
 Nena E
 Jai T

Rose E
 Fatima H
 Raylee B
 Victoria J
 Caitlyn M

ALUMNI

Guy B

ADULT ALLIES

Ruby B
 Ryan W
 Ashley L

Britta P
 Alex W
 Emma G

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

GET PUBLISHED IN POWER PAGES

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

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **Kayla J** for winning the Reach for Success Bursary and getting engaged!



a protector or keeper

PUBLIC GUARDIAN & TRUSTEE of BC

government

someone who manages or holds money on behalf of another person

Are you a young person in care in BC?
Want to know if the PGT holds money for you?
Connect with us!



Who's the PGT?

The PGT protects the legal and financial interests of children and youth in care in BC. They're responsible for your money and for representing you in some legal situations.



What does the PGT do?

They can help you learn about money and how to manage it as you transition from care.



They can hold any money that you might have from an injury settlement, benefits you've received, or money that was left to you by someone.

They can apply for financial benefits you might be eligible for.

They can provide legal help if you've been injured or harmed.



How do I know if I have money with the PGT?

Your social worker should be able to tell you, but you can also contact the PGT to find out.



I'm about to turn 19 but I don't really know what to do with my money.

That's okay! The PGT can hold your money with your permission and help you manage it until you turn 27!



Find out more about how the PGT can help you!

WEBSITE <http://www.trustee.bc.ca>

EMAIL cys@trustee.bc.ca | PHONE 604.775.3480



Message from The Honourable Melanie Mark Hli Haykwhl Wii Xsgaak

MINISTER OF ADVANCED EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING



Dear Lorena Bishop and members of the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks,

I want to thank you for allowing me to participate in your Youth Retreat at Zajac Ranch in October. As a former youth in care, I know how important it is to come together and learn life skills while creating a community among young people in and from care — as you said, "our care family." Your work and vision are building a brighter future for young people and their allies in BC.

It was amazing to be with you to celebrate the 1,119 former youth in care who are building themselves a better future with post-secondary education through the tuition waiver program. The fact that so many are benefiting from this opportunity speaks volumes about the talents, resilience and determination of youth in and from care. I am so proud to be part of a government that recognizes young people are our greatest asset and that lifting them up is the best legacy we can leave behind.

We recognize there is still much more that we can do together to provide young people pathways to success. I want to continue to work with you, to hear from you and Fed members, and to strengthen the relationship we have started. Please feel free to reach out to my office anytime.

As leaders in the community, I would really appreciate it if you could help promote the tuition waver program and encourage every young person in and from care to take advantage of this incredible opportunity. There are thousands of good paying jobs opening up over the next few years and most of them will require some level of post-secondary education or skills training. To build the best BC, we need social workers, carpenters, teachers, graphic designers, business owners, nurses and so much more!

Thank you again to the leaders and participants of the Youth Retreat for an amazing day. Thank you for lifting my spirits and strengthening my passion to make lives better for young people in BC. I am proud of all you have done and encourage you to take advantage of all opportunities to pursue your dreams. Maybe one day, I will see you at your convocation. Keep shining!

T'ooyaksim' N'iisim',
Honourable Melanie Mark
Hli Haykwhl Wii Xsgaak
Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

FED LOCALS UPDATE



FEDERATION
OF BC YOUTH
IN CARE
NETWORKS

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 Society
1357 Aster Street, Box 656
Pemberton, BC V0N 2L0
Contact: Crystal Tonkin
604-894-6101
crystal.tonkin@sscs.ca

VICTORIA

Host Agency: Youth Empowerment Society
533 Yates Street
Victoria, BC V8W 1K7
Contact: Maria Ebenal
yicn.vyes@gmail.com

SURREY

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

KAMLOOPS

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

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

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@cvfesa.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

