

Amplifying Voices of Youth From Care

FEBRUARY 2024
ISSUE #13

**PHOTO BY
STEVEN HOPE**

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.



THE
STRONGEST
HEARTS
HAVE
THE MOST
SCARS

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Cover Story

Redeye Rax

What's Inside

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OSYS

(Old Strathcona Youth Society)

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Sherry Vanstone

Steven Hope

YESS

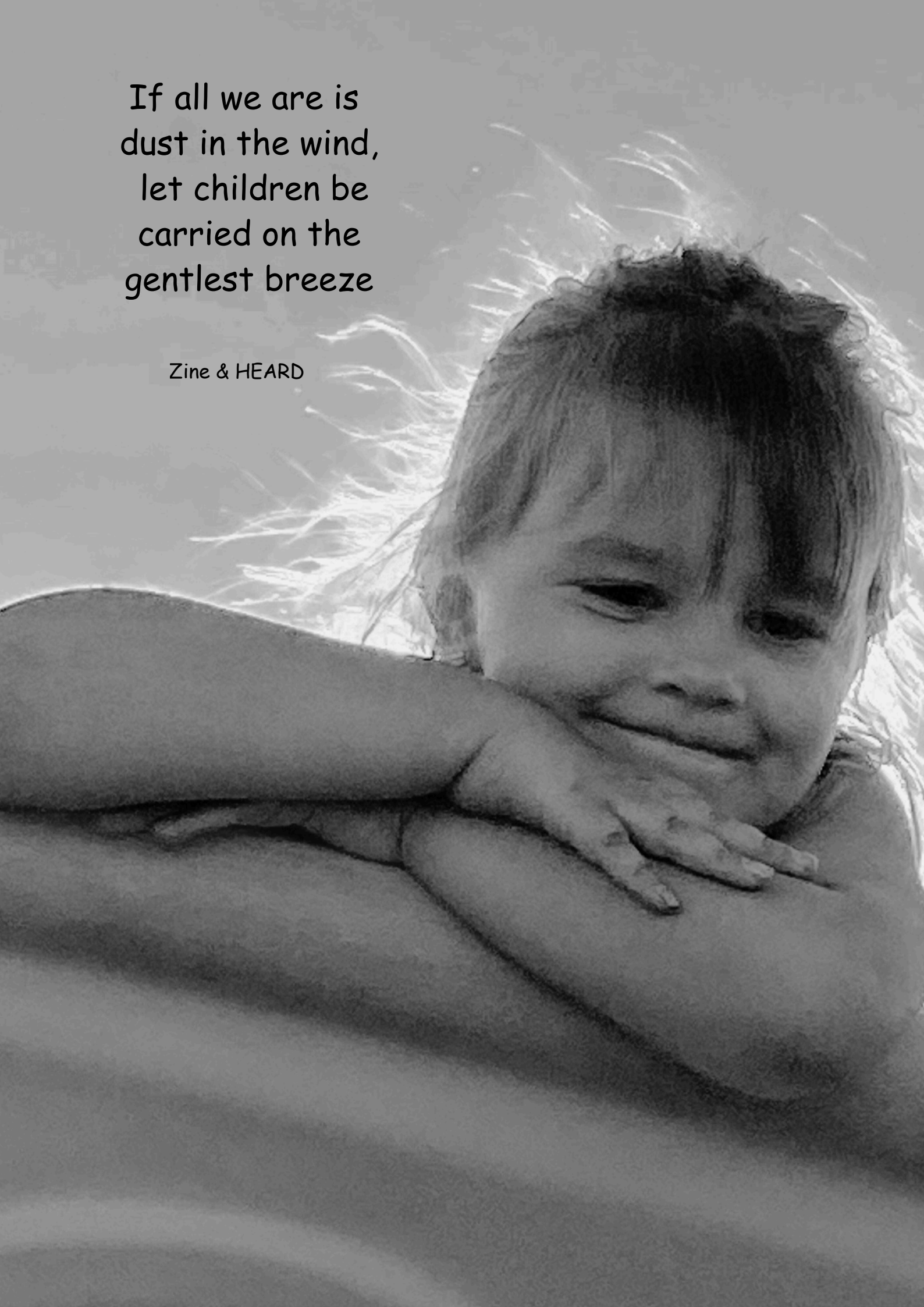
(Youth Emergency Shelter Society)

Youth in Care Chronicles



If all we are is
dust in the wind,
let children be
carried on the
gentlest breeze

Zine & HEARD



**OLD SCHOOL.
NEW SCHOOL.
NO SCHOOL.**

**THERE IS NO AGE LIMIT ON
YOUTH FROM CARE WHO
CAN SUBMIT A STORY OR
SHARE THEIR WORK
IN ZINE & HEARD.**

**YOU MATTER.
YOUR VOICE MATTERS.**

**SPEAK YOUR TRUTH.
SHARE YOUR WISDOM.
SPREAD THE LOVE.**



**THANK
YOU.**

RODEO CLOWNS & OTHER DANGEROUS OCCUPATIONS

Dang it, I really wanted to write a piece about how I feel like the Alberta Government is running a rodeo. Like the boots are on, the shutes are locked and loaded and the tractors are runnin', but the the cowboys are drunk, their saddles are on backwards, and the Rodeo Queen is riding double with Tucker the Rodeo Clown. Sure, that last one was a crowd pleaser for some spectators but for the rest of us it was like watching a chuckwagon wreck.

But no, I'm just going to talk about how eerily similar what the rodeo officials are planning to implement for gender-diverse kids in Alberta is to what they did when they lowered the age of financial supports for kids aging out of care. Similar in that they just did it. Bang. Like the horn blast when they swing the gate open and let the bucking broncos out. No warning. No extensive consultations with stakeholders. Little regard for any relevant reports that were contrary to the plan. Not a whole lot of consideration of how these actions actually impact young human beings. The most marginalized youth in Alberta. The youth at high risk of suicide and at high risk of becoming homeless. In both cases - statistics appear to have been pitched out like mouldy bales of hay.

