

Zine & **HEARD**

Amplifying Voices of Youth in Care

**ISSUE #6
JUNE 2023**



**Photo by
JESSICA FERN**

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 and making a difference.

WHAT

A zine to amplify our voices and raise awareness.

WHEN

We publish around the 15th of every month.

WHERE

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

WHY

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



Editor

Penny Frazier

Contributors

Bernadette

Black Friday

Bryant aka

Higher Knowledge

Cheyenne

CHEW Project

Creating Hope Society

Dominika

Indigenous Boys Matter Too

Kat

Kate

Marisa

Lady Cox

THE
STRONGEST
HEARTS
HAVE
THE MOST
SCARS

QUOTE: Jeff Woods ARTWORK: Chasm Frazier

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Your neighbour
Your dog groomer
Your driver
Your advocate
Your mailman
Your barista
Your veterinarian
Your friend's mom
Your friend's dad
Your kid's friend
Your friend**

**You
might
know
a
former
youth
in
care.
You
just
might
not
know
that
they
are.**



Marisa McKinney is a fashion designer and mother of an active two-year old from the Greater Edmonton area. She developed an interest in creating things at a young age and began designing costumes for Shakespeare plays in junior high. She continued to pursue that passion in high school and also began to excel in other areas of drama - getting into acting, directing and set design for which she won a prestigious award for Best Set & Design. With high school far behind her, Marisa is now married with a son, owns her own home, operates a design business called Feathered Away, and works part time in a local fabric store. When she isn't spending time with her family, she loves upcycling denim and designing ribbons skirts. Marisa also does a lot of beadwork which keeps her in touch with her roots.

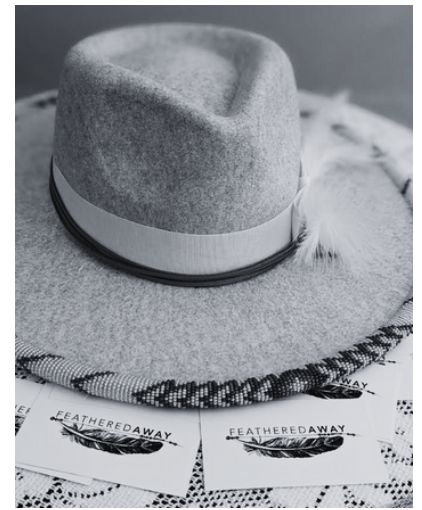
I was about a year old when my older brother and I were adopted. I grew up with five other adopted siblings and we had many other foster children who came and went along the way. I always kind of knew my life would be complicated. I felt like I was straddling two worlds growing up. From Kindergarten to Grade 12, I went to school in a white community. I was often the only brown kid in my class. Fortunately, my adoptive family took me to a group called FONC (Families of Native Children) and I was introduced to a lot of cultural activities. I joined the White Buffalo Dancers & Drummers Society and learned to dance. I learned to Fancy Dance, Jingle Dance, Hoop Dance and Traditional Dance but I chose to Fancy Dance the most. I danced at many pow wows and other events from age 6 to 13. I recently gave my childhood regalia to my young niece to wear.

Even though I learned about my culture I still felt out of place. It was often hard to hold on to the importance of what I had learned. I have no connection to my blood family other than those who were adopted into the same family as me and it gets very complicated trying to make those connections. Now, I know it is A - OK to straddle that line between cultures. Be who you are. You don't have to pick one or the other. I often felt like I wasn't Indigenous enough and now as a mom, I want my son to know where he is from and be who he is. He can make his own decisions when he grows up. My husband, Tim, was adopted at a young age, too. He is from the US and is Paiute and Portuguese. I am Cree and Metis. Our son, Mason is the first in a long lineage to not be born addicted or with FASD or in the foster care system. I had to go through so many specialists because I was premature and had underdeveloped lungs. I was always sick and to think that my son doesn't have to struggle like that his whole life: that he can grow up and develop with only the normal things to worry about makes me so happy and grateful.



*There was life before and after Mason.
I don't remember much of the before now.*

Growing up with FASD was so confusing. It wasn't until they changed the name from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum that it started to make sense. Knowing that it was a spectrum helped me a lot. All of my siblings had FASD but we were all so different. Not one of us had the same challenges. My deficits were in learning. I felt I needed to upgrade my high school and it was a real struggle. I felt I had to go to college or university or something and I kept beating myself up for not being able to do better. I had so much self-doubt. I was too scared to tell anyone and never reached out for help. It was so defeating and I felt so alone thinking that no one else had my problems. I also have ADHD so I could never



gather myself enough to do what I felt I needed to do in school. Seeing my siblings struggle was tough, too. These challenges are not black and white but growing up, I thought they were. I was so hard on myself and felt so alone. I always thought I just wasn't working hard enough until I realized I was doing the best that I could. I have since learned many strategies to help me cope and I am more than OK talking about FASD now. I don't hide it. I am not ashamed of it and I have built a great life with my little fam.

In the fabric store where I work I meet many Indigenous people and we talk a lot about our backgrounds. We connect over our struggles and our successes. We talk about what we are creating in our sewing rooms and in our personal lives. I meet people who were in care who are pushing through the past. It is so good to feel comfortable with who I am and who I want to be. We sometimes talk about healing and I realize how far I have come in this journey between two worlds. I am still healing. This whole generation is healing. It is so good to see.

My biggest inspiration in what I design is my son, Mason. There was life before Mason and life after Mason. I don't remember what the life before Mason feels like anymore. Mason is my inspiration. Breaking those cycles for him is so empowering. I am working on some "Break the Cycle Designs" and he is where I get my drive from. Tons of people are breaking cycles everywhere - being in care, intergenerational trauma, abuse, addictions. It is so uplifting.

Having your own business is tough. It's a learning curve. You work more hours than anyone can see you work. Especially an art and design business. You are constantly evolving and constantly creating. I love it but sometimes I have to take a break and that's OK, too. You need to know your limits and be kind to yourself. Know what's really important and self-care is really important.

