Zine & Barbaro



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

WHO

Youth in care speaking out and making a difference.

WHAT

A zine to amplify our voices & raise awareness.

WHEN

We publish on or around the 15th of every month.

WHERE

We are based in Edmonton, AB, but are for youth in care everywhere.

WHY

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



QUOTE: Jeff Woods ARTWORK: Chasm Frazier

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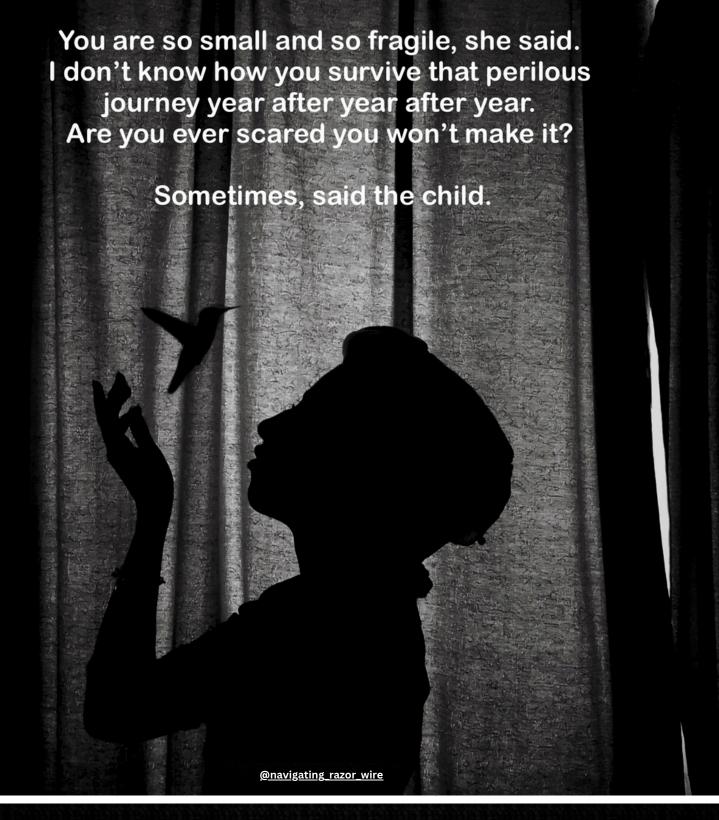
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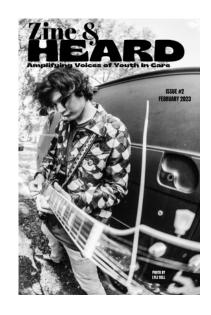




Are you a youth in care or former youth in care? Do you have words, poetry, art, music or something you would like to share? All contributions pay \$10. You retain the rights to your work.

Please contact editor@zineandheard.ca Or message us at Zine & Heard on Facebook or <u>@zine_and_heard</u> on Instagram.

Thank you.



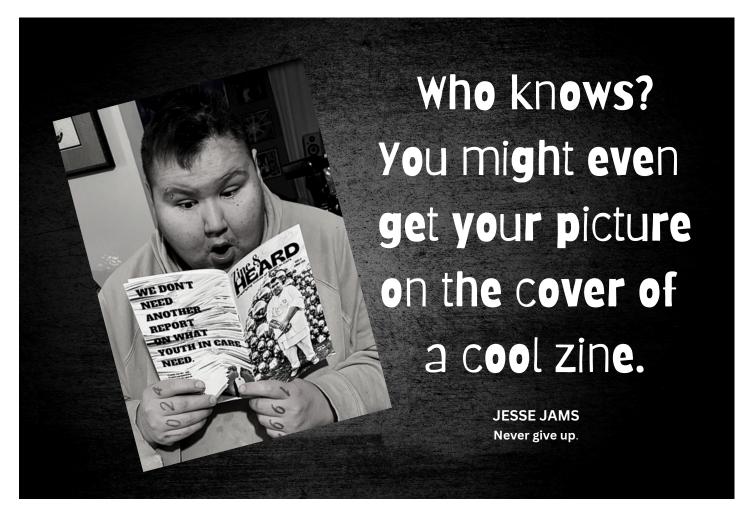
Many thanks to the Friends of Zine & HEARD COLLEEN THOMPSON MARLEY-JAY SUMMERS BUD FRASIER & THE ELECTRIC RAZORS LYLE BELL JAN MASLYK TOMMY TWO DOGS LOCAL 124 SKATEBOARDS & LONGBOARDS CORINNE CROSSMAN ANONYMOUS X 3