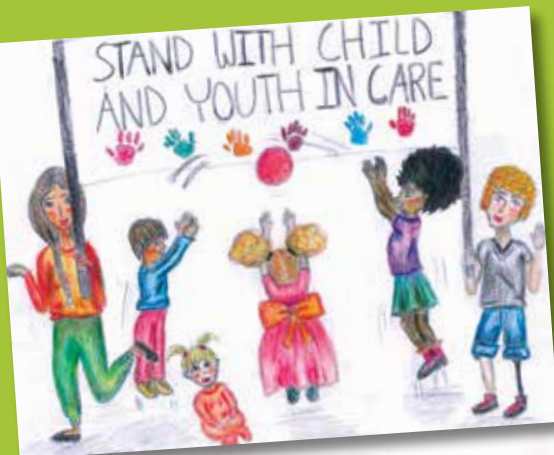
Host Agency: Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre
2595 McCullough Road
Nanaimo, BC V9S 4M9
Contact: Ruby Barclay
250-668-2595
rbarclay@nanaimoaboriginalcentre.ca



#YOUTHVOICE #YOUTHTALENT: BC CHILD AND YOUTH IN CARE WEEK

The BC Child and Youth in Care Week (BCCYICW) Committee recently hired a youth artist to design a new logo for BCCYICW's 10th Anniversary! Applicants were asked to send in a sample or two of their work or a concept sketch, plus a few sentences on why they think BCCYICW is important. Sadly we could only hire one person and we had many talented youth artists apply. But a number of artists kindly allowed us to share their amazing interpretations and ideas about BCCYICW in *Power Pages!*

Check out some fantastic art by young people who shared what BC Child and Youth in Care Week means to them!



BC Child and Youth in Care Week is important to me and other children and youth in care, not only because it gives a sense of belonging and achievement, but also the awareness it brings to the public about children and youth in care. They recognize children and youth when they are rarely recognized. I am a former recipient of the BCCYICW award. To this day it remains one of my achievements that I am most proud of.

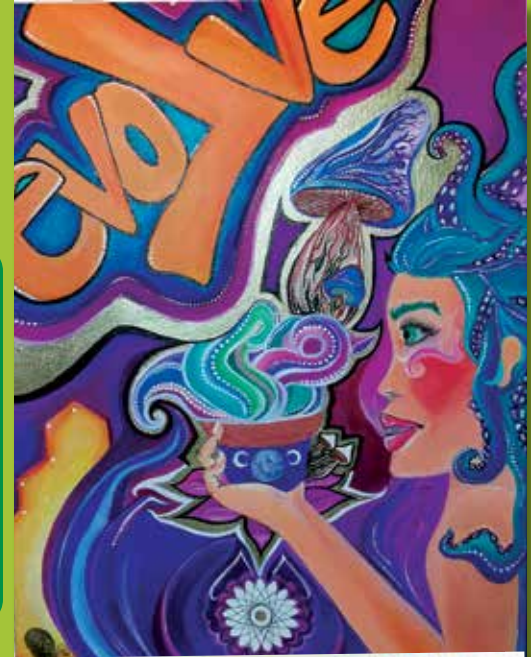
— Victoria J

NEW LOGO!



BC Child and Youth in Care Week is important to me because it celebrates the lives of youth in care in the past, present and future. It's a time for people to recognize how important it is that youth are raised in a safe, secure and healthy learning environment where they can grow into adults that hopefully break the cycle. I hope to see many other youth with a sense of hope in their eyes because their community supports them.

— Quintin C



I believe BC Child and Youth in Care Week is important because it brings awareness to the concept of equity; that any person can succeed if the right amount of support and resources are offered. When we are surrounded by those who have shared experiences, we are able to forget about the stigmas of being in care. Community events that bring those folks together are so important because they help self-esteem, emotional stability, and build strong connections. Each person I have met while being in care has greatly impacted my life in some way. Whether it be a lifelong friend, new perspective, or wisdom and advice, every person I have met through being a child in care has shaped who I am today.

— Carmin Blomberg



I think BC Child and Youth in Care Week is important because it recognizes children and youth in the care system and what they go through. I had many friends who were in and out of the care system and their lives were worlds different from others who did not share the same experience. Most of these children and youth, including myself, felt like it was them against the world. It should not be like that for any child or youth. It's good to show children and youth even though there are tough struggles, there will always be people there to help you.