In one of the articles I came across regarding parents who abuse their kids or kick their kids out if they start questioning their identity, the Alberta Government says they will step in to protect and look after them. Never mind the irony here, first they would have to find them on the streets and then find somewhere to place them. As the former Mayor of Calgary, Naheed Nenshi, said, "Let me tell you what that means. We'll deal with y'all later." And if you think affected kids are going to trust the Alberta government to have their best interests at heart, I've got a nice team of big, ol' Narragansett Pacers I'd like to sell you.

It feels like a pattern. Like a barrel race.
Different horse. Same course.

Over and over again. It feels like
marginalized youth are
simply considered
disposable like
the crap left
behind after
the bull rides.



Penny Frazier,
Editor

Office of the Child & Youth Advocate

Public Statement: Supporting Gender Diverse Children and Youth

February 1, 2024

Yesterday, Premier Smith announced new policies affecting gender diverse young people and their families. We are gathering more information to understand the full impact of these changes on the children and youth we serve.

Our support for gender diverse young people remains unwavering. In 2017 we released [Speaking Out](#), a special report on the challenges faced by 2SLGBTQ+ young people in the child intervention and youth justice systems. Sadly, many of the issues highlighted then persist today: these young people are particularly vulnerable, and are more likely to be unhoused, struggle with their mental health, and lack the supports they need. When young people are not accepted for who they are, it can lead to tragic outcomes.

Young people have the right to gender identity and gender expression, and these rights are protected under the Alberta Human Rights Act and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children and youth need to feel safe in their homes, schools, and communities, without the fear of experiencing harm simply for being who they are. When children and youth feel secure, accepted, and loved, they are more likely to reach out to their parents and other significant adults in their lives for support and guidance.

It is crucial to remember that what is at stake in this conversation is the lives of vulnerable young people. We must centre their voices and ensure that we are prioritizing their safety and well-being in decisions that affect them. In doing so, we can help ensure their rights are upheld and their futures are bright.

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To Art, Healing & Youth: A Personal Statement

I have a complex personal history and have been through a lot of traumatic and painful experiences of which I bear physical, mental, emotional and spiritual scars. Conflict was my norm; survival, disconnect, coping. Honestly, I can't begin to unpack what I have experienced in this short personal statement, and I don't think it necessary to do so. I will say, in the last two years, I left an abusive relationship and my dear brother/best friend passed away suddenly from an overdose. In this darkness, I experienced two extremely visceral, emotional, moments, in which I was able to feel anguished parts of me die, and the birth of self inquiry and compassion. I was able to sit behind myself and witness myself with curiosity and compassion. These moments were spiritual to me. Now, with an open mind, I welcome all of my feelings, pieces of me I may not be aware of, I make space for them, and I learn from them. I use these moments of self connection to envision images attached to my experiences, perceived within my internal world, of which I can sometimes channel into creation; the whole process being art.

I have spent the last two years grieving, healing and learning about myself in a therapeutic manner. I research psychotherapy and therapeutic models, which I engage with in my own way, to further encourage my healing.

I have begun to use my natural survival skills as my strengths. One being my imagination and ability to travel in my mind. Born from a desire to disassociate from childhood trauma and pain, I have always had an active imagination and spent a lot of time exploring my inner world(s). I would often incorporate imagination and reality as a child, letting myself be. Unfortunately, over time, like so many of us, I buried this part of me, my spirit, to protect myself. I have since created safety within myself, and can once again be imaginative and let my



mind and spirit wander. This imaginative connection is my connection to self, and I use it to heal and empower myself and those around me. Further, I use this connection to heal my past wounds, for comfort, and to envision the future I want for myself.

During the last 8 years, i have been working with youth aged

12 - 24 in group homes and group home housing facilities (to use realistic terminology). I connected with many of these youth through our shared, yet unique experiences with pain, trauma and grief. Further, due to the high percentage of Indigenous youth in these facilities, I could connect with many of them because I am a Métis person who was relinquished to the child welfare system and adopted into a white household. I grew up disconnected from my culture and uprooted from my reality, while enduring chaos around me and later, trauma and abuse; unfortunately common, shared experiences amongst Indigenous people. Through my years working with youth, we have enjoyed hanging out, laughing, playing games, cleaning, cooking, chatting, and getting to know one another. Once I began to paint, I was determined to introduce as many youth as possible to the notion of self connection through art, knowing the healing power of it. Most youth were not interested, however I was able to convince a few to join me. These connections were very meaningful to me, and to the youth, and they remain cherished in my memory. I know how difficult it is to exit one's comfort zone, when living in survival, with fear as the baseline. These youth knew that I knew this; and they were able to step outside with me, to connect with others and themselves for a while to create and exist; beautiful, artistic moments. I wish to continue to connect with youth and to provide culturally, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally meaningful opportunities and access for them to connect with themselves, with art being a natural tool of connection.

My reasons for pursuing Art and Art Therapy are many, but most importantly it is an act of my spirit, in which I can walk and act in line with my beliefs, values and knowledge. I value intergenerational healing, for Indigenous youth, myself and my son, my newfound biological connections, and to foster change and growth as individuals and society. I believe in social and systemic change, and I do this by embodying the ways of my ancestors and their values. Through which, I act to decolonize my being, knowing that every time I am connected to myself and sharing what I know, I am embodying the world I wish to live in and see.



Love,
Erin
Simpson



AN INTERVIEW WITH

REDEYE RAX

Redeye Rax is an Edmonton songwriter, rapper and performer. Redeye uses music to tell his story and uplift people who are facing similar circumstances. His story is one of hope and perseverance. Redeye performs regularly at downtown and Whyte Ave venues - so watch for his next show. Follow him @redeye_rax

By Sherry Vanstone

Where did the name Red Eye Rax come from?

“Redeye is from the Red glasses I wear, and Rax is to manifest Racks of my music in the future. “

What would be your hashtag?

“I am Cree First Nations/ Aboriginal descent and wolf is my spirit animal. #awarewolf would be my hashtag.”

What is something people don't know about you?

“They think I'm a rapper- but I'm an artist. I am like the coloursof the rainbow. Not just Red, but fuschia, hot pink, magenta.

