

# **Zine & HEARD**

**Amplifying Voices of Youth From Care**

**FEBRUARY 2025  
ISSUE #25**





We respectfully acknowledge that we reside on Treaty 6 Territory; traditional lands of many First Nations & Metis people & we are committed to learning the true history of Canada & the true meaning of truth & reconciliation.

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## **WHO**

Youth from care speaking out & making a difference.

## **WHAT**

A zine to amplify our voices & raise awareness.

## **WHEN**

We publish around the 15th of every month.

## **WHERE**

We are based in Edmonton but are for youth from care everywhere.

## **WHY**

Because we can. Our voices have been silent for too long.



QUOTE: Jeff Woods     ARTWORK: Chasm Frazier

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RAMONA

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THE SKATE ZINE COMETH

WELLBRIETY

YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

YOUTH IN CARE CHRONICLES

ZINE FEST!



MANY THANKS  
FOR ALL YOUR  
LOVE & SUPPORT

# METRO CINEMA



Canadian Heritage



PRESENT

AN ANTI-RACISM SYMPOSIUM

# wâhkôtowin

DOCUMENTARY DIRECTED BY  
NIPIY ISKWEW & JOLIE FLETT  
WITH PANEL DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW

FREE ADMISSION & LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

**FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2025  
4:00 - 8:00 PM AT THE METRO**

**INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION  
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**



# The GOA needs an enema & other emergencies

If you have been reading the zine for a while, you have probably read these stats but they deserve repeating. Raising awareness of what happens to youth from care is what we do. Talking about the GOA (Government of Alberta) role in this crisis is also what we do.

Less than .03% of Canadians have been in foster care. Less than .03%.

However....

65% of unhoused Canadians have been in foster care.

50% of sexually exploited youth have been in foster care.

65% of Indigenous inmates have been in foster care.

Nichols et al 2017

But wait.... there's more.

Youth from care are 193 times more likely to become homeless than their peers.

Youth from care are 5 times more likely to die before the age of 25 than their peers. (Tyee, May 29, 2018)

Youth from care are 50% less likely to graduate from high school. (Jane Kovarikova, April 24, 2017)

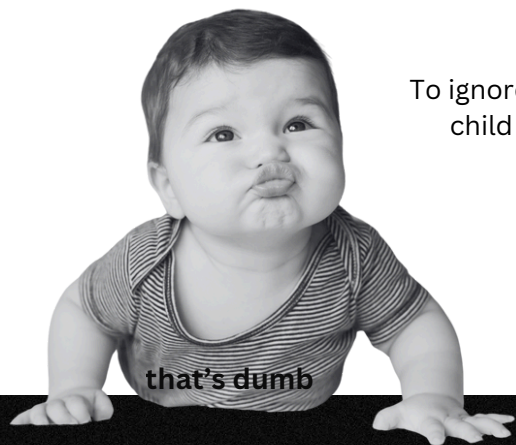
Involvement in the child welfare system is a significant risk factor for gang involvement.

Transitioning out of care is one of the top four leading causes of death and serious injury of youth.

And yet.....

In 2021 (after a lengthy legal battle with a 21 year old single mother who challenged them over the following decision) the GOA lowered the age of financial support for youth in care from age 24 to age 22. No regard for the research. No regard for the opinions of experts in the field. (Sound familiar?) And no regard for the wellbeing of apx. 500 Alberta youth leaving care every year. They simply wanted to "save" \$14 million. That's it. That's all. Which of course, is not morally or fiscally responsible considering the human costs of homelessness, incarceration, human trafficking and gang activity. There's not enough room here to list all the expenditures the GOA has made since then that far exceed the amount "saved" on the backs of vulnerable youth. The \$330 million promised for the new arena in Calgary comes to mind but there are are many. Bet you are thinking of some good examples right now.

Further on in this zine we have included a list of the 75 reports that have been written in Canada from 1987 to 2020 about what youth transitioning from care need. Yes, 75. There have been more since including one from the Alberta Office of the Child & Youth Advocate entitled: A Critical Time: A Special Report on Emerging Adults Leaving Children's Services Care published shortly before the age was lowered. Like all the others, it just didn't seem to matter to the GOA.



To ignore the reports and stats around poor outcomes for youth in the child welfare system is neglect. To continue to do so is abusive.

**Speak up. Spread the word.**  
**RAISE THE AGE. LOWER THE STATS.**

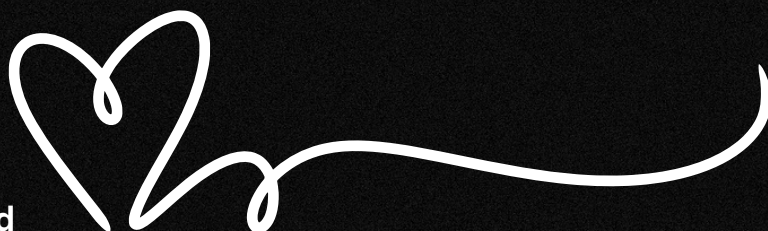
With love, Penny Frazier, Editor

**Please get a hold of us to share your stories, poetry, art, music, life, hope.**

**Deadline for the March zine**

**is February 25th. Contact us at**

**editor@zineandheard.ca or @zine\_and\_heard**





# JO'S JOURNEY



*This is my truth and I use it to help others carry water so that they may put out their own fires within and the healing can begin.*

Tanisi,  
Wahpikihew Iskwew nitsihkason. Maskwacis ohchi niya on my nikawiy side ekwa onihcikiskwapiwin on my nohtowiy side.

Hello, my name is White Eagle Woman, I'm from Maskwacis on my mom's side and Saddlelake/Goodfish on my dad's side.

However, I was not raised on either reserve. It wasn't until I got older that I started learning my extended relatives from either reserve. I was in care as a very young child. Part of the scoop.

This is some of my journey as a young one. I share strictly and solely to provide hope and encouragement to others. Not to embarrass, speak ill or to negativity impact anyone. To put that medicine into the air as hate or bitterness is to be distasteful. I love my mom and dad tremendously, especially my momma. I have also healed most parts of me and I'm grateful for that.

Sometimes when we hear or observe the struggles of another person, it helps us to have the courage to navigate through our own struggles which hurt us deep within our core. A key element to healing is when we do the work our traumatic experiences demand. This allows us to turn it into a beautiful experience filled with hope and wisdom.