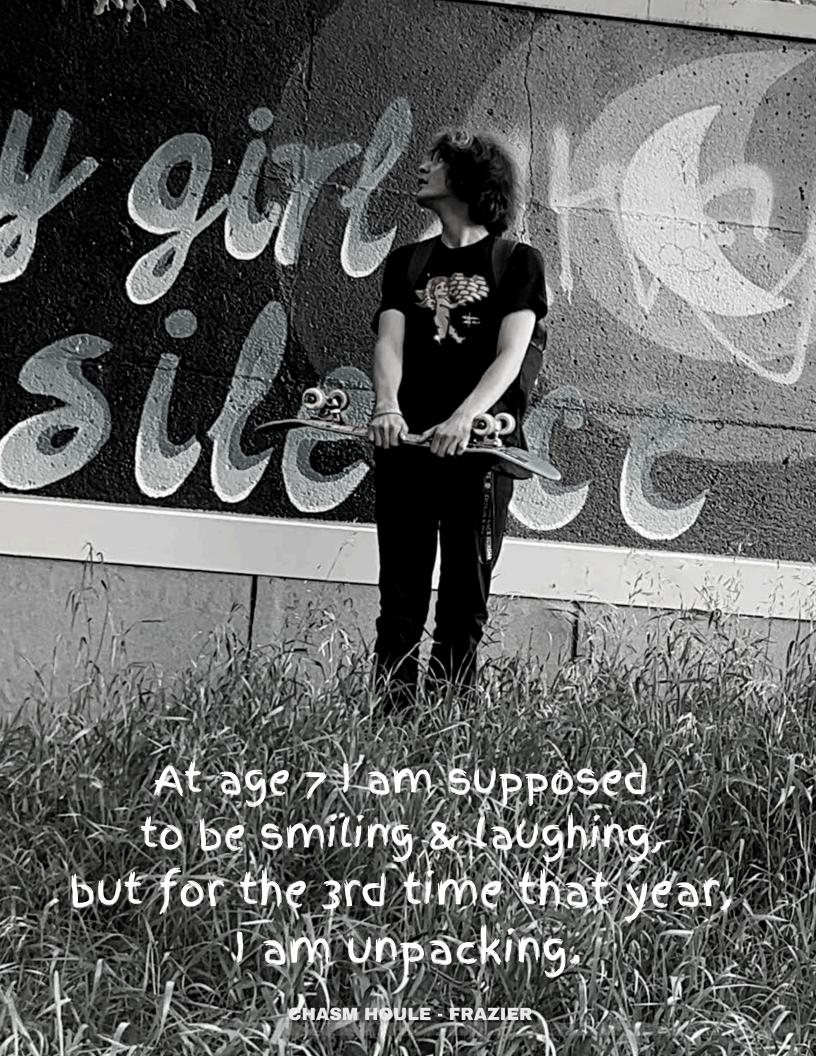
BE A PART OF SOMETHING GOOD

Zine & HEARD is made possible by the donations of friends, limited advertising, random sponsorships & fierce passion.

Please contact editor@zineandheard.ca for more information & thank you for your support.

Deadline for March issue is March 8th.





ON THE COVER

I have been in care since the day I was born. I never met my mother or my father and now they are gone. I am turning 22 soon so I will be "aging out". It's scary for us. It's like a dooms day clock ticking. You have to get it all figured out by then because you are gonna be all on your own. The only way to get financial supports after 22 is to go to school. I moved out on my own and went to school last year so I could get a good job before I turned 22 but I wasn't ready and it didn't work out. I felt very pressured and it was extremely stressful.

I graduated from high school which is something only 50% of kids in care do because we move around so much and change schools all the time. I moved 11 or 12 times in 13 years. Before I turned 14 I joined a baseball team, moved in with my coach, and the rest is history. I got lucky to find a family that loves me no matter what. So many of us don't. Most of us go through our whole lives never feeling like we belong anywhere. Never experiencing love.

I am a musician and music saved my life. It shows me that I am worth something. I taught myself most of what I know and realized that I have some talent. I play guitar, I sing, I play a bit of keyboard and I have written over 200 songs since I was 15. I learned the recording program, Ableton, on my own and composed a lot of my own music. It is hard work at times. It takes time but it's rewarding. Through that experience, I have learned that I have some pretty good tech skills, too. I play in a band called Jesse Jams & the Flams. The first time I performed live it was really fun but it also gave me a feeling that I was just the same as everyone else. I was up on stage with my sister and other bandmates and I felt like I finally fit in somewhere. It was a dream come true.

It's very lonely being in care. You can't relate to other kids. When they tell you to go home and cry to your mama, you can't. It's really scary because you don't know where you are going to end up. Raising the age back to 24 will give us more of a fighting chance to end up somewhere good and safe.