The things I have struggled with in my life, being an alcoholic, drug addict... most of my family and people I know struggle with that, you know? I had to overcome my addictions and being in foster care and being homeless. I had to become one with my inner self, to become my true nature, the person I was always meant to become”

What's your favourite time of day?

“Whenever I wake up. I work on music, rest, repeat. I feel blessed and thankful to wake up each day. To breathe fresh air and to be one with the earth.”

What's your dream destination to travel to?

“I don't have one honestly- but I will make it to Atlanta one day, to make music. Take it global, worldwide. To inspire and motivate the next generation to be better versions of themselves”

How do you take your coffee?

“1/2 coffee, the other half cream and sugar. And let it get cold.”

Do you have an affirmation?

“Yes, I tell myself every morning- Today we're gonna get it done. I'm gonna work on my music and my songwriting and I just tell myself: You got this.”

I had to overcome my addictions and being in foster care and being homeless. I had to become one with my inner self, to become my true nature, the person I was always meant to become”

Why do you go to OSYS?

“The help I got here - they support me in my music, they support me in my passion - what I love doing. They help me with food, they make me feel like welcome, you know? Like I’m at home ‘cause I never really had a home. I was in foster care and stuff. I was just told you can’t do this and that. I was told I wouldn’t make music, but I said nah, I’m gonna do what I want. I told my mom - I’m gonna get my diploma and I got my diploma. I said I’m gonna make music and I’m making music - because the sky’s the limit and anything is possible if you put your mind to it. I strongly believe that because I was told you can’t do this and that - you’re gonna end up like your family, you’re gonna end up in jail, or dead. I beat the odds.”

When did you first go into care?

“I was born into foster care. I lived in a lot of different places. I saw the world for what it was, early on. I had to grow up, fast”

How do you stay so positive?

“I am a happy, positive person. I believe the energy you put out is the energy you’ll get back. You gotta be kind- you don’t know what people went through. Give respect and you’ll get it back.”

What would you tell a young person growing up in foster care?

“Keep doing what you do. Believe in your dreams and never give up. I’m living proof. It’s up to you what you want to do. You’re not a puppet, you’re a human being. Follow your passions.

GO GET IT!”