Ok, oh my, where to start...so many stories...not enough time.

I remember back to a few key moments in my journey which highlight some of the experiences I have gratefully been able to walk myself out of in order to find my light. The story's I will share are done with my heart and thoughts intact. I share with the hope of providing a spark of the healing to the readers. To know they aren't alone on the walk, ever. I share with gratitude, forgiveness and a very much healed perspective.

As a very young one, and while in care. There were times when we were apprehended and put into the foster care system (I'd been in many foster homes as a young child) so my childhood was riddled with abandonment issues of all sorts. And certainly, in my misinterpretation of things,  
I did feel unloved at times as well.

There were times where mom simply couldn't mom, anymore. During these grievous times and in her own turmoil, she dropped us off at child services. All to which she freely surrendered her parental rights. Mom's mental health wasn't the greatest. Being a mom coupled with her own unresolved childhood traumas, there were addictions present so this had great influence over her state of mental health. Even more so than if she was capable of being sober. One memory is of a time she dropped us off with CFS, I didn't know what was going on. I remember crying and screaming for my mom... I didn't want to leave my mom. She is all I knew. I didn't understand...Why? Will I ever see my mom again?...This was my first experience of what abandonment felt like. I was 5 or 6 years old when this happened. Very traumatic for little Jo, to say the least. I never did get answers. It's just what was. I know now, why. But as a small child I couldn't fathom all that he at that time

Another time my mom just got us back from care, this time I was about 9/10ish. Through the chaos, a vivid memory I have, when mom was up late, intoxicated, hurting while crying... this was during Christmas Eve: I remember waking up because she was having a conversation on the phone with someone. Her speech slurred and loud. I looked around. It was then I noticed my sister awake as well. When she saw that I was awake, she signaled me to be silent by waving her finger at her mouth... So I kept still. But I was listening in to see what was happening. As I listened in, I remember her saying to the police, "you need to come get my kids because I'm not doing well and that she felt as though she wanted to unalive us, then herself" ... This was due to her own unresolved trauma which came plenty.

I remember after she called them, I was scared to breathe, scared to move... thinking she may come in and hurt us/ unalive us. As that was her threat to the police officer on the phone. After about an hour of agonizing silence, with the exception of the echoes of her cry's. I remember the sigh of relief I felt when the police officer showed up to the house. I was grateful; thinking we were going to be safe... I heard my mom talking to the police officers (I heard more than one of them) when they got there. I then heard her say, "she was ok and didn't feel like she would harm us or herself anymore". The police officers left, I remember my throat sinking into my chest... The questions which rang throughout my mind. Would she decide she was depressed again and harm us while we slept? Would we wake up in the morning to see another day? Would she harm herself? Would we wake up and it be like one of those scary movies? I remember being scared again. Scared she would harm me or my siblings. As I woke up in the morning, I knew I was lucky to be alive. We survived one of mom's manic episodes.

Mom had many manic states. Where she ended up wanting to not be here anymore. There were several accounts where she wanted to take our lives and then hers. There were times where she tried to unalive herself. Being young and seeing your mom sitting in a tub full of blood due to her trying to unalive herself... so painful and so traumatic. As a small child, one would think to themselves... did I do something wrong? How come we aren't a good enough reason to be alive for? ... Just, why? I didn't understand and back then we didn't dare ask the questions either.

When it came to discipline, it always meant being obstructed with an extension cord, wire hanger or being beaten with a soup ladle of some sort-until it broke. Sometimes it also meant being punched in the face or that your hair was pulled. I remember being hit so much, and being scared any time I knew I was in trouble. So much fear - The one time I remember I peed my pants in fear, while being struck several times. Then I was beat up for that too.



**As a small child, one would  
think to themselves...  
did I do something wrong?**

Many times she kept us home from school because the night before she had whipped us so hard that we had bruises or whip marks all over our faces and bodies. Yes, our faces. This one particular time we had lived with a relative and someone had lost money. They asked mom to get it back as it was money they were using for a car repair of some sort. My mom's reaction was to beat us. It still wasn't found. So we searched endlessly for it. The people we were staying with came home and said they found it.



**It was so relieved but angry at the same time.**

- 1. Angry because I knew it wasn't us.**
- 2. We got beat for it and for nothing.**
- 3. No apology.**

**I recall that the relative left and came back home with a small bag of candy for each of us. Small something for the guilt she must have felt seeing our faces all whipped. It was all in part of Moms anger, sadness and the injustices which came from her own childhood wounds that caused her to be in a state of constant chaos.**

**Other memory's, are of my mom being drunk on Christmas Eve, so intoxicated that she fell over and had thought that someone pushed her. She then ran to the kitchen and grabbed a big knife and started waving it around as if to hurt someone... perhaps the person she thought had pushed her over? When I saw this all happening from the bedroom, I was so scared I jumped out the bedroom window. I then walked around to the front of the house to check where my younger siblings were. They were standing there, scared. I took them and not knowing where to go or what to do... we slept in the bush. It was cold outside. But we did the only thing we knew to feel safe. We had a brilliant idea... to sneak blankets from the clothing lines of their relatives so we wouldn't be so cold sleeping outside. After a few days, we wanted to check in at home, see if she sobered up yet. Mom was a totally different person when she was sober. She was loving and kind. When we got home, Mom was still drinking. In fact, drunk still. So we stayed at a relative of my younger sister and brother for a few days before we went home. I was 13 at this time.**

**Another piece of my childhood, education. When it came to education, in Elementary I remember being placed in the IOP class. This is the "special needs class". At this time, I didn't want to sit down and listen. I wanted to play. Like who wouldn't!?... this was the only time I could play with kids my age. I didn't want to learn. All of my elementary years were spent playing and not listening in class. It wasn't until Jr. High, that I decided that I should maybe buckle down and actually try. I went from having 30 percent in elementary throughout all my classes, to a smooth 70's in High School. Then an even better 80's in College. This lead me to see, even though my conscience wanted to do nothing but play and be a child, my subconscious was taking mental notes of everything going on around me. So teachers, don't be so quick to think a kid is special needs, please.**



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As I decided to leave home, I learnt the art of working which gave me enough funds to take care of my own needs. I stayed with close friends and got along great with my friends' parent(s). I often got along with older people. I would identify myself as an old soul. I rarely found those in my age group as a suitable friend. I just thought differently than those who were my age.

