

Zine & HEARD

November
December
2023

Amplifying Voices of Youth From Care

*In
Loving Memory
of
Vee Duncan*

Photo by
CURTIS CARDINAL

Photo By
CURTIS CARDINAL

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.

WHO

Youth in care & 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

Based in Edmonton but are for youth in & from care everywhere.

WHY

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



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Co*Lab

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Youth in Care Chronicles

[@indigitalmediayeg](https://www.instagram.com/indigitalmediayeg)



**We all come from the great soup in the sky.
To the cauldron we will return.
Thank you for feeding the people
the Feast and the Fire.**

**Take care.
Take a walk
if that helps.
Make soup.
Write a poem.
Notice the noise
and the silence.
Feel.
Cry.
Hug.
Rest.
Laugh.
Travel safely.**

Back to the Feast and the Fire.

**Maigan van der Giessen
In memory of Vee Duncan**

The long hard road you walked

From time to time you stumbled on this road. It was a road most would not even fathom to take. A road full of ups and down. A road full of lefts and rights. A road that was unpredictable and bumpy. No one I know went down the road you went down. From the time we met in this physical world to the time you left to the spirit world. It was during those times when the road was rough and we wanted to give up when things weren't going our way to the smooth sailing happy moments when you were so excited to continue the work you do. To the heavy times on this road when you had to speak about your past and make amends to the generous times when people would donate to your god given cause. The times when the road looked like it would never end so your inner child kicked in and told you to just keep going the end is coming soon. The times we would feed the brothers, sisters and children the amazing food you made with love. This road you thought would end still hasn't ended. It is still going. We are still doing the work through you. The impact you made on me and those around you to just shut up, quit talking and do the work. To do Creators work everyday that in this day and age people just do not want to do. The unconditional love you have shown to others came with so many risks and you knew the repercussions on this road but still kept going. You knew this road was long, rough, happy, sad, crazy, fun, beautiful, angry and lonely. It was a long hard road for you and this road still doesn't end here. We keep walking this road together in this physical world and in spirit. This road never ends. I love you Uncle Vee. Always. Keep walking. See you in the kitchen when I get there.

Curtis Cardinal



Curtis & Vee at Tee Pee Treats.

His like will not soon be seen again.

Vee Duncan showed up unannounced at Peace Camp in late summer 2020, looking to volunteer in supporting the unhoused folks in the camp. He'd been at our sister camp Pekiwewin, but was a better fit for the more hippie anarchist Zeitgeist of our camp. For the first week, he thought I was either a government spy or a prison guard, and I wound him up about that. I knew prison slang as well as he did. But by force of circumstance we became close and sort of mentored each other through the chaotic day to day of the camp. I helped him with de-escalation, planning, logistics, and he helped me with understanding what the material and emotional needs of people experiencing houselessness really were, and with the central importance of food and culture. As bad as he was at de-escalation (he got pepper sprayed), and as much as his angry outbursts, some righteous, some completely gratuitous, upset good order, he had a better instinctive feel for what people were going through than any of us, because he'd lived through and learned from homelessness, anti-indigenous racism, incarceration, mental health challenges, and concurrent disorders, all before reaching what we call l'age du Christ (33) in French.



As rough as he was on everybody else sometimes, with his mercurial temperament, he had the best intuitive touch with people who were 'down on their luck', or suffering from poverty, systemic discrimination, psychiatric and or substance use disorders, of anyone I've ever met. He had reflected a lot on his experience, without reading Victor Frankl he'd reached the

conclusion that hope was the key. He thought that transmitting whatever hope one could to others, enabled one to remain and grow one's own hopefulness. He struggled to remain hopeful, vacillated between elation and despair, but always manifested an absolutely sincere desire to help others with simple things like food, water, ciggies, safe supply, clothing, propane, anything that would make people feel that they were loved, that they were not forgotten, that things could and would still work out.



By early November, 2020, the naloxone was freezing up, the EPS were moving in, it was too cold to cook or use water, and the camp was shuttered. Agencies housed whom they could, and we were overjoyed that the two camps had created enough media and political pressure that two additional shelters were opened at Cessco and the Shaw. The camp was cleared on November 5th, and Vee was as angry and anguished about it as any of the campers. He was right to be, not a single person had died during the months of camp, but many people we knew were to die on the street over the next two winters.

Without missing a beat, our camp cook Christina and Vee started delivering hot meals to homeless camps, with Christina founding Our Initiative and Vee, Vic Krengel, Rohana Green, and myself helping set up Nékem. Nékem started with nothing more than donations and member contributions, but Vee had a knack for fundraising, networking, and social media, and the operation gradually grew from a few sandwiches and juice hiked into the bush to an operation with ten employees. This was only possible because Vee had a vision and he had a serious work ethic. Along the way he worked hard on himself, apologized to people he'd wronged, and strove always to be better. In doing so he went from being a reprobate to a man who earned two service awards from the Lieutenant Governor, one for mental health advocacy, the other for human rights advocacy.



Vee was also very funny, retaining an incredible sense of dark humour (I used to love Rage Against the Machine before they got all political) that got him through his 300 kilometer shopping cart drag from Calgary to Edmonton in late winter of 2021. This exploit drew national press to the homelessness issue, putting a face on how people who are supported through their difficulties can go on to do valuable work. Even in the heart of redneck country, people loved Vee's chutzpah, his belief that everyone should 'just fucking do something'. While he was willing to use media for the cause, he had nothing but contempt for people who used it to further their own

narcissism, or worse, for poverty porn. He was acutely aware that in going from zero to hero, there was a risk of it becoming about him. The only personal gratification I ever saw him take was the pride of having turned things around in the eyes of his family and his band, having redeemed himself in that community, where it mattered most to him. He was deliriously proud of having done sundance and become a pipe carrier.

Nékem was Vee's vision, it was his show, based on an astute analysis of the relationship between food, culture, love, work, and hope. But he never forgot to thank the dozens of people and organizations that had helped us, notably Rock Soup, CHEW, Teepee Treats, Our Initiative, COLAB, Backstairs Burgers, French Taste Bakery, Duchess, Solo Bar, etc. Like a lot of people dealing with PTSD, his pattern was to get angry, fly off the handle, burn bridges, process, reflect, circle back, and apologize. His untimely death means that he won't get the chance to do that. For those of you who knew him, please believe that he would have, the stubborn bastard, eventually. We believe that he hauled his ass out of darkness and purposefully added light to the world, and that those so inclined should learn from him and carry on any practical aid for the houseless they can. I believe his passing to have been accidental, but would encourage all to be extra mindful of self-care in its wake.

He was a strong man but
his demons were strong
as well.