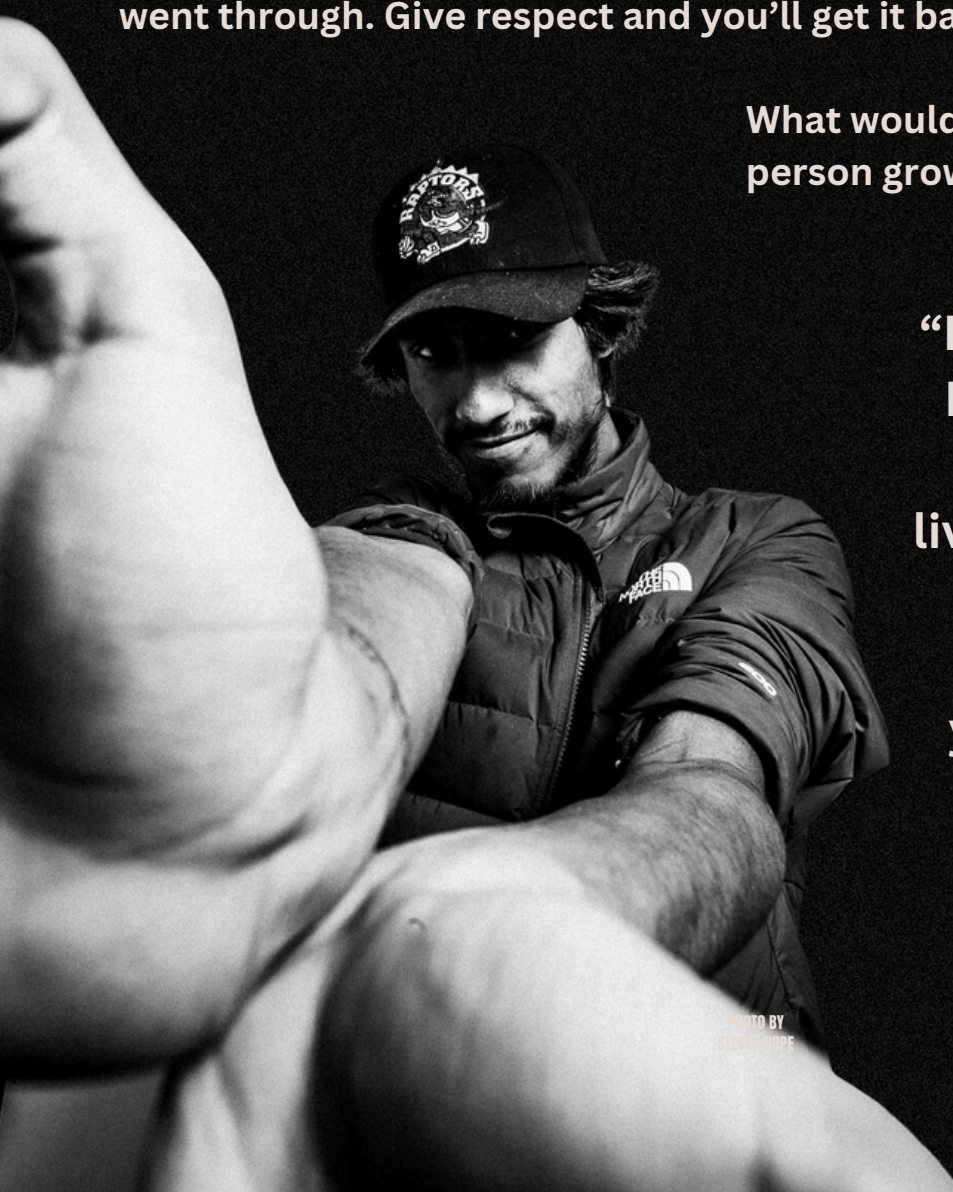


PHOTO BY
ALEXANDRE



Redeye Rax

Redeye Rax is an upcoming Canadian Independent Artist on the Rise All the way From Yeg Located In Edmonton, Alberta. He has his own Melodic Unique Sound and is able to Create and make Hits when it comes to being diverse with his music. It's not only Therapeutic for him but tells the world his Story so his Fans and Family Can Relate and not make the same mistakes as him. As a human being he's doing music for the next generation of children to inspire them to believe and achieve in their dreams; being able to manifest them into reality so they can do anything they put there mind to. His music and songs are Meant For All Ages and Audiences including seniors / kids / teens. All of his songs have no swears in them, his lyrics are all written by him and his mind based off his past of pain. He pours his heart and soul along with his pain and passion From Going Through a lot of Heartbreak Growing up over the years. He just puts it Into His Music in order to Become Better Every Single Day. With His Special Talents and Gifts he will one day Reach his Full Potential so that's why He is Representing All of Edmonton and Canada and he is Carrying All the Spirits and hopes of His Lost Loved ones and His Aboriginal Cree People that Are First Nations. His love for music and Especially his Hard Work Ethic to Never Give Up No Matter what - he has Got What it Takes To Make it Big one day in life with his music career!

LIKE. FOLLOW. SHARE. THANK YOU.



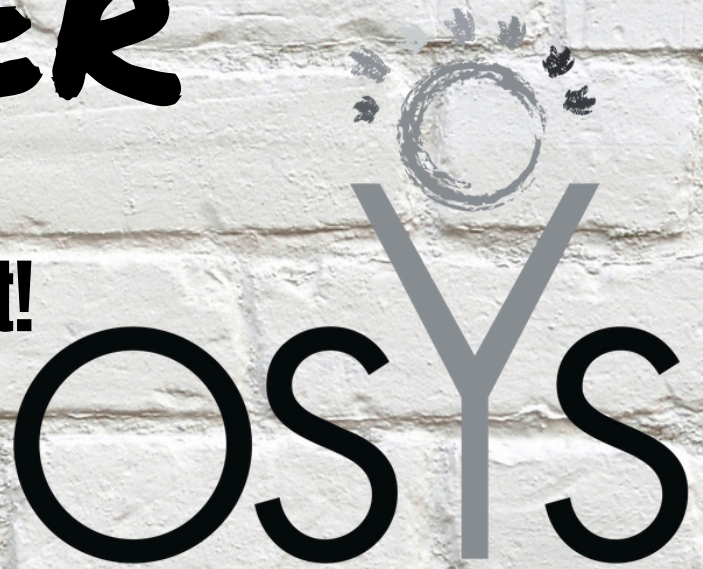
HELP US SAVE THE YOUTH CENTER

We need your support!

We have a plan!

We have the staff!

What we need is a building.



While this isn't the challenge we would have chosen to take on, we are choosing to recognize it is an opportunity for OSYS and our community to do something amazing!

Editor's Note

*Have you ever walked into a place and actually felt the love?
I feel that at OSYS.*

An interview with OSYS Executive Director, Ian Pidgeon

We have been hearing a lot about OSYS in the news recently. For those that are unfamiliar, can you tell me about your organization and what you do?

Yes! The Old Strathcona Youth Society is a non-profit low-barrier drop-in center that supports unhoused and vulnerable youth between the ages of 14 and 24. Supporting Edmonton youth for the past 25 years, OSYS provides non-judgmental, trauma-informed access to basic needs items, services and referrals.

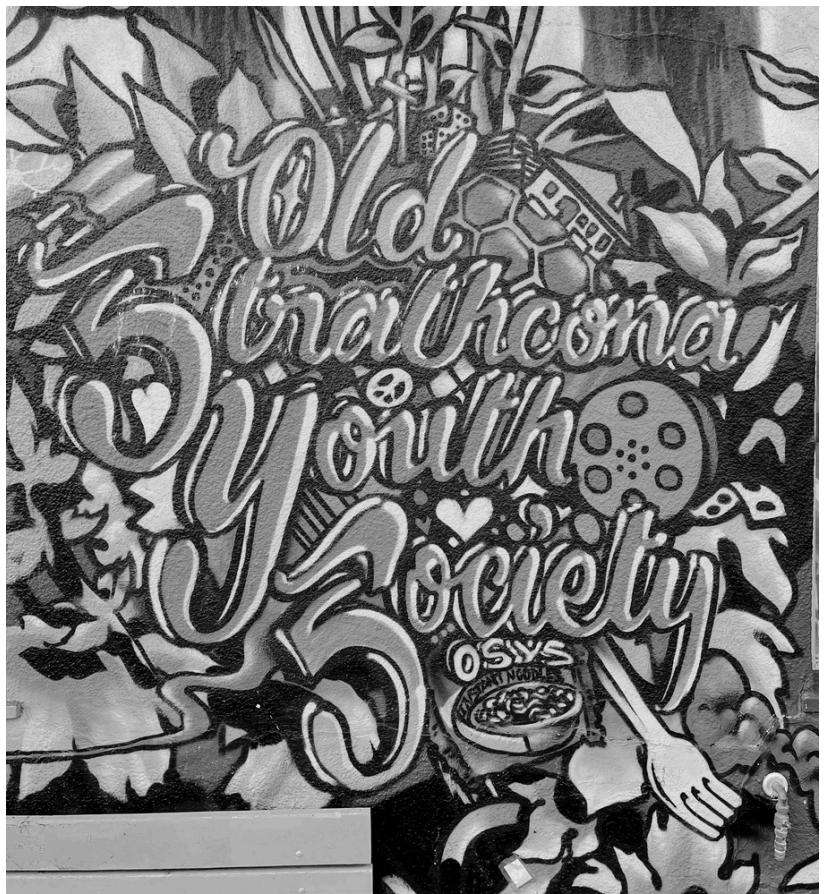
At OSYS, we take a relationship-based approach to providing care. We believe that healthy communities start with healthy, meaningful connections. With this in mind, staff are committed to ensuring that OSYS is a place where youth can feel like they are part of a community that celebrates who they are, sees their potential, and is always happy when they return.

That sounds like a unique place. You mentioned that you provide supportive services as well. Can you tell me about that?

