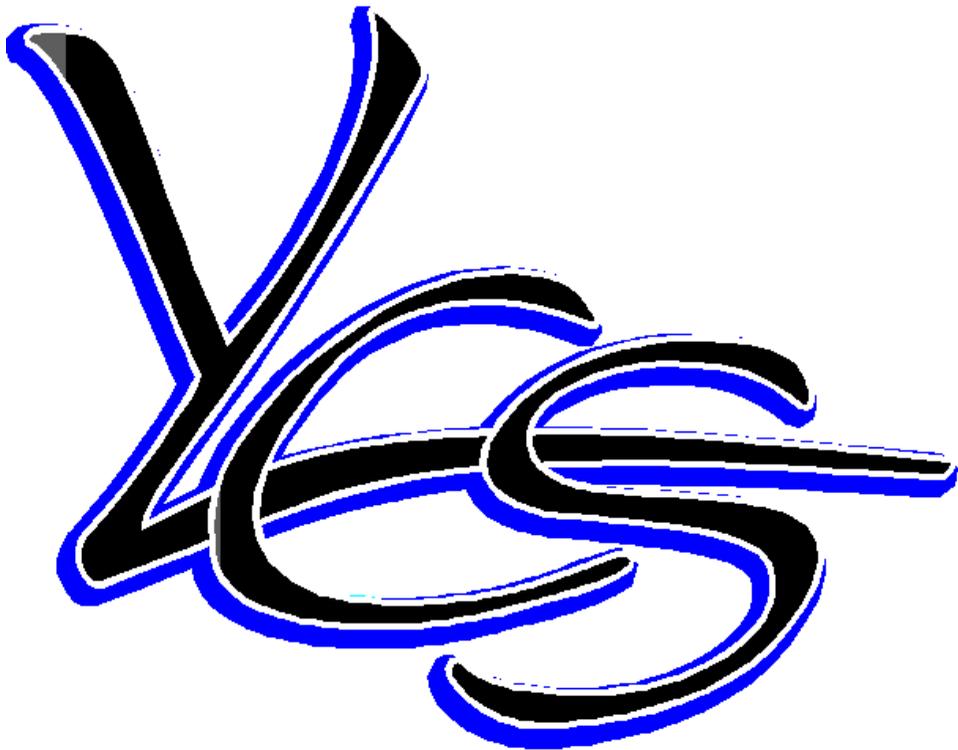


The Victoria Youth
Empowerment Society
2017-2018 Annual Report



Empowering the youth of Victoria for over 25 years.

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Who We Are

The Youth Empowerment Society came into being in its present incarnation in October of 1992. Before that date, the Alliance Club (Youth Development Society) and the Association for Street Kids had been doing work with “street kids” in Victoria since 1986. These two organizations amalgamated in late 1992.

For over 25 years the Board, staff and volunteers of the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society (YES), in partnership with 1,000's of youth, families and various service providers, have systematically developed a service delivery system for youth and families. Over the years, YES has continued to grow and develop programs based on emerging needs in our community. YES have grown from an agency which was primarily focused on street entrenched youth to an agency which provides prevention, intervention, treatment and education for youth, their families/caregivers and the broader community.

We, at the Youth Empowerment Society, believe that all people have the capacity to improve their lives. We dedicate ourselves to helping youth and their families achieve their goals while respecting their individuality and recognizing their diverse and sometimes challenging needs. Our commitment to healthy lifestyle choices creates an atmosphere where youth can feel safe and supported as they progress toward their goals. We believe everyone should be treated with equality, dignity, respect and acceptance.

At YES we believe in inclusiveness where the youth, staff, board and volunteers work together to create an atmosphere where people feel safe, supported and respected, while being given the opportunity to fulfill their own goals.

The Youth Empowerment Society is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for disabled clients, and aims to create an environment which enables everyone to participate in the services offered within the parameters of our building structure. We value the diversity of our programs and accept the challenge of supporting each one to best serve the community. We believe our programs show strong leadership and prove themselves to be innovative, solution-focused, and proactive and that each continues to develop in response to our community's needs. We are dedicated to developing long-term, effective solutions by working together to provide the opportunity for growth and success.