I'll miss riding around in
the truck with him yelling,
'Don't be so fucking white',
U turn here! Or, dude,
can you fucking believe
what we're doing, dude?
We're going to do this
across Turtle Island, uncle!

As we say in Irish,
his like will not soon
be seen again.

Kevin Bell
with Nekem



Edmonton advocate to finish 300-km walk for Indigenous mental health, homelessness

Vee Duncan has pulled shopping cart from Calgary to Edmonton over week-long journey

Jordan Omstead · CBC News · Posted: Mar 09, 2021 7:00 AM MST | Last Updated: March 9, 2021



Pulling for Change

Christina Max

Published Mar 10, 2021 · < 1 minute read

☐ Join the conversation



0310 wk cart walker WK.jpg, WK

After setting off on foot from Calgary March 2, Indigenous advocate Vee Duncan stopped at Rock Soup Food Bank and Greenhouse before settling in for the night in Wetaskiwin Sunday.

Duncan experienced homelessness for a number of years in Vancouver, Calgary, and Edmonton before embarking on his Pulling For Change campaign to bring awareness and immediate Call for Actions to end homelessness and create support programming for Indigenous men's mental health. He has been pulling a shopping cart, as a symbol of the daily struggle of the homeless, as he made his way along Hwy. 2A to Edmonton. Duncan was expected to arrive at the Alberta Legislature steps March 9.

EDMONTON | News

'I know what it's like': Indigenous man completes 300 km walk to honour homeless Albertans



Sean Amato CTV News Edmonton
@JSJamato | Contact

Published Tuesday, March 9, 2021 7:20PM MST



Right to left, Indigenous advocate, Vee Duncan, and Kasey Petriuk push a shopping cart through Nisku towards Edmonton.

Tuesday
March 9, 2021

On the right path

"I've been homeless before and I've had to drag shopping carts. And I've had to do all of this while living on the streets. I just wanted to show solidarity and I also wanted to bring awareness to reconciliation," Duncan said.

Duncan followed Highway 2A on their way to Edmonton, connecting with community organizations, friends and curious strangers along the way. One of the most powerful moments of the trip was an encounter with a group of older Cree women in Maskwacis, who offered them tobacco and a donation, telling Duncan they were on the right path.

"I broke down crying. I couldn't believe that people would support me in this way," Duncan said. "I've had friends come out and follow me. I've had some people come out and pull with me, walk along beside me ... The support that I get from them, it's just amazing."



I've had friends come out and pull with me, walk along side of me...the support that I get from them, it's just amazing.





Vee Duncan (1987-2023)

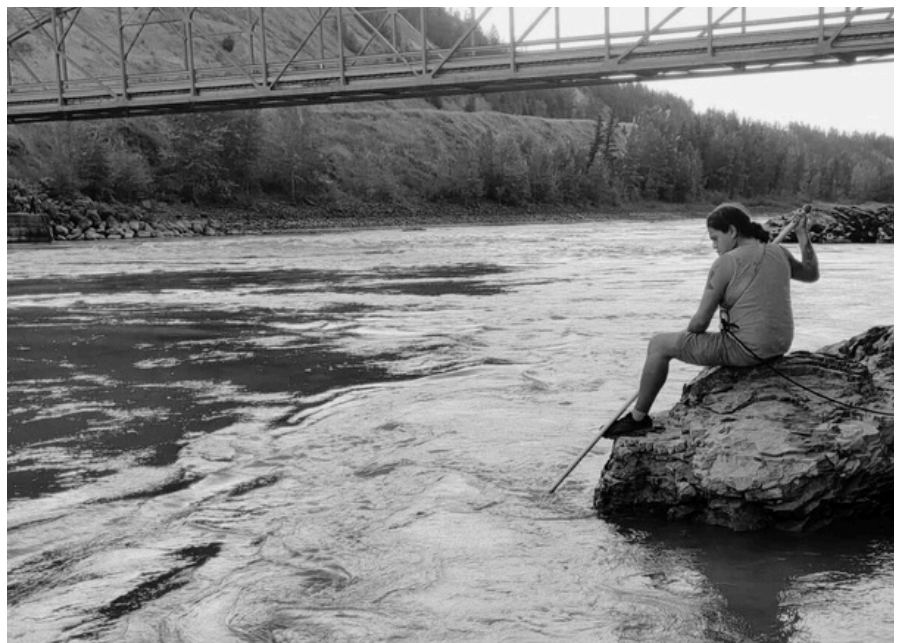
Vee Duncan was born in Williams Lake, BC and was half-Secwépemc, half-Squamish Nation. Facing the impacts of inter-generational trauma, Vee experienced addiction, incarceration, and homelessness for many years. In March 2021, he walked from Calgary to Edmonton dragging a shopping cart to raise awareness about homelessness and Indigenous mental health, and then founded a non-profit called Nékem (“to change something”) to continue his community outreach and awareness-raising work. The name Nékem was chosen to honour the Secwépemc values of caring for the community that Vee learned from his grandparents. Vee led Nékem’s efforts to dismantle harmful colonial biases in existing support services, build resilience and support within the houseless community, and mentor Indigenous Warriors to heal from inter-generational trauma and care for the community. Vee drew strength and inspiration from connecting with Indigenous ceremony and teachings, including participating in the Sundance and being a Pipe Carrier.

Sadly, Vee passed away just ten days before the Human Rights Awards, and so, on their behalf, the team from Né'kem came to stand in Vee's place. Tears were shed as the team came up to receive the award and it was an emotional moment as we collectively grieved Vee's absence. Faves, who works at Né'kem and accepted the award on behalf of Vee, spoke of their last meeting together at a local McDonalds, and how they bought food and gave out cigarettes for the houseless community members there. Faves spoke of Vee's kindness, how they worked hard for a minimum wage to ensure equity between themselves and fellow employees, and how Vee tried so hard to ensure everyone he surrounded himself with and encountered felt valued and loved.

"Vee always made sure everyone felt like they were human - that they were valued - he was affirming to everyone on how much he valued their work. Vee was very funny, witty, outspoken, and present in the community. He had a lot of energy and a lot of creative ideas... the shopping cart pull from Calgary to Edmonton to raise awareness, garbage cleanup for camps to keep them out of trouble with the law, meal support, heating support, naloxone supplies, clothing support...expanding to Calgary....there was no angle to the complex challenges he hadn't thought of."

Her Honour, Salma Lakhani, spoke briefly and expressed her shock at Vee's passing, reflecting how Vee had left a lasting impression when they had last been at Government House to receive an award previously:

"One of the things Vee said - 'Never in my life with the life I've lived, did I dream or imagine that I would be invited to a place like this to accept an award'. Vee's legacy will live on, and I thank all of you at Né'kem for coming out here today, and I know you will help Vee's legacy live on and shine bright."