In addition to creating a safe space where youth can connect, we collaborate with various community organizations to provide daily snacks, clothing, legal support, in-house healthcare, housing referrals, ID replacement, free transit options, as well as a number of other resources.

We heard that you are going to have to move from your current location. What's going on?

Unfortunately, it's true. In December, the City of Edmonton completed an evaluation of our building. Upon assessment, it was determined that extensive repairs would be required to ensure the



building's continued fitness for use. Consequently, due to safety concerns related to the building's foundation, the City has opted to end our tenancy effective March 31, 2024.

With less than 60 days until your move-out date, how are you responding?

Throughout this process, we have been in close communication with our funders and stakeholders and remain confident in our ability to continue providing services to our youth. While we have been working collaboratively with the City to find a solution, there are no viable City leasing options in the Strathcona area. With a current serving population of 700 vulnerable youth, remaining in the area to ensure preventative and life-saving-supports are available is our highest priority.

So what does that mean for finding a new building?

This means that in order to stay in the Strathcona area, OSYS will need to purchase a building. While we were aware that we may need to find alternative accommodations at some point in the future, the short-notice termination of our three-year lease was unexpected. Despite this, I am proud to say that the OSYS team has pivoted quickly since receiving the news. Potential solutions are beginning to present themselves as a result of the staff's hard work, support from the City, and the community's generosity.



“With a current serving population of 700 vulnerable youth, remaining in the area to ensure preventative and life-saving-supports are available is our highest priority.”

How will this change impact the youth?

It goes without saying that many of our young people are experiencing a lot of strong emotions right now. OSYS is like a home for its community members, and it's always hard when you have to move on unexpectedly. But as difficult as it is, our youth are doing their best to find their way through it. While it's going to be hard, we promise they won't have to do it alone. To ensure their continued access to support, we have developed a community outreach plan that will allow us to continue connecting and supporting the youth who need us.

Given the circumstances, it sounds like you're responding the best you can. What do you need to ensure your success?

We need your support! We have a plan; we have the staff; what we need is a building. While this isn't the challenge we would have chosen to take on, we are choosing to recognize it is an opportunity for OSYS and our community to do something amazing!

Help us ensure there is always a safe space for the youth in our community who need it most. If you're on a budget, buy a doorknob; if you're feeling flush, pay for a wall or purchase our roof. Our success is going to come down to the funds we can raise. You can help make a real impact in the day-to-day lives of young Edmontonians right now by scanning the QR code below and making a donation today!

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THANK YOU!



THE OSYS LOVE

Even though OSYS isn't tied to our physical space, leaving the building is difficult because of the memories attached to it. It wasn't the perfect space, but now when I look at it with eyes that know we won't get to be here anymore, I see how beautiful and weird and wonderful it is. I'm excited to settle into a new space, but it'll definitely be a bittersweet feeling when I walk by the old place and remember our bingo nights, watching Avatar 2, and the inside jokes that it once held.

Dill Prusko, Program Coordinator, OSYS

It has been an honour to be part of OSYS in our current space. These walls hold a certain kind of magic (corny as that is to say) and I will forever cherish the days spent here making pizza pops, earning street credits, taking in the colourful walls, and meeting the most wonderful folks.

I can't wait to continue our journey in a new space and make new memories.

Ella Dunlop, Recreation Coordinator, OSYS

I could go on and on about the impact OSYS had made in my life. It allowed me to be a part of a community that was truly all support. Watching youth support youth, staff support staff, staff support youth and youth support staff. It was a magical and eye opening experience.

Everyday was a new adventure and everyday was a learning opportunity. I encourage anyone and everyone that has the capability to work or volunteer for the centre to.

It is a beautiful representation of community and it has forever changed my life.

Sydney Libbus-Child and Youth Care Practicum Student, Grant McEwan

Volunteering at OSYS has revealed to me the truth about the prevalence of unhoused youth in Edmonton. Hearing our youth member's stories has taught me about true strength, courage and determination. It is a privilege to work with these incredible kids and provide them with a safe and non-judgemental space.

Sarah Jorristma, Nursing Practicum student, U of A

"I'm 18 and I have been coming here (to OSYS) since 2021. I have been struggling with homelessness, for the last 3 and a half years. I got pregnant on the streets- it was not the opportunity that I wanted but I'm glad I have my baby boy by my side-even though I may not have him in my custody. I hope to find a place in the next month or coming months because I don't want to spend it homeless."

Dakotah, Youth, 18

PHOTO BY
STEVEN HOPE



MY STORY

Where it began:

Growing up, my mother would do one of two things when she was mad at me. Either I'd be locked in the basement until she felt like I'd learned my lesson or she'd kick me out and call the cops on me for "running away." Because of more extreme abuse I was put through I had CFS in my life for 11 years from ages 5-16, during those years I would temporarily be removed from my home while the workers conducted "investigations"

but I was never properly taken care of and removed from my childhood home so naturally I hold some resentment towards CFS.



I lived with my mother until I was 20. On February 1st, 2021 she kicked me out for the last time. I have reoccurring lung problems and that time I also had Covid but was unaware of it. I had called 811 just to see if I could avoid going to the hospital because I pretty much wasn't allowed to go anywhere without my mother but I was told I had to go to the hospital asap. I told my mother what the person on 811 said and she made the decision for me that I wasn't going to the hospital, asking how stupid could I be to listen to a registered nurse and not her because according to her I was fine unless I was on my deathbed.

...something in my gut told me if I left she'd kick me out. So I packed my most important things like my birth certificate, laptop, etc, in my backpack and got ready to quite literally run.

My boyfriend at the time knew how controlling my mother was and convinced me to go to the hospital but something in my gut told me if I left she'd kick me out. So I packed my most important things like my birth certificate, laptop, etc, in my backpack and got ready to quite literally run.

On my way out the door my mother literally ran after me and tried to grab my backpack to pull me back into the apartment and chased me into the hallway where she told me this was it, I wasn't allowed to come back and if I did she'd charge me with trespassing, she was holding onto my wrist so tight it left a bruise and my boyfriend on my phone could hear everything so he yelled at her to let me go which she did thankfully, then I ran down the stairs and was outside, officially on my own.