We are skilled, empathetic professionals working consistently to encourage the well being of others. We are trusted and respected for our ability to work with youth and their families/caregivers. We continue to train and educate ourselves to enrich our perspectives, maintain a level of excellence and demonstrate ethical presence in our work. We work confidently together to create an optimal work environment where work place issues are resolved in a creative and co-operative manner.

We challenge ourselves to be accountable and responsive to those we serve as well as to the community that funds, supports and depends upon us. We are a valued organization that demonstrates success by continually evaluating our programs and challenging our assumptions.



YES would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our community supporters, funders and volunteers.

What We Offer to the Youth and Families of Victoria

Emergency youth shelter available all year long for 13-18 year olds

Community kitchen and gardening classes

Drop-in services including meals, laundry, showers, storage of belongings, computers, and counselling

Family counselling including mediation

Specialized youth detox services

Help with income assistance, PWD applications, obtaining ID and filing taxes

Life skill development including employment and education assistance

All services Available Free of Charge

Crisis services including outreach support for youth and families and the Reconnect Missing Youth Program

Healthy recreational and social activities for youth

Support finding, securing and maintain housing, including offering Ready to Rent for youth

Support for youth transitioning to adulthood including referrals and connections to adult services

LGBTQ+ specific support including Outlet program

Board of Directors

Paul Vinning
President

Julia Diamond
Vice President

Gerry Thompson
Treasurer

Wendy Graham
Secretary

Ken Sherwood
director at large

Robert Milen
Director at Large

Helen McAllister
Director at Large

Tessa Lloyd
Director at Large

Michele Davis
Director at Large

Resigned during 2017-2018 Fiscal Year

Marlene Schlotterbeck
Director at Large

Message from The President

As I reflect on the past 13 years that I have been a board member of the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society I find myself continually surprised and proud of the innovative programs and the many changes that have occurred over this time.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to acknowledge all the staff who work tirelessly to share their knowledge, expertise and life experience with our youth, families and community. I am proud of this organization; its staff, leadership and board of directors, and I am in awe of the resilience I see in the youth that we serve.

A big thank you to our departed Director, Marlene Schlotterbeck, we wish her well with her future endeavors. We also sadly say goodbye to our long-term Board Member Helen McAllister. Helen has been on YES fundraising committees and the YES Board for over 15 years. We truly appreciate all the hours and hard work they have both put into making this such a successful agency.

Although it seems like we just completed our first accreditation, YES has now completed its fifth accreditation. I am pleased to report that YES, once again, received the maximum three-year accreditation certificate this spring. This is an important achievement for the YES staff as they continue to sustain the high level of CARF accreditation standards; they are to be applauded for their continuous attention to the many details, of the many standards, that have led to yet another successful CARF accreditation.

We continue to benefit from the remarkable efforts and endless support of our volunteers. We had another wildly successful Souper Bowls event. Thanks to Michele Davis and her team of passionate Souper Bowls of Hope volunteers, donors and the community at large that continue to support this fantastic event. We are overwhelmed by the generosity shown by our community and our local businesses. This year we had over 400 guests come out and enjoy the soup and the music and generously bid on many exciting silent and live auction items. We were pleased and honoured that our Souper Bowls of Hope founder, Helen Hughes was able to join us. We are already looking forward to next year's Souper Bowls of Hope, keep an eye on our web site <http://souperbowls.com> for the next year's event date.

Exciting changes are happening in "Helen's Place" (the Alliance Club). We've recently renovated the space; new computer desks, new individual youth storage solutions, new flooring, new kitchen cabinets and countertops, a very impressive commercial grade fridge and freezer - and that's not all, to top it off, a complete overhaul to the washroom

and shower facilities. The youth are eager to be moved in and are looking forward to enjoying this “new” space for many years to come.

Our success is the community’s success, and with the steadfast support of our donors, partners, Board of Directors and volunteers, the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society is ready to take on the challenges in the years ahead.

Paul Vining
President, YES Board of Directors



Message from The Executive Director

This past year marked the completion of the Agency's fifth successful accreditation survey which resulted in the maximum three-year accreditation. The process included an extensive review of our programs, financial practices, health and safety procedures, cultural competence, accessibility, strategic planning, human resources and interviews with other community agencies, youth and families. Thanks to all the staff for the 100's of hours of work it takes to prepare for an accreditation survey.