Most of my friend's parents liked me. I also made sure I was cleaning up after myself and being helpful in any way needed (thank you, mom for teaching me that). Of course I made sure I was always being respectful. I even tried to get back into school so I could finish my High School. It wasn't for me just yet... so I continued to work.

This is when I met my kids father. With whom I have 9 babies with. There was love there. But, there was so much dysfunction there as well. All abuses took place in our relationship. I don't say this to put him down. I truly loved this man. I do appreciate that we have many children together. I honor him because of that. But this is my truth.

He had much trauma as well. I respect that looking back.. Most people who are not in their higher version of themselves, often haven't had the chance to work on themselves. The behaviors they possess are learnt dysfunction. But that is not my story to tell. I can only honor my own truth.

From all of the hardships, hiccups and learning I've done thus far. I have learned that when you don't hear your traumas, they continue to echo whispers of pain into you. This can bleed into all your future relationships, including, your significant other, family, and your friendships alike. This is because if you haven't learned to process and work through them. You also cannot process your self-worth as an individual.

Especially If your partner doesn't see theirs. Trauma is everywhere you look. But those who take the time to love and heal themselves are also everywhere. You won't be able to see it unless you're healing yours as well. Just as the fog can dim the vision. The unhealed mind fights reality.

At this time in my life and with all the lessons I have not only accumulated, but, worked through. I mustered up the strength to leave my children's father. This was probably the most difficult thing I had to do. He was the first taste of love I had. But I was in pursuit of a more peaceful existence for my children and myself. I did this with the hopes of building something which didn't bring so much toxicity into our lives.

That's all I wanted by this stage in my life. A stress-free life as much as humanly possible. it was already going to be a daunting task to raise my babies alone... but to leave what I thought of as the love of my life... To face the same challenges, I saw my mom go through... I didn't know how I would get through. It was hard and one of the most heart breaking things I had to do. But I did it!

I remember being told that, "nobody would want me with all my kids. The kids belonged to another man". But, I needed free from this cycle of trauma. It wasn't just mine, he had his own childhood trauma which made it impossible to be healthy together. I focused on me and my babies. I was a student at the time. This helped. Too busy to hurt.

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After a bit I met another man, he was way different. Still some toxicity present, but definitely different from what I was used to. I wasn't used to the extra niceness I received. He did things like buy things for me and my children. Even helped me clean my home. We took the kids places like swimming. Like, Oh, my! I didn't know they did that. That's how toxic life in general was up until then.

I was the bread winner in my last relationship. What to do with all of this new stuff... He tried his best to help me when he could with many things. Me being used to toxicity, it was way too hard to accept all the big changes. Additionally, I hadn't healed from what I went through prior to this new and very out of experience relationship. I wasn't always nice either. My own trauma oozed out of me like an overflowing cup of lava. There were times I was actually horrible to him now that I look back.

One of our biggest failures in that relationship, and something I couldn't accept, he didn't know how to hug. For me that was a sign of safety that should never have been have to be begged for. It meant much to me to be able to have a hug. To know you're loved and cared for. For whatever reason, he was unable to provide that for me. It bothered me enough to argue with him until we both had to walk away. In the end I recognized we weren't for each other. Otherwise we would've been able to find a to stay together.

What I know is he came to show me stability. Something I didn't have before. He was also there through the loss in my family. We had many losses. My mom, grandmother, uncles, my brother. He was better than what I was used to. But we weren't for each other. I didn't realize any of this until I started healing myself.

There was many avenues of unhealed trauma. It wasn't until I began to get real with myself that I learned because of the lack of love as a child, I was accepting just anything as love. This is that which had awoken something great in me... It was the opportunity to awaken the need to heal so that I can experience this true and genuine love I really wanted to experience one day. One that was worthy of who I am. One that would break that cycle of unhealthy relationships. I was willing to wait for that kind of love to surface. So I've been single since then.

When it comes to family, I come from a severely broken family with so much Intergenerational trauma, I almost don't know where to begin here either. Today nobody has done that good ole internal healing work. So nobody has begun healing. This only meant stagnation, hate, bitterness and yuckiness. All of it. Which is sad. We have 50-60-year-old aunties acting like high school, mean girls. It's actually shameful.

Any healing my generation has done was initiated by the younger generation. It's sad as I have healed some of the traumas on my path, I talk to an auntie again and no changes in their ways. Much needs to be done still.

Being young we learnt to keep quiet for the most part. Meaning no communication. We followed the adults lead out of fear of being beaten by mom. As we moved about in our lives we learnt to dislike each other from a distance. Most family members stayed away from each other, and nobody was dealing with the hurts and the traumas inflicted. This was because nobody was willing to see the truth. They shoved it under the carpet. I think it was because It would break their false narratives they currently resided in.





**I was the black sheep of the family. Whatever that meant... but I always knew I didn't fit in.**

As for being in care. There were some foster care homes that were ok - other ones, it wasn't any better than being at home with mom during one of her manic episodes. I remember one time, while in care at one of the foster homes I was in the foster dad had molested me. My little conscience self, had blocked it and it wasn't until my older sister talked about it which made me dig deep to remember what had happened. My older sister was the one who had to stop it from happening. This foster dad also walked around the house butt naked and blamed me for "looking at him", I was 5 or 6, btw. It was traumatic enough for me to forget and put it in the back of my mind. All of which I couldn't remember at first. At the same time, I didn't mind some of the homes because I wasn't being harmed the way I was at mom's. It was the lesser evil of the two. Imagine being young and not being able to trust anyone.

Because of the trauma and addictions in my home. I left home at 14 yrs. old. I knew I'd be ok to leave home. I had my first taste of work and a paycheck. Which I was so shocked to learn about while doing my first job as a summer student. As I just finished Jr. High to enter into High School. Like what the heck? You mean I get paid to do the same things I was made to do? Oh, Heck yes, I'll work!

In my house growing up there was favoritism as well. Which carried its own traumas as well. Little sister was a baby when parents met. So she was a favorite. She was also the baby of the family. Older sister was almost a teen when parents wanted her approval, so she was spoilt. She was also mom's friend more than her kid. My younger brother was a mom's boy and my older brother stayed in Maskwacis when we left to live up north a year or so after we came out of care.