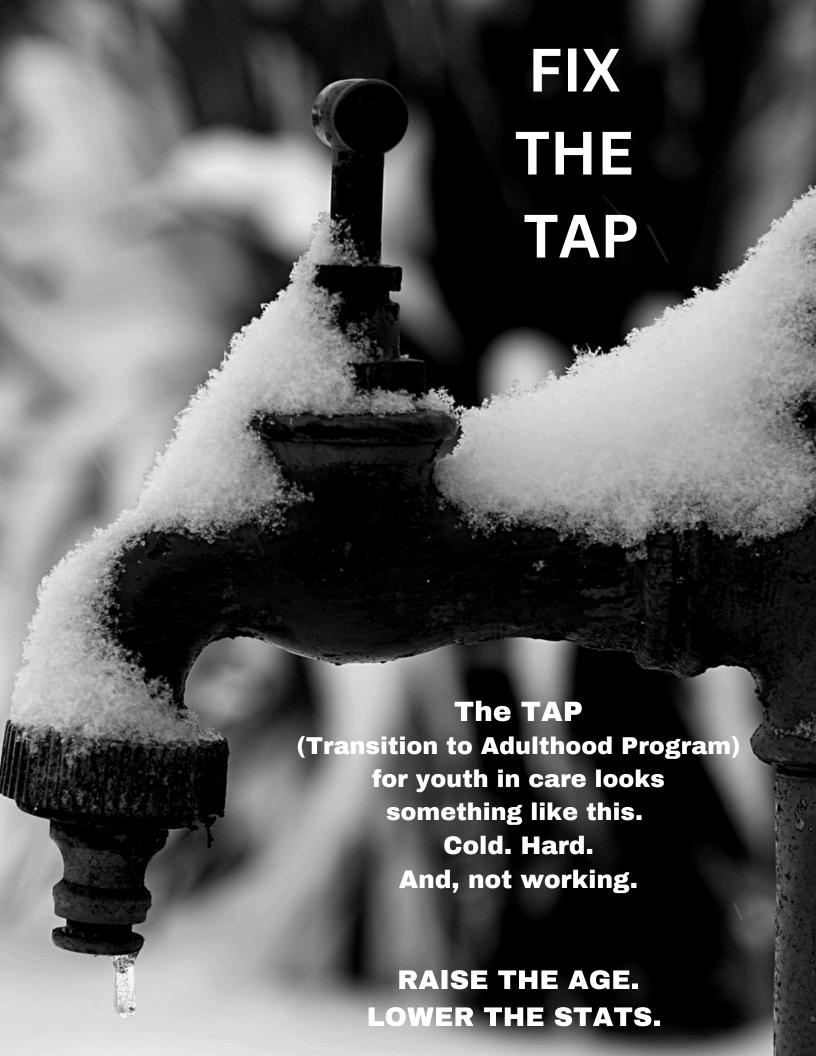


/ LYLE BELL

CHASM HOULE FRAZIER Contributor Zine & HEARD Also a musician, a bit of a song writer, a bit of a composer, a bit of a techie & a bit of a lot of things. Currently working on a PhD in Life.



A picture of me at age 12 or 13. I still skate every chance I get.





"Youth have repeatedly shared that the relationship they have with their worker matters."

There are some cracks in the TAP.

The TAP (Transition to Adulthood Program) has many of us who work in the field concerned about how this program will meet the needs of high-risk youth. How does TAP plan to meet the needs of these high-risk youth when long-term relationships with workers are ended due to a youth turning 18 or when a youth is required to change streams and workers as their needs change? How will TAP ensure that NO youth leaving government care will slip through the cracks?

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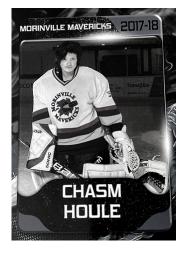
These are the youth that are calling their worker from a random phone because they lost their phone but wanted to check in. These are the youth that are calling their worker from jail asking about bail plans. These are the youth that the worker is sitting outside with making sure they have clean supplies and Naloxone. Youth have repeatedly shared that the relationship they have with their worker matters. This does not appear to have been considered when the TAP program was designed.

Yes, Advancing Futures will meet the needs of the youth that are hoping to go to school. Mentorship and support for developing employment skills will meet the needs of the youth that are hoping to be employed. But what about the youth that are just hoping to make it to tomorrow? They were given a program that does not focus on what is most important for them to succeed - relationships.

TAP meets the needs of the system rather than the needs of the youth.

Child Welfare Worker, Name Withheld

Somehow, I have had the same case worker for 17 years. I consider myself lucky because it is so rare. It has made a huge difference in my life because he gets me. He knows me and I know I can trust him. A worker is one constant you should have in your life especially when a lot of us don't have parents or anyone else to have our backs. He is also the reason I collect hockey cards and love hockey so much. I even got to live my dream of being a goalie and played hockey for a few years which most kids in care don't get to do because we don't have the support and we move around too much. Chasm, age 21



COURT SAID. THEY SAID.

In 2019, the GOA (Government of Alberta) made the hasty decision (ie money grab) to lower the age of supports for youth aging out of their care from 24 to 22. They stated that it was because there was a decline in the numbers of youth needing help up to age 24 (<u>Toronto Star, October 31, 2019</u>). What they failed to state was how big of a decline in numbers there was. They failed to say how many youth there were that still needed support. They failed to explain why those youth didn't matter.

The decision was halted by an injunction based on the challenge mounted by a young, single mother in care. However, the Alberta Court of Appeal sided with the province and the GOA went ahead and lowered the age during the pandemic. They did not however get away without some clear direction from the five judges who oversaw the case.