A few of the comments the surveyors included in their report:

- YES is a genuine, accessible, inclusive organization that is known in the community for its efforts to respond to the needs of the youth with complex issues.
- YES emphasizes positive communication with the youth that encourages an open exchange that fosters a comfortable, trusting relationship and connection.
- YES has a true commitment and a willingness to improve operations and services.
- YES is committed to transparency which leads to high morale and concordance in the organization and its ability to meet youth and community needs.
- YES staff members are seasoned counsellors, implementing a uniquely person-centered and practical approach that addresses immediate concerns to support the entire family system and working to improve relationships and communication without judgement or aligning with parents versus youth or vice versa.
- YES provides essential services to engage and retain high-risk youth and help them establish stability to develop productive and wholehearted lifestyles.
- Families and youths are extremely positive about the organization's staff members, noting that their skill, support, and flexibility are invaluable in helping them achieve meaningful goals.

Highlights of the Past Year

As can be glimpsed throughout the brief summaries of the various program reports in the 2018 Annual Report, the Society continues to annually assist 100s of youth and families.

A few of the highlights include:

- The Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter (KEYS) received 1521 requests for assistance and a total of 194 youth accessed the residential component of the program.
- Our Youth and Family Counsellors assisted 109 families which translates to a total of 215 individual youth and parents.
- The Alliance Club was accessed by 792 individual youth for a total of 6076 visits.
- Life Skills supported 187 youth through drop-in, outreach support, and group workshops.
- 131 youth were admitted into the Specialized Youth Detox (SYD).
- Over 133 youth participated in the Summer Opportunities program.
- The Youth Outreach Team supported over 280 youth.
- The Supported Independent Living program assisted 67 youth.

In addition to our established programs, YES continues to evolve to meet the needs of the youth, to develop more community partnerships and to expand services. Over the last two years programs that have been developed by staff include: You(th) Can Cook, You(th) Can Garden, Down to Earth, Outlet, and the Anxiety Group which are all summarized in the Annual Report. The increase in group programming (under the group title of Youth Options) is based on the belief that positive use of leisure time and healthier activities will assist youth in transitioning to a more constructive life away from high risk behaviour and/or the street scene.

Trends

A further examination of the reports indicates several ongoing and developing trends such as:

- In most program areas there continues to be more female (ranging from 56% at SYD to 68% of referrals to Outreach) than male participants. The one program exception is KEYS where admissions were 67% male.
- Over 80% of the youth admitted to SYD completed the program.
- We continue to experience large numbers of youth transitioning into adulthood, often with few community and familial supports.

- Risk factors that are prominent across all programs include: poor employment skills, substandard or no housing, self-esteem, problems at school, family breakdown, bullying, sexual exploitation, lack of basic needs and limited life skills.
- These risk factors are compounded by large numbers of youth with mental health concerns, such as depression, suicidal ideation and severe anxiety. These mental health concerns are often coupled with substance misuse. In the past fiscal year 68% of youth who accessed KEYS reported substance use, and over 65% of youth reported a mental health concern or a cognitive impairment. In addition, 69% of youth who accessed the Specialized Youth Detox had a formal diagnosis of mental illness.
- The number of individual youth that annually access the Alliance Club has increased by 300% over the past three years.
- The number of youth accessing the Alliance Club, in the 13-14 year age category, increased substantially to 119 individual youth.
- In many programs the average length of service has increased due to the multiple and complex needs of the clients and the absence of needed services in the community.
- Over 55% of youth who accessed KEYS due to a family breakdown were mediated back into the family home.
- Across programs the top four drugs of choice as identified by the youth over the past fiscal year were: marijuana, alcohol, Xanax and Crystal Meth.

A tracking of referrals to all YES programs indicates that the most common reasons for a referral include: family breakdown, housing issues, high risk behaviour, mental health concerns, basic needs, substance use, employment support, education goals, connections to income support and personal management (e.g. various life skills).

