Zine & RD HEARD

Amplifying Voices of Youth From Care

ISSUE #12 January 2024

> PHOTO BY Kayla Black

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 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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Hard copies available at <u>Local 124 Skate Shop</u> <u>The Glass Bookshop</u> <u>Audreys Books</u>

Editor

Penny Frazier

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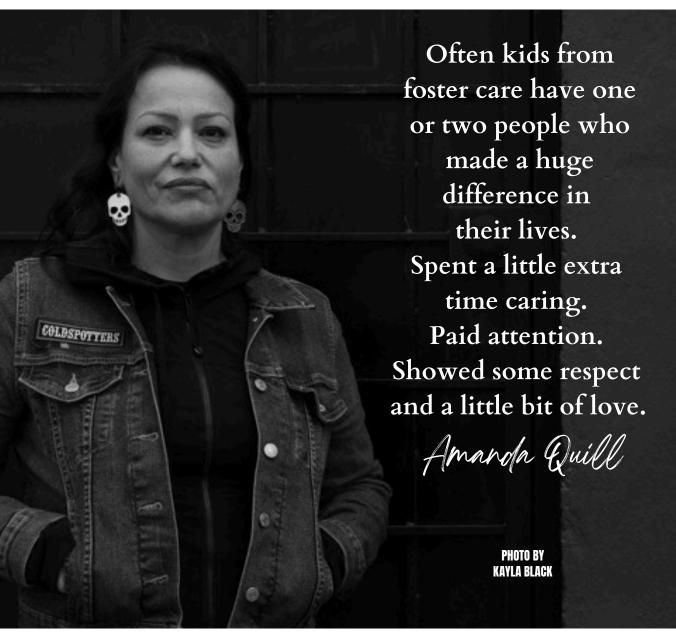
Names Withheld

Office of the Child &

Youth Advocate - OCYA

Youth in Care Chronicles





Much love and many thanks to Amanda Quill for taking the time to be featured in Zine & HEARD this issue. From 60s Scoop Survivor to the cover of Paranormal Underground, Amanda shares her journey through her life in Scotland, her experience in the system and with special people who took in a kid with special gifts... and the rest is history.

Very grateful to writer, Mike Gosselin, and photographer, Kayla Black, for bringing Amanda's story to us.



paranormalunderground.net

Grassroots are good.

Have you ever tried to pull well-established grass out by its roots with nothing but your bare hands and the thought of: Well, how hard could it be? Yeah - it's pretty hard and you never get it all. You think you have removed it, destroyed it, banished it from the earth. Yeah. No. It's gonna grow back. Somehow, somewhere, sometime. It's gonna gather whatever it has, whatever it needs, to return to its rightful place in the environment. If you have ever stared at a cement sidewalk and wondered what came first - the cracks or the blades of grass - it's the grass, man. It's the grass.

I love Edmonton and the people who keep coming up, coming back, coming together, finding that speck of light that keeps them alive, that leads them in the right direction, that helps them rise. I see so much of it in this city. The agencies. The frontline workers. The first responders. The volunteers. The activists. The protesters. The musicians. The artists. The film makers. The students. The writers. The businesses. All the communities. All the humans being human.

It would appear there are even people in government seeing the cracks and inviting the blades to the table. (See next page.) This is good. This is very good. This is where change can really take root.

I sincerely wish you all more rest, more love, more hope, more truth, and more good news in 2024.

Wishing you all the things that make you believe that good can overcome bad and that humanity will prevail. That love will always be the most powerful force on the planet. That our respect for one another will grow. That we will never say die in our fight for that light and what's right.

See you on the sidewalk.

Penny Frazier, Editor



Youth Advisory Task Force

Are you a youth or young adult aged 14-24, who has experience with Alberta's Child Intervention System?

Children and Family Services' Youth Advisory Task Force is a diverse youth and young adult driven group that promotes change and raises awareness related to youth and young adults in and transitioning from government care.

If you want to become a member of the task force, see the details below. This is a great opportunity to share your voice.

What do YATF members do?

Provide perspective, insight, and feedback on programs, policies, and services that affect children, youth and young adults receiving services through Children and Family Services.

How long will I be on the YATF?

Members serve for 1 year terms with the possibility of extension, meet virtually bi-monthly (every othe month), and participate twice per year in-person.

Who can join?

Youth and young adults who:

- are between 14-24 years of age
- have lived experience with Alberta Children and Family Services with a minimum of one year involvement through an open legal status
- are passionate about improving the Child Intervention System and amplifying voices of youth and young adults

Deadline to apply
Apply by Janaury 19, 2024

Youth Advisory Task Force | alberta.ca/youth-advisory-task-force Albertan

https://www.alberta.ca/youth-advisory-task-force

CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

This is new. This is where change can happen.
Allowing the voices of youth from care to be heard
ie. inviting the experts to the table.

Your participation will make positive change.

Be that game changer.

Please apply by January 19th. Spread the word.



Stuck up for yourself in a tough situation?

Spoken up about what you need-maybe to a teacher, social worker, or someone you live with?

If yes, then you're an **ADVOCATE** and we want to hear from you!

Help us build a self-advocacy toolkit made for youth by youth! We want to find out...

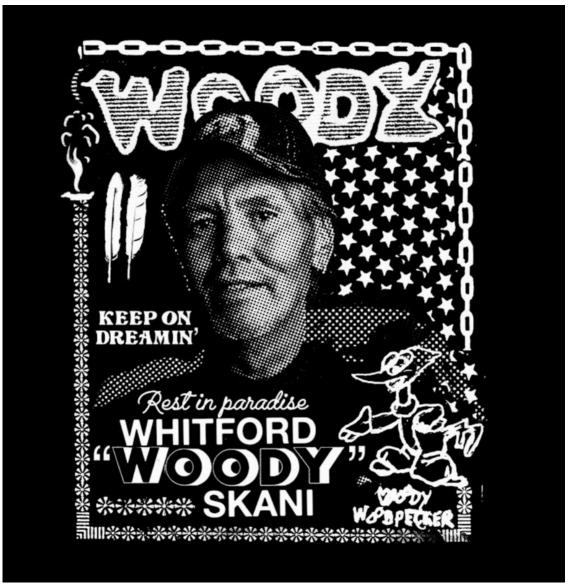
- What worked for you?
- · What do you wish you had known?
- · How do you tell others what you need, want, and feel?