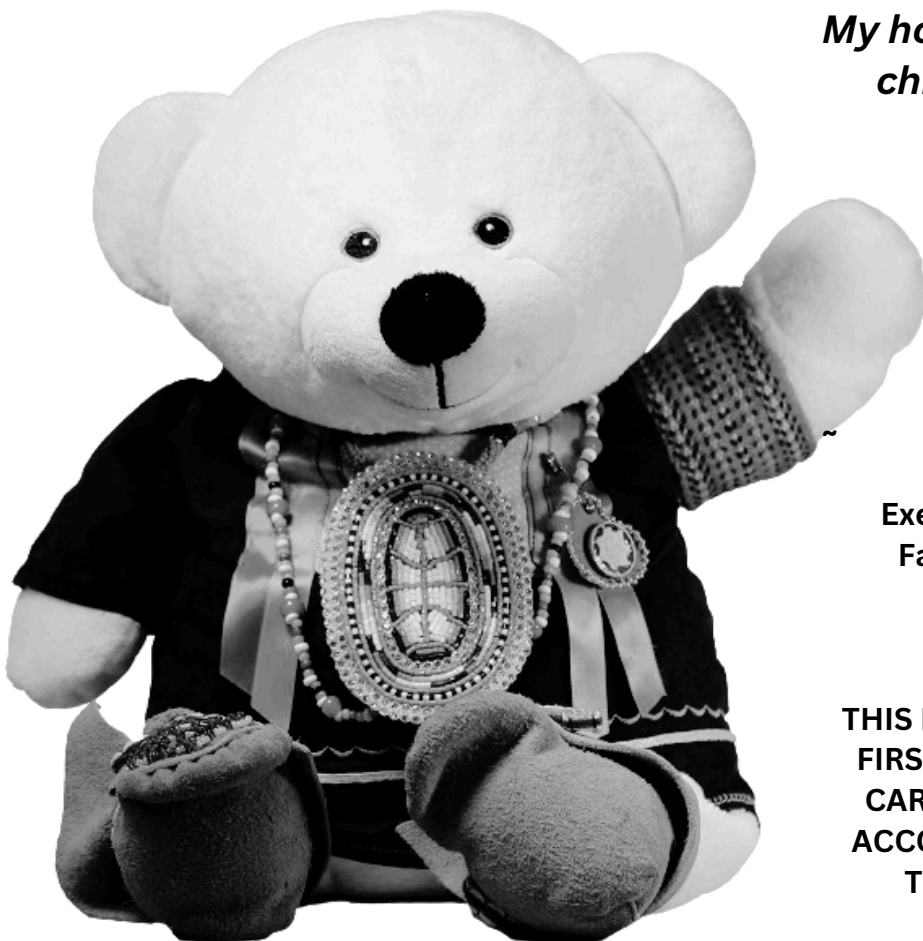


MARISA

@featheredaway
Featheredaway@gmail.com



National Indigenous Peoples Day



***My hope is that First Nations
children will never have to
grow up recovering from
their childhoods and
non-Indigenous
children never
have to say
they are sorry.***

**Cindy Blackstock
Executive Director of First Nations
Family & Children Caring Society
& Child Welfare Advocate**

**THIS IS SPIRIT BEAR WHO JOINED THE
FIRST NATIONS FAMILY & CHILDREN
CARING SOCIETY IN 2008 AND HAS
ACCOMPANIED CINDY BLACKSTOCK
TO ALL TRIBUNAL HEARINGS.**

June is good ... and so are you

June is such a great month. Summer is here. Winter is at least two weeks away. So many good things to do and celebrate. So much to see and hear and learn.

Get out and celebrate Indigenous History Month & Indigenous Peoples Day! Get some culture! Get some music! Get some dance! Get down to Tee Pee Treats and get a Bannock Burger! While you are there think about donating to their food program for those in need. It's a good one. There is no shortage of cultural events and shows and good things going on in Edmonton. Just gotta do it.

We are so happy to help the CHEW Project launch their CHEW COLLECTION during Gay Pride Month here in this issue. We have a 3-pager on all the cool stuff they have done and are doing. Please support them. This is the place for LGBTQ2S+ youth to rest their weary heads and be a part of a loving family. CHEW estimates that 65% of the youth that access their services are youth in and from care. 35% of all youth who go there are homeless or have housing insecurity. CHEW is a lifesaver.

I did a fun podcast with the one and only Wesley O'Driscoll at NowhereFast Studio. We talked about the zine, youth in and from care, my love of the punk rock community and so much other stuff. We talked for almost two hours so if you want to listen - take a long ride or use the 3-times-faster-than-normal speech option. Also did a presentation to some students at Grant Mac which was pretty sweet.

And.....THIS IS ISSUE #6! We just keeps growing and going strong. Starting to get some subscribers and even selling a bit of advertising but not too much. A maximum of 2.5 pages to be exact. Enough to cover the costs and keep it free. None in this issue but we are very stoked to have a July sponsor coming on board. Honoured, actually.

One HUMZINER of a FUNDRAISER coming up this summer or early fall! STAY TUNED!

I spoke about Zine & HEARD at the U of A last week after a presentation by Dr. Irvin Waller about how we can reduce violent crime in Edmonton by 50% in 5 years. They did it in Glasgow and other cities in other countries using this strategy. We can too.

On a personal note, it would have been my Mom's 92nd birthday this month. I was a lucky kid. I know she would have totally loved the zine and supported it 100%.

On a political note, big congrats to our new M.L.A. Brooks Arcand-Paul who has been a subscriber since January. The only other thing that could make June better is if the government had already raised the age and lowered the stats for youth aging out of care. Shooting for this fall when they are rested and can think more clearly. Hoping they may have upgraded their High School English and Math skills over the summer. That too would be something to celebrate.

Much love and thanks again for all your support.

Penny Frazier, Editor, Zine & HEARD



RAISE THE AGE. LOWER THE STATS

In 2022, BC the age of eligibility for supports of youth in care was raised to 27. In 2023, Ontario raised the age to 23.
In 2019, Alberta lowered age from 24 to 22.

WHY HAS ALBERTA GONE BACKWARDS?

The only logical answer can be summed up in two words:

MONEY GRAB.

You know:

ROB FROM THE POOR.

\$14 MILLION from youth aging out of care.

GIVE TO THE RICH.

\$330 MILLION to Calgary for a new arena.

Don't get your hockey socks in a knot. It's just one example.

We have MANY, MANY, MANY, MANY, MANY more.

It simply boils down to a government that doesn't comprehend stats or understand simple math or ever contemplate what it might be like to face hunger, homelessness and/or a complete loss of hope.

If you are a youth in care or a former youth in care, we want to publish your words, your art, your photos, your lyrics, your expressions and impressions. All submissions pay \$10.

Please email editor@zineandheard

or message us on Instagram

@zine_and_heard

Thank you.

**MANY THANKS TO ALL OF
OUR FOLLOWERS.
WE APPRECIATE YOU.**



*There should never have to be an
International Missing Children's Day.*



BERNADETTE IAHTAIL

**CO-FOUNDER OF
CREATING HOPE SOCIETY
SOCIAL WORKER MENTOR
WIFE SISTER FRIEND
ADVOCATE MOTHER
GRANDMOTHER
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL
SURVIVOR
60'S SCOOP SURVIVOR**

My name is Bernadette, Executive Director, and Co-founder of The Creating Hope Society (CHS) that began in March of 2006 with a bold vision: "An Aboriginal Home for Every Aboriginal Child by 2025." When Creating Hope first began, 2025 seemed so far away. The CHS goal and vision was to stop the cycle of Indigenous children coming into the care of the child welfare system.

Creating Hope Society is a non-profit society that was established to recognize the 1960s and 1970s child welfare "scoop" of Aboriginal children being removed from their families and communities. We believe that the child welfare system is a continuation of the residential school era. John A. McDonald left a legacy that continues to echo ghostly and silently "to take the Indian in a Child".