Community Impacts

All programs are now tracking youth goals in most of these referral areas so that we can provide an overview of our agency outcome indicators. In coordination with our community partners the Agency and staff has achieved a number of outcome indicators during the past year. A few examples include:

- Assisted over 125 youth to transition to independent living.

- Helped over 250 youth to secure or maintain housing.
- 150 youth received assistance with employment preparation or training.
- 115 youth were mediated/reunified back to the family home or received a foster placement.
- Connected over 400 youth to primary health care services.
- Over 350 youth were connected to addictions and mental health services.
- Helped numerous youth to obtain personal identification including: birth certificates, social insurance numbers, medical care cards, B.C. ID cards etc.
- Supported over 150 youth both individually and in group settings with the acquisition of the life skills in areas such as: budgeting, healthy family connections, goal setting, time management, communication, conflict resolution, self-esteem etc.
- Provided basic needs (food, clothing, laundry, showers, hygiene supplies, shelter) for over 900 youth.
- Delivered educational sessions both individually and in group settings for over 100 youth regarding: alcohol and drug use, risk reduction, dealing with anxiety and depression, stress management, self-care, nutrition, building support networks etc.
- Worked with over 125 youth to support their educational plans and goals while working with secondary and post-secondary to increase school attendance and engagement.
- Worked with over 175 parents to facilitate improved family relations.
- Established a Healthy Support Fund to enhance youth potential with employment, housing and recreational opportunities. Youth are assisted with certified training, work clothing, housing start up food and furnishings and access to healthy leisure activities.

“Homeless” youth and the lack of appropriate housing constrain most YES services. Last year the Agency made over 500 referral/connections for youth seeking housing. However there are a number of factors that impact a successful transition to supportive housing or independent living including: a very low vacancy rate, a very limited number of youth housing programs, many of the youth do not have the emotional, social, and financial resources to successfully transition without support and family breakdown means that the youth no longer has familial support and a return home is not an option.

Thank You

In the 2017/18 fiscal year we continued to remain vigilant in an effort to reduce costs and maximize our revenue. In addition to our core provincial government contracts with MCFD and Island Health, we also received funding from the City of Victoria and the United Way to assist with our summer, outreach and basic needs programs. A particular thanks goes to Michele Davis and the Souper Bowls Committee for another extraordinarily successful fundraising event.

With the support of these funders and the financial and in-kind support of several generous donors, various foundation and grants, the Agency ended the fiscal year with a small surplus during a continuing cycle of economic instability. This surplus has allowed YES to complete extensive renovations of the Alliance Club (Helen's Place), contract to update the agency website, upgrade computer systems, continue the Youth Options programs and increase staff training opportunities.

Each year it is difficult to compile an inventory of thanks for our hundreds of supporters. At the risk of overlooking some a special thanks to a few of those that contribute thousands of dollars in direct and in-kind support including: the Felicia Oliver Fund, the Quail Rock Foundation, Ron Fuller, Browns the Florist, the Potter's Guild, Thrifty Foods, St. John the Divine, Auntie's Community Closet, Women in Need, Sports Chek, Fairway Market, Save on Foods, Starbucks, Shoppers Drug Mart, Johnny Rockets, ARQ Salons, Habit Coffee, Hey Happy Coffee, Spruce Nail Design, Artworld, Linda Sheppard, Cidel Trust Company, Donn Mann, W. Seagar, Gustavson Courntall Enterprises, Dr. DC Morgan, Michelle Stannard, Island West Coast Development, CIBC Wood Gundy, Golf for Kids (Corix), Hendry Swinton Mckenzie Insurance, Roughley Speaking Communications, Renee Depocas.ca, Brand Brilliant, Island Blue, Ralmax Group of Companies, Downs Construction Ltd and the other various businesses and supporters of our fundraising activities. Thanks also to the private individual donations of money, clothing, and basic need items. A special thanks to the Kiwanis Club of Victoria for their continued involvement and maintenance of the KEYS facility and grounds.

Volunteers are involved in every facet of the Agency; from the enthusiastic individuals that make our fundraisers possible, to those that supply meals for the Alliance Club, and the volunteers that assist in individual programs. YES values the immense support,

commitment, expertise, and above all, the thousands of hours of time these volunteers put forth helping vulnerable youth and their families.