John Humphrey Centre
for Peace & Human Rights

Since March of 2021, Nekem has delivered over 28,000 meals, along with supplies related to harm reductions, menstruation and winter needs.

2022 TRUE GRIT RECIPIENT

Vee Cee Duncan is a 33-year-old, half-Secwepemic, half-Squamish Nation. We was born in Williams Lake, BC. His mom is a survivor of St. Joseph's Residential School and his father was murdered when Vee was 9-years old. He was raised in East Hastings and all over the Lower Mainland. He lived on Sugar Cane Reserve with his grandmother who passed on traditional knowledge that would deeply affect Vee's ability to overcome the challenges that followed. Facing the impacts of intergenerational trauma, Vee left home at 17, and experienced addiction, incarceration and was homeless for many years. In 2018 he was released from jail for the last time, and found a path to recovery at an Indigenous treatment Centre. He has spent the last four years doing extensive therapy to heal from trauma and abuse.

In 2019, Vee started handing out water to people in need, practicing altruism through the teachings of recovery and teachings of his people at Akcai Lake. In the summer of 2020, he volunteered at Peace Camp YEG, providing much needed support to Edmonton's vulnerable populations. In March 2021, he walked from Calgary to Edmonton dragging a shopping cart to raise awareness about homelessness and Indigenous mental health, and founded the non-profit company Nekem: To Change Something to continue his community outreach and awareness-raising work.

Vee chose the name Nekem to honour the Secwepemic values about taking care of the community that he learned from his grandparents growing up. As managing Director, Vee leads Nekem's efforts to dismantle harmful colonial biases in existing support services, build resilience and support within the homeless community and mentor Indigenous Warriors to heal from intergenerational trauma and give back to the community. He has built working partnerships with a wide range of non-profit organizations, businesses and government agencies to strengthen the community ties necessary for this work. Since March of 2021, Nekem has delivered over 28,000 meals, along with supplies related harm reductions, menstruation and winter needs. Vee continues to draw strength from connecting with Indigenous ceremony and traditional learning. He has been participating in Sundance and is a Pipe Carrier and brings the knowledge that he knows to those that want to learn.



2021 - 2022 True Awards

On October 27, 2022, Her Honour presented the Lieutenant Governor's Circle on Mental Health and Addiction True Awards and Donald Ethell Youth Awards for 2021 and 2022 at a ceremony at Government House in Edmonton.



Vee Duncan with Lieutenant Governor, Salma Lakhani



‘Never in my life with the life I’ve lived, did I dream or imagine that I would be invited to a place like this to accept an award.’

Reflection on Né'kem Healing Storytelling Circle

In late August 2023, folks with lived experience in the child welfare system led a storytelling and circle discussion in Edmonton, holding open space for recognition, solidarity, and healing.

In the back of CO*LAB, Vee Duncan of Né'kem stands watch over a large pot of simmering duck stew, the mouth-watering smell wafting into the gathering space beyond. As guests begin to arrive, the speakers who have come to share their story gather to smudge and ground themselves, finding courage to be vulnerable with those who have come to sit within the circle. Despite the rain pouring outside, 40 people have come to sit in the space to hear stories that are not just words on paper, but immensely painful life experiences and memories carried to this day. Vee has brought folks together who have experience of growing up within the child welfare system, and the legacy of harm, pain, and trauma that has come of it.

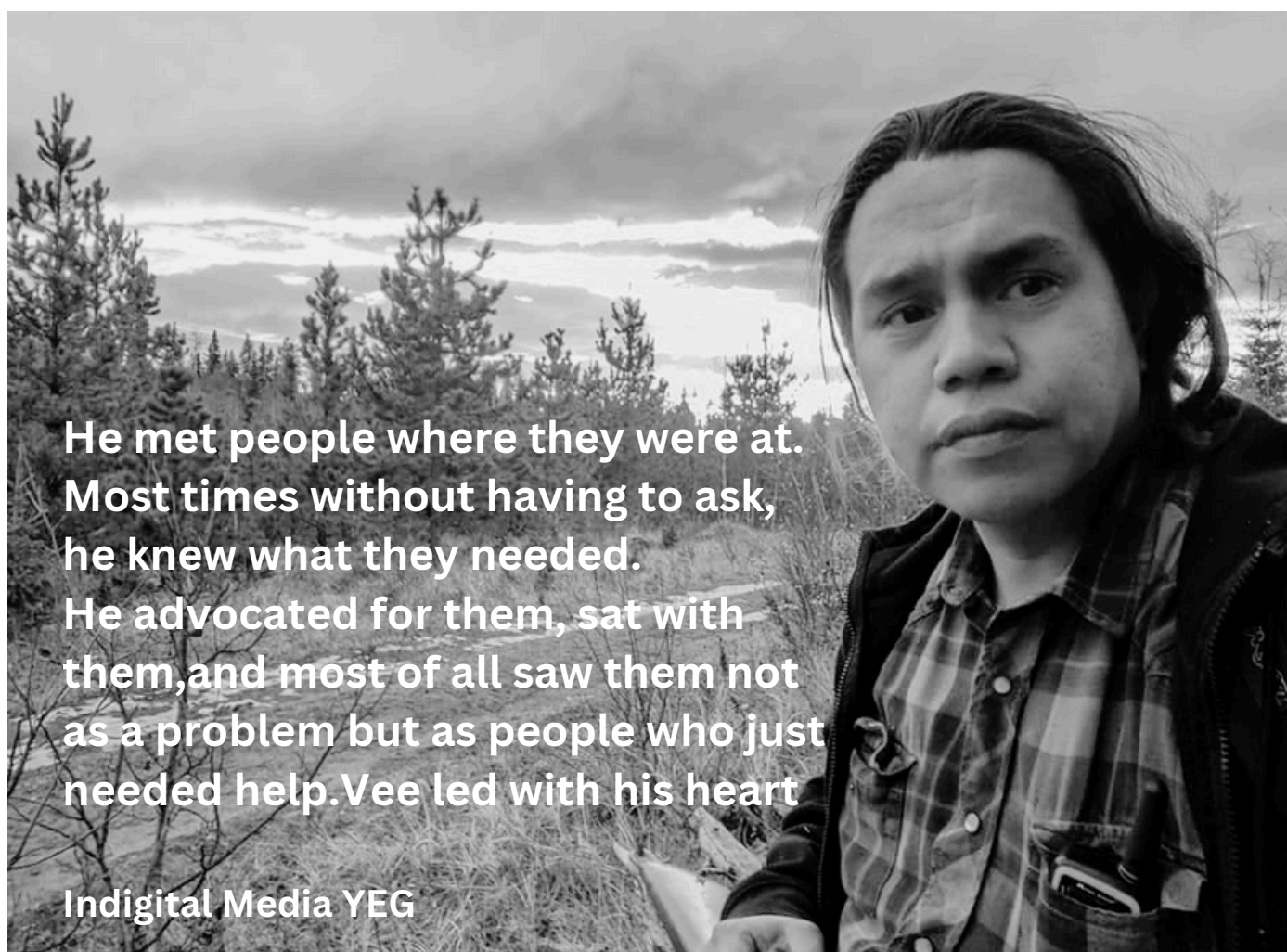
The percentage of Indigenous children in the system continues to increase over time, with over 75% of children in this system today being Indigenous children and youth. Why is that number so high? Those who spoke in the circle stated that the system has marked Indigenous folks, and, once marked, will follow you for your entire life much like a rap sheet follows an ex-convict. It perpetuates across generations, never letting go, and puts not just oneself, but one's children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, and other loved ones at risk, constantly. The system is broken, some say. Others say it is a continuation of the residential school system. One profound statement that came forth from the circle was that the system is not broken at all — it is functioning just as it was intended: to continue the cultural genocide that Indigenous folks across Turtle Island have faced ever since colonizers first came to these lands. It is a sickening thought that even today something that was meant to keep children from harm has had such a traumatizing legacy and has resulted in Indigenous folks having the highest rates of poverty, mental illness, addictions, and homelessness in Canada.