How I stayed safe on the streets:

After I left the apartment I went to the Royal Alex and after many breakdowns and explaining to the social workers there what my relationship with my mother was like they sent me to one of the old Travelodges meant for homeless people who needed to isolate due to covid and I stayed there for about a week before my mother had texted me telling me I had 1 day to pick up the rest of my belongings before she threw them out.

I then discharged myself from the Travelodge early and had a friend with a car come with me because I knew if I went alone I wouldn't have made it out again. During the drive to my old apartment I reached out to another friend who said I could stay at his place for a bit until I had somewhere longterm and safe to go. I then stayed at that friend's place for about two weeks until I got a bed at the Nexus youth shelter by YESS.

I was at Nexus for 4 months on and off while I got connected to Homeward Trust. During that time I managed to get 3 jobs and keep them while being homeless and was able to get a storage unit for the rest of my stuff that had been at my friend's house for months. Because of the hours of some of my jobs there were times where there wasn't any beds at Nexus and I went to the river valley to sleep. Thankfully I rarely experienced anything bad while being on the streets and if I did I wasn't alone because I had made friends and we took care of each other. My 5th month of being homeless I was put in bridge housing just to have a secure place to sleep because of my jobs.



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What OSYS + iHuman have done for me:

I discovered OSYS around June of 2021 before I had housing, I was definitely scared going to a new place but the staff made me feel safe insanely quick. OSYS became my second home and I was there daily for almost a year until I switched jobs. The youth and staff at OSYS have been there at some of my lowest points even when they didn't know it. I'd go there when I was feeling suicidal because there was always something going on to help ease my mind.

The OSYS staff began to feel like family to me and I'll forever be grateful for them. They helped me get a monthly bus pass, clothes, food, and what seemed like endless resources for whatever I needed. Sherry in particular even helped me with basic adult things I didn't know because my mother never taught me them so because of OSYS and their resources I know how to pay bills, do taxes, laundry, and generally take care of myself.

I started going to iHuman for therapy sometime in September of 2022, I also got a tour of the building where they have insane programs like a music studio, an art room, and a place to make your own clothes. I also got connected to a family doctor for the first time in my life who helped me with my general health and still does now. I mainly go to iHuman for therapy still and the doctor but the staff there are amazing, everyone's so kind and non-judgemental which makes it really easy to be yourself there.

Where I am now:

I'm currently in sober housing and almost 100 days sober! It definitely took a long time to get here because I've been struggling with addiction since I was 12, when I was homeless, and even when I had housing through Homeward Trust I was majorly struggling because I was on my own and I was scared, I was almost never a day sober from July 2021-October 2023, I lost my housing from because of my addiction. Drinking and being high was more important than my rent.

I lost all 3 of my first jobs because of my addiction. I'd call out to prioritize being intoxicated and would go to work intoxicated which affected my performance. Everyone in my inner circle knew something was up but for the most part I was a high functioning addict so I seemed like I was fine when I wasn't, for "some reason" I just never had enough money for bills or rent.

From April-October I was in an abusive relationship where my use was encouraged and I went off the deep end, I lost my second apartment, friends, and my connections to my therapist and OSYS staff, and I wound up feeling suicidal almost daily from August-October. On October 21st, 2023 I overdosed on ibuprofen and was admitted to the psych ward at Alberta Hospital.

During my time at the psych ward I reached out to old friends, Nathan (my therapist,) and my chosen family Dorjay and Saint to rebuild those connections and decided for my life to get better I needed to be sober. I then transferred to a rehab facility for a month and a half and graduated into the sober living program I'm in today.

I've also been put on medications to help with my mental disorders and pairing that with sobriety has gotten me to a place I never thought could exist for me. I'm the most stable I've ever been, I have sober friends and friends who encourage my sobriety and I have the support network that I've always dreamed of. And, I'm happy.

I still access OSYS and iHuman and my connections there are stronger than ever. I'm finally at peace with how I'm living and I'm able to imagine a future for myself.

*Rainnah-Lily
Gosselin*



Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow Too

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow Too only took me 4 years to publish, but it sat on the side of my life for a couple of those years. My oldest son truly believed in my dream, and I had to show my children that you can accomplish your dreams if you work for it. No matter what you go through in life, there will always be someone who cares even when you think there isn't. That was the purpose behind my book. To help others as I received help growing up in and out of care. The system failing me so many times to having a social worker who actually cared - who was my voice when I had none. I have grown up knowing that my life will always be chaotic and messy, but I will always overcome it because I always have. I hope that this poetry self-reflective journal gives light to people, but also helps to heal and help with whatever they may be going through. I will always try and be the difference in everyone's life, in hopes of making this world a bit of a better place.

With love, Cheyanne Cramm



Available on AMAZON



**Please scan code to find out how you can
help OSYS - Old Strathcona Youth Society
secure a new space!
Thanks!**



Age eligibility for provincial benefit program supporting vulnerable youth being cut from 24 to 22 this year.

Edmonton Journal, July 21, 2021

"It's not going to be a cost saving because if the youth feel unprepared to be on their own, it's going to increase homelessness, which is particularly frustrating because the government also is in the business of trying to end homelessness and now they could be continuing it," Smyth said in an interview with Postmedia Tuesday. "I can't wrap my head around what the need for this change is." Edmonton Journal, July 21, 2021

"Deaths of young adults hit an all-time high once they no longer qualify for government care"

Calgary Journal, June 8, 2021

Number of deaths of children in care in Alberta in the past year 'astounding,' 'profoundly concerning'.

Pipestone Flyer December 1, 2023

Failure to improve programs for Indigenous youth adults transitioning out of government care could cost the Canadian economy billions, warns a new report from the Conference Board of Canada. CBC October 11, 2023

Deaths of young people in government care continue to climb, Alberta child advocate says.