WHAT THE COURT SAID

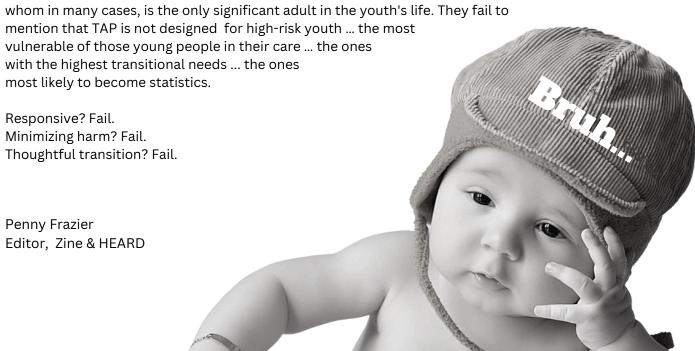
"Any transition of these vulnerable individuals to a new program should be done with careful consideration to its impact on them, and with an eye to minimizing harm," the judgment says. "The need for thoughtful transition is particularly acute during a time of social and physical isolation, as we are experiencing in this pandemic. I encourage Alberta to be responsive to this transitional need."

(Globe & Mail, January 27, 2021)

WHAT THE GOA DID

The TAP (Transition to Adulthood Program) recently rolled out by the GOA does not meet the court directives. It was not designed with careful consideration to its impact on youth. It also appears that current research on the outcomes for youth aging out of the system was ignored or perhaps it just wasn't important that former youth in care are 200 times more likely to become homeless (Globe & Mail, August 9, 2017) and 5 times more likely to die by the age of 25 (The Tyee, May 29, 2019). Those are just two of the many staggering statistics that persist among former child welfare recipients.

The GOA wants you to believe that TAP is the answer for the youth aged 22 - 24 that they removed supports from. It is not. They fail to mention that TAP does not provide any financial supports to these youth unless they attend school. They fail to mention that TAP is not designed for youth to keep their case worker past age 18, whom in many cases, is the only significant adult in the youth's life. They fail to



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GIVING CUTS TO YOUTH IN CARE ACROSS THE PROVINCE!

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EMPATHY

If you listen hard enough you can see their tears in the rainfall and feel their cries in the silence.

But you must listen.

Excerpt from Scars & Stars by Jesse Thistle

Eddie Murphy's experience in foster care was a short, but very important part of his life. He was just eight years old when he and his brother were sent to a foster home because of his mother's illness. Although he stayed in foster care for just

"Those were baaaaaad days. Staying with her was probably the reason I became a comedian."

about one year, he credits
the experience with helping
him develop a sense of humour
and making him realize how
important it is to find
something to laugh about in
every situation. Murphy and
his older brother Charles were
put in the care of a woman
whom Eddie calls "a kind of

black Nazi". "Those were baaaaaad days. Staying with her was probably the reason I became a comedian."

Excerpt from "Foster to Famous" fosterclub.com

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It's a simple yet powerful word that describes my life well.
It's a good reminder to keep going no matter how hard shit gets. My sister has the same tattoo in the same place. We share an arm of tattoos and we also share a world of hurt but at the end of the day we have each other and we are unstoppable. According to the statistics I shouldn't be alive but I am. I do struggle but I have an end goal to not only survive but to thrive. I will figure it out because I am Unstoppable.

A.B.

MY INK is a regular feature in Zine & HEARD. If you are a former youth in care, send us a pic of your tattoo and the story behind it. Pays \$10.

Contact editor@zineandheard.ca

or message us @zine and heard on Instagram

or Zine & HEARD on FB. Thanks.

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER

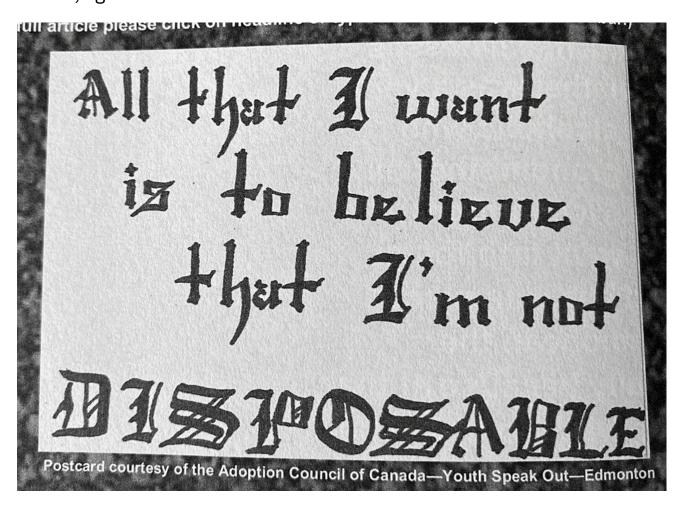
(unless you grow up in care)



I never asked for this life. We don't choose to go into care. We don't have any control over our lives growing up and then are expected to have it all under control when we "age out".

Then you think you'll have the supports you need until you are 24 to make plans and get set up but suddenly it's 22. What did we do to deserve that? Time goes fast enough already. We are your future. We will be in charge of looking after you someday. Think about that.