Who: Ages 14-24 When: February 22, 6pm -7:30pm

Where: Online - Zoom

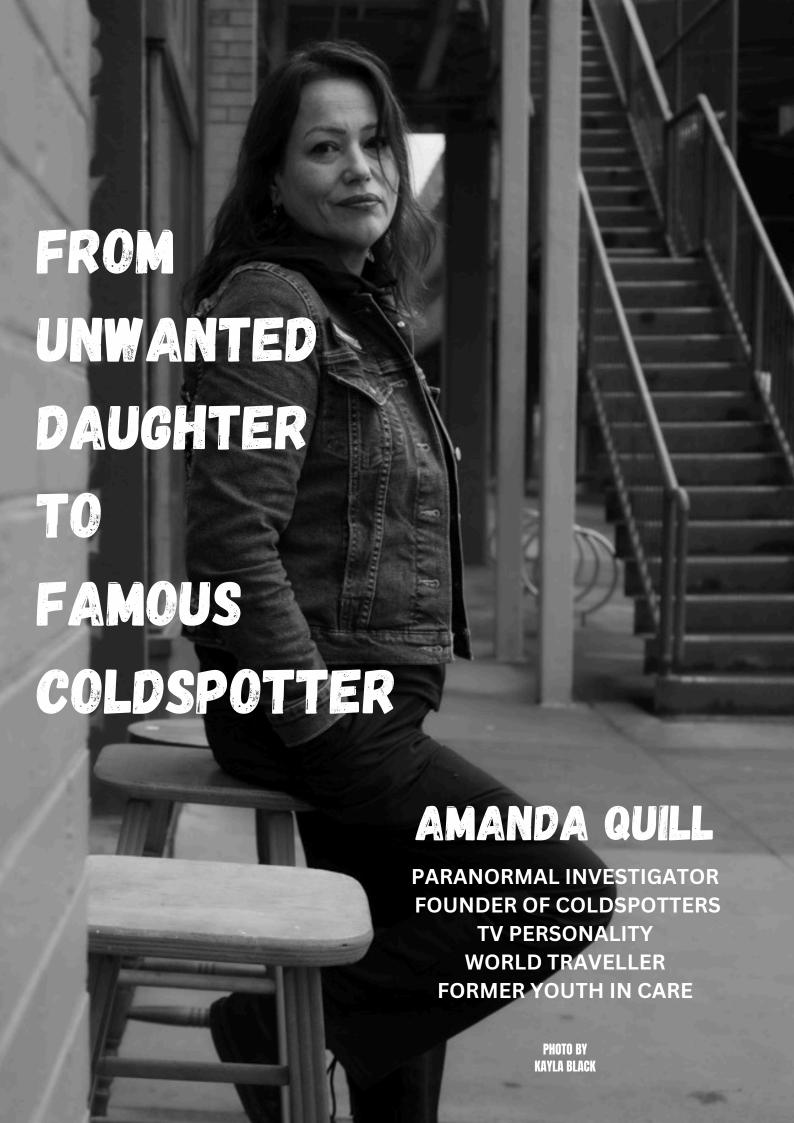
Why join: To help others like you! (a chance to win 1 of 3 \$50 gift cards!)

Learn more and sign up: bit.ly/Eventbrite-Toolkit



Tribute & Artwork by Helen Herbert & Travis Salty





'Don't let her grow her hair long because people will know she's an Indian. "My adoptive parents were told these things by the system when they adopted me," says famed paranormal investigator Amanda Quill, "no wonder I became obsessed with searching for and explaining the existence of monsters - I felt like one."

Don't buy her new clothes.
Second hand only. Indians have oily skin and they attract dirt.

A victim of the Sixties Scoop, Quill was adopted from what is now Sapotaweyak Cree Nation / Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation in Manitoba when she was fourteen months old. She immediately moved to Scotland with her adoptive family when her father was stationed there with the Air Force. Her adoptive mother was Scottish and stayed at home with Quill and her older brother.

Indians have a 'bad gene' behind their ear that can be removed.'

"I believe they had good intentions adopting me but I was never accepted. especially by my mum. My brother was their biological child and treated differently. They told me I was theirs but never acted like it. We never celebrated my birthday. I didn't even have a real bedroom."

Quill credits her Scottish grandfather with making up for some of her childhood's shortcomings by instilling a deep appreciation of stories as a young child.

"He loved telling ghost stories and I loved hearing them. But he wouldn't just tell me them. I had to earn them. Do some research and find out the history of the building or house or area the story was in. Then he would tell me."

And these experiences stayed with her even when things at home became real bad after her father was transferred back to Canada.

"At twelve I left. I was tired of feeling unwanted and there was abuse in the house. So I ran away. Baseball dugouts were my go-to if I didn't have somewhere to sleep. But I was still at the library during the day learning about ghosts, phantoms, spectres and paranormal investigation."

[&]quot;I knew that's what I wanted to do with my life."

She told me that I was the reason all this was happening. I was connected to the spirits. I could feel them under my feet. And she was right...



By her early teens, Quill was a ward of the state and living in her first group home for girls.

"I decided early on I had to survive on my own. I knew I was adopted but didn't know my birth family. So I kind of just accepted I had no-one and moved on from there."

And it was at the group home she was officially introduced to paranormal activity.

"Every time me or one of the other girls would get angry or elevated, strange shit would happen. All the cupboard doors would be open. Books would fly off shelves. Windows would be broken."

The staff would blame the girls for the destruction of property even though it was often impossible for them to have done it. Then one day a Key Worker named Kate figured out what was going on.

"She told me I was the reason this was all happening. I was connected to the spirits. I could feel them under my feet. And she was right..." Often times kids from foster care have one or two people who made a huge difference in their lives. Spent a little extra time caring. Paid attention. Showed some respect and a little bit of love.