Vee has brought folks together who have experience of growing up within the child welfare system, and the legacy of harm, pain, and trauma that has come of it.



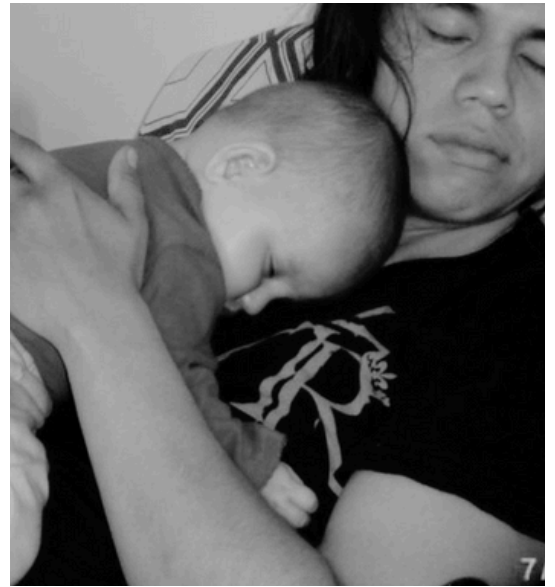
The legacy of the child welfare system is genocide and loss — a loss of family and loved ones, of home, of identity, of traditional culture, languages, and teachings. In many cases, it resulted in physical, emotional and sexual abuse much worse than many could fathom. Many aged out with immense trauma and no connection to family or supports, left to fend for themselves. Some spoke of finding pathways of healing, but even this journey has been difficult. Many shared that they feel they belong in neither the “white” world, nor within the Indigenous community, and many are left to continually struggle throughout their lives trying to heal and live with the painful experiences they endured.

This is why Vee is so passionate about the work he does with Nékem — because he has lived it and understands how dark that road can feel and how alone and hopeless one can be. The soup and bannock that attendees enjoyed is the same that will make its way out on wagons that will be pulled that evening to serve houseless community members on the streets. The food is delicious, often locally sourced and made with care, with the hopes that those who eat it will be nourished and feel that someone cares for them, understands them, bringing a little hope to the darkness amidst the dreary rain.



**He met people where they were at.
Most times without having to ask,
he knew what they needed.
He advocated for them, sat with
them, and most of all saw them not
as a problem but as people who just
needed help. Vee led with his heart**

Indigital Media YEG



***Vee always made sure everyone felt like they were human -
that they were valued. John Humphrey Center for Peace & Human Rights***





There are so many beautiful pictures of Vee & friends, it was hard to choose only these. Please visit the Vee Duncan Memorial on YouTube for all the memories we are unable to share here.



Vee tried so hard to ensure everyone he surrounded himself with and encountered felt valued and loved. Nekem



NEKEM.TOCHANGESOMETHING

Posts



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nekem.tochangesomething It is with great heartache and sadness that we announce the passing of a true warrior. When Vee first launched Nekem with a walk from Calgary to Edmonton to shed light on the homeless epidemic, I don't know if he ever realized how many hearts he would touch along the way. It's been an honor working alongside such a kind person with a good heart.

Please continue to follow our page for updates on the future of Nekem and how you can support Vee's family in a time of grief.



indigitalmediayeg Now that the dust has settled...

We lost an amazing soul. We were in the process of shooting a mini-doc on a local non-profit called Nèkem that serves Edmonton and Calgary's most vulnerable people, and it was led by Vee Duncan. Sadly Vee passed away and the Vee sized hole was left in many people's lives. We had the pleasure of sitting with Vee and listening to his life story. He was raised by his grandparents who taught him harm reduction before harm reduction was the thing to do. He met people where they were at. Most times, without having to ask, he knew what they needed. He advocated for them, sat with them, and most of all, saw them not as a problem, but as people who just needed help. Vee led with his heart.

Rest well, Vee.

October 17



yegteepeetreats

...



Liked by **therover02** and **126 others**

yegteepeetreats This world was better with you in it. The selfless love you gave to everyone will always be remembered. No one in this world can replace you and your dedication to helping others. The impact you made on me and the brothers and sisters in Alberta will always be in our memories. I just wish you could have stayed longer but I know you have others you need to help in the spirit world. They needed you more. I haven't been the same since you left and I don't know why. I'm sorry I wasn't there with you in the end to help ease your pain. Just know Uncle you are missed a lot by the Tribe. Life is so fragile and so short and is taken for granted. I'm just gonna take it day by day and keep on doing what I love to do but it's hard when we would see you almost everyday for the last year. Love you uncle we got this and we will honor you always !

[@superinjun_1987](#)

JUNEAU

There
on the steps of the shelter
we met, both relapsing from rehab.
We knew this wasn't who we really were.
I turned my back to the cold,
searched for the police
up the alley,
down the sidewalk
and street.

"It's no use, Jess," you said. "We're already
caught by something much worse."
I nodded, glanced past you,
watched the city lights as they hummed
against the tracks
and stars
and all of our scars.

Jesse Thistle
Scars & Stars



“I lived on the street for many years. I know what it’s like to barely survive, to sleep in sub zero weather, freezing rain, and to go for days with next to no food. I lived it. I survived it. Now it’s time for me to help, to give back.”