Chasm, age 21

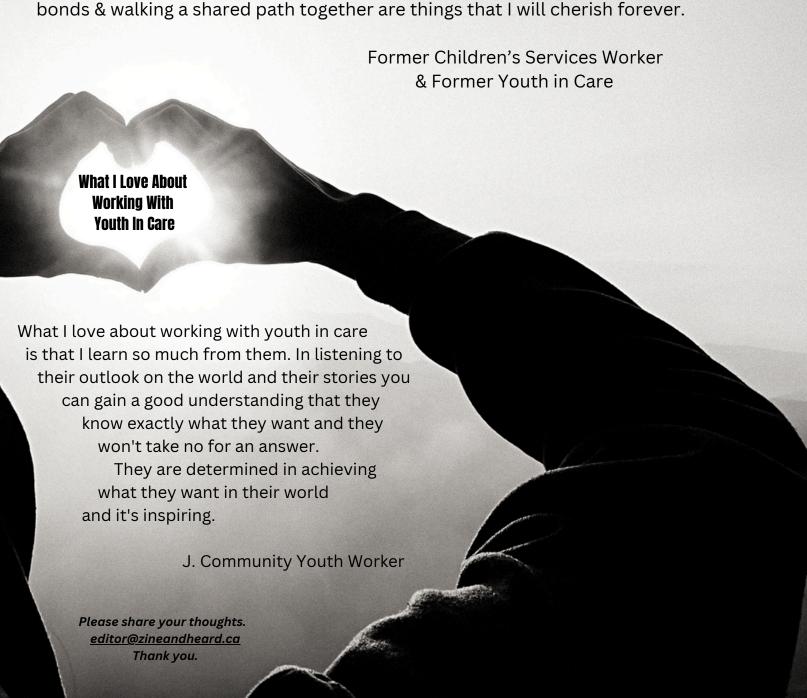


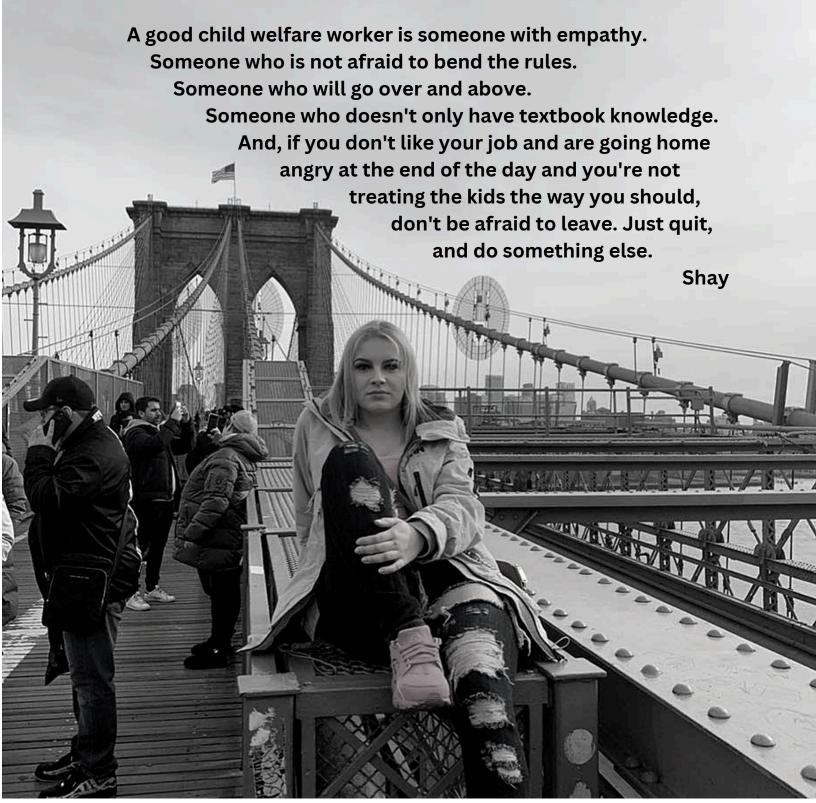
WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER is a regular feature in Zine & HEARD We want to know what your experience of 'aging out" of the child welfare system was like. Change is needed and through sharing stories we can make a difference for those who are coming up and 'aging out' in the future. The government can do better. Tell them what needs to be done.