"I'm sad to let you know that these trends are continuing," Pelton told a legislative committee on Friday in Edmonton. CBC, December 2, 2022

"Over the years, the OCYA has made more than 100 recommendations to the provincial government after reviewing the deaths of young Albertans. The annual report says of the 31 recommendations evaluated by the OCYA in the last fiscal year, four were met, two were closed and 25 remain in progress." CBC Nov 29, 2023

"It's disturbing to see the number of deaths rising among children and young people in care, especially when the union has been calling for immediate improvements in the delivery of services," said AUPE president Sandra Azocar in a release. "Workers are at capacity and have been working at emergency staffing levels due to impossible caseloads, short staffing and burnout," Azocar said. "The government can no longer delay it's responsibility for the protection of vulnerable children in this province.

" Pipestone Flyer, Dec. 1, 2023

RAISE THE AGE. LOWER THE STATS

**ARTICLE NOWHERE TO TURN: ALBERTA'S DISMAL HISTORY OF SUPPORT
FOR YOUTH IN TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD - A.C. AND J.F. V. ALBERTA**

Sarah N. Kriekle * CITED: (2023) 28 Appeal 1

ABSTRACT: This article explores the existing standard of care for youth transitioning from government care into independent adulthood. The article will first explore the history of Alberta's child welfare laws and policy, specifically regarding youth who 'age out' of care. It will then review the existing literature on the impact of the 'aging out' process on the individual and on society before examining the current case of A.C. and J.F. v. Alberta, where two youth who had a support agreement expected to continue to age 24 are challenging the constitutionality of removing supports from youth 'aging out' of care 2 years earlier than expected. Finally, this article will provide an analysis on the rights of youth in transition to adulthood under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Alberta Human Rights Act, with a particular focus on the rights of Indigenous children and youth.

**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.

Damn

How am I supposed to live when I feel like I'm dying?

Scrolling on instagram, time flying.

Not realizing I'm using it to numb the rest of the world.

To have a moment that's mine.

It's coming round again, to think the memories were gone was a naive thought.

The healing process was supposed to somehow make things easier,
or that's what I was taught.

Was the progress I made now fake?

I feel emotionally naked. My confidence gone. I let someone take it.

Stripped of the things that make me feel like I was at my best.

And now all that's left is a whole lot less.

Fake it till you make it. But what happens if someone breaks it. And the IT is you.

That person's actions only affecting a few.

But no big deal, right?

Even if it means them hurting you dims your light. You're just a casualty.

So they're justified in thinking their right.

In this world being the victim is attention seeking.

Being the survivor means you are overlooked,
and no one realizes that time is fleeting.

Before you turn into the monster.

The monster gets the attention they longed for by bringing everyone else down.

Picking thier victims and watching slowly as they drown.

I learned of a victim who survived but was never truly healed inside and became
the thing she hated. And started to push her own fears into the people she dated.

I will not become like her. Numbing my pain until it becomes a blur.

Everyone waiting for me to go insane.

I refuse to be chained to an unhappy life like my predecessor.

Nah, I'm going to make it better.



Naadi
Silver

CO*LAB

2024 COMMUNITIES GALLERY ROSTER

ALEX JONES
AL MCKEE
BRITT TAYLOR
CHLOE YAKMYSHYN
CLEM HUGHES
CODY SMALLZ
DONNA ROBILLARD
GERSHON CORNEJO
GINA PASARAN
ISABELLA CAMERINO
JAMES LEE
KAI WU
KAILENE DILLON
KAYLA MCDONALD
KIRA HUNT
KIRA VLIETSTRA
LARIZZA POSELUZYN
LAURA POTTS
LEVIATHAN ISAIAH
LIDIA CHACINSKI
LOU KAISER
LUCY COOK
MADISON FITZGERALD
MATTHEW CARDINAL
NOELLE KOVATCH
OWEN HUNTER
PEY
QUINCY JORDAN
RAINBOW BROWN
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SEF SALHAM
SHAELA WELTE
SHAYLEE MITCHELL
STREETPRINTS COLLECTIVE
TEAGAN MELNYK
ZARLEY JACKNISKY



Thursdays 4 - 7 PM until February 29





CO*LAB's Communities Gallery Series represents an annual effort to highlight artists across all mediums and perceived skill levels. I don't think you need to be a quote-unquote "professional" to produce engaging art. The essence of these exhibits is to provide opportunities to those who wouldn't have had a chance before to be a part of a gallery experience. It is essential to give artists a space to network and have their friends and family come out to take pride in their creativity. At CO*LAB, we are just as much an arts venue as a community hub for gathering and belonging, and this is one of the ways we try to bring communities together to celebrate successes and differences.



THE MEDIA FREQUENTLY REPORTS CRIMES THAT ARE COMITED BY HOMELESS YOUTH

A STUDY SHOWS THAT THESE YOUTH ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE VICTIMS

OVER 3 OUT OF 4 YOUTH EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS HAVE BEEN THE VICTIMS
OF CRIME IN THE PAST YEAR



ALMOST 40% OF FEMALE YOUTH
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
WERE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED
IN THE PAST YEAR



CREDIT: HOMELESS HUB

YOUTH AGING OUT OF THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM ARE ALMOST
200 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BECOME HOMELESS THAN THEIR PEERS.
RAISE THE AGE. LOWER THE STATS.

STOP THE SWEEPS
START THE LOVE





Share your story

If you are a youth from care who would like to share your story or art please contact editor@zineandheard.ca or message us on Instagram @zine_and_heard. Thank you.

THE YESS IMPACT



“I would be dead if it wasn’t for YESS. This is so serious, and it is not a joke. YESS helped me realize that I wasn’t just born to be a homeless person. That has been the hardest thing for me to do, is to change that mindset. When you are homeless it feels like you are worthless... When you are homeless it feels like no one else in society cares and getting over those feelings is still a struggle. So yeah, the staff at YESS, they help save people.”