Mom had her first child (my older sister) at 15. This was due to the inability to understand relationships and sexuality in a healthy way. She also had her own sexual abuse trauma growing up. As she told me later in life that she didn't know what pregnancy was. She thought, "it was a sickness and she would get over it". Back then nobody talked about sex. So it was never given the chance to be something beautiful. In fact, it was taught to us as something we don't ever talk about. If you dared, you were dirty minded little pigs and such. If I remember my years correctly, it wasn't until the teen magazines became the hot topic that I actually learned anything about sexual health. Anybody who knows what I'm talking about, knows those magazines were over stimulating and had highly sexual forms of talk. How to this. how to that... Not good info for the younger generation. Not good for a young indigenous woman just learning. With this said, I can only imagine my mom's lack of healthy conversations growing up.

I was the black sheep of the family. Whatever that meant...which I always knew, as I didn't fit in. I never did think like most people. I always felt I didn't belong anywhere particular. I just went along where I wanted. As I decided to leave home, I learnt the art of working which gave me enough funds to take care of my own needs. I stayed with close friends and got along great with my friends' parent(s). I often got along with older people. I would identify myself as an old soul. I rarely found those in my age group as a suitable friend. I just thought differently than those who were my age.



**So distance  
is the  
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The things I remember as a child, Christmas dinners were odd-fully weird. All the aunties, uncles and cousins were there. But every family sat in their own corner of the house. Nobody sat together to enjoy the dinners. And if you tried to visit with the cousins. The auntie or uncle of that certain family would get upset and tell you, “go over there”. Then we’d be yelled at by our mom for going over there, when “we don’t talk to them”. This was like this my whole childhood. It played many hurtful songs in my head. How I longed for a healthy family. To have loving family who supported you and cared enough to check on your well-being. Why was that too much to ask?

Surprisingly enough, it still happens as an almost 50-year-old. The dysfunction didn’t stop. It remained. So distance is the healthiest route, unless changes are made. Our aunties weren’t aunties and our uncles weren’t uncles. They even played against one another all the time. One would come talk to us, just to get the other one upset. They would each gossip about the other and tell you how horrid the other was. It was to convince you not to talk to the other aunt or uncle. So confusing. So toxic, to say the least. We could never have all our immediate aunties/uncles in our lives at the same time. We had to choose who we liked more. As that would be the only one we would be able to talk to. This left us torn and just wanting to stay away all together.

I remember whenever the uncles or aunties didn’t agree with our behavior, even if it was something so small, they would tell my mom, “hit your kids, they won’t stop misbehaving”. And, she did hit us when we got home. I remember they also hated on my mom every chance they had. I think it was because she had a different dad. Moms dad was the brother to the rest of her sibling’s. They blamed her for it. Like... mind blown. Not sure, they seemed to find every reason to make her feel less than. Too many kids... This was to where my mom carried it with her and ended up being depressed, sad and suicidal most of her life.

Sexual assault was very much part of my life as a child. Myself and most of my siblings went through this. That is another story. In due time. So, I have faced all abuses as a child.

When it comes to child protective services. I’ve had welfare workers come into my home on several occasions. One of the times I went to the store (Giant Tiger), on 156st because they were having a chicken nugget sale. I remember vividly, the sale was a box of nuggets for \$2.99.

In any way, my aunt was going to Giant Tiger to grab some things, and asked if I wanted to go. Me not being a driver, I immediately jumped anytime she went to do errands. This meant I could grab the hot sale items and always be stocked up. I bought 15 boxes. I was happy as the sale items can go pretty quick. When you have 9 children you raise by yourself. Those deals make all the difference in the world.

During the time I was gone, a teacher stopped by to drop homework off at home for my daughter who was 16 at the time and at home. She thought kids were home alone as my 2 yr. old son looked out the window but nobody answered the door when she knocked. She didn't teach her kids what I taught my kids I guess. This was to not answer the door if I wasn't home because I would carry the house key with me at all times. This meant there was no need for them to come open the door while I was gone. I taught them about "stranger danger". They listened to this. Which to be honest, made me proud. I successfully taught my children about safety.

When I got home, a social worker was standing there, already on the phone with her supervisor. She stated, they were apprehending my kids... I was in shock...

No communication. Driven by assumptions. She stereotyped me. I had 9 children.

I was "Native", so I must have been a drunken street walker??? Her next communication was to comment, "You don't look like you've been drinking." She even checked my bags only to find my fabulous chicken nuggets, geez. The questions continued. Are you a street walker...? If my children had the same father...? What I was doing with myself...?

The workers did leave without my babies. The whole situation left me speechless in how wrong the system is. How they probably wronged so many others. As not everyone knew what to do in these circumstances. This is part in what lead me to want to be a Paralegal in the first place. Because I didn't always have a voice. I was taught to fear the authority.

Due to my late dad being part of the starlight tours and my late mom was assaulted by an officer. Different story and time...

The next day I relayed my circumstances to my Paralegal instructor on what had happened. She advised me to contact the social worker's supervisor and demand that a meeting be set up. So I did that. I then called all the supports involved with my family. I called the big brother and sisters which most my kids had, I called the school, the principal, the support worker, the psychologist who worked with my family (many losses in the family) and anyone else who connected to my family. I got the chance to voice my opinion and tell the social worker that she was being unreasonable and only stereotyping me. There are many more stories of my encounters with the system. The system who had failed me many times. Imagine, even in my own experiences of being in care. Frustrating to say the least.

I didn't drink at this time, nor was I a drug user at any time in my life. I struggled being a mom of 9 and barely having any family support on either side. Looking back, I don't know how I did it, but I found a way to get it done.

**I didn't always have a voice.  
I was taught to fear authority.  
My late dad was part of the  
infamous Starlight Tours  
and my late mom  
was assaulted by  
a police officer.**





I had toxic family constantly trying to tell my kids I was not a good mom. To this day I don't know fully what they were trying to accomplish. They constantly pointed the finger at me for every little thing I did in what they consider the wrong direction. Do they know the trauma they inflicted onto not only me but my kids as well...? Instead of encouraging them and me. They looked for drama and chaos. They didn't support me and it worked. My kids slowly started to believe them. They tried to turn my kids against me. They would bribe some of them by buying them things they wanted. Of course my kids took the bait as any other child would.