The intention of assimilation in the Indian Act continues in "removing children from families." We are in the fourth generation of Indigenous children being removed from their families. The growing number of Indigenous children in care has been described as the Millennium Scoop and the number of children in out-of-home care has surpassed that of the Sixties Scoop era.

The voices of survivors are at the heart of our Society, and key principles guiding the journey of this organization include building on the resiliency of survivors, remembering the past while moving forward into the future, and learning from and acknowledging the past while continuing to forge ahead. Many who grew up in the child welfare system were assimilated into the colonial way, not by choice.

In 2006, Creating Hope Society gathered up to 1000 of 60's child welfare scoop survivors and brought the Alberta Child and Family Services, former case workers, judges, and other people of interest to hear the stories of the 60's scoop survivors, who shared their experience of growing up in care. Many shared about - their losses, their loss of mother tongue, culture, tradition, and the connection to the land. Losses of family, relatives and siblings who were in care with them, but placed with

other families. The greatest challenge was many survivors felt their voices were not heard when they disclosed to their workers about the abuses that were happening to them in their foster homes, group homes and other institutions.

CHS believes that telling your story is part of healing, seeking ways of building relationships, learning to reparent ourselves, learning to decolonize our worldview, looking at alternative ways of healing, learning to trust, rebuilding reconnecting with families and community. Learning to grief over the missed milestones of ages of stages of a child's life. Learning to ground ourselves because no matter what, the world continues to evolve and we still must carry out our responsibilities. Healing is a hard journey. Some of the 60's scoopers were successful at reconnecting with their families and communities and others not so much.

All CHS programs and services are created for those involved with or at risk of losing their children to the child welfare system. Programs and services are planned for children and adult children who want to learn and reconnect to their culture and traditions. We also bring awareness of the child welfare scoops.

If you need more information, please visit our website www.creatinghopesociety.ca

The Mona Lisa smile

As I sit on the north door of the Medicine wheel, I ponder the many years of lived experiences – as a Residential school/orphanage survivor, a 60's scoop child welfare survivor, a mother, a grandmother, a sister, and wife.

During my time in care with Children Aid's Society of Ontario, my identity was stolen, culture and traditions were compromised, my kins were ripped away. I left the child welfare system at the age of 14, I ran and ran, I ran from the hurts, pain, the overt racism, the abuses. I ran to forget. While escaping my past, I met my son's dad on the streets of Toronto. I was young when I met him. (That's another story for other time)



At my first foster home they called me Jeanne D'Arc, then Jeanne or Jeannot and other names that suited them. I was placed with a German Mennonite community that operated group homes for difficult behavioral boys and girls. The German Mennonite family couldn't pronounce my French names; so, another name change "Jeannie". (That's another story, too)



In 1988 I changed my name to Bernadette as written on my birth certificate and at the same time I quit sex, hard drugs, and alcohol. Why? My biggest fear was to be homeless and houseless, and my biggest fear had come to reality where I was houseless. I had family to think about, my son and I wanted more for him and me.



I was in grade 4, History class, the chapter covered the Indians and Savages who burnt and tortured missionaries. During our class, I felt the shame come over me. I knew I was different, my dark hair, skin color. I asked mom (foster mother) why am I living here? My foster mother's eyes appeared content and mean (dark) at the same time and said, "When you were brought here, you were just a dirty little Indian and nobody wanted you, so we took you in".



When my granddaughter was 9, she began questioning my life. Kohkom (grandmother) how come you never speak of your mom? Do you have a mother? Does dad have aunties and uncles? Do you have a dad? My heart stopped; a memory occurred. When my son was younger, he would cry during the summer because his friends would go on a summer holiday to visit their grandparents. My boy would say, "I wish I had grandparents to go and visit" I would look at my son and say, "well at least you have me, your mama". It was then I planned a road trip with my son and granddaughter to northern Ontario to visit my past.



For 43 years I never had a photo of me and my sister. My foster sister emailed me photos of me. It was the first time I had seen a photo of me as a little girl. A Grade 3 school photo, my haircut like the residential school, dark brown eyes, dimples, and the Mona Lisa smile. With the Mona Lisa smile, I knew Jeannie had carried a gift, a gift of resiliency, the gift of tenacity, the gift memory, the gift of audacity, the gift of anger and rage, the gift of addiction, the gift of fight or flight, and much more the gift of wittiness, sadness, gift of survival through displacement, grief and loss, and the gift of healing.



Healing is not just for me; it's about healing the cycle of displacement within my family, within our First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities. Healing for a better future for the next seven generations.



Bernadette lahtail, RSW

INDIGENOUS BOYS MATTER TOO!



INDIGENOUS BOYS MATTER TOO! INDIGENOUS MALE YOUTH WELLNESS PROGRAM
 Inipiin & A' (Summer) program
 REGISTRATION OPEN
 Program date: July.5-August.23rd,2023
 Every Wednesday: 5:00-8:00pm

Eligibility requirements:
 Self identifies as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)
 Identifies as "Male" (Two-Spirit and non-binary youth welcomed)
 Between the ages of 14-18
 Dedicated to bettering themselves.
 Committed to their healing journey
 Open-minded and wanting to learn about Indigenous Culture and Ceremony.
 Open communication between Youth, staff and caregivers

SCAN QR CODE WITH SMARTPHONE



FILL OUT GOOGLE FORM TO REGISTER

WHAT TO EXPECT:
 Oskapewis (ceremony helper) based mentorship, access to ceremony, integrated wellness practices, land-based teachings and career and employment resources




For more information contact
 Program Coordinator
 Ambrose Cardinal
 587-588-8717
 ibmt1@creatinghopesociety.ca



At Creating Hope Society of Alberta, the incredibly talented Ambrose Cardinal runs a program for Indigenous youth aged 14 - 18 who want to learn about Culture & Ceremony. One of the things they do is create artworks on skateboards. An Indigenous Male Youth Wellness Program runs every Wednesday this summer and registration is still open!



THE

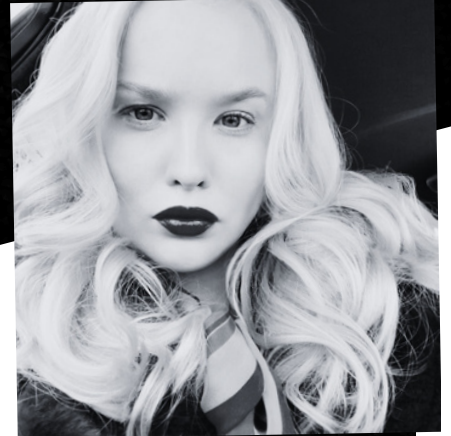


2023

&

BEYOND

CHEW COLLECTION



[@ladycox](#)

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[ladycoxcollection](#)
[.com](#)

"As a proud member of the LGBTQ+ community and former homeless youth who experienced addiction and sexual exploitation, it was my honour to gift my time to develop the CHEW Collection with the CHEW Project. When I was teaching an art class there in February, I facilitated conversations with youth to come up with ideas to develop a merch line for CHEW. As an artist of 20 years who also has a fashion background of 10 years, I was confident that the CHEW family could do this. I brought in some art and fashion books and let them go to work. It was 90 minutes of pure genius. They worked very hard and came up with three concrete ideas based on the concept of art with a cause, what would be cost effective, and what would sell. The result was the hoodie design with the CHEW Project logo, the rainbow string bag and the amazing Pride Panda sticker which is the new CHEW mascot. We live in the golden era of tech so if you can dream it - you can make it! Thank you for supporting these youth-inspired designs. All profits go to support the CHEW Project."