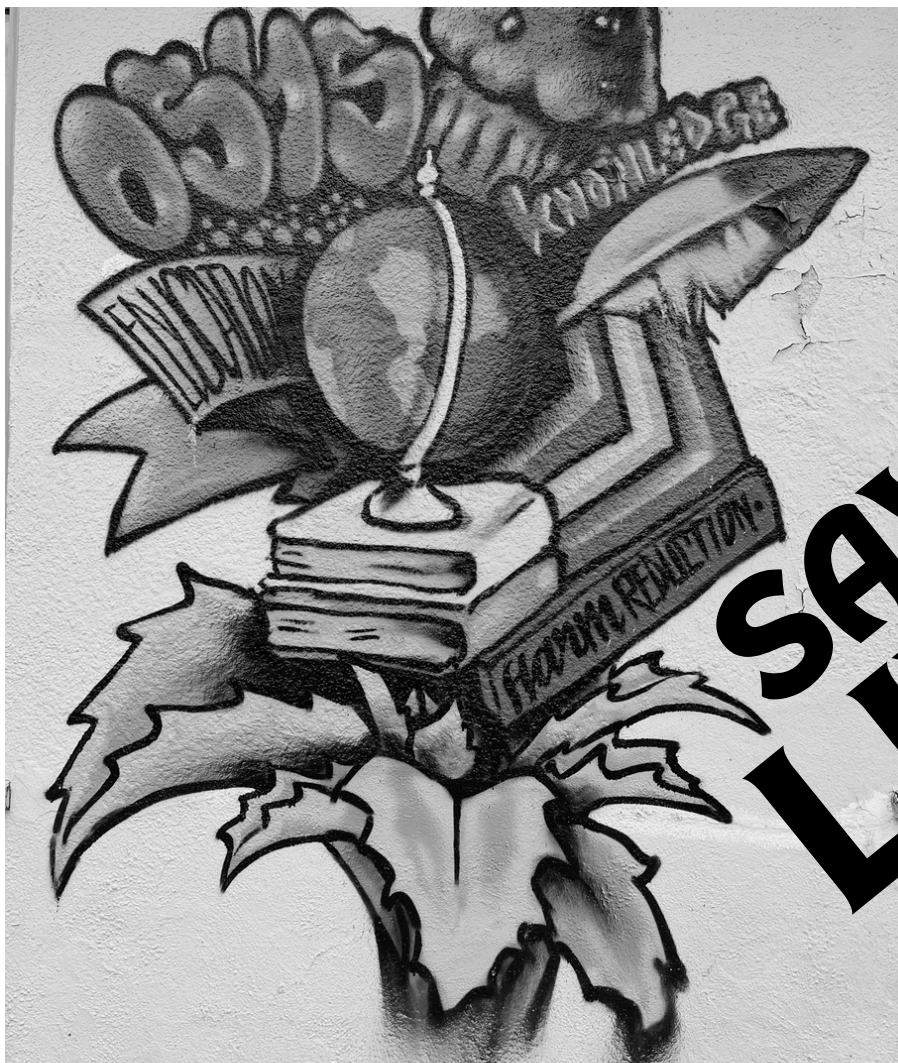
—— Tom YESS Youth



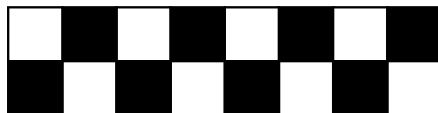


SKATE ZINE
MAY 2024

GET THOSE STORIES ROLLING IN!



**SAVES
LIVES**



DIAL 9-8-8 SUICIDE CRISIS LINE 24/7

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS CRISIS LINE

24- HOUR 1-866-925-4419

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

780-468-7070 24/7 24 HOURS

ACCESS 24/7 - 24 HOUR

Crisis and Intake Services - 780-424-2424

KIDS HELP PHONE - 24 HOUR

Call 1-800-668-6868 Facebook Messenger

Text CONNECT to 686868

NACIS CRISIS LINE - 24 HOUR

780-422-2001

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION SERVICES

1-888-456-4566 24 HOUR

CMHA DISTRESS LINE - 24 HOUR

780-482-4357 (HELP)

KICKSTAND CONNECT

mykickstand.ca/online-care#resources

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

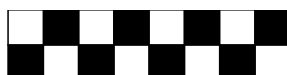
SOUTHERN ALBERTA Call: (403) 297-8435

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



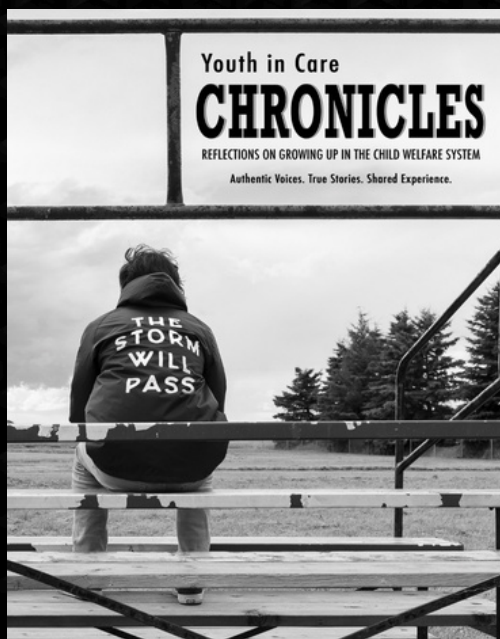


Many thanks to the Friends of Zine & HEARD

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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.

Audrey Beaver



You are not forgotten



Audrey Beaver was 48 at time of disappearance.

Height: 5'2" Weight: 114 lbs EPS File #: 20-153462

Audrey is an Indigenous female, with long brown hair and brown eyes. She has a large tattoo of a cross on her right forearm. Audrey stayed at the Edmonton Convention Centre / Shaw shelter on August 10, 2020. She may also have gone to the camp in Old Strathcona Light Horse Park. There have been no confirmed sightings of Audrey after August 10th.

If you have any information about Audrey, 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: 26-Jul-2021

We hope Audrey is found soon and reunited with family & friends.



*You
are
not
forgotten.*

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

2014 Speech From The Throne

Your government is committed to building a culture of transparency, quality care and continuous improvement in Alberta's child intervention system, on the foundation of changes made to date and the recent childcare roundtable. These changes will include extending support for young adults in care by two years, to age 24, to help youth transition more successfully to adulthood.



2019 Direction from Premier Kenney

Reverse the age for supports by two years, back to age 22, to not help youth transition more successfully to adulthood...and save a few bucks at their expense.

RAISE THE AGE. LOWER THE STATS.