— Dorothy S



I am so grateful that BC Child and Youth in Care Week exists because it reminds us that we are not forgotten and we have an entire community celebrating us and standing with us every day of the year. After all the things we have gone through, it's life-changing to finally find truly caring people and have a place where we belong.

— Raylee L



BC Child and Youth in Care Week is a very important thing, in my opinion. I've been in care for six years, and I'm very lucky to have all my sisters with me! Being the eldest of the rest, I don't know what I'd do without them. And BC Child and Youth in Care Week tells people about us. Or at least makes us known, and that's important for me. Because it's like saying, 'we're here too!' And that gives me this feeling that all those kids, with or without siblings, are being heard and talked about and I'm glad. This whole idea of making all youth in care known makes me happy! And I'm glad I got to see it and to be able to help! Even if it's only a little!

— Cedes RQ



It's important to me to show other kids that community not only helps you grow to become a better person, but also helps you thrive to complete or reach your dreams. That's what happened to me!

— Hadassah O



SCM #78







YOUTH PROFILE

VICTORIA J

Tell us a bit about yourself.

My name is Victoria and I was born in Richmond. I've been in care since I was 15, I'm 18 now, and I've been involved with the Fed for almost two years.

How did you first get involved with the Fed?

One day I was just browsing online and I found the website. I emailed someone, I think it was Shannon (Program Coordinator), about volunteering and she said, why don't you come by the office one day?

What has being involved with the Fed meant to you so far?

I feel like being involved with the Fed means this support network family that you can't really experience anywhere else, especially in care. That's always a struggle for youth in care; trying to find that support, people to rely on. I feel like the Fed has brought that to a lot of young people.

What's a recent accomplishment that you're proud of?

Probably learning to DJ. It's a DJ program with a New West youth centre. I really like picking up new skills and that was really cool

to me. I've been doing it since October, and I've done a few events here and there in New West. I really like tech-type stuff and I also like a lot of the tunes we play. It's really fun and everyone seems really happy and it gets people really excited.

What are some of your goals for the future?

I was thinking of engineering or going into computer sciences, either one of those. I like the idea of creating something out of the blue. You build something and it works, and I thought that was really cool. I really like art and sculpting, and I really like science as well so I was trying to figure out what path to go to. If I went to fine arts I wouldn't have that science piece, and if I went into straight sciences I wouldn't have the art piece, so I thought engineering and coding would be a good mix because you can create something but still use that science part.

I would also like to advocate for children and youth in care or children who have been in a similar situation to me. If they've been abused or not treated well, that's something I'm passionate about advocating to fix. I feel like still in 2020, youth and children in care are underrepresented. You don't really hear about us in the news and how the government is

treating us, so that's something I would like to help out with in the future.

What are some of the biggest life lessons and wisdom that you've learned that you think could help other youth?

I have a couple.

One: love yourself before you start loving other people. I feel like a lot of people who are around my age seek out love because they feel like they need it, but it really needs to come from themselves first and I think that's really important.

Two: I think a lot of youth in care are scared of growing older. And it is scary. After 19 it's like, what do you do? But I would say, it's going to be okay. I am firm believer in that people can grow older but not grow up if they're not ready. By growing up, I mean, mentally growing up vs. physically growing older. I know from a lot of kids that didn't get to experience their childhoods because they were forced to have this maturity that's beyond their years. You can keep that child-like innocence. It's your choice, you can choose when to grow up. Growing older is the destination, but growing up is the journey. Just take the time to experience it.

What changes would you like to see happen for children and youth in BC?

Being heard is a big one. I feel like the system itself is broken, so that's where it has to start in order to change. You have to fix the system to fix everything else. I've heard many stories and know people who should not have been in care when they were in care and should have been in care when they weren't. It's very damaging.