SHOP NOW: [chew-project.storeenvy.com](#)



THE CHEW PROJECT'S VISION
IS TO PROVIDE FRONTLINE
SUPPORT, OPPORTUNITIES FOR
HEALTH AND WELLNESS, AND TO
HELP FIND HOPE FOR 2SLGBTQIA+
YOUTH AND EMERGING ADULTS
FACING BARRIERS RELATED TO:
MENTAL HEALTH, OPPRESSION,
POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS,
SUBSTANCE ABUSE,
SEXUAL HEALTH, SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION/SEX WORK,
AND OTHERS



THE CHEW FAMILY

CHEW is a family because many of our youth are without natural family resources. CHEW recreates healthy family environments for them in which they can thrive.

We are looking after their basic needs, providing positive role modelling, nurturing, love, and offering what they need to support a healthy trajectory into adulthood.

This model works by taking people out of their trauma brain and focussing on glimmers not triggers. By giving youth an environment of safety, people stop living in a continual survival more which allows them focus on thriving not just surviving. We have seen proof that this model works in our crisis intervention statistics which have dropped significantly in the past year.

Thank you for your support.



SHOP NOW: chew-project.storeenvy.com

It is estimated that about 65% of youth who access CHEW services are in or from care.

Apx. 35% of all CHEW youth are homeless, precariously housed or are from group homes.

In 2020 the average number of youth who accessed services was 11 per day, In 2022 that number doubled to 22 and has continued to rise in 2023. 11725 Jasper Ave NW, Edmonton



The CHEW Project's vision is to provide frontline support, opportunities for health and wellness, and to help find hope for 2SLGBTQ+ youth and emerging adults facing barriers related to: Mental Health, Oppression, Poverty Homelessness, Substance Use, Sexual Health. Sexual Exploitation/Sex Work & others



"Fashion is the confidence in my life.

It makes me very happy and proud of myself.

Fashion makes me comfortable in my own skin.

I like something that makes a statement and that says I'm a good person."

Dominika

A proud member of the CHEW family.

BOOK ME TO SPEAK

Joe Buffalo
Keynote Speaker

Co-Founder of
Nations Skate Youth
Professional Skateboarder
Actor

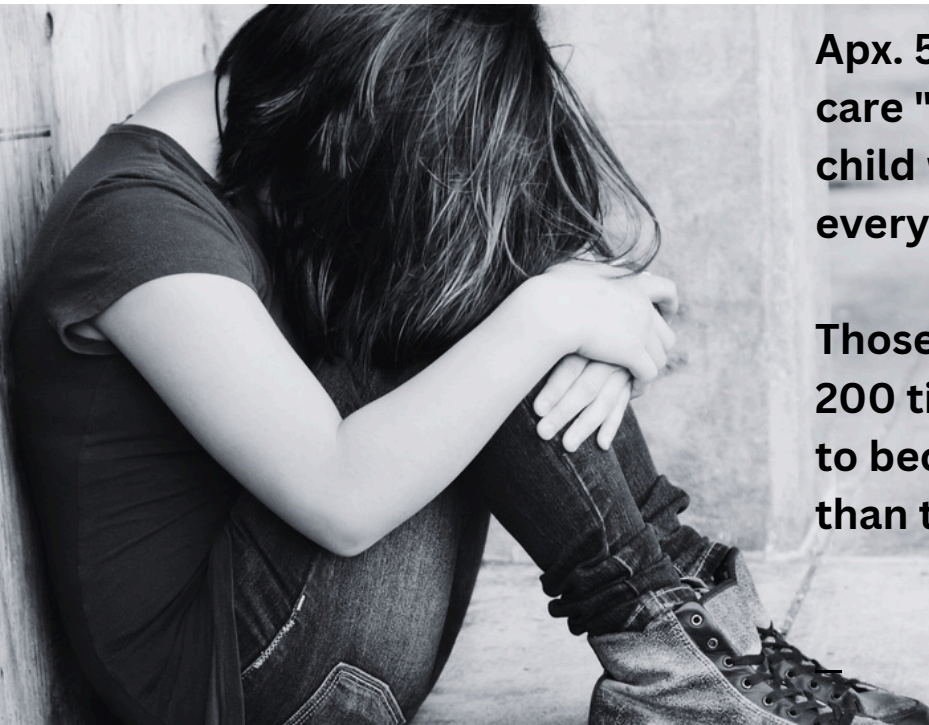
www.joedionbuffalo.com

joedionbuffalo.com



**RAISE
THE
AGE.
LOWER
THE
STATS.

PLEASE.**



Apx. 500 youth in care "age out" of the child welfare system every year in Alberta.

Those 500 youth are 200 times more likely to become homeless than their peers.

Globe & Mail
August, 2017



Dr. Melanie Doucet is a former youth in care, an Adjunct Professor at the McGill University School of Social Work, a Researcher at the Centre for Research on Children and Families (CRCF), the Project Lead on the Equitable Transitions to Adulthood for Youth in Care Project at the Child Welfare League of Canada, an Expert Consultant, and a Musician (DJ). Follow her on Twitter @MelanieMDoucet LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/melanie-maxine-doucet](https://www.linkedin.com/in/melanie-maxine-doucet) and on Mixcloud: <https://www.mixcloud.com/mizzmaxine/>

Trauma memories tend to either stick to your bones or become a dense fog you can't quite see through. I 'aged out' of care 25 years ago. I still remember it like it was yesterday. I was excited to move to a city three hours away to start my first year of university. I was also terrified, as I had never been completely on my own before, never rented an apartment, didn't quite know what post-secondary was going to be like. I was also very poor – with no savings, and a mattress, a dresser and a garbage bag of clothes to my name. I was inexperienced, with no life skills training or guidance for what was coming in the next few years of my life. At the beginning of the school year, I had a falling out with my social worker because I had the audacity to ask for additional supports that I desperately needed. My placement instability in the system followed me out of it – I moved around a lot, I couch surfed for a bit, I went to the food bank many times and went through one of the toughest years of my late teens/early adulthood life.

One of the major things that kept me from being homeless in the streets was my social support network. Friends, their parents, teachers, professors – all people who weren't paid to care about me – stood by me and had my back during the most difficult times of my life. I never truly felt alone because of that strong safety net my network provided me with. I had people who believed in me, in my potential, and wanted to invest in it. Every kid from care should have access to people like that – and it should never be left to sheer luck or chance. The system needs to do better when it comes to nurturing the relationships that are meaningful to youth in and from care. They can literally save lives.