I would also particularly like to recognize the guidance, leadership and governance provided by our Board of Directors. Working behind the scene it is through their efforts that YES has continued to develop and thrive as an organization that provides accountable, responsive and quality services.

YES is fortunate to have a dedicated and skilled staff who undertake an amazing volume of work. Whatever we accomplish as an agency can be directly attributed to their character in taking on the most complex cases and their passion in helping others to reach their potential.

We extend a heartfelt thanks to our multiple community service delivery partners as we all strive to provide the best possible services to improve our community.

As always, we salute the youth and families that we serve. Your resolve and courage to improve your life situations through difficult circumstances motivates our daily efforts.

Pat Griffin
Executive Director



THE ALLIANCE CLUB (HELEN'S PLACE)

The Alliance Club is an evening drop-in centre for youth aged 13 to 19. The Alliance Club provides a safe, healthy alternative for youth who may be hanging out in the downtown core, as well as a connection point for at risk and street entrenched youth who may wish to explore a more positive lifestyle. The Alliance Club addresses the short term, immediate needs of youth and makes referrals to facilitate community connections. The staff and volunteers build rapport with youth to develop trusting relationships, increase awareness of avenues to reduce risk, offer support in implementing positive change and provide basic life skills to enhance successful long range goals.

Patterns of Utilization

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the Club served **792** individual youth, which translated to **6076** visits (averaging 24 visits per day). 422 youth were female, 350 youth were male and 20 youth were transgender/gender non-conforming.

The Alliance Club saw an increase in individual youth as we all as increase in visits. This translated into the services the Alliance Club offers being utilized more frequently.

Alliance Club Basic Needs Services			
Meals and Snacks	3385	Hygiene Products	130
Showers	185	Clothing	339
Laundry	82	Bus Tickets	250

Referrals/Community Connections

Referrals are an important part of the work done by the Alliance Club staff as it links at-risk youth with agencies and professionals throughout the community. Through the referral process, youth can build a network of people and resources to help them transition to healthier pathways. Due to the complex nature of the multiple issues presented by many youth, an individual client will likely generate a number of referrals in various categories and may be referred to the same program more than once to enhance their potential for connection.

The Alliance Club made a total of 2633 internal (YES) and external referrals last year. Youth were referred externally to over 60 different community agencies. Approximately 33% of our referrals were made internally to other YES programs, with Youth Services Outreach Team, SIL and KEYS the most commonly referred to programs. Major

external referral sources were the Victoria Youth Clinic, MCFD and Out of the Rain. Referrals are an important part of the work done by the Alliance Club staff as it links at-risk youth with agencies and professionals throughout the community. Through the referral process, youth can build a network of people and resources to help them transition to healthier pathways.

Trends

Trends this year included:

- More female than male youth utilizing services.
- Youth required the most assistance in the areas of basic needs, finding housing and mental health.
- An increase in requests for meal and snacks.

Donations and Volunteers

The Alliance Club welcomed six direct service volunteers who worked 100 total hours during the past year.

The Alliance Club received several donations throughout the year. Every other month the Alliance Club received casseroles prepared by volunteers at St. John the Divine. These casseroles were greatly appreciated by staff as they stretched the food budget every month and provided an easy yet nutritious meal.

Many items were donated over the Christmas period, including gift cards and various items from the following businesses: Sportschek, Fairway Market, Save on Foods, Starbucks, Shoppers Drug Mart, Johnny Rockets, ARQ Salons, Habit Coffee, Hey Happy Coffee, Spruce Nail Design and Artworld.

The Alliance Club staff looks forward to this upcoming year in continuing to meet the needs of youth in our community while providing a high quality of service and care.

Alliance Club Reconnect Counsellors: Josh Clarkson, Addison Lee, Rachel Wilkinson, and Keely Anderson.

THE KIWANIS EMERGENCY YOUTH SHELTER (KEYS)

Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter (KEYS) is a 10-bed facility that provides services for youth between the ages of 13-18 who are in crisis and have no safe housing alternatives. The program offers assistance 24 hours a day 7 days a week. KEYS provides a safe and supportive environment and responds to a wide range of crises including but not limited to parent/teen conflict, mental health and addictions issues and homelessness. Referrals are accepted from youth, parents/caregivers and community professionals.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) funds KEYS and the house is owned by the Kiwanis Club of Victoria.