~ Vee Duncan ~



Many thanks to all who contributed to the zine in memory of Vee.

I never met Vee Duncan. I wish I would have had the pleasure.
I wish I would have had the honour. Someone like Vee is rare.
It is evident by the love they shared and the love they were
shown. It is clear by the words they spoke and the actions they
took. It is defined by all the lives they touched.

We always have a quote in the zine by Jeff Woods that says: The
strongest hearts have the most scars. I believe those words are
true for Vee. And, the more I come to know about Vee, the more I
know there is so much more to illustrate just how rare they were
than I could ever fit on these pages. I think there is probably a
book that could be written. I wish they were still here to write it.

This winter, remember Vee and know that there is something you
can do to make the world a better place - be it however big or
small. You might not be able to pull a shopping cart 300 kms but
maybe you can help someone get their cart across the street
through the snow. You might not be able to go out and deliver
food to those in need but maybe you can make a donation to
those that do or help put together the care packages they make.
You might not be able to talk to someone on the street but maybe
you can look into their eyes and nod or smile.

Remember Vee and all of those who still work
the front lines to keep people fed.
To keep people hydrated.
To keep people warm.
To keep people safe.
To keep people alive.

Thank you for whatever
you can do and all the best
from all of us who make
the zine real.

Penny Frazier, Editor



No matter how old your pen,
how crumpled your paper,
how torn your heart,
we want to hear from you.

Your experience.
Your thoughts.
Your story.
Your voice.
They all matter to us.

Dear
I feel that
but would upset
re your
the strong
chances cover
pleas
rained
will send
sometime try to
during
ada
swallow hard all
Con- ed a wood
n

@zine_and_heard
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Where I Came From

I am from the belt.
From the generational trauma.
From knowing they just wanted
to keep siblings together.
From the wishing I just could be loved again.

I am from being the “weird” Kid in school.
From failing all the tests and
quizzes in elementary school.
From feeling like a failure.

I am from seeing my Aunt for the last time.
From feeling like if I abandoned her.
From her house being my ultimate safe space.

I am from being placed into care twice before I was 14.
From having so many people leaving.
From never actually having a home.
From being bounced around from
placement to placement.
Until I found the perfect place.

I am from the farm, from the cows and pigs.
From watching the cartoons on a box TV.
From never being alone.
From the group homes and treatment centres.

A story about Blake

This is a story about Blake. Blake grew up with Children Services involvement. Blake spent a significant portion of his childhood in and out of young offender centres, foster homes and group homes as a result of traumatic and developmentally impacting experiences. At the age of 18, Blake did not have access to a bank account; he did not know how to pay a bill, shop for groceries, cook for himself, clean, or use public transportation independently. Fortunately for Blake, he was able to sign a SFAA, and his caseworker had the historical information to understand the adversity in which Blake faced each and every day, and how these adversities impacted his ability to function safely and independently as an adult.

Blake really wanted to live on his own. So he was supported in getting an apartment. His worker taught him how to set up viewings and together they would go. Eventually Blake got his own apartment. Blake and his worker would get groceries together every week so that he could learn how to budget, his worker helped him set up his bills so that they would be paid automatically, including his rent. Blake appreciated this as he knew his memory was not the greatest and he had a hard time saving money. Blake struggled with alcohol and drug use, so his worker decided to give Blake money every week rather than once a month. This was to help make sure Blake's bills would get paid ensuring he had shelter, food and clothing.

Unfortunately, Blake ended up in jail. Being in jail was not new for Blake but now he was navigating an adult system, this scared him and he felt hopeless. Blake's caseworker continued to see him often and helped Blake obtain a lawyer and access mental health services in jail. Blake's caseworker attended every court date and helped Blake's family stay in touch with him, even finding his dad who he was able to talk to after many years of estrangement.

While Blake was serving his sentence; Blake and his case worker started planning for his eventual release. Blake's caseworker knew he needed a lot of support going from jail to the community and Blake agreed. Blake and his worker talked about Blake attending school and learning a trade. Blake started to dream of being a mechanic or a heavy equipment operator and having a family of his own one day. Blake's worker knew how hard being in jail must be and made sure they kept in touch with Blake by phone calls, visits and letters.

Blake and his caseworker talked about Blake attending school and learning a trade. Blake started to dream of being a mechanic or a heavy equipment operator and having a family of his own one day.

Then one day Blake had to be transferred to a new worker, a worker with TAP. Both Blake and his caseworker were sad about this change as they had built a close relationship. Blake often said that his caseworker was like a parent/sibling/extended family all wrapped into one. Blake experienced some changes when he moved over to TAP. He got over \$500 deposited into his bank account every month, but he couldn't access this bank account until he was released. Because of this he no longer had money to buy phone minutes while in jail. He used to get \$80 a month to buy phone minutes/hygiene/snack from the canteen. Blake didn't hear from his TAP worker as often as he heard from his caseworker. When Blake was released from jail his TAP worker took him to a shelter. This lacked the supports that Blake needed to transition successfully. Blake was happy to be out and he wanted to stay out of jail, but it was hard for Blake as he felt alone and did not have the same supports as he did before; he did not have anyone to take him shopping for groceries or to help him set up appointments and because Blake now had access to the account where the \$500 a month was being deposited he began to deal with his stress, loneliness and hopelessness with drugs and alcohol. Not long after he ended up back in jail to restart the cycle.

Would Blake have relapsed and ended up back in jail if he had the same supports he had at 18? Maybe...but maybe not. Blake had a good relationship with his caseworker and his caseworker knew that Blake needed specialized supports tailored to him so that he could function safely and independently as an adult.

Blake knew that his caseworker had his best interest at heart, and that they genuinely want him to succeed, and that made Blake believe he could be a mechanic and have a family of his own day. Blake will one day have kids of his own. Will his kids have a chance at a different life or will their childhood be similar to that of their father?

Child Welfare Worker
Name withheld



JANUARY ZINE

Blake's story is not uncommon.

We want to bring more stories from youth aging out of care into the open and advocate for changes to TAP. We are looking for stories of what it was like to age out of care and also what it is like to work with youth aging out of care. What was your experience? What were the hardships, frustrations? What could have made it better? What are your thoughts on TAP? We guarantee anonymity. Please email Penny at editor@zineandheard.ca or message Penny on Instagram @zine_and_heard Your voice can influence change.

THE AGE

Youth aging out of care used to be eligible to receive financial supports to help them transition to adulthood until they were 24 but in 2019, Premier Kenney abruptly lowered that age to 22. His spokesperson said that there weren't "that many" youth who needed supports up to age 24 but they never said how many did. Was it 100...200...300...400?
And why didn't those young lives matter?