Music also saved my life. Many times. I met a wonderful group of friends through the electronic music scene when I was leaving care, many with whom I am still close with today. I learned how to DJ, and started playing gigs all over the Maritimes, and eventually in Montreal and even Los Angeles. I still DJ to this day – it's a passion that feeds my creative soul and lets me express myself in other ways than words. It's also one of the reasons why I do arts-based research, as I know first-hand how crucial artistic expression is when you come from a life of childhood trauma. It's about healing, community building, living authentically - heart and soul.

My guiding star in life is “what kind of legacy do you want to leave behind?” I want to leave a legacy for the generations in and from care after me. I want to help build a future in which they can thrive in, and never have to ‘age out’ of anything – a world in which they are supported and invested in throughout their entire lives just like a lot of kids not in the system get to experience. That's what I strive for in all the work that I do, whether it's advocacy, research or teaching.

Melanie Doucet



Rally for Youth From Care organized by Fostering Change & First Call BC. B.C. Legislature - October 2017
Power in numbers. Changes were made. Melanie was there.

**KEEP AN EYE ON
INSTAGRAM FOR
DEETS & TREETS
ON OUR
FUNDRAISER
THIS SUMMER!
@zine_and_heard
IT'S GONNA BE A
HUMZINER!!!**



**COOL BANDS!
COOL PEOPLE!**

**COOL PRIZES!
EVERYWHERE!**

TRUST!



**Black
Friday**

We make our clothing for everyone. Anyone who has ever faced criticism, exclusion, social injustices, and those alienated for their psychological well-being. We make our clothing for anyone looking to belong. For those looking to fit in, and for those looking to not. We make clothing for those who feel they are unheard, and under appreciated.

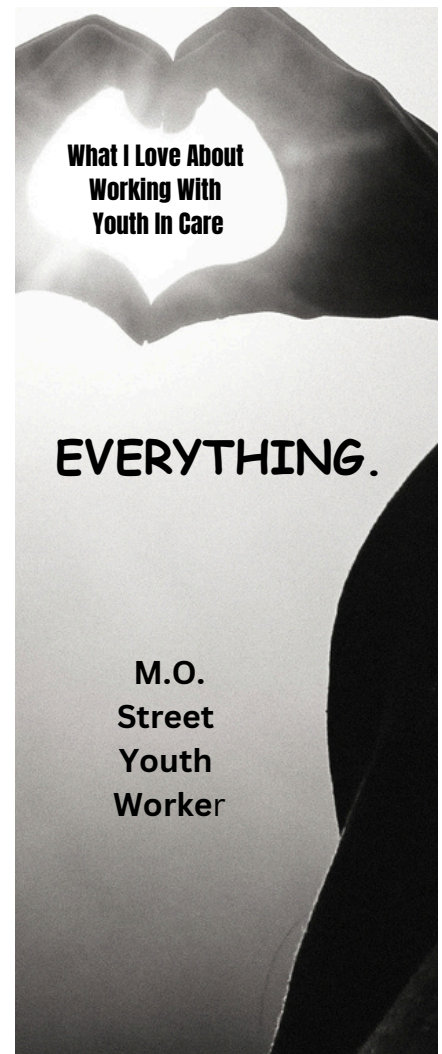
We make our clothing for those that have ever been oppressed and for those who have felt the effects of racism - the ones that have been excluded from social belonging. Black Friday Apparel has been designed to promote a sense of self worthiness and belonging. Belonging to a community of those who have found their way towards worthiness and facing their fears. This community and this brand share one common goal: Safety!

Changing the Streetwear trend from a fashion statement to a Declaration of Safety.

@fr.blackfriday.

JUST REACH OUT AND HANG ON.

Trying to find out who you are and growing up in and out of care has its own difficulties. I often felt like I was not enough to be loved, like I had done things to not be worth someone's time and attention. I learned in high school that if I wanted to have a life, I needed to work hard and build a life I wanted. I never gave up. I didn't let what I was going through determine my life for me. I was going through things that would only make me stronger and to be a voice for others and to give them hope and courage. When I got out of high school, I had kids young, married who I thought would be right for me. It wasn't until after my 3rd child that I realized that I was lost in who I was. I was missing something. I needed to find me. I was living life just for my children. It wasn't until I really thought about what I wanted in life which turned out to be a woman to share all of my dreams and aspirations. To grow my family and make many memories along the way. A person to push me to pursue my goals and hold my hand if I fail. Through thick and thin. Something I had never had my entire life. You're never alone in this world even though it feels like it sometimes. Just reach out and hang on. You will discover you, might just take some mountains to climb along the way. Life isn't always perfect, but it can be as perfect as you want it to be. Mine just happens to be gay 😊 CHEYANNE



Yale SCHOOL OF NURSING
IRB # 2000033580



Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

SEEKING YOUNG ADULTS WHO AGED OUT OF FOSTER CARE IN CANADA

Paid Research Opportunity



**SHARE
YOUR
STORY**

**what was your transition to
adulthood & independence like?**

**complete an online survey &
virtual interview (optional)**

Young adults ages 18 to 29 may be eligible to participate.
For more information, please contact Brianna Jackson,
a Canadian mental health Nurse and Researcher.

brianna.jackson@yale.edu or 1-(203)-535-7207

tinyurl.com/yalefostertales

tinyurl.com/yalefostertales

**This is for real.
The Child Welfare PAC
(Political Action
Committee) is a
seriously committed
organization founded
by a former youth in
care . They are doing
an extensive research
project around
outcomes for youth in
the system. We urge
you to take part in the
survey. It will make a
huge difference in the
lives of all children
and youth in care for
decades to come.
AND you get paid!**

around this time last year I was dealing with grief
& trauma while being homeless...
i'm happy to have my own
home and to be among
ceremony & community
making new community ...
i'm grateful to Creator
and all of creation and to those
who helped me during that dark time
i probably wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you ...
i'm strong ikswew
and now that dark time
is part of my story
and now I can use my strength to get
thru the rest of life's journey

Words & Photo by Kat
[@lil.yung.kat](https://www.instagram.com/lil.yung.kat)

*A tough life
needs a
tough language -
and that
is what
poetry is.
That is what
literature
offers -
a language
powerful
enough
to say
how it is.*

Jeanette
Winterson

NOT NOTHING

I remember that day like it was yesterday
the moment you looked at me like i was nothing.
But look.
Look at me now.
Here I am.
Here I am still standing with my head held high.
That nothing kept me together.
Held me when there was no one.
Was my rock to get me to where I am today.
Nothing.
I was not nothing.
I was something incredible hidden behind nothing.
And now you see nothing.
You don't get to see how
incredible I am.
Because now you are
what you thought I was.