In my experience, not every social worker really has the same values and the same ways that they perceive a certain situation where a kid is in trouble. I feel like everyone should have kind of a middle ground on where they stand with things before they start helping children and youth. And I find that sometimes social workers need help, and that's the absolute truth! You can't help someone else if you need help and that's a huge thing.

Is there anything else you'd like to share or add?

I would say to children and youth to try to think of the bigger picture. I feel like a lot of times people are stuck in this little bubble of a world where they think that the trauma and the hurt is all there is, but the world is so much bigger than that.

YOUTH PROFILE

TIMOTHY BOLTON

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I am a young Indigenous man. I was in foster care for 15 years and exited the system strong and resilient. I completed my high school courses 6 months early, I was the valedictorian of my grad class of 2015, and I graduated with honours. Since then I have been serving on the Provincial Directors Youth Advisory Council of British Columbia (YAC) and working in my tiny hometown of Prince Rupert!

How did you get involved in the Fed?

I had a friend who was involved with the Fed awhile ago, he passed away a few years back. At one of my YAC trips in Victoria, a representative of the Fed came to do a presentation to me and the council. It was Chris Buchner. My friend really looked up to Chris and talked about him often. Chris came to the council to invite two members to the following SCM (Youth Retreat) as VIP guests, and I was the first to jump up and grab an application. My first SCM was at the UBC campus, to this day it is still one of my favourite SCMs. I made so many friends that weekend, and since then the Fed has made me feel like I am part of a huge loving family.

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

The most recent accomplishment of mine would have to be when I built my PC on my birthday. I built the PC all by myself. I did about two months of research to get

familiar with the tech and accessories. Then I ordered the parts and assembled it myself.

What are some of your goals for the future?

Me and my wife are contemplating moving to Vancouver or Victoria! Of course we have to save money first (which we aren't good at).

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

After growing up being bullied and oppressed for my culture and heritage, the colour of my skin, not being religious, etc., no matter your outlook on any of the following (race, gender, religion, politics), you should always strive to be a symbol of

peace, a beacon of hope. Raise people up and help those in need. It helps me sleep at night knowing I have people who look up to me and knowing there are people out there that I have helped somewhere along the line. Love everyone and everything abundantly.

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

I would like to see an increase in the AYA program so it is accessible by more youth from care. Like a reduction in the tight requirements on the program, and an increase in the amount of time it can be accessed for. From 4 years, to potentially 6-8.





ALUMNI PROFILE

DARIAN NEWELL

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm Darian, I'm 25, I'm queer and I'm a social work student looking to give back to the foster community in my future career. I play guitar and I started picking up poetry and taking a class at Vancouver Island University (VIU) for it. I think taking a nice comfortable class is important for mental health. Taking any opportunity that you can to find a little joy in the world while you are at school is more influential than you would think on your mental health.

How did you get involved in the Fed?

I got involved in the Fed because another youth suggested I go to an SCM (Steering Committee Meeting, or Youth Retreats).

It has meant so much. It's meant being a part of the Fed Family, and I only really understood that after being at a Youth Retreat. I always saw the magazine (Power Pages) at my MCFD office, and I didn't know the Fed could be so loving and accepting. It feeds my shared identity and creates strong feelings of inclusion and support. It's a testament for what the organization does and how effectively it runs. The environment has helped me open up about my experiences in care with others outside of the Fed. I now feel stronger talking about my experience in care, something that I thought isolated me. The opportunity of

sharing my story with others and holding a shared identity bolsters me and is unique. We do not get to do that in other spaces within the typical care experience. Doing that gives you validation and awareness that fosters advocacy for yourself and peers, creating a sense of solidarity and ability.

The Fed created volunteer opportunities where I got to feel integral, proactive and honoured for my skills.

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

Personally: In the past year, with my grandmother's passing, I really was able to learn what being there for my family was like. It gave me an opportunity to care for my family members and share a sense of their loving space. That was needed.