We may never know those answers but we do know that they "saved" around \$14 million per year by severing those supports since 2021. We know too that they have since spent around \$76 million on a program called TAP which they say supports youth age 22 - 24 but it does not. It provides NO financial supports for youth age 22 - 24. None.
Do not be fooled by the clever wording.

THE STATS

Aproximately 500 youth age out of care in Alberta every year. Youth aging out of care are 200 times more likley to become homeless that their peers.

THE WORD

The word on the street is that the number of homeless youth in Edmonton has increased significantly since the age was officially lowered in 2021. There are currently over 500 unhoused youth aged 14 - 24 in Edmonton on any given day or night. An educated guess would be that around 65 to 70% of them are in or from care.

**If you do not want to see the
numbers of unhoused youth
continue to rise every year**

please email

Searle Turton

The Minister of Children's Services

cfs.minister@gov.ab.ca

Don't know where to start?

We got you covered.

Go to our website at zineandheard.ca

Click on "LETTER".

Copy and paste that letter into your email.

**Please cc your City Counselor, your MLA
and the Premier of Alberta**

premier@gov.ab.ca

And please use this subject line:

Thank you very, very much.

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

A Love Letter

Hey YOU!!!

Edmonton's DIY spirit and arts scene made me who I am. And I'm worried that we're losing it.

CO*LAB is one of a small handful of community hubs and art spaces that embodies the spirit of Edmonton's scene that shaped my youth.

I absolutely love the vision: A creative haven downtown. A DIY space that is accessible and safe. A community hub where we can create, advocate, and celebrate the arts and one another.

That's why I just joined CO*LAB as President of the Board. CO*LAB is f**king important right now.

The arts are being gutted in this province, a policy that has lasted for too long. We've seen far too many venues and creative spaces die during the pandemic, and we're seeing what feels like half of the spaces in dense urban environments go up for lease, with no foreseeable tenancy.

I don't know if I can save CO*LAB, but *I know I have to try*. It's completely selfish: I want somewhere where I can listen to cool music, meet incredible people, and experience local art. I want to be inspired and celebrate the scene. Our scene! Here in Edmonton!

Through the end of the year, we're going to be sharing how we're going to get CO*LAB on a path from surviving to thriving.

Subscribe to our newsletter through the QR code and join us for the ride!!!

Isha Datar
isha@quartersarts.org



I Survived

I can honestly say that 2023 was one of the hardest years of my life.

A lot happened.

January - Jeremy Renner has his snowplow accident

February - Tom Brady retired, and Rihanna performed at the Super Bowl

March - There was an AI revolution, Trump was charged in Manhattan

April - When the starship rocket was launched, and Tucker Carlson was fired from Fox News

May - Ed Sheeran was cleared of copyright infringement, and Josh Freese joined the Foo Fighters

June - Boris Johnson resigned as MP, Ryan Seacrest was announced as the new host for Wheel of Fortune

All of that is quite interesting, so interesting it made the news and became the talk of the town. But that is not what this story is about.

July - I wrote my first spoken word piece, I got two jobs

August - I was in a car accident, My spoken word piece got featured in a magazine and I went on a podcast to talk about it and was able to co-host the show as well

September - I broke up with someone, my friend passed away

October - I isolated myself from the things/people that were preventing me from reaching my full potential, I was happier than I had ever been in 2023

I'll end there, as November has just begun.

In 2023, a lot of wonderful and undesirable events happened to me. But I moved forward.

I weep for the girl who believed that 2023 would be the final year of her life because she thought she wouldn't survive. And I am proud of the person I have worked so hard to become. Everybody's story is important. Whether you have overcome your issue or are still facing one.

I will cry in January. Due to the challenges of 2023. However, I've been able to make friends with an abundance of kind individuals who inspire me.

I am aware that at the start of this year, I was a different person. Broken and ready to give up. I would love to

hug my younger self if I were able to go back in time. To tell her that she had discovered a part of herself she was unaware of. She felt love and light from that piece. And she achieved a great deal of amazing accomplishments that were unimaginable to her at the time. Despite suffering great losses, she continued to live.

Mady Silver



Ella Foerster & Mady Silver

One of the many things I have always loved about working with youth in care is the heart they bring to the table.

**Tattered and broken
but never
beyond
repair.**

**Penny Frazier
Editor,
Zine & HEARD**



**WHAT I LOVE ABOUT
WORKING WITH YOUTH IN CARE**

GAME CHANGER

I used to call that worker everyday to tell her how much I hated her and then about nine months in, I called her to tell her how much I loved her. I wanted a different life and she was just so awesome. We planned for when I got out of jail and she supported me in every way.

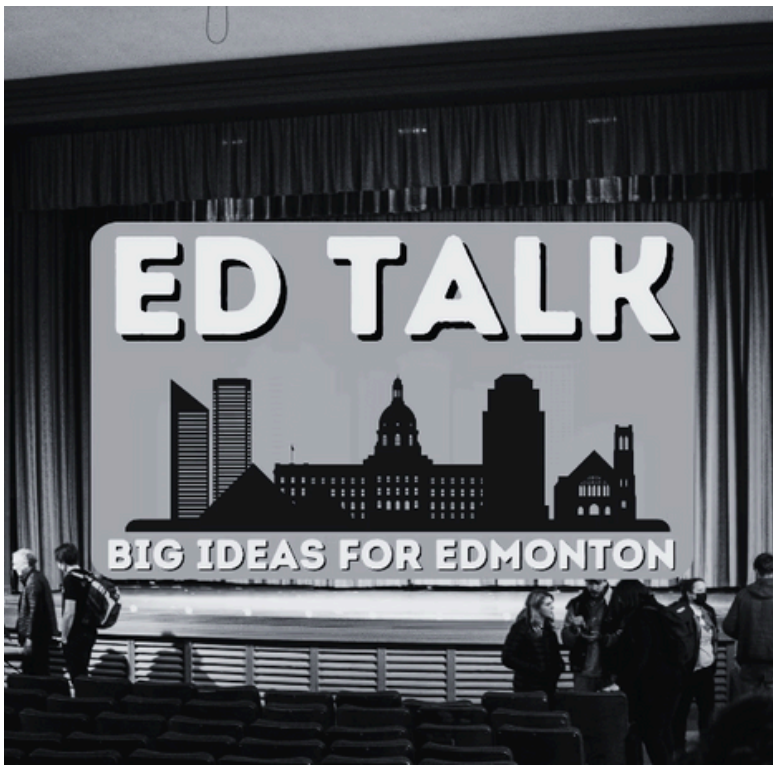
**Linda
Author from the Youth in Care Chronicles.**