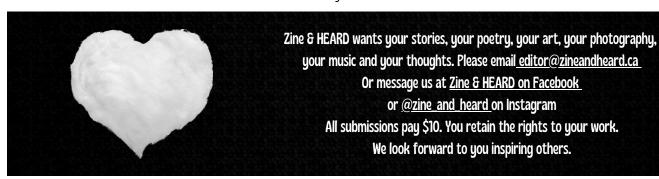
editor@zineandheard.ca

Working with youth in care is one of my greatest passions & something I love to do for so many reasons. By definition, youth in care, have been unfairly disadvantaged, often due to circumstances beyond their control & by those tasked with ensuring they are cared for. Young people have so much potential & their entire lives ahead of them. I find that youth in care can be some of the most hurt people, but are also some of the strongest & most loving. My heart truly feels for these youth whom have had to endure such hardships & it makes them some of the most in-need & deserving of extra care & compassion. Being able to play a role in helping to possibly make their lives just a bit better, see their own potential or just letting them know that they are not alone is some of most rewarding work you can do. The right person working with a youth in care can have the most significant impact on them by giving them something that they may not have ever had from another adult; trust, care, mentorship & guidance. The intimate one-on-one chats about life, watching them persevere, building strong bonds & walking a shared path together are things that I will cherish forever.





Shay is currently working towards her BSW and is a strong advocate for the rights of youth in care. She has spoken on dozens of panels and webinars and at various conferences over the past 5 years. Shay tells it like it is. Youc can read her full story in Youth in Care Chronicles.



JESSE THISTLE

Best-Selling Author. Award-Winning Writer. Historian. Academic. Keynote Speaker. Former Youth in Care.

JESSE THISTLE is Métis-Cree, from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and an assistant professor in Humanities at York University in Toronto. From the Ashes, his memoir, was the top-selling Canadian book in 2020, the winner of the Rakuten Kobo Emerging Writer Prize for Nonfiction, Indigenous Voices Award, and the High Plains Book Award, and also a finalist for CBC's Canada Reads. Jesse won a Governor General's Academic Medal in 2016, and is a 2016 Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Scholar and a 2016 Vanier Scholar, A frequent keynote speaker, he lives in Hamilton, Ontario, with his wife, Lucie, and is at work on multiple projects, including his next book. Visit him at JesseThistle.com.



"I longed to be part of something again. To be known and accepted. To hear my name. No one ever said my name anymore. I never told anyone who I was for fear of being found out. For what? I didn't know. I had forgotten years ago. I slumped forward on the bench and held my head in my hands, trying to remember how my name sounded. I spelled it aloud to myself. J-E-S-S-E. Jesse."

 Jesse Thistle, From the Ashes: My Story of Being Métis, Homeless, and Finding My Way

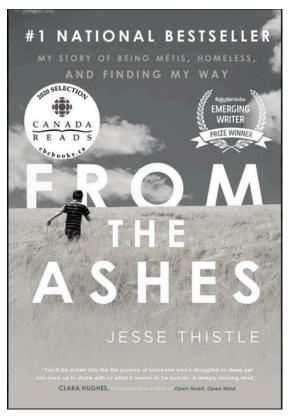


Many thanks to Jesse & his wife, Lucie.
While Jesse was unable to grant us an interview, we are honoured to have been given permission to use his bio and picture in Zine & HEARD to inspire others. Never give up.

"I went to rehab and part of it was to write my four steps. I looked at what I did wrong to other people — and what other people did wrong to me — and at the events that traumatized me that led to a lot of resentments and shame. I decided to stick them on a blog. I was cataloguing them that way. The Toronto Star did a story on me that caught the attention of Simon & Schuster. I sent them my collection of four steps from rehab. They contacted me right away and said, 'This is going to make an amazing book, we want to publish you."

<u>Jesse Thistle, Excerpt from CBC Books, November</u> 27, 2019

How Jesse Thistle survived addiction, homelessness and incarceration — and became a Canada Reads finalist.



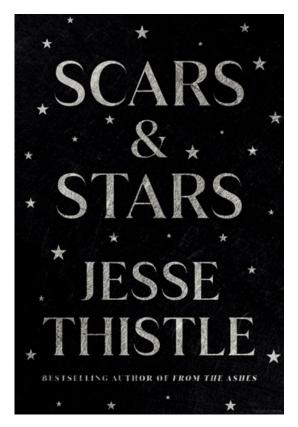
"All us criminals start out as normal people just like anyone else, but then things happen in life that tear us apart, that makes us into something capable of hurting other people.

That's all any of the darkness really is—just love gone bad. We're just broken-hearted people hurt by life."

Jesse Thistle, From the Ashes: My Story of Being Indigenous, Homeless, and Finding My Way



Readers will be gripped. PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (Starred Review)



"We are allowed to imagine ourselves as something more, even if you're just some Native guy with a broken heart living at the shelter with a rotten leg who thinks he's Achilles," he writes at the end of the book, handing over his shield to Rose. "So you can overcome and be who you are supposed to be." Jesse Thistle, Scars & Stars **Excerpt from Toronto Star** article, October 21, 2022



#6 Best Book of the Year 2022 - Indigo Books

Read more about Jesse Thistle

"I want people to understand that you can't just write people off because they've done something wrong. You have to give people a second chance. I'm one of those people."

Now Or Never. CBC RADIO.