My parenting was, listen to mom, do your chores and be rewarded. The way it's supposed to be. On-the-other-hand, go to grandpa/grandmas/aunties place and get whatever you want no matter what. All of this added further trauma to my already present toxic family traumas. ... They did to my kids what they tried doing to me as a child. What did it do to my kids? Well, they believed I was the mean one for not giving them the things they wanted. I had one relative tell my kid, "you know that you can decide where you want to go when you turn 13". Not because I was truly a horrible mom. But because I wasn't the mom she thought I should be. I stayed away from my family enough and nobody even knew how I parented to begin with. So no opinions should have been made about me. It was being spiteful and continuing decades old trauma and dysfunction.

This is a very small bit of the stories I have to share. I will save those for sharing with others in the groups I facilitate. I will share as encouragement and hope to others who have walked a journey such as mine. So that they know they are not alone. Believe me, it was a lot.

**Thank you Kise-manito for helping me to walk away from this in one piece.  
I am grateful for all you've done for me.**

Today I have gone to college twice, once for Business Management and another time for Paralegal. In the process of my search for a better life for my babies and myself, I have also acquired many certifications in different fields. Some being, Full Spectrum Indigenous Doula, Life Coach Training, Child Development 1 and 2, Several Train-the-trainers. Many Trainings on child psychology. But the most important job I do (besides being a mother and kokum) is to bring cultural awareness and land based skillset to our community members. I do this by connecting and bringing in cultural teachings to many in our community. I facilitate land based training including, plant Life (my favorite), and the four legged (animal) teachings. I am so beyond grateful to the communities for entrusting me to deliver programs and facilitate this sacred healing work. It is such a beautiful thing to be able to inspire others to build new and sturdier foundations for life.

I currently work at, Creating Hope Society as their Knowledge Keeper. A job I take to the heart. Helping others in community learn to seek their highest versions of themselves through healing and culture. These things which weren't allowed and even banned by law officials have now been given life force again. This work helps fill the gaps in our lives by reconnecting us to who we are as Indigenous people. It's a foundation to the previous rocky edge we sometimes come to when facing traumas of the mind, spirit, heart and soul.

For those who find themselves lost on their journey due to the abusive powers that be. Find solace in your culture and your roots. Unhealthy connections reside everywhere you go. But when you deal with what's inside, you. You learn that imperfection is the key that opens the door to heal all that ails you and become the best version of self. There is always room to improve self always. Remember some people, places and things are not meant for you on your journey. That's ok. Simply remove yourself from that path and build the things which are meant for you. This also gives you the chance to find out who you are as an individual. This is the most important work you will ever do here. Finding out who you are.

**Remember, we didn't come here to be perfect. Perfectionism is fake. We came to break down all the barriers which make us think we aren't good enough. So that we may reach our full potential on this journey.**

For those who find themselves in a hurt space: I agree with you in many aspects of what it takes to go through the stages and the emotional turmoil one has to when someone has attacked another on a personal, emotional, physical, and mental level. It brings a different, and whole new and ugly facet(s) to the word, yucky. That's putting it mildly too.

I've been there, at the hands of others. The emotional ruin one goes through... Incomprehensive and at times we can't even begin to muster up the correct thoughts to correlate it in its fullest form and nature. Just so we can correctly measure how it made us feel... nobody explains how we can continuously feel exhausted and to the point where our spirit feels torn inside out. How exploited we feel being the victim of this stuff. Very raw and very naked, for sure.

This is because it's a whole whack of wickedness. Spiraling and entangling into a web of one another. Especially when you thought you could trust the person. The person said they loved you and you believed that. Oh, I know.

Also how reactive abuse becomes that penetrating thought. When the unspeakable is done in tremendous proportions to any one person. Many have thought, It's no wonder at times one has felt there was no other way out other than to decide to take a stand. These are the reasons why some tend to want to regurgitate back toward the abuser, the very things that they have done unto us. Know though, if you do unto others because of your own trauma. It will be delivered back, times ten. If you are a victim, know you shouldn't have had to go through. I hear your most inner screams.

But think on this. Do you know? Some of those emotions aren't yours to carry? Do you know the actions and atrocities you have been through belong solely to those of who have inflicted the harm? You were there experiencing. But in no way are you responsible. Do you know that?

You're only responsibility is to find your way out of the chaos. To love you enough to do this. To honor your emotions, but also, to do what it is you need to do to help yourself out and away from the abuses suffered. This is because we can only control, ourselves. Something you can do (when you're ready) is to help others by sharing your story (only if you so wish).

Simply put tobacco down. Sit with your ancestors. Then ask for guidance from your ancestors while you walk your path. Healing isn't easy. But it is possible. This is only because healing asks you the question, Are you ready to take accountability? Are you ready to take charge?

Only when I started my healing journey, then, only then, did I see that my own abusers were not the only problem.

Yes, they abused me in many ways.  
Yes, they did what I didn't know with what to do.

Yes, it was some of the worst pains one can ever possibly imagine.  
Yes, it took every fibre of my being to successfully begin to heal.





But every time I walked that mountain of healing my spirit, mind, and my heart all thanked me. This is because I freed me, I used my energy to become. I built a version of myself that nobody could break but myself.

I forgave and in turn was able to forgive myself for the distasteful things I did during my early healing stages. Just to feel acknowledged. These things, I have learnt I don't want anymore. No matter what a person does to me. We always want to move away from the beasts that be, so as to not become one ourselves.

These things I have learnt I don't want anymore. No matter what a person does to me. We always want to move away from the beasts that be, so as to not become one ourselves.

A wise person once said to me (my momma) Kisahkihiti ( I love you)! "Make your stubbornness work for you, not against you". I will never forget her teaching. Time and time again, it has awoken in me, my very best attributes. A side of me that fights to want/be better. Not to become equal to my abusers. Definitely not less than either.

It's all perspective. In the end, how you deal is all up to you. When you get angry or feel bitterness coming on, remember, we also have to clean up our doo-doo messes as well.

This is the accountability part the seasoned leaders speak on.



### **I found a safe place. I found this place in healing myself, loving myself and respecting myself.**

My heart leads the way in most things, but I've trained myself to not be in fatal attraction mode - a place where one feels the need to project their pain onto others just because they suffered. No control of how their thoughts, words and actions affect others around them. Just, "I'm hurt", so you're all going to hurt too. It is a sickness of the mind, spirit and heart. Growth has shown me to have compassion for the hurt and broken hearted.