For Quill, these people were Kate and the mother of another care worker named Pam.

"Pam was told about me. They said I was special. That I should live with her. And one day I was told to throw my stuff in garbage bags - I was moving."

But this was no temporary arrangement.

"I ended up at Pam's place for a couple years until I got pregnant with my son at seventeen. She wasn't too happy with me but never said so. She always supported me. Pam was the closest to a mom I had until her death a few years ago."



Struggling to survive with a new baby and living on her own as a teenager, Quill did everything she was told in order to receive help from Post Majority Support Services when she aged out. She finished high school with straight A's and was excited to embark on her post-secondary journey.

"I understood they funded my schooling and helped with living allowance. Then I found out they only funded certain programs and university wasn't one of them."

So she settled on hair-dressing school but was forced to take out student loans. Post Majority Support Services assured her the loan would be paid out.

"It ended up I had to pay back the student loans. And for the living allowance they just put me on welfare."

But the universe works in mysterious ways and it wasn't long before Quill was lead down her path of destiny.

"I ended up getting into modelling. Kate hooked me up with my first agent. She also introduced me to some paranormal mentors. And I started my investigation career by going into homes where the activity was believed to be the ghost of a child."

"While I was modelling, I was also known around Vancouver as the ghost girl."

Today, Amanda Quill is one of the leading paranormal investigators in the world. She founded the Coldspotters investigation team in 2012 and has appeared on countless paranormal media platforms including Haunted Hospitals, Paranormal Adventures, Repossessed, Paranormal Underground, podcasts, radio shows, ghost tours...

And rumour has it it's time for a platform of her own. Could there be a TV show in the works?

"There might be. Maybe? I'm not sure what I'm allowed to say."

Amanda Quill has come full circle from being treated like she was a monster to investigating paranormal activity all over the world. She's gone from a family that didn't want her to a system that didn't support her to reconnecting with her Cree family in Manitoba.

"I missed meeting my birth mom by two weeks. I was just a little too late finding her. But I am close with my siblings on both sides. I have five brothers and two sisters."

And to this day, not one of them has had that 'bad gene' removed from behind their ear and they are all still good people...





Being in care doesn't define you, or make you who you are. It's a blip, a situation that ends. Your strength, tenacity and deadliness carry you through it all. There is so much more out there, recognize your power and seize it all.

Amarda Quill

Behind the Amanda Quill story



MIKE GOSSELIN

Really Good Stories Inc.

mgscreenwriter@gmail.com

<u>Check out Wynter</u> <u>vimeo.com/274690829/1b12570a5a</u>

Mike Gosselin is a proud Métis with Red River roots. A flatlander from Saskatchewan, he moved with his wife, two babies and beloved pooch to the west coast twelve years ago when the TV/film industry was cut in his home province. These days he's a one stop shop for developing, pitching, writing, directing and producing factual and scripted film and television programming. His work has appeared in over 190 countries around the world on Netflix, CBC, APTN, Global, Showcase, SPACE, TLC, Discovery and National Geographic. Mike's prized project to date is the pilot for Wynter: a Métis superhero whose destiny is to save humans from an evil race of tricksters. His favourite job of all, however, is being a dad to his teenagers Luka and Ruby. He also loves downhill mountain biking, fixing up his house, coaching rugby and helping writers find their storytelling path.



KAYLA BLACK

Kayla Black is an Anishinaabe photographer and emerging filmmaker based in so called Vancouver, BC. She loves utilizing photography to blend her indigenous and lesbian identities to capture the spontaneity and authenticity of the communities she's a part of.

Instagram @kay1ablack Kayla Black on Flickr kaylamarblack@gmail.com

We are always looking for contributions from youth in and formerly from care.
Thoughts, stories, poetry, art, music. Please contact us on Instagram <u>@zine and heard</u> or email us at <u>editor@zineandheard.ca</u>
Thank you.

Everyone has a story..

BGCBigs' Youth In Care Program

My mentee has gained confidence since we met. She is more open in conversations, she has met new friends at school and she is proud of the activities she accomplishes at school.

*Anna, Youth In Care
 Volunteer Mentor

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.



It only takes one person to make all the difference in someone's life. Especially in the life of a child or youth. It's a small commitment with a big impact that can last a lifetime.

We are looking for more volunteers, like you, to be mentors in our Youth in Care program. You can change two lives for the better - yours and your mentees.

Become a volunteer mentor today.

Visit BGCBigs.ca

A BGCBigs' Story

Amanda

How long have you been matched with Lexis? 5 years.

What first inspired you to want to become a mentor? Why was this important to you? I had a mentor when I was in a group home. It was a pivotal moment in my life, having someone believe in me. When I grew older, I often thought about that period in my life. I knew I wanted to support someone the way that I was supported.

What's been the most impactful part of being a mentor? Watching Lexis grow, develop and become part of my family. I never had a younger sister and I guess it's safe to say we adopted each other. I've been lucky enough to support her through so many milestones. Things like graduating high school, finishing her welding trade, obtaining a driver's license and even her first apartment. To summarize, all of the experience has been impactful to me! I'm so proud of who she's become.

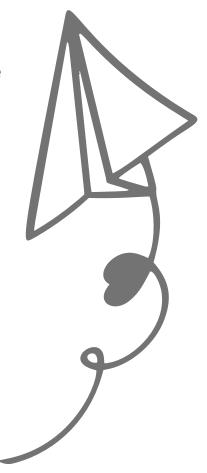
Lexis

Why did you want to have a mentor? The foster home suggested it, since a lot of the other kids had one. I never had a strong role model, so I was interested in meeting Amanda.