CHEYANNE

Poet
Mom
Former Youth in Care



SKATE STUFF

BY SKATERS 4 SKATERS

My name is Hunter Paton, I'm the pusher behind BS4S.

7 years ago I was a key part in envisioning & designing an incredible not for profit skatepark in London, Ontario. We had open skate nights and we ran and facilitated over 200 students in a learn to skate program. Throughout the years I've dreamed of what else can be done to draw in not only new skaters but also skilled skaters.

I've now been living in Edmonton for 3 years and about 9 months ago we moved all the ramps previously used in that park to Edmonton as well.

Our vision is to operate as a not for profit organization that can promote the love & passion for skateboarding we all know. We got to team up with Local 124 for our first event in Edmonton, they hosted a killer parking lot jam that we got to set up the park for. We have more ideas for the future planned so stay tuned!!

I would also like to give a huge shoutout to Zine & Heard for amplifying the voice of the youth in care and giving the opportunity for people to read and acknowledge life stories from within our community.

**Congrats to Delburne Ghost Ryders on their
6th Annual Ryders Invitational - Central
Alberta's longest running
and largest Jr./Sr. High School
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@delburneghostryders**

**Congrats to Tigers Skate Club
on their successful June events
in partnership with The Source!
@tigersskateclub @sourceboards**



**B
A
M
!**

**If you have skate events/news coming up in
July - September send us a message on
Instagram@zine_and_heard
Deadline is around the 6th.
Publication is around the 16th.**

**SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL
SKATE SHOPS**

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HIGHER **KNOWLEDGE**

Bryant Doradea aka Higher Knowledge(HK) is a Hip Hop artist, poet, writer, youth worker, and grass roots community organizer residing in Coast Salish

territories on Canada's West Coast. Ancestrally, he is Indigenous to Kuskatan (Western El Salvador in Central America) on his father's side and to Collasayu (Chile in South America) on his mother's side with European roots in Spain and Romania as well. The complexities of his mixed Indigenous/immigrant identities, state of existential diaspora, as well as his traumatic upbringing fuels a lot of the themes in his music.

Sonically, Higher Knowledge is a diverse mix of classic street rap, soulful hooks, synthy beats, and deep symbolism/messages. His poetic lyrics tell the tale of a youth growing up street entrenched, in foster care, gang affiliated, as well as struggling with relationships and mental health. However, his music is not just a testimony of struggle, but also evidence of rebirth, and proof of the possibilities of an indomitable spirit. Through cathartic rhymes HK connects to others who can relate to his words, and through this connection, both parties are liberated by the isolation of those experiences. His moniker "Higher Knowledge" is not a claim of ascended enlightenment but rather a commitment to the pursuit of elevating oneself from the limitations of ignorance placed upon them.

For the last 8 years HK has dedicated his life to engaging marginalized youth, advocating for change in the system, and helping organize grassroots movements for the benefit of community. This work and his Hip Hop identity go hand in hand as he uses his social capital as an artist, and messages in his music, to fulfill the purpose Creator intended for him. Bryant is the man, HK the master of ceremonies, and Higher Knowledge the message!





HK currently has two EPs released: "Hood Therapy" and "Attachment Disorder". His third project and first full length album "The Knowledge of Good and Evil" was released in early 2023.

"This hate it's weight enormous,
it waits encased in poor kids,
till age and rage join forces,
and strays us way from all this,
these holes will never forfeit,
till gorges look like they gorgeous,
this pain in veins that courses,
I'll take and paint a portrait," - HK

I have been in Canada since I was less than one year's old but I was born in Los Angeles. I grew up in Foster care for roughly 15 years from the ages of 4/5 till I aged out while I was in adult prison at 19. I have been on my red road and healing sober journey for the past 10 years.

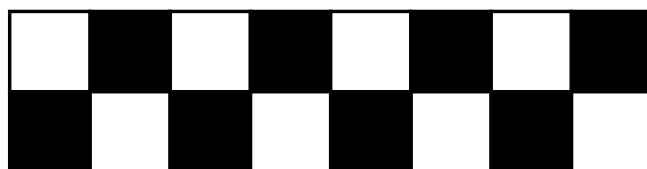
I've accomplished this through therapy, culture, ceremony, training boxing/muay thai, my rhymes/performances, making amends, learning to love myself, and giving back to the community.

I consider myself a modern warrior navigating a colonial jungle/wilderness. I am an instrument for creator/ancestors and have been blessed with gifts to help community and myself. I am grateful for these gifts and the beautiful notes they give me to play and perform. We all have gifts and I try and help others find theirs if they are having trouble doing so as I struggled with this for a long time. Our pain is not just our handicap, and our negative experiences are not just burdens. We can turn them into our super power if we do the hard work and trust the path and process creator has put in front of us. I have been blessed to do shows at clubs, conferences, festivals, and in communities across B.C. and Canada. Onwards and upwards!

 hkeezay
 HK Higher Knowledge
 HigherKnowledgeMusic
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 www.facebook.com/hkeezay
 higherknowledgemusic@gmail.com

READ MORE ABOUT HK
As a former child in 'care,'
hip-hop artist brings message
of visibility to the legislature

by Anna McKenzie
@IndigiNEWS
May 16, 2023



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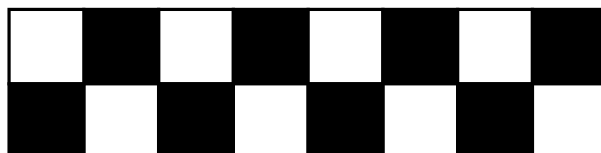
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**ACCESS Open Minds Edmonton is a walk-in service for individuals
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NEED TO CONNECT? DIAL 211 24 HOURS



ORDINARY THINGS

by Kate Rittner Werkman 2022 ©

You are 15, just a kid, a runaway standing with bruises fading, on the city sidewalk in front of your group home. It's summer. The boy from school stands beside you. "I'll be a sec," you say to him. It's starting to rain. "Ok," he says looking down. "If you're sure," he says shuffling the pebbles on the sidewalk. He is a year older and that much taller. "You are brave to go back in there," he says looking you in the eyes. You smile slightly at this as you're still a little shy with him. And he's a poet. You've never met a real poet before. "I'm really glad you're here. You can wait under the porch ... out of the rain," you say. "I need to see you, ok? Just call me from the window if you need me," he says striking a superman pose in the rain one arm angled by his side and the other straight up fist toward the sky as the bells of St. Joseph Basilica start to ring.

You go up the porch steps and go in. You climb the large oak staircase one floor at a time to the attic bedroom that you shared with two other girls. Now here in the room, you are not so sure you can do this on your own. You've come to pick up ordinary things left behind and move towards the window. Pulling back the curtains, white-yellow stiff with age, you see the boy on the corner pacing. Winds play with the feather in his long dark hair blowing it this way and that. The bells ring and vibrate against the window panes drown in succession as they bounce off the historic houses that stand across 100 Avenue. Hope is fleeting here, in this house of hollow ghosts in this room with paper wallflowers. The hope of a life. The hope of a future. Hope is the message in the bells.