I'm grateful for life. A life that has given me so much. I see the growth in every situation now. There is no negativity, only experience. This journey is set out for us before we even come to this side. I believe we choose our path before we get here. We choose our parents too. We choose the lessons which will bring us to our highest version of ourselves. The bright light I have gracefully found within myself, which has introduced to me the alchemy of the heart, mind, spirit and body.





To Kise-Manito, my ancestors and the  
angels who watch over me,  
Ay Hiy, Kinanaskomtinaw Kakiyaw.

Jo Swampy



# ZINE FEST!

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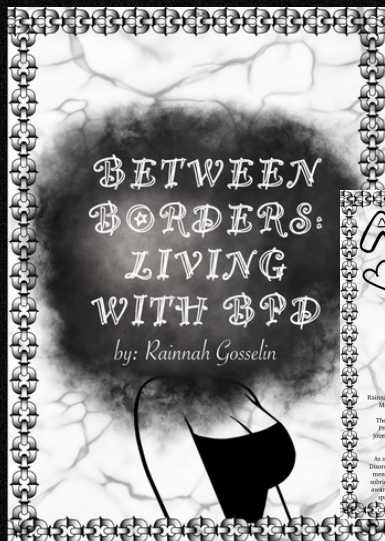
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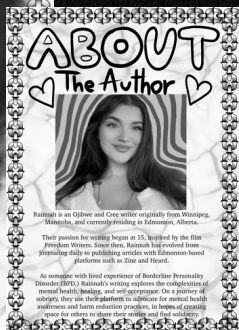




# Featured at the ZINE FEST!



## Rainnah Gosselin



Rainnah is an Ojibwe and Cree writer originally from Winnipeg and currently residing in Edmonton. Their passion for writing began at age 15, inspired by the film, *Freedom Writers*. Since then Rainnah has evolved from journaling daily to publishing articles with Edmonton-based platforms such as Zine & HEARD.



## Mady Silver



Mady has written extensively for Zine & HEARD and is the author of two zines she will have at the Fest. She began writing at a young age and has found that as she has grown so has her craft. Raw, honest and in the moment, Mady's work speaks to the struggle of being a youth but her words are often beyond her years.

## Ramona

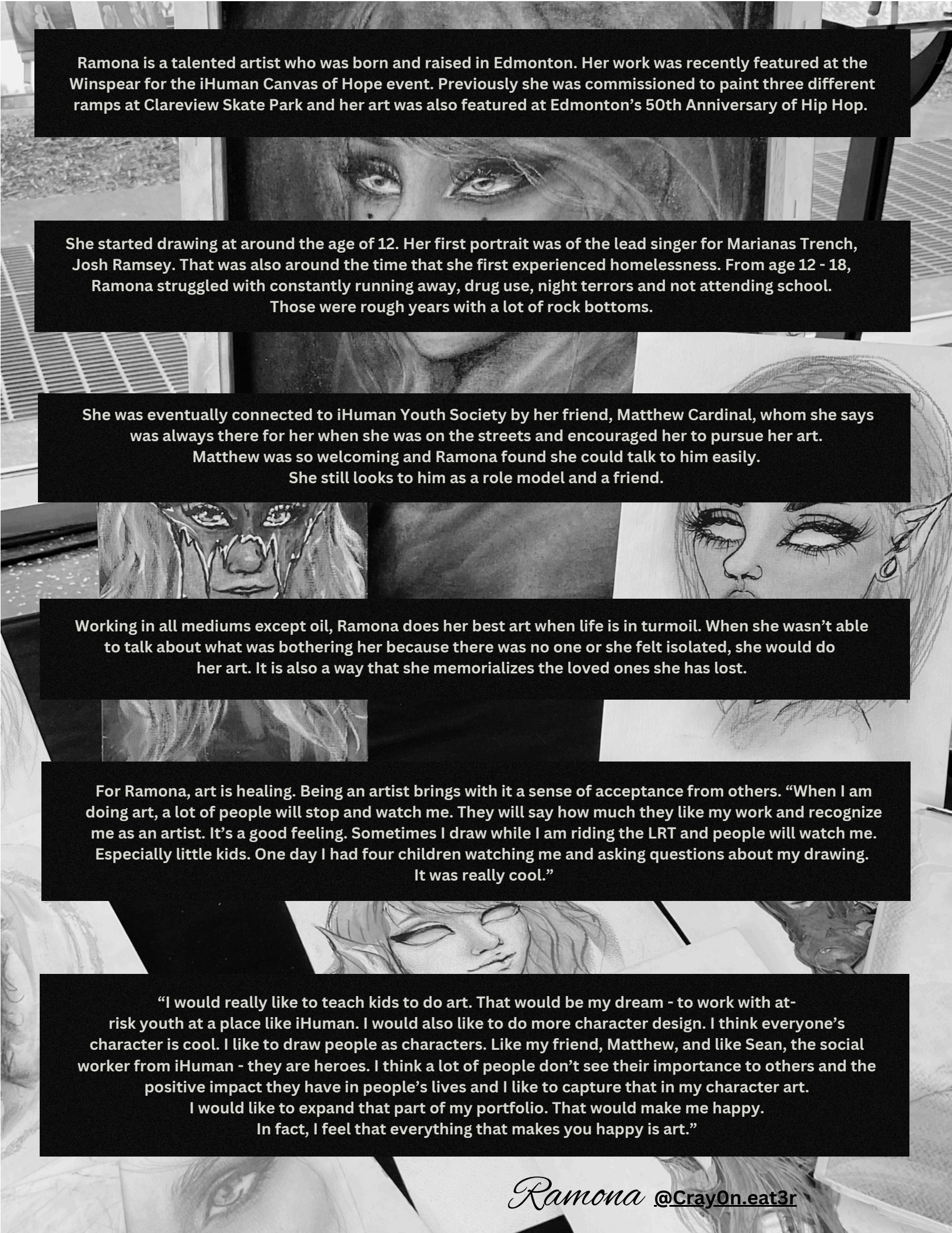
We are stoked to feature Edmonton artist, Ramona, who will be joining us live at her easel from noon until 4:00 at the Zine Fest. Ramona will also have zines and art work for sale.