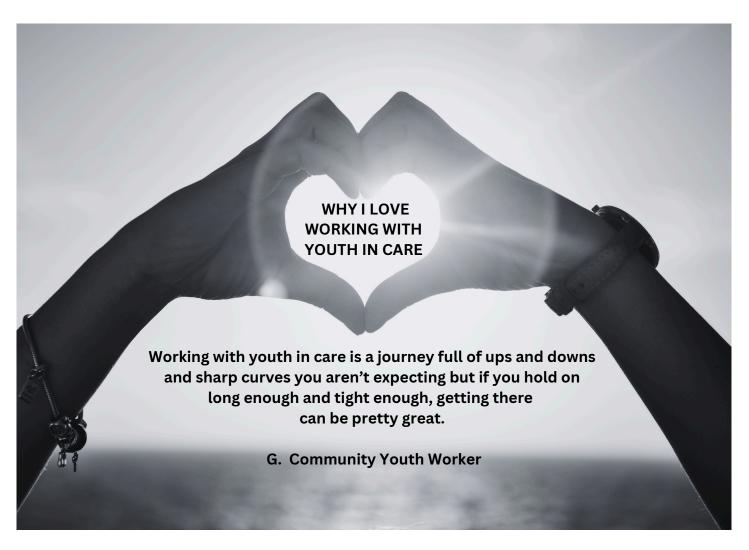
What's the most special thing about your mentor? She's really similar to me, like my twin!

What do you hope to gain from having a mentor? Confidence and a sister.

What has the impact of having a mentor had on you, and why has it been important? I now have a sister who helped me grow into a better person and live a healthier lifestyle. This wasn't just important to me but to both of us.



Visit BGCBigs.ca



GAME CHANGER

When I was 13 years old, I remember having a fight with one of my workers and telling him that I could do his job better than him. He told me it was harder than it looked and although I didn't believe him at the time, he was right. He really was a good guy and I was a really difficult kid, but he kept trying to work with me. At a separate time, we both shared a good laugh as he told me that I was one of the most difficult children he had ever worked with. This made me very proud as it highlighted where I used to be in my life and where I am now. How dramatically my life has shifted from then to now has given me a firm belief that change is possible.

Cody, excerpt from his story in the Youth in Care Chronicles



If you have a story for WHY I LOVE or GAME CHANGERS, please email us at editor@zineandheard.ca or message us on lnstagram@zine_and_heard. Thank you.

Now. Not later.

In December, we put a call out to youth from care and frontline workers to share their honest, open thoughts and feelings on the government's decision to lower the age for financial supports for youth in care under Premier Kenney's direction and the switch to TAP (Transition to Adulthood Program) that happened hastily thereafter. The following 10 pages are responses we received and some quotes worth repeating from 2021 when the changes were being made.

Anonymity is guaranteed in our zine but speaking out still takes a great deal of courage and a steadfast belief that what they share will make a difference. That those who need to hear them and their realities will listen. We believe it's worth it and enough voices can influence change. Thanks for trusting us with your what is in your hearts. Thank you for speaking your truth so others might understand. Why change is so desperately needed. Now.

What did they think was going to happen? We were all going to just suddenly live happily ever after? Or that we would all just magically disappear?

Former youth in care, Age 23

Lowering the age was fcked up. Unfair. All because they wanted to save a few bucks as usual. The fact that it's always about money disgusts me.

Former youth in care, age 24

"They did not have an alternative program in place," said lawyer Avnish Nanda in an interview. "They developed the TAP program and it has been an unmitigated disaster. "It has forced ... people who otherwise would have been through the SFAA program, taken care of, supported, led to an independent self-sustaining life in adulthood, to homelessness, to substance use ... to overdose, death."

QUOTE from CBC News · Posted: Mar 18, 2023 by Andrea Huncar

"The implementation of TAP, with no consultation from youth, the front-line workers or community did harm for this population of complex and troubled youth," Smyth said. "I have heard this from all three groups. The youth feel betrayed and abandoned. I would anticipate we're going to see an uptick in homelessness in the youth and mental health services with youth getting in trouble with the law, with addictions, because I think a lot of them will go back to using their old coping mechanisms," Peter Smyth, former Social Worker QUOTE from CBC News · Posted: Mar 18, 2023 by Andrea Huncar

The Transition to Adulthood Program (TAP) for youth aged 22 - 24 in Alberta is like giving your kid a car with an almost empty tank and no money for gas, sending them on a 900 km road trip ... and wondering why they didn't make it. Penny Frazier, Editor, Zine & HEARD

RAISE THE AGE. LOWER THE STATS.

As a former child protection worker and supervisor in the system, the lowering of the age of financial supports and service for youth in care was one of the worst decisions I have seen in my entire career.

It had so many profound impacts to both staff and young people alike, and was very poorly executed with significant confusion produced by the government throughout the process. It was so emotionally devastating to many young people and we watched them spiral out of control as a result. These young people often times have limited family connections and even then, their family often times is dealing with their own struggles in life - what 22 year old do you know in today's society that is ready to face the world completely on their own? I personally don't know of any and the research shows that in this century, most young people are still at home and receiving support well into their 20s and even 30s. This decision to lower the age of services went against well-grounded evidence in the field and was ultimately financial in nature - when you consider the minimal amount of money saved in comparison to the costs to society overall due to reduced supports during a critical time in a young person's life, it is actually not fiscally responsible.

This decision to lower the age of services went against well-grounded evidence in the field and was ultimately financial in nature - when you consider the minimal amount of money saved in comparison to the costs to society overall due to reduced supports during a critical time in a young person's life, it is actually not fiscally responsible.

Children and youth in care are the most vulnerable young people in our society with the poorest outcomes and for our government to make this decision is nothing less than embarrassing. While other provinces are moving forward and increasing the ages for service across the country, I watched us move backwards without adequate reason as to why. The worst part for me was watching the government spin this decision as beneficial to the public, when those of us inside knew the truth and had to pick up the pieces in the wake of severe consequences. I used to be proud to work in this system and this decision made me filled with disgust, eventually leading me to decide to leave altogether. Shame on you, United Conservative Party of Alberta - you will neither comprehend nor care about the havoc you caused to such vulnerable humans.

~ Name Withheld ~

A 19 year old told me off today. I asked where he'd been staying and he snapped "outside." I said "I'm sorry." He replied "No you're not. No one is sorry. No one does anything to help me. You all say you're sorry but no one does anything."