How best-selling author Jesse Thistle is overcoming fears about being a good dad

Carleton Newsroom

Bestselling Indigenous Author Jesse Thistle Shares
Story of Trauma, Healing & Finding Home at Carleton's
Let's Talk Series

CBC BOOKS

How Jesse Thistle survived addiction, homelessness and incarceration — and became a Canada Reads finalist

Publishers Weekly

The Frontlines of Colonialism:

PW Talks with Jesse Thistle

A Tribe Called Beauty

Native Reads: From The Ashes by Jesse Thistle



"My Life Book" All I want is to be like any other child. Do you know how it feels to have your life typed and filed? Kayla, 21 Former Youth in Care

This is a quote from the Report from the <u>"Youth Leaving Care Hearings"</u> in Ontario in 2011. It was interesting to read through the report 12 years later and see that the top recommendation of the report was to: Raise the age for Extended Care and Maintenance to youth until they are 25. To date that has not happened. Kids in care in Ontario still 'age out' at 18. I am guessing that not supporting youth in their care as soon as they become young adults is all about saving money, but consider the following.

"Five hundred and eighty youth "aging out" each year in Ontario will experience homelessness. Over their lifetimes, they may cost the province approximately \$629.8 million in emergency shelter." (TVO Today, Jan 5, 2022)

Maybe they need to hire better accountants.

Penny Frazier, Editor, Zine & HEARD

"Youth in care should not be considered as disposable by the systems who are responsible for their care [...] but rather they must be recognized as worthy of the social and financial investments¹² that will help them grow into thriving adults."

National Council of Youth in Care Advocates & Youth in Care Canada Board Member

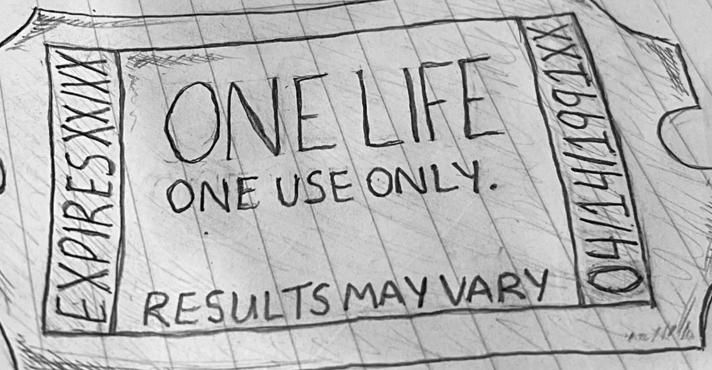
Meanwhile in Scotland...



Scotland introduced its "staying put" model supporting youth in care until age 21, in 2013. Those who leave care at that age, or earlier, can also return to receive support as former "looked after" kids until they turn 26.

Take note, Canada.

Rehab Life Art by A.B.





SHOUT OUT

to our friend & Zine & HEARD contributor, Marcus, who recently underwent major jaw surgery in Calgary. Marcus was in care from a very young age & has had multiple surgeries on his jaw over the years. He hopes this is the last one. We do too. Sending him love & all the best in his recovery.

Youth in care are 200 times more likely to become homeless than their peers.

Globe & Mail, August 9, 2017

Panic

Sitting there in the darkness Heart racing Trying to calm your breath Tears streaming down your face as you pray for this to pass The uncertainty that is out of control All the fears running through your heart Dancing and taunting you as you pray for the strength to breathe You look up Removing the hands from your face Attempting to take a deep breath Pray for strength to breathe With each breath your head beats Try not to panic anymore, love This shall pass Keep breathing You are loved, dear child Even though there is uncertainty And the unknown beyond Try not to panic, love

Cheyanne



That feeling of uncertainty and wanting to disappear happened after my brother died when I was 9. That one person who I had was no longer. I had to find another or so I thought. But I had to trust that life would only give me what I could handle. That's how I overcame. Knowing that what I endured would only help me to help others.

VOICES OF YOUTH IN CARE CAN & DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Some of their stories are horrific. At the B.C. Legislature, when an MLA began fiddling with his phone, a young woman raised in care in the Okanagan forced him to look up: "I have to have sex to eat," said the woman, who was granted anonymity by The Globe and Mail because she feared that her job prospects might be hindered if she was identified. "I live with mice, black mould, maggots and ants. We're here to tell you: this isn't working. What parent kicks their child out at 19, and says: 'Don't come back?' To be frank, young lives are at stake." Globe & Mail, December 27, 2018...

...Fast forward to 2022

Budget 2022 funds comprehensive supports for young people transitioning from government care to adulthood, including a new financial supplement, a no-limit earnings exemption, help with the cost of housing, improved access to transition workers, enhanced life skills and mental-health programs and better medical benefits until age 27.

BC Government News, March 15, 2022

...and this is progress ...

But these supports are policy changes, not child welfare law amendments, and legislation still ends support for young people at the age of majority: 19 in B.C., New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut and Yukon; 18 in Alberta, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

"What that means is they're voluntary," said Jessica Knutson, a child and youth engagement social worker with Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society, and a former youth in care. Youth still have to apply for additional support after leaving government care, and future governments could choose to remove these supports or cut their funding.

The TYEE, February 10, 2023, Katie Hyslop

RAISE THE AGE. LOWER THE STATS.