Professionally: I would like to highlight being a part of the Federation's fish ladder of opportunities (fish ladders help fish go step-by-step up difficult parts of rivers), such as facilitating SCMs with the Extreme Team. The Fed staff facilitated the personalized opportunities for me and my peers to practice and see ourselves shine and grow in ways that supported our development and our futures. The opportunities the Fed provides really are giving me training for my future career, as well as building my

resume. I'm proud of myself for having an opportunity to write a proposal to the Fed for a program. I see myself writing proposals in the future and the Fed is giving me opportunities to practice those skills, as well as group facilitation.

What are some of your goals for the future?

I'm really inspired by organizations like the Fed, who take youth engagement and voice into the equation. I want to create space for youth in care, youth who've aged out, and allies of all ages to come together and build life skills and take collective action by learning from each other and other members of the community. I want to create equity and would ensure that the space represents the people who are or have been in care. Because 65% of children and youth in care are Indigenous, I'd be committed to ensuring the people learning and the people teaching reflected that percentage. Through developing senses of inclusion and community, we become stronger.

Tuition waiver has been so important. It lets youth from care in BC go to post-secondary, making it realistic for more of us to dream of and achieve realities that were much harder for the youth who came before us. Being middle class (owning a home, being able to afford vacations, going to university, financial security, having a car, etc.) is something that many youth like me have not had much opportunity to dream of. And I remember a Professor of Indigenous Studies telling me that it wouldn't have started without Indigenous advocates rallying for change at VIU. Their fight allows us to be independent and build the lives that we want.

Advocacy is a skill that you can learn at the Fed. Getting involved with organizations like the Fed early on really does set a pace for your future by making you aware of your opportunities and capacities.

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

Save up your free coffees for a rainy day. Take 15 minutes in the morning with your face to the sunlight, and it will set the pace for your day. Bringing snacks for study sessions will make you quick friends. Taking one more second to appreciate beauty will make the most of your curiosity.

When learning how to make art, it has to start crappy before it gets good. Like when you learn a guitar, it has to start shit before it gets good, just keep practicing and laugh

when you make mistakes.

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

I would like to see more opportunities for community engagement and skill development. Those opportunities would look like getting youth in a room and facilitating a community for them. It would include inviting foster youth into already active community spaces. It would include lowering barriers and creating more funding opportunities. It would include supporting organizations like the Fed who already do this work. It has to start young, because that is when we build our excitement and engagement capacities. If it includes community, our kids will have community skills. If it includes advocacy our youth will have advocacy skills. Our youth have what we give them, and we need to give them more.

Any final thoughts?

Thank you to each and every member and staff of the Fed, present, past and future. I'm certain that it is us together that makes the Fed so wonderful and effective.

**MOSAIC THOUGHT
BY DARIAN NEWELL**

Now that she knows her broken dish,
Can shape into some glinting fish,
By touching piece of pane with grout,
She crafts mosaic of two rainbow trout.
Arts made from vase she's learned to
break
Each kept or sold for beauty's sake.
For fish to catch a glimpse of gleam
Red shards of glass, turned shades of
bream.
Pink skinned trout have as the salmon:
Building shade while fending famine.
In troupes the shrimp flush sanguine
skin.
As chunk, her plates feed blush to grin.
China holds to softened spackle,
Like gold spinners, knotted tackle.
As worms pinned on would cast allure;
Her baited heart made call so pure.
Between dry mud and hardened clay
Her angled fragments bore rose-
coloured flay.
A sign that beauty could be caught:
Mosaic gives her broken pieces
thought.



YOU DESERVE TO LIVE YOUR DREAMS.

We have education bursaries for youth in and from care! Visit bcfosterparents.ca to find out more details and download application forms. Apply by May 31, 2020.

JCW Excellence in Writing Grant

Any youth (17-24) who has been in care of the Ministry who intends to further their education in the field of writing (journalism, screen or play writing, poetry, creative, political, or non-fiction) can apply. Bursary applicants must submit a 500-word short story or essay about their future goals with a description of their desired education program or receipt for the program they intend to pursue, should be submitted. One bursary of \$2,000 per year is available.