And he's right. I am working with a teenager facing serious barriers including mental health, abuse, trauma, substance use, street violence. Not to mention hunger and sleep deprivation. No consistent spot to shower or eat or use the toilet. And I have no good resources to offer. He's "hard to house" because of his many issues. He's also a lovely and kind person. Keenly intelligent. Soft hearted. And he deserves the world.

I often think what it must be like to be a kid and to connect with these non profit agencies that try to fill in some gaps left wide open by government agencies. They must wonder why none of us seem to do anything.

Like, really imagine being a kid and going up to an adult who is working in a field that is supposed to be helping you and saying I have nowhere to go. I have to sleep

you and saying I have nowhere to go. I have to sleep them about the appointments they the applications they need to fill out and have to wait in and maybe if they get lucky file for them and maybe a worker will have at their office for you but you'll need to their office and they keep banking hours.

No, that's untrue banks are now open late. You'll have to

make it

to the worker on your own before 430, on weekdays

I often think what it must be like to be a kid and to connect with these non profit agencies that try to fill in some gaps left wide open by government agencies. But you try to sleen during the day because it's less dangerous and it's warmer. So you end up missing appointments. You don't make it to the office by 4:30. You don't even know what time it is most of the day. People don't want you riding next to them on transit. You can no longer hide that you're homeless. Your hair and your clothes tell your story. You're carrying everything you own with you. You might try to leave it in a tent with friends but there's a good chance you get rinsed. You lose everything. You have now lost all keepsakes and momentos of your former life. Your childhood. It seems like a lifetime ago. Do your parents still think about you:

Maybe your parents are in the same boat. Your anger builds.

Your physical state is dire. You go to the emergency for the open sores on your body but there's a 16 hour wait. You can't go that long sitting alone in a waiting room with nothing to eat or drink and let's be honest your body can't go that long without getting high. So you leave. A worker tells you that you should seek mental health support. But you have no idea how to find that. They might earnestly try and they might take you to an office where you have to wait in a queue, again. Then you might see a counsellor or doctor who wants to help you but they can only see you once a month. There might be a team assigned to you. You may or may not ever connect with anyone on that team.

You ask a worker to call a shelter (there are 8 emergency beds for youth in the city) because they fill up and you need to go somewhere soon. They're full. They tell you to call back in a few hours. Maybe someone will leave. But you don't have a phone (and even if you did, you definitely wouldn't have service to make a phone call), and the drop-in centre will be closed by then. So the option you are given is to get on Transit again if you're lucky enough to have a bus pass, or a bus ticket, and walk to the shelter and sit outside and buzz when people come out, hoping that you can go in. But you very well may just end up sleeping in the woods.

Again.



This is because the captain, so to speak, changed our course into rocky waters, with daily sea storms, iceberg fields and a waterfall I fear as the final destination. They also did so without consulting anyone on deck.

Coming up with the right words and way to express my perspective around the changes to our system has been difficult. I feel like it is almost all I've been able to think about for a while as well as the one thing I try very hard to forget, deny, or soothe myself daily in the face of. If this sounds similar to a trauma response it's because it is. We're all exxperiencing it. Any worker in CFS who says otherwise is likely in their own protective state of denial or is simply selling something. I mean that. I believe that. I realize this is harsh disheartening language but it is the truth.

Why do I say this so bluntly?

Our ministry right now is very much like a sinking ship... with no clear or "real" plan to fill the holes in the vessel - as we all struggle to bail out water out everyday trying to stay afloat, watching as more and more people jump ship or overboard to find land... leaving those of us left on the vessel to sink faster. This is because the captain, so to speak, changed our course into rocky waters, with daily sea storms, iceberg fields and a waterfall I fear as the final destination. They also did so without consulting anyone on deck.

CFS has always historically sailed on rocky waves with less than sturdy foundations, or the best working compasses (due to the value systems we were built upon and the relationships those value systems promoted). The most profound result of this has been known as the 60's scoop which was brought on from the multigenerational effects of the residential school system and cultural genocide of indigenous peoples in Canada. The 60's scoop was directed by the continuation of removing indigenous children from their families in the name of their "safety", "security", "stability", and "well being" even after residential schools closed. It often resulted in the same or similar consequences as the residential school system for indigenous communities, families, children and youth by furthering their disconnections from whom and where they belong and by attempting to assimilate people to a certain way of living. Of connecting. Of being.

Any worker in CFS who says otherwise is likely in their own protective state of denial or is simply selling something. I mean that. I believe that.

As such, CFS has a long history of promoting intergenerational trauma at the hands of the government, and this feels very much like it's going to be a 3rd wave of that. What history will call this I do not know but I fear it might be the worst yet. I would call it "A Sunken System" or more simply a "Capsized Care System". I mean it when I say this is the worst it's ever been. I know it. People who have worked here for 30 plus years know it. Every person who has found work elsewhere knows it. Those on medical leaves know it. Our union knows it. Supervisors leaving by the day know it. The outcome is clear as day even though the skies and waters we navigate daily are not. 20% of our working force left standing speaks volumes.

Unfortunately as loud as our voices and the voices of childrens and youth in care might be, we are falling on deaf ears.

Nothing is being done to prevent our inevitable capsize. Our staffing shortage and support from the top has never been this dire. I see no light in this darkness other than the resilience of the people on deck. Which almost makes the reality of us all sinking despite our best efforts not to, far more difficult to stomach.

It is crucial to recognize that this vessel isn't just carrying us but also the lives of so many vulnerable children and youth whom we are responsible for taking with us on the safest and most stable journey we can offer. This creates major issues for them. Real ones. To their lives and futures. The result is that these children and youth sink with us, jump ship to brave the waters on their own, give up, or even die... yes that last one is unfortunately tragic but also true. Death rates, suicide rates, and disconnection has increased since these changes. This is simply undeniable.