The small attic door in the room rattles under the weight of wind and memory. Ghosts scream to get out. You look behind you. You, Cathy and Daphne often talked late into the night too scared to sleep. Cathy's bed had been there by the attic door, Daphne's by the closet and you had the bed by the window.

"It's ok it's the wind," Daphne says.

"No it's the ghosts," Cathy says.

"Maybe it's windy ghosts," you say and laughter erupts.

You are all scared to sleep.

But it's not the windy ghosts you need to be afraid of.

In the grey daylight, you examine the old black and white polaroids you had taped between the wallflowers as a kid; the ones that you took

in 1974 with the camera you got for Christmas that year from your group home parents, Joe and Cindy, who disappear; the people that the group home operators say didn't exist.

"We never had staff by that name," you are told by group home administration. But their photographs are here stuck to the wallpaper. Here is a photo of Joe wearing his checkered flannel jacket organizing our camping trip to the Pembina River; one of Cindy, his wife, and their baby. But they say they are not true they were not real you look closer, this one is bloodstained with childhood, the one you took of the others on the porch you pull it off the wall but they said there was never a house here. Never a home. That would mean all the kids I knew never existed here. But they are all there. You have proof and rip them off the wall fast before someone takes them away or paints over their proof of existence.

Stepping back you see your reflection in the window. Green garbage bags you hold are full of your things, your clothes, jewelry, toys you took from home in the run from your mother. Your hands, you see, are covered in blood. In this place of hollow ghosts, how do you do anything at all with doors closing inside out so you walk the streets of snow, rain, wind looking for sleep, food.



The boy with the blue feather (with permission ©)



Kate Rittner - 1974

And then you remember. You save your roommate, Daphne, from suicide as her modus operandi is to slit her wrists or leap from the roof. Because you always find her or she calls a staffer and they call for you. She has asked for you on this rainy day. Where she is sitting on the roof facing the backyard threatening to jump five stories down.

"I will only talk to her," Daphne says.

Joe says "Here is what we will do," and opens a side window in the hallway by the attic room.

"Do you want to come in," you say.

"No," she says.

Climbing through the window you go out and sit with her dangling your legs over the roof's edge. Joe is on the ground looking up, standing on the grass by tall trees in the light rain.

You are five stories up in this old Victorian house in the Oliver neighbourhood of Edmonton. Admiring the view you hear Elton John singing 'Your Song' from somewhere on the radio. You both sing-along for a little and laugh.

"Do you want to see my scars," she asks. You nod, yes.

She slowly unwraps the bandaids on her wrists.

You examine the cuts are deep but healing. Sitting on the roof talking about ordinary things.

You need to run. Run as far away as you can.

Investigating later you learn the group home hired sexual predators and predators in general. For cheap. Not much pay and lots of vulnerable children. Not advertising it this way but the group home was desperate for help and had no or little operational money. Draft dodgers came in, they say.

"What did they do with the money that they did get? Remember we had no food - just the peanut butter and jam and a loaf of bread they left for us out on the counter," says your housemate who survived but not unscathed.

Instead, blaming you all for the trouble, they kick you all out.

You are just 15. And you don't know about life but this; you don't know but know you no longer have a home.

Only criminals, kings and rooks remain throwing knives at you missing your heart stabbing you in the leg as you cut yourself on broken glass from the garage door glass window where inside you're catching the predator staffer convincing your housemate to do a drug deal.

Many kids end up in lock-up like YDC. You launch plans to rescue them but fail. Yet you escape every police chase jumping fences becoming the robber's watchman.

There is no help for you through high school. So you doubt everything about hope. No secure footing. But these bells keep ringing and the boy with the feather in his hair is waiting. He too is on the street and sleeps in the park across the river playing his white guitar writing songs about you.

And you both work at the Fireside Restaurant on 101 street by the hospital close to school. Him longer than you.

He yells up for you. He startles you on purpose.

Waiting. There is this boy with the blue feather in his dark hair. He is anxious for you pacing on the sidewalk looking up at your window and stops when he sees you looking. You drop a bag and wave a small wave. He waves back and smiles. Then a police car turns the corner and he runs - white guitars flying in the dust.

"We never had a house there," the executive director said.

"Not at that address," he said 10 years later.

"It wasn't our house there," he says 20 years later.

"I wasn't there."

"That wasn't me conducting the raid," he says all along. But you know it was. You are now almost the same age.

But you call the police to this house that never was or someone did in 1974 about Daphne, when you were just 15.



Side Window Group Home 1975

You find Daphne in the closet she has been missing for hours and it's dinner time but your other housemate sets fire to the dinner table. "I am sorry I set fire to the table," she says, matches in hand as staff put out the fire.

You look for Daphne to find her and tell her about dinner drama and to talk of ordinary things. You find her in the attic closet with her wrists slit, bleeding, mumbling and trying to stand. And the bells ring. The rain falls.

You leave your room and run down the five flights of stairs. You run into a staffer who raped Daphne repeatedly. You pass in silence but turn and say: "I need to go with you."

"No you need to stay right here," he says.

You listen as he has a tennis racket in one hand slapping the other hand with it. He is one step above you looking down on you. "We're going to play tennis," he motions to Daphne.

"Can I come?" I say. "I play tennis."

"No, you need to stay here."

You get help for Daphne. With her blood on your hands because you help her sit up against the closet wall with her clothes hanging there. Clothes and papers laying on the floor there. They take her to the General Hospital again where they wrap up her wrists again and place her in the psych ward again but she is back within a few days, again.

You climb off the roof through the window. When you used to sneak out the window to smoke opium at the park at the end of the block where the mansion stands.

The bells ring when you enter the church. Coming home from high school you find the police entering the group home and see them going through all the office desk drawers on the main floor, pulling out files - looking for, something.

You sit in the pew, on the porch stairs, curb, waiting, watching while a staffer looks on securing the police. They find the shit book so-called for the shit you and your housemates wrote to express your thoughts.

"You are guilty of devil worship," the staffer that wasn't there tells you. "You need to leave now." What?

"He's gaslighting you mom," your daughter says years and years later as you explain your past.

"We were never here," the staffer says and slams the door in your face inside out.

"It's time for us to go now," says the boy.

You see him. You see your reflection in the glass the blood is gone.

You leave your stuffed toy that you took as you ran away, on the make-shift table beside the bed that looks out the window and is across from the closet. And leave all your artwork sketches on the wall. Especially Mick Jagger. All the photos and your camera you take.

The bells are ringing the rain has stopped.

You leave the attic room go down the stairs to meet the boy waiting outside for you. He is the one who listened to your stories in art class when you went to Victoria High School.

Who sat next to you, the one who told you stories. It seems like a thousand years since then.

One day you see Daphne downtown at Edmonton Centre with her baby, say hello, and talk of ordinary things.