*I think a lot of people don't see their importance to others and the positive impact they have in people's lives and I like to capture that in my character art. I would like to expand that part of my portfolio. That would make me happy. In fact, I feel that everything that makes you happy is art."*

*continued on next page.....*







Ramona is a talented artist who was born and raised in Edmonton. Her work was recently featured at the Winspear for the iHuman Canvas of Hope event. Previously she was commissioned to paint three different ramps at Clareview Skate Park and her art was also featured at Edmonton's 50th Anniversary of Hip Hop.

She started drawing at around the age of 12. Her first portrait was of the lead singer for Marianas Trench, Josh Ramsey. That was also around the time that she first experienced homelessness. From age 12 - 18, Ramona struggled with constantly running away, drug use, night terrors and not attending school. Those were rough years with a lot of rock bottoms.

She was eventually connected to iHuman Youth Society by her friend, Matthew Cardinal, whom she says was always there for her when she was on the streets and encouraged her to pursue her art. Matthew was so welcoming and Ramona found she could talk to him easily. She still looks to him as a role model and a friend.

Working in all mediums except oil, Ramona does her best art when life is in turmoil. When she wasn't able to talk about what was bothering her because there was no one or she felt isolated, she would do her art. It is also a way that she memorializes the loved ones she has lost.

For Ramona, art is healing. Being an artist brings with it a sense of acceptance from others. "When I am doing art, a lot of people will stop and watch me. They will say how much they like my work and recognize me as an artist. It's a good feeling. Sometimes I draw while I am riding the LRT and people will watch me. Especially little kids. One day I had four children watching me and asking questions about my drawing. It was really cool."

"I would really like to teach kids to do art. That would be my dream - to work with at-risk youth at a place like iHuman. I would also like to do more character design. I think everyone's character is cool. I like to draw people as characters. Like my friend, Matthew, and like Sean, the social worker from iHuman - they are heroes. I think a lot of people don't see their importance to others and the positive impact they have in people's lives and I like to capture that in my character art. I would like to expand that part of my portfolio. That would make me happy. In fact, I feel that everything that makes you happy is art."

*Ramona* @CrayOn.eat3r



# A Critical Time

## A Special Report on Emerging Adults

### Leaving Children's Services Care - 2019

*The age of 18 to 24 is a critical period during which a significant amount of development occurs. Unlike the average emerging adult in Alberta, young adults who have grown up in care may not have natural connections such as parents or relatives whom they can rely upon for support. In 2014, legislation was changed to extend SFAA age eligibility from 22 to 24 years old. This change was the result of the recognition that there was a gap in service provision for this age group. There are significant milestones and developmental tasks that need to occur for young people during this critical period. They need support and guidance to help them become successful adults.*

The following is a list of 75 reports that have been written in Canada from 1987 to 2020 about what youth transitioning from the child welfare system need. [A Long Road Paved with Solutions: 'Aging out' of care reports in Canada: Key Recommendations and Timelines \(1987-2020\)](#) Dr. Melanie Doucet

## A CRITICAL TIME

A Special Report on Emerging Adults  
Leaving Children's Services Care



NOVEMBER 2019

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In 2014 the age of eligibility for youth in care to receive financial supports in Alberta was raised from 22 to 24, making our province a leader for improving outcomes for the youth in their care.

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A young, single mother who was severely impacted by this decision challenged the GOA in court but they fought her long and hard to push it through.

Their other choice would have been to re-think their hasty decision. To review the many reports, the ample research and the opinions of many experts in the field and say, "OK, this is a bad decision. We are putting the youth in our care at risk."

But they didn't.

We must continue to ask why.

Approximately 500 youth age out of care every year.

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***"WALKING THE RED ROAD ONE MOMENT AT A TIME"***

## **MEETING INFO**



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Many years ago I worked with this artist when they were in care. I always thought it was so wild that they did their work with nothing but an HB pencil and a deep passion for drawing their favourite artists. We became and remained friends and I know they are out there somewhere. Today I am reminded of what Bob Marley said about friends. "True friends are like stars; you can only recognize them when it is dark around you."

Penny Frazier, Editor



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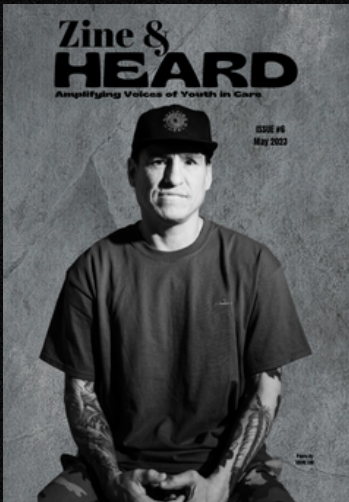
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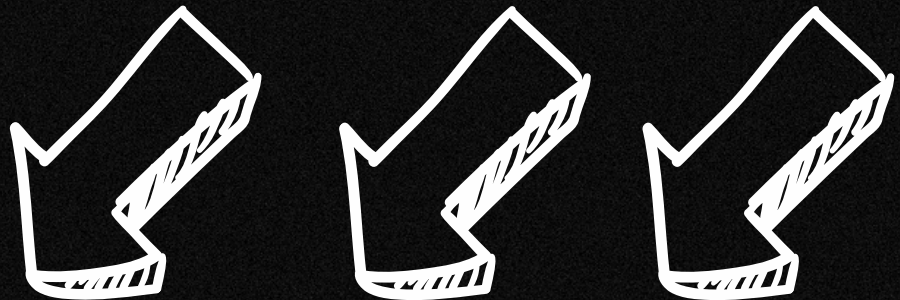
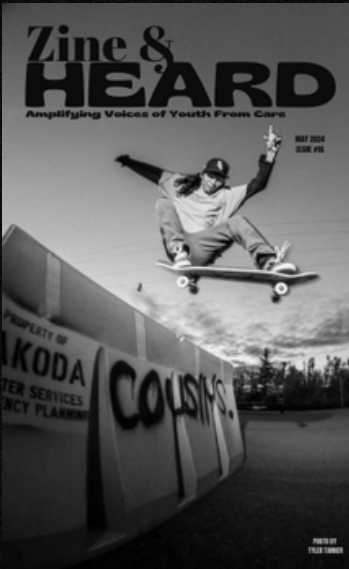
# THE SKATE ZINE COMETH

**MAY 2025**



We are looking for skate stories, skate art, skate photos, skate bands, skate events, and those all-time crazy, cool, colossal **FIRST BOARD CONFESSIONALS** back by popular demand.