Just writing this out has me in a state of what I've been in since the changes, the growth model, and the one worker model were solidified. Absolute shock, anger and disbelief. True hopelessness that has been building over the last year and a half as these changes and their effects unfold.

It's a very helpless feeling to have been so motivated for so long towards bettering this journey - sailing securely as a system - and to feel so helpless towards being able to do anything to prevent the capsize.

It is important to remember that how we walk up to a door is how it opens and as front line workers our input and consent were never considered in these changes. Neither were the families, youth, or children in which we support. In fact we were all made to sign "voluntary" contracts framed as our "choice" where the result of such could have been a loss of our jobs if we didn't and the most youth got as an explanation was a pamphlet that read "TAP" on it with promises of "better support" towards "independence".

Many young people in care don't even trust these vessels (relationships and forms of building safety and stability around them) due to their own childhood and reoccurring traumas and how many times the system has been at the center of furthering their pain, grief, and loss. If they did connect with a worker who was with them for years and who managed to build a partnership with them despite these challenges, they were told that they had to start new. This is more loss. Now you add that the ship that took these children from their homes, communities, and families to begin with, is sinking... completely... and more so by the day. Then compound that with how nothing is being done to truly address it. You get what is unfolding now.

If they did connect with a worker who was with them for years and who managed to build a partnership with them despite these challenges, they were told that they had to start new. This is more loss.

Hopelessness. Everywhere. For everyone.

We are sailing on seas of doom and dread with a compass that is broken because it is blind and with a captain who can't see how many people are going to go down with the ship. Or, alternatively with one who honestly does not care. I'm not sure which is worse to consider or realize.

...and the most youth got as an explanation was a pamphlet that read "TAP" on it with promises of "better support" towards "independence". Reminds me of the scene in the Titanic. When everyone is being assured that the situation is "under control" when it isn't, when people are being blocked to access of areas of the ship that would offer some refuge or reassurance, as we all panic and freeze and try to make the best of what time we have left above water. There is only so much a relationship that needs to bring hope, a light to a dark world, can accomplish when the light is fading for everyone on deck. When the sun is disappearing. Only so long we can navigate the icebergs and waterfalls we are inevitably headed for in the dark.

I feel crazy some days knowing all of this and still being on the ship. I also feel guilty knowing how communities, families, children and youth are affected and will continue to be by these changes. They didn't ask for this any more than they asked for the childhood traumatic situations they were often born into. It breaks my heart in the hardest of ways.

I know I am not alone in that feeling. Like I said earlier how we are all dealing with those feelings is unique to us as people - many of us have dissociated or are in denial. Most of us have left.

The goal used to be striving. Now it's surviving. With no end in sight but drowning.

tt's sad too because many of us, myself included, witnessed the rise and creation of communities of practice which prioritized relationship based, trauma informed methods of working with people that kept both us and those we walked alongside as stable and safe as possible. I took part in some of these changes and in furthering their direction with youth and children and I have now watched as many mentors I worked with for years who spent their entire lives trying to redirect our course

and redefine how we worked with people had their whole life's work reversed. Sabotaged.

Thrown out. Almost over night.

The stability and safety
is now gone for all of us.
I fight the feeling of dread
every day knowing this.

Trying my best to do
what I can to support
the children, youth

beside on this ship while we sink together.

and families I walk

The goal used to be striving. Now it's surviving.

I don't know what the answer is. I hope we don't capsize. But I honestly see no other way of this ending without serious and significant changes happening immediately.

That is what I see and it's all most of the people I've talked to can either. The method of hiring more people into jobs behind those who leave consists of hiring lower classified and less experienced people who have a limited ability and permission to take on higher case loads making much of their presence to those of us who have been around more work and training for us to find time for rather than helpful to our collective survival. I will say that I do value everyone who is part of this journey and who is trying to do what they can but I must speak honestly and clearly. This approach to add more bodies to a vessel that we who are overworked already have to teach how to sail, how to bail water out, and how to support the most vulnerable among us in unauthentic ways, is not working. It's also difficult to promote authentic connections and relationships with people when we can't even be authentic with ourselves. For many of us, denial and dissociation is how we survive each day. I guess a silver lining might be that now we understand these realities and survival mechanisms of those we work with a little better. But it's hard to call that positive. It's more so a reach for what possible outcome in this could not be negative as there are far too many.

I don't know what the answer is. I hope we don't capsize. But I honestly see no other way of this ending without serious and significant changes happening immediately. Which is not realistic nor even on the horizon for the captain of this ship. For our government. This is not unique to Alberta either

it is happening in other provinces and is the result of a conservative government that does not understand the need for programming and the challenge of equity over equality.

I write this as a way to help a silenced perspective be seen... if nothing else in an effort to help convey that everyone left on this sinking ship is not sinking alone, and to offer a perspective to youth and families to consider when they experience the abrupt end to working relationships with people who needed to save themselves from this end.

Proposed lawsuit alleges Alberta government wrongfully kept money meant for kids in care

Plaintiffs say the federal government should have stepped in



Paige Parsons · CBC News · Posted: Nov 28, 2023 7:00 AM MST | Last Updated: November 28, 2023



Former foster children Octavian Laboucan and Sierra Clarke are two of the representative plaintiffs in a proposed class-action lawsuit that seeks to force the Alberta government to repay benefits it allegedly misappropriated from kids in care. (Emilio Avalos/CBC)

https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/proposed-lawsuit-alleges-alberta-governmentwrongfully-kept-money-meant-for-kids-in-care-1.7041584

Manitoba

Manitoba won't appeal ruling that government improperly took \$334M from children in care

Indigenous leaders pleaded with government not to appeal

an Froese · CBC News · Posted: Aug 04, 2022 8:56 AM MDT | Last Updated: August 4, 2022



A child walks among signs at a 2020 protest against proposed legislation exempting the province from a lawsuit for taking funding for kids in care. (Trevor Brine/CBC)

Same case.
Different province.

Alberta needs to follow Manitoba's lead and do the right thing.

Not everything has to be a fight. Mistakes were made. Restitution is required. That's it.

Justice can be a very simple process.