GAME CHANGERS

When I was 16 years old, my sister and I got our own apartment. We attended high school and worked part time jobs as the government's assistance was minimal in the early 1990s. I recall a school counsellor who would frequently check in with my sister and I. When we moved into our first apartment, he bought us a plant and took us for lunch. This small act of kindness meant so much to me then and it is still a heartfelt memory almost 30 years later.

Teresa, excerpt from Youth in Care Chronicles

I heard a silly woman coming down the hall yelling,
"Hey! Do you know where a pretty, young girl is?
Her name is Patricia!" Around the corner came that
wonderful child welfare worker with balloons and
flowers. I was so happy and embarrassed to see her.
She told the psychologist he could leave and held my h
much she believed in me and how much I would miss out on it I took my own
life. She told me she was going to help me and that I wouldn't have to worry
from this day forward. That night we made a plan to change my story from
"foster kids can't make it", to "proving that they can" and that became my
motivation from that day forward.

Patricia, excerpt from Youth in Care Chronicles

My first caseworker that I had was good because I felt like she understood me at a young age. The first time I met her the staff told her not to take me out in public because I was a risk to society but she took me out anyway because somehow she knew I was just a messed up kid that needed help. She was also from the LGBTQ community so that was kind of cool.

Jesse, excerpt from Youth in Care Chronicles

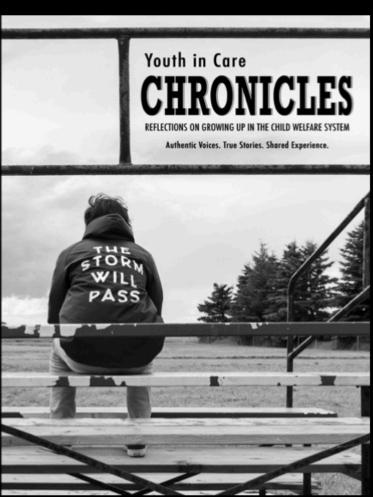
GAME CHANGERS is a regular feature in Zine & HEARD. We'd like to hear about who made a difference in your life. Could be a big or small difference. It all matters. Please contact editor@zineandheard.ca or message us on FB or lnstagram



18 AUTHORS **AUTHENTIC VOICES** TRUE STORIES SHARED EXPERIENCE

If you are a youth in care or formerly from care, someone who works with youth in care, or someone who would like to know what it is like to grow up in care, this book was written for you.





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Praise for YOUTH IN CARE CHRONICLES

Powerful! Thank you for sharing youth voices from the Edmonton Youth Speak Out Team. A call to all policy makers, child welfare agencies and permanency families. Lifelong connections and supports are crucial, thank you for highlighting youth voices. Nothing for us, without us! Cathy Murphy, Executive Director Adoption Council of Canada

I love the cover of Youth in Care Chronicles. The young man's jacket reads:, "THE STORM WILL PASS", and as a former child welfare recipient of the Sixties Scoop era, my thoughts were so similar. "Everything is temporary."

Seeing children, youth and young adults affected by the separation, displacement of their homes, families and communities is heartbreaking. Growing up in care is not easy. It is a scary and frightening experience when you walk into your first group home or foster home. There are no familiar faces; you don't have the same bedroom, living room, kitchen or eating habits and the menus are different. The rules and regulations are different in every household. The families you live with may be devoted Christians or come from a diverse ethnic background. Being in child welfare you have no control over your life.

Social workers can make a huge difference in a youth's life, especially when they take the time to get to know the youth they are working with because culturally, children and youth are the heart of our communities. No matter what age, the child and the youth need to feel that they belong and have a chance to be loved, accepted, acknowledged, heard and understood.

Youth in Care

lic Voices. True Stories. Shared Experience

Bernadette Iahtail, RSW Co-Founder/Executive Director Creating Hope Society of Alberta

An engaging collection of meaningful perspectives and lived experience of those in the child and family intervention system. An essential read for learning about the intimate relational world of social work with resilient youth populations. Ellen Perrault, PhD, RSW Dean, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary

Hey.... it's OK to ask for help.

YOUTH EMERGENCY SHELTER (Y.E.S.S.) 780-468-7070 24/7 24 HOURS ACCESS 24/7 - 24 HOUR

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KIDS HELP PHONE - 24 HOUR

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

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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

Foster Care

By TERRY WOLVERTON

Each house smells of strangers:
cabbage boiling on the stove,
harsh soap at the rim of the sink,
starched sheets that scrape
against the skin in bed,
hard pillows shaped
by someone else's head,
rotting bananas, sweaty feet and dust.

I try to hide one shirt
beneath the mattress
just to keep the smell of home.
Sometimes they find it,
squeeze it through the wringer;
hid long enough, the cloth absorbs
the air around it, loses its memories.

My brother smells like sour milk,
unwashed armpits and the school paste
he eats. He cries
when they hit us; I never do.
Each night I hear
his sniffles soak the pillow.
Come morning, I grab the damp case,
hold it to my nose and breathe.

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