Patterns of Utilization

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, KEYS received **1521** requests for services from the community. These requests for services not only represent youth needing to access the shelter, but families and caregivers seeking support from KEYS counsellors as well. KEYS also provides support to community agencies by providing information about youth/adult programs in Victoria as well as filing Reconnect Missing on a community agency's behalf.

The top four referral sources for 2017-2018 were:

- MCFD 321
- YES 256
- Families 162
- Youth 146

Total Intakes

In the 2017/18 fiscal year, a total of **194** youth accessed the KEYS residential component. Of these youth 131 were male and 53 were female, transgender 10. This fiscal year KEYS saw 68 new youth who had never accessed the shelter before. The top 2 reasons youth accessed KEYS were: homeless/couch surfing, family breakdown/mediation.

Ministry Care

120 youth who accessed the shelter were not in care of MCFD. 50 youth had a MCFD designation upon intake at the shelter.

Age

Average age: Female youth: 15.8 Male youth: 16.7 Transgender/Gender non-conforming: 17.01 Overall average age was 16.5.

Substance Use

This fiscal year 131 youth reported substance use, with 60 of the 131 youth reporting the use of more than one substance. The top three substances identified by youth were: marijuana, alcohol and Xanax.

Mental Health

101 youth reported mental health concerns this past year. Anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideations remain the most identified mental health concerns. The amount of youth that identified more than one mental health concern was 61 youth.

Cognitive Impairments

92 (47%) youth reported cognitive impairments this fiscal year. ADHD and ADD syndrome were the most frequently reported this year. Of the 92 youth, 38 reported more than one concern regarding cognitive impairments.

Outcomes

This year staff engaged in over 920 activities (including providing family support, advocating for youth, connecting and collaborating with youth supports, helping with resumes, providing bus tickets and recreation activities, assisting with housing searches, providing information and support on harm reduction etc.) to support youth identified goals

Of the 194 intakes, 61 (31%) youth met all identified goals, 100 (52%) met some goals and 31 (16%) did not meet identified goals.

KEYS Manager: *Thea Pichurski*

F/T Crisis Support Counsellors: *Rachel Ducommun, Aja Sherlock, Cheryl Fikowski, Brit Rockford*

P/T Crisis Support Counsellors: *Michelle Gomez, Erica Okell, Nabeela Ramji, Kim Rumbley, Rosalie Beaudoin, Courtney Wilson, Maya Hamel, Bronwen Coulthard, Vanessa Barr.*

THE LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

The Life Skills Program provides services for multi-barrier, at risk youth between the ages of 12 to 19. This may include youth who are not attending school, having difficulty finding or maintaining employment, are experiencing family difficulties, have some mental health issues that are impacting their ability to maintain in the school/home and/or are unable to sustain a stable housing situation. Youth may also be dealing with multiple issues such as poverty, poor physical health, homelessness and substance use.

Through individual and group work, Life Skills Counsellors aspire to improve a youth's life skills in areas such as; self-esteem, healthy relationships, teamwork skills, risk reduction, stress management, healthy relationships, family dynamics, anger management, decision making/problem solving, interpersonal communication, budgeting, standards of hygiene, substance use, mental health, securing employment, independent living, securing housing and creating a positive attitude towards learning, growth and personal health.

Patterns of Utilization

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year the Life Skills Program received a total of 54 new referrals for Life Skills Counselling, with the top three referral sources being: YES Programs, MCFD and Island Mental Health.

Life Skills supported a total of **187** youth, through drop-in and outreach support, group workshops and individual case management.

Youth Demographics

Of the 46 new referrals:

- 10 identified as male, 34 identified as females and 2 youth identified as transgender/gender non-conforming.
- The average age of youth participating in the program was 16.5 years old.
- 21 youth were not in care, 5 were youth in care, 10 were youth on Youth Agreements.