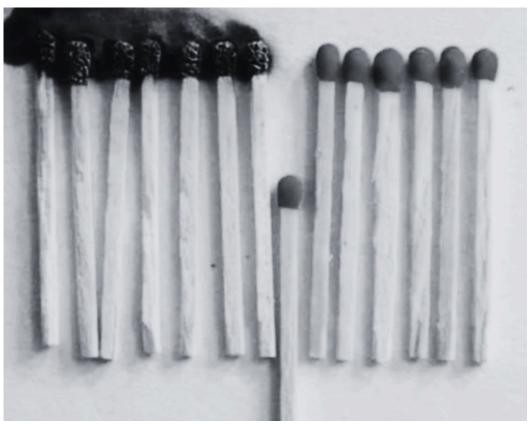


COMING SOON!

The Reel Deadly Film
Festival will launch its
inaugural event in the
summer of 2024. We will
invite new and upcoming
Indigenous story tellers to
showcase their work
alongside each other over
two days, with each day
having one feature length
film, two documentaries,
and two short films. Stay
tuned for more details!

FOR MORE INFO: DAMIAN@INDIGITALMEDIA.NET

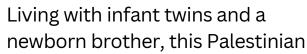
Follow <u>@indigitalmediayeg</u>
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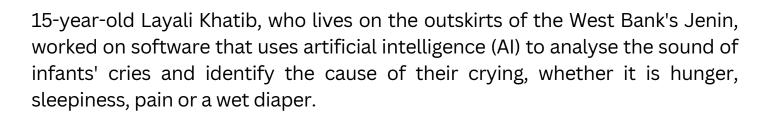
It's OK to step back when you need to so you can come back burning brightly again. Take care of yourself.

Palestinian teen creates an app that decodes babies cries.

A Palestinian teen developed an app she says can predict the reason behind a baby's tears based on the tone of their cries.



teenager used their constant sound of cries to develop an app, which she says can help mothers identify the reason their infant is crying.



While preferring not to share the specific details of how her app works, Khatib says the process involves recording the sound of a child while crying, which is then analyzed through AI processes, resulting in a list of possible reasons and solutions for the tears.

After her hopes of refining her current app and spreading it worldwide, Khatib's next goal is to develop an app that can diagnose Autism.

Excerpt from Euro News October 2023







Theresa, excerpt from her story in Youth In Care Chronicles

Kaylen

I can't see myself doing anything but working with animals because that is what I love to do.

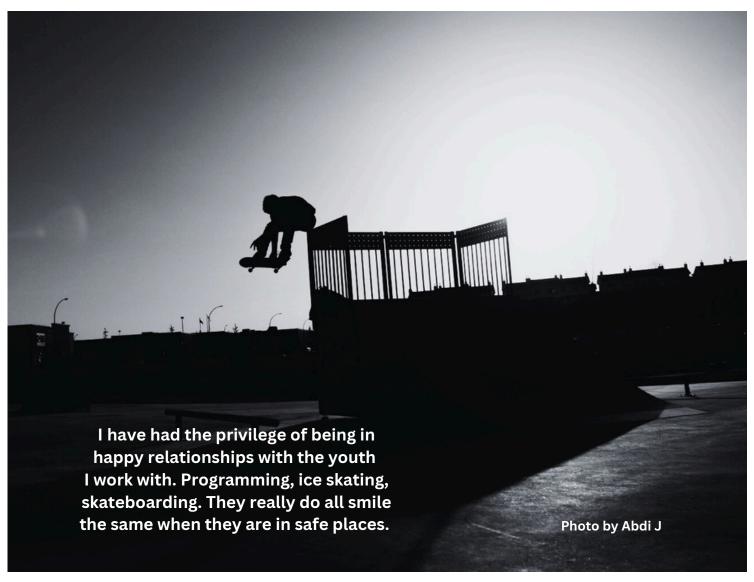
There's so many animals that need care. So many that need to be rescued and need to be loved and a lot of them are misunderstood - just like kids in care.



Kaylen, excerpt from her story in Youth In Care Chronicles

If you are a youth from care and would like to share a story about the difference that your pets have made in your life please send them to us. And a photo, too!







A Safe Plate

RECIPES & STORIES OF YOUTH FROM CHILD WELFARE

"Food has always been a way for my three siblings and I to re-connect," said Chelsea Wallace, former youth in care. "Being in foster care, it wasn't always possible for us all to stay under one roof so making and sharing a meal was a way for us to bond when we all did get a chance to be together. Food was a way for us to feel at home and it brought us comfort."



Currently, there are 59,000 children in care across Canada. Thousands of children age out of care each year and almost 300,000 children are at risk of entering the system. Children's Aid Foundation of Canada is our country's leading charity supporting families, children and youth involved in the child welfare system. Through a national network of partners, the Foundation connects youth in and from care to resources and programs that enable them to continue their education, find meaningful employment or find stable housing and mental health support.

"Food and storytelling are key ingredients to what makes us human," said Valerie McMurtry, President and CEO, Children's Aid Foundation of Canada. "We know food fuels our bodies but, it also feeds our soul by building community, culture, and connection. With A Safe Plate, we have created a space to hold not only recipes from youth formerly in care, but stories too. Stories of struggle, resilience, self-discovery and the incredible power of food to reflect who we are at our core and who we've become."

Submitted by former youth in care from across the country, the recipes featured in A Safe Plate were reviewed and prepared by Chef Frank Parhizgar, Co-owner and Chef at <u>FK Restaurant established in 2010 as Frank's Kitchen</u> in Toronto.

"It's an honour to be asked to be part of this project," said Chef Frank Parhizgar, Coowner and Chef, FK Restaurant. "Obviously, I'm very passionate about food, so I was happy to help. More importantly, though, I care deeply about the cause and the work that Children's Aid Foundation of Canada is doing to help children and youth in government care. A Safe Plate reflects my belief in the restorative powers of a good meal; it was an honour to give back to the community in this way."