Please email us to share your stories for “WHAT I LOVE ABOUT WORKING WITH YOUTH IN CARE” or “GAME CHANGERS”.

editor@zineandheard.ca

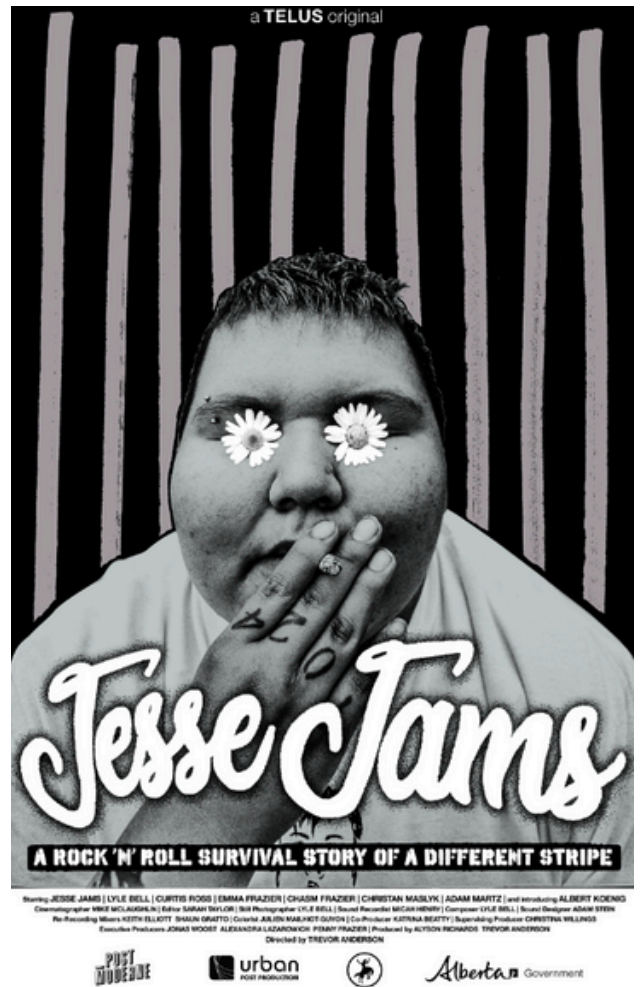
Thank you.



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28th
METRO CINEMA

For more information on ED TALK please visit
www.michaeljanz.ca/edtalknov28

Edmonton's own award-winning short doc JESSE JAMS will be playing at the Metro Cinema to kick off the ED TALKS. Followed by an ED TALK from Zine & HEARD and many others. Doors open at 6. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE.



info@colabyeg.ca

VENUE RENTALS

info@colabyeg.ca





Y2K

YOU 2 KNOW

MUSIC

VIDEO

IN

PROGRESS

The crew at Y2K are looking for input into their new music video and for appearances in their upcoming video series that's ALL about

YOUTH IN CARE RIGHTS.

IT IS LED BY YOUTH IN CARE.

IT IS DRIVEN BY YOUTH IN CARE.

Please email: youtoknow60@gmail.com
for more information & to get involved.

CALLING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

ARE YOU A YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR AGED 15-30 WITH A
UNIQUE PRODUCT OR SERVICE TO OFFER?



Join us for an exclusive youth entrepreneuru networking event, where you can:

- Network with fellow young entrepreneurs
- Connect with experts for support with idea building, testing, marketing and more
- Enjoy incentives, including a free vendor table, social media features, and gift cards!

Don't miss this opportunity to grow your business and connect
with like-minded peers. Sign up at bit.ly/YouthpreneurEYEEC

Subscribe to the EYEEZine at
bit.ly/EYEEZine for updates.
Questions? email info@eyeec.ca

eyeec

STAY CONNECTED

SUBSCRIBE TO THE EYEEZINE

Find jobs, business tips, career advice, education
insights, and resources for youth aged 15-30.

Join our epic journey of inspiration,
information, opportunities and community!



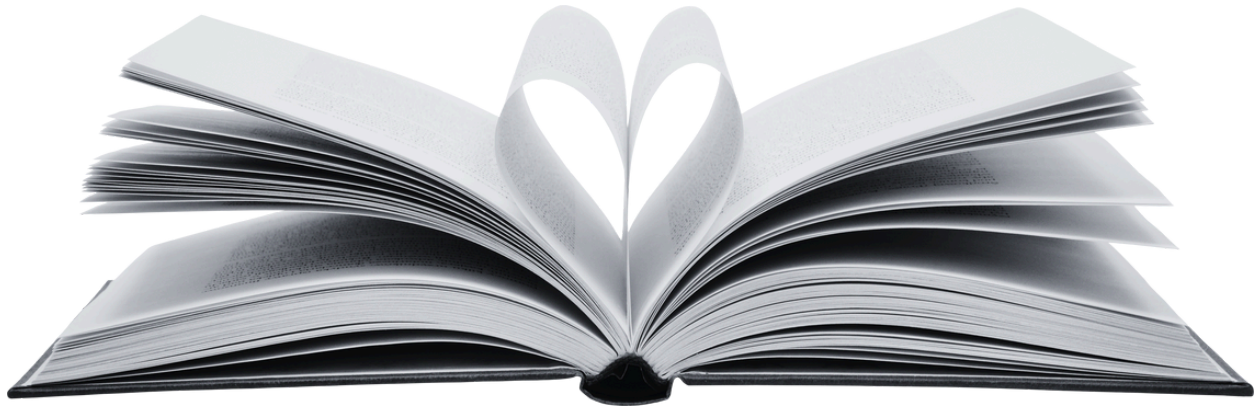
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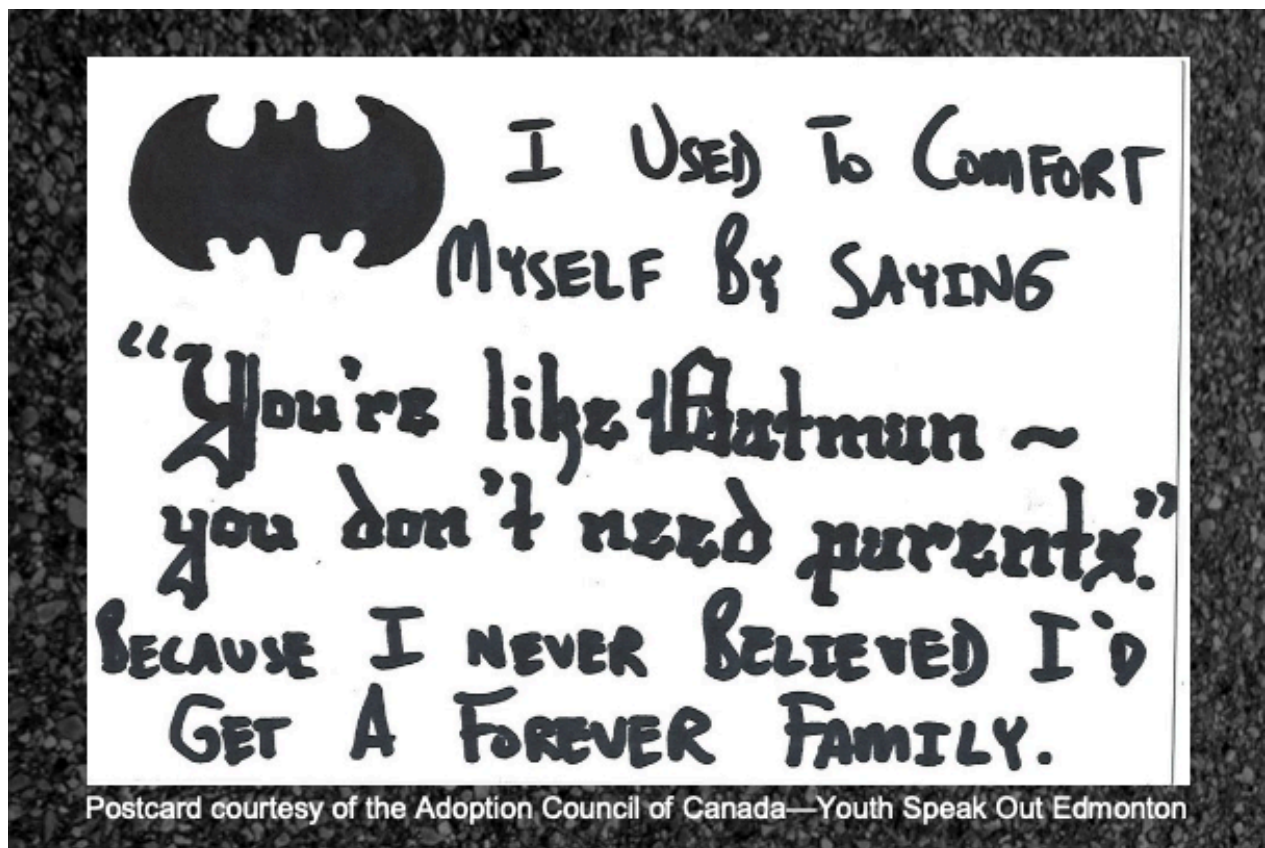
QUESTIONS? INFO@EYEEC.CA