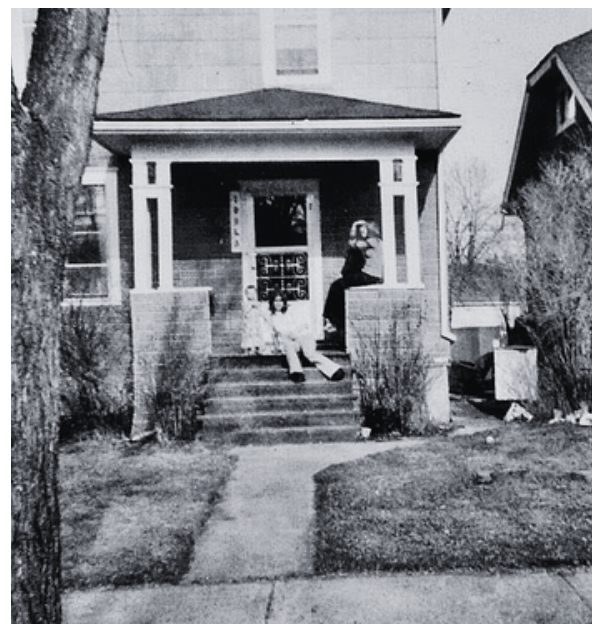
You see the boy again with the feather in his hair who became a rockstar.

You see the house is torn down and made into a parking lot as you drive by with your son.

"This is where the house was," you say to him.

In the distance church bells ring.

You have raised your kids on precious ordinary things.

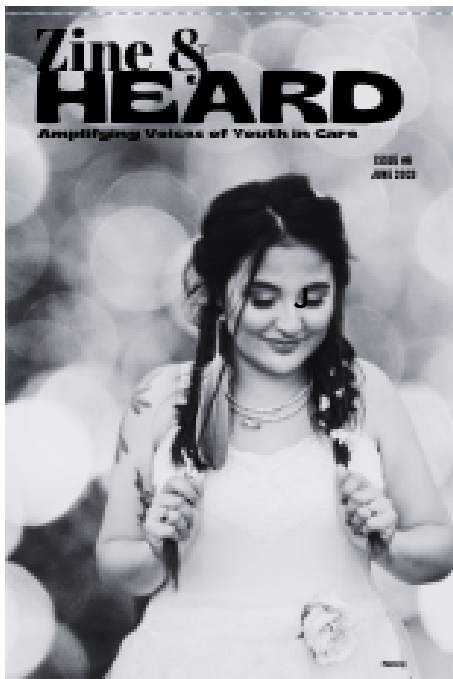


'Porch talks' Group Home - 1975

Kate Rittner Werkman still lives in Edmonton.

She lived in the group homes described in this story from 1974 - 1976.

This is a work of creative non-fiction - the names of the people have been changed to protect their identities.



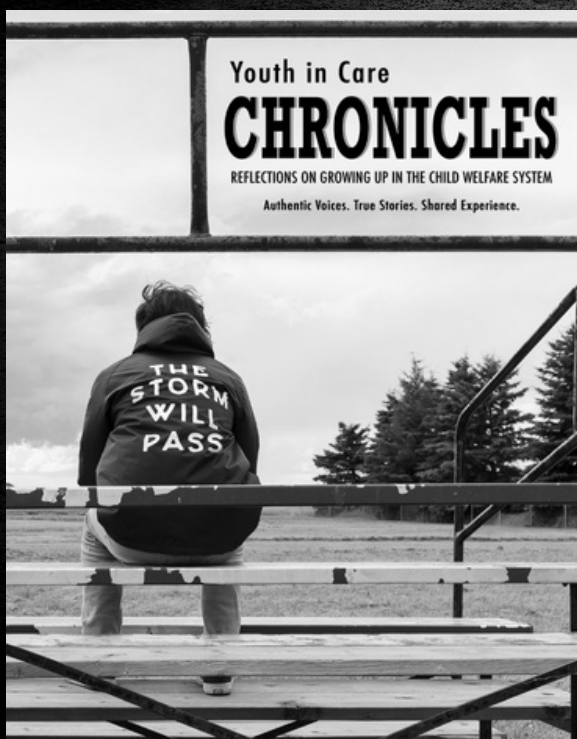
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18 former youth in care from Alberta tell their stories in **YOUTH IN CARE CHRONICLES: Reflections on Growing Up in the Child Welfare System**

Available at
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All proceeds go to fund projects for youth in care.



Chantelle Bushie

Chantelle Alice Rose Bushie, 16, was mother to one daughter, and could sketch anything you set before her in minutes.

On Dec. 1, 2007 Chantelle was seen for the last time in Grande Prairie, Alberta. The city's RCMP detachment is investigating the missing persons case, which was temporarily transferred to the KARE unit, an RCMP entity that investigates and reviews files of murdered or missing vulnerable persons throughout Alberta.

There have been no developments in the investigation since it was moved to the KARE unit, and investigators last contacted Chantelle's family in 2012. Chantelle has the letters VT tattooed on her left hand. If you have any information please contact

mmiw@cbc.ca

Information taken from CBC Missing & Murdered: The Unsolved Cases of Indigenous Women & Girls.

MPs call for national emergency declaration on violence against Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit people

Olivia Stefanovich · CBC News · May 02, 2023

NWAC supports calls for a state of emergency on violence against Indigenous women


APTN NEWS, May 4, 2023

The House of Commons unanimously passed a motion Thursday declaring the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people a national emergency. The motion was tabled by Leah Gazan, NDP critic for women and gender equity, and arrived just before Red Dress Day on May 5. It includes a call to provide immediate and substantial investment in a red dress alert system to help notify the public when an Indigenous woman, girl or two-spirit person goes missing.

At a press conference on the morning of the motion, Gazan was flanked by several grassroots First Nation, Métis and Inuit advocates and activists. She emphasized during the press conference that structures are in place to create the alert system immediately. Gazan says she has met with Public Safety Minister Bill Blair to discuss a path forward. But her patience is running out.

"They just need to come to the table and then act," Gazan said. "I'm done with meeting for the sake of meeting. "It's beyond "feel-good stuff" — action needs to happen, she added.

Excerpt from NUNATSAIQ NEWS, May 5th, 2023, by Matteo Cimellaro

A black and white photograph showing a black dress hanging from a tree branch. The dress is a sleeveless, knee-length garment with a large bow at the waist and ruffles at the hem. It is suspended in the air, as if caught in a breeze. The background features a row of bare trees along a road, with a white car and a semi-truck visible in the distance. The overall mood is somber and evocative.

*You
are
not
forgotten*

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

My guiding star in life is “what kind of legacy do you want to leave behind?” I want to leave a legacy for the generations in and from care after me. I want to help build a future in which they can thrive in, and never have to ‘age out’ of anything – a world in which they are supported and invested in throughout their entire lives just like a lot of kids not in the system get to experience. That’s what I strive for in all the work that I do, whether it’s advocacy, research or teaching.

Dr. Melanie Doucet
Former Youth in Care



RAISE THE AGE. LOWER THE STATS.