Visit <u>cafdn.org/ASafePlate</u> to download the free cookbook. To learn more about how you can support children and youth involved in the child welfare system, go to our <u>how to help</u> page.

cadfn.org/ASafePlate

Y2K IS SHOOTING A MUSIC VIDEO...

...ABOUT YOUR **RIGHTS** AS A YOUTH IN CARE.

PLEASE EMAIL: <u>youtoknow60@gmail.com</u>
IF YOU WANT TO BE IN IT. ASAP. THANKS.

We hope that Maggie and Nicole are found safe and can return to their friends and families, soon.

Magdalene Mae "Maggie" Oerlemans

Maggie was 43 at the time of her disappearance. She is described as an Indigenous female with green eyes and brown hair. She stands 5' tall and weighs apx. 115 lbs. She has pierced ears and a tattoo on her right shin described as a "Chinese dragon." If you have any information about Maggie, 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 when possible.

Date Posted: 04-May-2023



You Are Not Forgotten

Nicole Frenchman

EPS File #:21-099485

Nicole was 23 at the time of her disappearance. She is 5'4"and weighs 130 lbs. Nicole has long black hair and brown eyes. She also has several noticeable tattoos including, a blue tattoo of a woman wearing a crown on her upper right chest, a dreamcatcher on her right forearm and a flower and a dollar sign on her right hand. Nicole is known to use taxis for transportation and reportedly frequents the downtown core and the Alberta Avenue area.

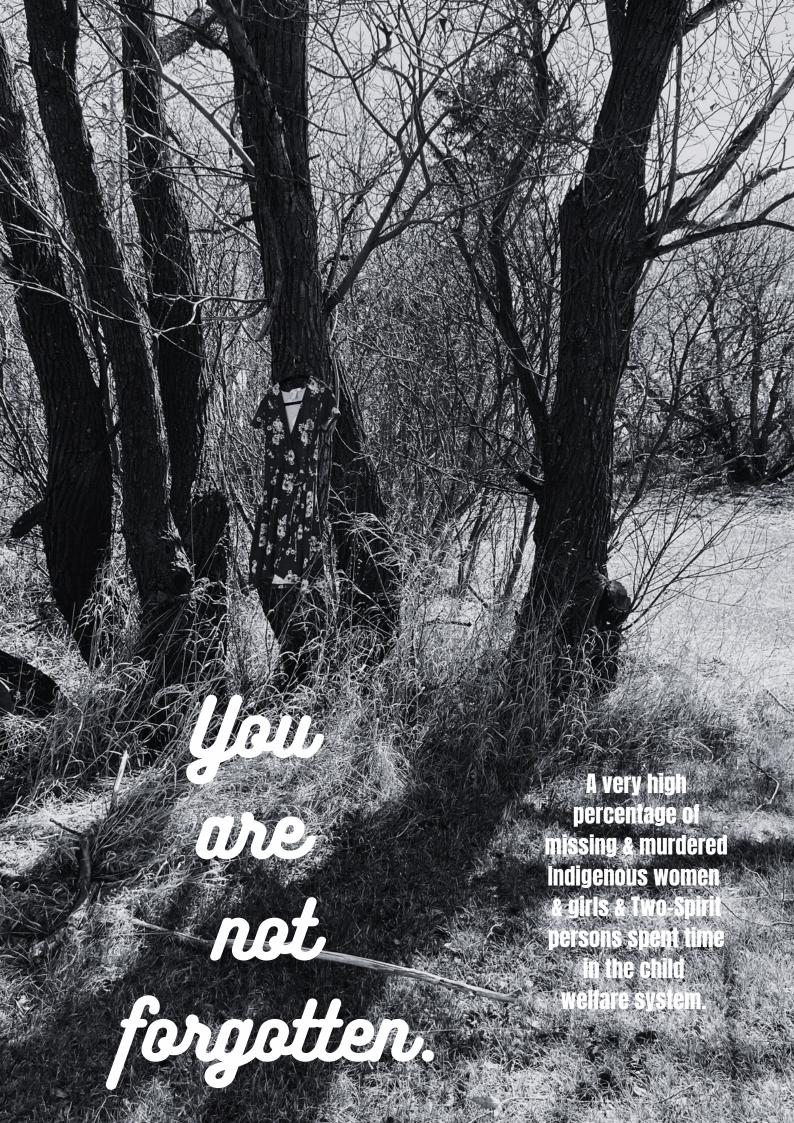
If you have any information about Nicole, please contact the Edmonton Police Service at 780-423-4567 or Edmonton Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or <u>submit your tip online</u>. Please reference the EPS file number when possible.

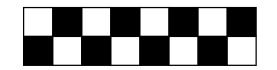
Date Posted: 02-Sep-2021



You are Not Forgotten







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

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

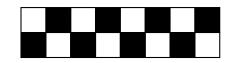
SOUTHERN ALBERTA Call: (403) 297-8435

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





Many thanks to the Friends of Zine & HEARD

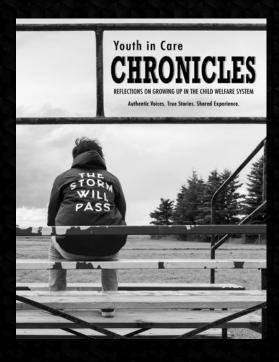
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DAVE HOUSEMAN JOE BUFFALO NIK KOZUB
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for more information & thank you so much. We appreciate it.



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

<u>Amazon</u>
&

<u>Audreys</u>

All proceeds go to fund projects for youth in care.

RAISE THE AGE. LOWER THE STATS.

Children and youth in care are the most vulnerable young people in our society with the poorest outcomes and for our government to make the decision to lower the age of support for them is nothing less than embarrassing. While other provinces are moving forward and increasing the ages for service across the country, I watched Alberta move backwards without adequate reason as to why.

Former Child Welfare Worker Name Withheld

...and the most youth got as an explanation was a pamphlet that read "TAP" on it with promises of "better support" towards "independence". What did they think was going to happen? We were all going to just suddenly live happily ever after?
Or that we would all just magically disappear?
Youth From Care, age 23

Child Welfare Worker Name Withheld