General Scholarship Fund & William Curtis Memorial Fund

Former youth in care living in BC, aged 19, who show an interest in continuing their education (high school, attend a business/vocational school, college or university).

Merv Davis Bursary

Any youth who has been in care of the Ministry, living in Coquitlam, Maple Ridge, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody or Pitt Meadows, and reaching the age of 19, who intends to further their education can apply.



WHO WE ARE

The BCFFPA is a provincial organization which aims to bring together foster parents, social workers and other stakeholders who are working to continuously improve the standard of care for children in our province.

WHAT WE DO

For over 50 years, we have been working with the BC government to ensure a positive, nurturing environment for BC's children and youth in care.



BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations
"Another Branch of the Family Tree"

1.800.663.9999

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 Youtube.com/BCFFPA


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 604-320-7330 ext. 125



Education



Health & Wellness



Housing



ID Needs



Money & Income



Personal Life

AgedOut.com is an up-to-date warehouse of information about resources and services for young adults. Its learning tools are designed to empower youth who are or were in government care in BC as they transition out of care.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAYLEE L

Ancient Light



Kirlian Reflections



Beyond The Sun



September Sunset



PROVINCIAL TUITION WAIVER

by Fatima H

The provincial tuition waiver program is a great way to encourage youth in and from care to pursue higher education and reach their goals. However, this program is very exclusive because it only allows youth who have been in care of Ministry of Children and Family Development for two years. I understand the intention of this program is to be inclusive and allow youth to overcome financial barriers. In other words, financial barriers should not hold youth back from their academic goals.

Personally, I am a youth from care and have similar experiences, yet I am not eligible for the program because I do not meet the two-year criteria. I appealed the application, but the appeal process

reiterated the eligibility requirement without any further explanations. I strongly think that this program should recognize the financial needs of each youth outside the two-year criteria. The criteria should not solely and rigidly focus on the amount of years youth have been in care.

I am sure that I am not the only youth who feels excluded from this program. This program does not address the underlying financial issues on a broader scale. I moved to Canada as an unaccompanied minor, and my family still lives back home. Many youth who immigrate to Canada lack family support, which makes the financial hurdles even harder for them to overcome. I wish

the program focused on the financial state and need of youth, too.

However, I am still hopeful to see a change in this program and looking forward to an inclusive version of the program that encompasses and values different kinds of youth experiences. In addition, what is the point of appealing the application when there is no detailed and solid reasoning for the rejection of the application apart from the 24 months requirement? I, at least, did not receive any other reason other than the mentioned eligibility requirements. Lastly, I hope my letter reaches the people who can change the program and address the issue in more inclusive ways.





TEEN LIFE (MY LIFE)

by Gabrielle R

TRIGGER WARNING: This piece talks about things some folks might find triggering.

People say that the moment you have a baby in the belly your life is over because you won't have no more free time. But let me tell you how I feel about that...

Hi, my name is Gabrielle I had my son at 17. Yes, I was scared but I knew I had to talk to someone about it, so I did. It was hard showing up to school, with people calling you mean names and telling you to have an abortion so you can have a better life, but I didn't believe that for two reasons.

One, I knew I could do this without people being there for me, and two because I knew what was right for me and my body. I had to have this baby. When I told my teacher, she told me about a program that gives teen moms and dads a second chance at school and helps them graduate. In October of 2017 I started that young parent program. At first I didn't know anyone. I started to make friends, but I knew my studies had to come first before my son came out.

Everyone was telling me, 'your life is over, you won't have time for yourself, and

you won't be a good mom to your child.' Everyone who ever said that was cut out of my life. I had to keep the people who believed in me, because I was doing the best that I could. So what if I had a child at 17? I knew that I was going to be more responsible, wiser, and an awesome mom for my child because I was determined to finish school before my son was born.

And I did. I had my son in March of 2018, and I graduated in June 2019. I am happy and healthy and now I'm being the best mom I can be for my son. I guess what I am trying to say is, don't let anyone get in your way. You know what's best, you know what you can do, and you know what's most important to you.