MANY THANKS TO THE
MACEWAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
FOR SUBSCRIBING TO OUR ZINE.



We so appreciate all the support we have received from friends & strangers in the past year. Your subscriptions & donations are what help to keep this publication afloat as we remain fully independent and consistently fierce. You have helped us bring the truths and triumphs of youth in care to light. You have supported us to raise awareness about the child welfare system and you have helped us advocate for positive change. Can't thank you enough.



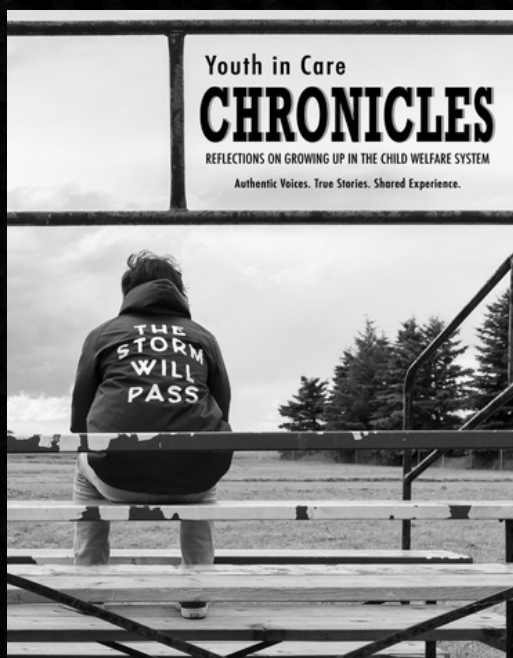


Many thanks to the Friends of Zine & HEARD

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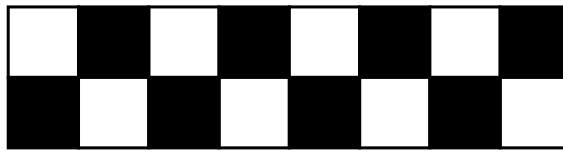
Zine & HEARD is made possible by the donations of friends & the kindness of strangers, limited advertising, random sponsorships & fierce passion. Please contact editor@zineandheard.ca or visit www.zineandheard.ca/support for more information & thank you so much. We appreciate it.



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](#)
 &
[Audreys](#)

All proceeds go to fund
 projects for youth in care.



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

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

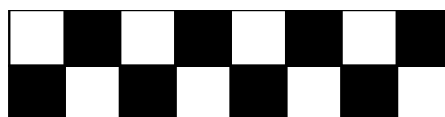
SOUTHERN ALBERTA Call: (403) 297-8435

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





Missing People of Canada

22h · 🌐

Missing Girl in Edmonton, Alberta - Juannita Calliou, 16 - #Alberta #Edmonton #missingperson #missingpersons #canada

Juannita Calliou, 16, was reported missing to the Edmonton Police Service on Oct. 10, 2023. She was last seen during the week of Oct. 16th in the Whyte Avenue area accessing youth services.

Juannita is described as Indigenous, 5'7" tall, approximately 200 lbs with brown hair and a tattoo of a rose on her forearm...

More Info: https://missingpeople.ca/missing-girl-in-edmonton-alberta-juannita-calliou-16/?feed_id=23136&_unique_id=654311b162dd6



**We hope that Juannita has been found safe by now.
If she is still missing please share this post from
Missing People of Canada on your social media .
If you have any information regarding Juannita,
please contact the Edmonton Police Service
at 780-423-4567
or contact Crime Stoppers anonymously
at 1-800-222-8477.**

A black and white photograph of a dark dress hanging from a branch in a dense thicket of bare trees. The dress is a short-sleeved, knee-length garment with a dark belt tied at the waist. It hangs from a thin branch on the right side of the frame. The background is a dense forest of bare, light-colored tree trunks and branches, creating a complex, web-like pattern. The overall mood is somber and evocative.

*You
are
not
forgotten.*

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

**Less than .3% of all Canadians
have spent time in the
child welfare system.**

Less than .3%

**But more than 65% of all
unhoused Canadians
have spent time in the
child welfare system.**

More than 65%

Read that again.

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