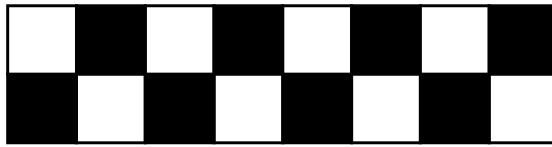
Priority will be given to submissions from youth from care but all are welcome. We can print up to 40 pages so we will try to squeeze you all in. Just get it in to [editor@zineandheard.ca](mailto:editor@zineandheard.ca) by the .....



**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS**

**APRIL 22, 2025**





**DIAL 9-8-8 SUICIDE CRISIS LINE 24/7**  
**INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS CRISIS LINE**

**24- HOUR 1-866-925-4419**

**YOUTH EMERGENCY SHELTER (Y.E.S.S.)**

**780-468-7070 24/7 24 HOURS**

**ACCESS 24/7 - 24 HOUR**

**Crisis and Intake Services - 780-424-2424**

**KIDS HELP PHONE - 24 HOUR**

**Call 1-800-668-6868 Facebook Messenger**

**Text CONNECT to 686868**

**NACIS CRISIS LINE - 24 HOUR**

**780-422-2001**

**NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION SERVICES**

**1-888-456-4566 24 HOUR**

**CMHA DISTRESS LINE - 24 HOUR**

**780-482-4357 (HELP)**

**KICKSTAND CONNECT**

**[mykickstand.ca/online-care#resources](https://mykickstand.ca/online-care#resources)**

**OFFICE OF THE YOUTH & CHILD ADVOCATE**

**If you have questions about your rights as a young person,  
need legal help, or need to speak out, we're here for you.**

**Talk to Us: Toll-free: (800) 661-3446**

**Monday - Friday 8:15 AM - 4:30 PM**

**NORTHERN ALBERTA Call: (780) 422-6056**

**SOUTHERN ALBERTA Call: (403) 297-8435**

**ACCESS OPEN MINDS**

**ACCESS Open Minds Edmonton is a walk-in service for individuals  
16-25 years old. Young people and their families can walk-in during  
open clinic hours and will be seen on a first come first serve basis.**

**MONDAY – FRIDAY 12:00-5:00PM 780-887-9781**

**NEED TO CONNECT? DIAL 211 24 HOURS**





# Many thanks to the Friends of Zine & HEARD

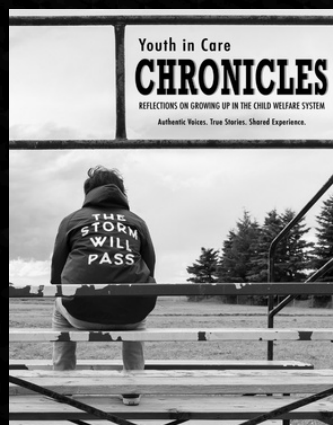
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NANDA & COMPANY AMANDA QUILL  
ANNE STEVENSON - WARD O-DAY'MIN COUNCILLOR  
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# We need your support

Zine & HEARD is made possible by subscriptions, the donations of friends & the kindness of strangers, limited advertising, random sponsorships & fierce passion. Please contact [editor@zineandheard.ca](mailto:editor@zineandheard.ca) or visit [www.zineandheard.ca/support](http://www.zineandheard.ca/support) for more information & thank you so much. We appreciate it.



4



18 former youth in care from  
Alberta tell their stories in  
**YOUTH IN CARE CHRONICLES:**  
Reflections on Growing Up in the  
Child Welfare System

Available at  
[Amazon](https://www.amazon.ca/dp/1554500000)  
&  
[Audreys](https://www.audreys.ca/)

All proceeds go to fund  
projects for youth in care.

# Edmonton Police hope new billboard generates tips in 3-year disappearance of Indigenous woman

**Jeannine Ermineskin last seen at downtown mall on Jan. 6, 2022**

Samantha Schwientek · CBC News · Posted: Jan 21, 2025 3:55 PM MST | Last Updated: January 21

"The goal is to get the community here talking about this case to generate conversation and then, hopefully, tips, even the smallest tips, just like places where she was, or people that she was with at the time of her disappearance," said Broadfoot. Native Counselling Services and REACH Edmonton helped fund the billboard.

The police investigation of her disappearance led to the area where the billboard is located, Broadfoot said. Ermineskin was last seen on CCTV at the TD Bank in Edmonton City Centre mall. Broadfoot said information from her cellphone suggests she was in the area of 107 Avenue and 101 Street when her cellphone activity ended.

Jeannine is an Indigenous female with brown eyes and brown hair.

She was 38 years old at the time of her disappearance

and was 5'8' tall and apx. 135 pounds.

She was last seen wearing a black jacket with a red hoodie underneath.

Her hair was dyed blond at the time of her disappearance.

She has also dyed her hair pink in the past.

Jeannine would go by the nickname "Nikki"

and she has used the aliases of

Verlya ERMINESKIN and

Candace Joyce ERMINESKIN.

According to EPS, Ermineskin has the following tattoos:

- Crown, diamond, flower and stars on her right arm
- The word "love" on the knuckles of her right hand
- Eagle, female faces and feathers on her left arm
- The word "love" written across her left wrist
- "Daniel" written across the right side of her neck
- Butterflies on the right side of her back
- Cheetah on her abdomen
- Feather with "Shyla" written on her upper left back

If you have any information about this individual, please contact the Edmonton Police Service at 780-423-4567 or Edmonton Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or [submit your tip online](#). Please reference the EPS file number #CA22-213918 when possible.

We hope Jeannine is found safe and reunited with friends and family soon. Zine & HEARD







*You  
are  
not  
forgotten.*

**A very high percentage of missing & murdered Indigenous women & girls, men & boys & Two-Spirit persons spent time in the child welfare system.**



**Less than .03% of Canadians have been in foster care.  
Less than .03%.**

**However....**

**65% of unhoused Canadians have been in foster care.  
50% of sexually exploited youth have been in foster care.  
65% of Indigenous inmates have been in foster care.**

Nichols et al 2017

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Nichols et al 2017

**Seeing a pattern here?**

**Why doesn't the  
Government of Alberta?**

**RAISE THE AGE.  
LOWER THE STATS.**