You can't change what people think of you, but you can change what you think about yourself.

These words keep me going:

I'm not giving up. Not even when I'm down to my last breath, even when there is nothing left. I will do it for you, my child, because I am the one who you will see every day, who will keep you safe and who will love you no matter what.

PROTECTING PERFECTIONISM

by Galicia GF

Whose fault is it that I have become so paranoid?
So afraid,
So careful,
So cautious.
That I plan before I speak,
That I count the words as I type,
That I want to be your perfect "little" girl...
Who is the person that decides who I want to be?
Clearly it is not me.
Saying there is no job out of my planned university degree really takes a toll on me.
You always map out what is best for me,
Without giving me a chance to breathe...
Why are you doing this to me?
I need to know who established this for me.
Was it the fact that he told you I am going to need a certain grade?
Or was it you,
Who listened to him say that,
Only to believe that his words were my sole path to destiny.
Whose fault is it that I can not think for myself?
You prioritize percentages over my mental health,
Telling me it's all I need to think about.
I have so many questions about who I have to be for you.
Maybe one day I'll get through.
They always tell me that high school is a place for self discovery.
Clearly you have already devised this all for me.
I have no choice,
No room for thought,
And my binder does not only belong to me.
You're the driver in my infinite loop of perfectionism,
And I have yet to know how to take the wheel.
If this matters so much to you,
Why do I not have much support from you?
It is hard to know what you want from me.
You have expectations beyond belief.
When you finally tell me you love me, how am I supposed to know if you are telling the truth?



Youth Works Program

The Youth Works program helps youth from or in foster care between the ages of 16 – 29 in British Columbia with employment and/or educational goals. We work with them to empower them, find needed resources and work towards independence and employment.

Who is eligible?

You need to meet all of the following criteria:

- Between the ages of 16-29
- Previously or currently in foster care

What do we offer (for free)?

- Individual employment counseling and support tailored to each client's needs and pace
- Access to all resources at CCSS and partners (including WIFI, computers, printers, job boards, and Job Fairs)
- Career exploration and vocational assessments
- Employability skills training (including but not limited to resume, essential skills, job search strategies and networking skills)
- Certification training supports and mentorship
- Job placements and on-going job coaching
- Access to volunteer placements for skill development
- Follow up and support up to 1 year

Intake Process:

- Self-referrals and 3rd party referrals are welcome
- A short conversation with the Employment Counselor to determine eligibility, needs and fit
- Start working with us towards your career and education/training goals!
- CALL TODAY **604-218-0964**
Email: youthworks@ccssociety.ca

**Supported by RBC Future Launch and
Children's Aid Foundation**



Connections Community Services Society

*Connecting our community, children, youth, and families
to thrive and reach for their dreams.*

110-5751 Cedarbridge Way, Richmond, BC V6X 2A8

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAMIA D



AGREEMENTS WITH YOUNG ADULTS (AYA)

WHAT IS IT?

AYA is an agreement between you and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) where you agree to work toward goals, and MCFD helps support you financially. AYA funding can cover things like housing, child care, tuition and health care while you are attending school, rehabilitation, skills-training or approved life-skills programs.

AYA provides up to \$1,250 per month, but not everyone will qualify for that much. You get payments every month of the year, up to a maximum of 4 years (48 months total).

AM I ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for an AYA you must be between 19 and 26 (cannot be past the day of your 27th birthday). On your 19th birthday you had to have been in one of the following care arrangements:

- Continuing Custody Order (CCO)
- In the process of adoption
- A Youth Agreement

If you're not sure, you can contact MCFD toll-free at **1-877-387-7027** to see if you're eligible.

HOW DO I APPLY?

You can find the application form, a list of AYA-approved programs by searching 'Agreements with Young Adults' on the BC Government website:

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/home

EDUCATION SUPPORTS!

PROVINCIAL TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM

WHAT IS IT?

The Tuition Waiver program covers tuition and some fees for BC students who are former youth in care aged 19 up to their 27th birthdays. Tuition Waiver can be used at BC **public post-secondary institutions** and some trades schools.

AM I ELIGIBLE?

You have to have been in care in BC under one or any combination of care statuses for a minimum of 24 months (2 years).

You don't need to have been in care for 2 years in a row (for example, you can have been on a CCO for a year, gone back to live with your parents for 5 years, and then been on a Youth Agreement for a year.) You don't need to have been in care when you turned 19.

HOW DO I APPLY?

You can get an application form at your school's Financial Aid office.

Find out what schools you can go to on a Tuition Waiver at studentaidbc.ca/explore/grants-scholarships/provincial-tuition-waiver-program

If you have any questions about the program, have trouble applying at your school's Financial Aid office, or believe your application for Tuition Waiver was unfairly rejected, email tuitionwaiver@gov.bc.ca

Public post-secondary institutions

are colleges like Camosun or Langara, universities like University of British Columbia or Thompson Rivers University, and some institutions like the BC Institute of Technology (BCIT) or the Justice Institute. Find a full list at www.bccat.ca/system/membership

YOUTH FUTURES EDUCATION FUND (YFEF)

WHAT IS IT?

The Youth Futures Education Fund provides funds to support living expenses to former youth in care who are attending a post-secondary school on a Tuition Waiver. YFEF is meant help cover expenses like books, housing or utilities.

HOW DO I APPLY?

You can get the application form at your school's Financial Aid office. If you have questions or if you have trouble getting an application form from your school's Financial Aid office, contact info@youthfutures.ca

AM I ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for the Youth Futures Education Fund, you must meet all of these criteria:

- Be a student attending a public post-secondary institution on a Provincial Tuition Waiver
- Be enrolled full-time or part-time in a program
- Demonstrate financial need
- Be in good standing, attending class on a regular basis and passing assignments and exams. Exceptional circumstances that prevent students from being in good standing or attending will be considered on a case by case basis

There are a lot of post-secondary education supports in BC for former youth in care, but there's also a lot of information about these supports that can be tricky to navigate. Check out some of the supports that are out there and see what might be available to you!

YOUTH EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FUND (YEAF)

WHAT IS IT?

YEAF provides grants of up to \$5,500 per program year to former youth in care in BC. The fund helps to cover education-related expenses. Students can receive a maximum of four grants.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Apply at: studentaidbc.ca/explore/grants-scholarships/youth-educational-assistance-fund-former-youth-care

If you have been denied YEAF and would like to appeal the decision, you can find the appeal form at: studentaidbc.ca/sites/all/files/form-library/yeaf_appeal.pdf

AM I ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for YEAF, you have to be:

- Between 19–24 years old
- You had to have been on a Continuing Custody Order (CCO) or a Guardianship Agreement when you turned 19, or for at least five years before you were adopted.
- A full-time student or a student with a permanent disability studying at a 40% course load
- Registered in certificate, diploma, or degree program that's at least 12 weeks long at a **designated post-secondary institution**

Designated post-secondary institutions are schools that the BC government gives financial aid (loans and grants) to the students who go to them. All of BC's public post-secondary schools are designated, plus some private schools. You can check whether the school you want to attend is designated at studentaidbc.ca/apply/designated#search-designated



Opportunity for youth aged 18 or 19 to take part in a youth-led survey about transitioning out of care

Are you 18 years old and currently in government care or an alternative to care?

If so, please consider completing this survey:

<https://form.simplesurvey.com/f/1/YouthTransitionTIME1>

Are you 19 years old and were previously in government care, or alternative to care?:

<https://form.simplesurvey.com/f/1/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 (aged 18 or 19 at the time of their first survey and have care experience) 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, and strengths and needs. 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 for all of 2020. If you have any questions about the study, please email garrett@mcs.bc.ca or call 604-291-1996 (ext. 222).



McCreary
Centre Society



Youth
Research
Academy

*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

DOSES OF BABY BY THERESA T