Outcomes

Youth received over 3681 hours of mentorship and supportive advice on Life Skills topics such as: transitioning to independence, mental health, substance use, self-esteem, healthy relationships and communication skills. Youth also received 247 referrals in areas such as housing, MCFD, advocacy, substance use, education, mental health and recreational opportunities to efficiently support long-term life skill development and stabilization.

Some of the highlights of the Life Skills outcomes achieved by youth include:

73 youth received support to Transition to Independence

- Youth increased their knowledge of nutrition, hygiene and community resources
- Youth increased their knowledge of basic life skills (budgeting, how to obtain ID etc.)
- Youth were supported to live self-sufficiently in safe housing

87 youth received Mental Health Support

- Youth were assisted to access and increase their awareness of mental health issues and resources and engage in supports
- Youth increased their willingness to address mental health issues

40 youth received Housing Support

- Several youths were housed
- Youth increased their knowledge of housing referrals and supports
- Youth increased their awareness of tenancy rights and responsibilities

Trends

Lack of Housing and Supports in Transitions to Independence

This year the program noted a higher number of youth seeking Life Skills support to help them successfully transition to independence and find housing. Many of these youth identified feeling unsafe or neglected as the reason they need to find alternative housing. The program has also noted that many youth this year have struggled to maintain housing once it has been found due to multiple housing barriers and the low vacancy rate in Victoria.

Increased Mental Health Support

Mental health still remains to be a significant barrier and trend for youth. The program supported over 90 youth with their mental health, with an increase of diagnoses of anxiety, depression and borderline personality.

Life Skills Counsellors: Nicole Linza and Maria Ebenal

SPECIALIZED YOUTH DETOX (SYD)

Specialized Youth Detox (SYD) is a five bed non-medical withdrawal management facility serving the youth of Vancouver Island. SYD is a voluntary program for youth 13 to 19 years of age that require acute physical detoxification. Youth are required to have a medical screen completed prior to entering the SYD program to ensure 24 hour supervised medical care is not required. SYD can provide individualized support services 24 hours a day to youth and their families/caregivers.

The SYD program is funded by the Island Health (formerly VIHA) and the facility is owned by BC Housing Corporation. There is no cost to youth and their families/caregivers for the services provided.

Patterns of Utilization

Referrals: SYD received **145** referrals this fiscal year. SYD received 12 referrals for youth who were inducted on Suboxone while in SYD, 3 referrals for youth who were already on Suboxone, and 4 youth who were prescribed Suboxone but chose not to take it while at SYD.

The top three referral sources were: Youth self referral: 33 (25%), Parent/Caregiver: 26 (19.8%) and Island Health Discovery: 18 (13.7%).

Of the 145 referrals received, 44 (33.8%) referrals were from out of region (Central Island: 21, North Island: 22).

Intakes: **131** youth were admitted into the program. Overall, the average wait time between referral and entry into SYD was 2.3 days.

Waitlist: This year the program did experience waitlists. When a youth was on the waitlist the average length of time between initial contact and intake was 4.26 days. When youth are on the waitlist the SYD Intake Coordinator provides ongoing support and counselling to the youth and their family as needed until time of admission.

Youth Demographics

Gender: Females: 73 (56%) Males: 57 (44%) 1 Youth identified as non-binary gender

Age: 13 years: 0 14 to 16 years: 59 (45%) 17 to 18 years: 72 (55%)

Primary Drug of Choice

The top three drugs of choice as identified by the youth are:

Cannabis (46.6 %), Xanax (34.4%) and Meth (31.3%). 14.5% of youth reported using substances intravenously, which is a 24% decrease from last year.

Concurrent Disorders

90 (68.7%) youth had a formal diagnosis of mental illness. The most common diagnoses of mental illness are anxiety: 52 (39.7%) and depression: 51 (38.9%).

Completion Rate

Of the 131 individuals who entered SYD, 105 (80.1%) youth completed the program.

84 (64%) youth were new to addiction treatment services; 47 (35.9%) have previously been involved with substance use services.

21 youth self-discharged from the program against SYD staff advice, 10 youth were discharged by staff.

35.9% (47) of youth were readmissions to the SYD program.

This year the average length of stay for youth was 6.7 days in the SYD program. On eight occasions, SYD was able to provide youth with extensions.

SYD Manager: Qionna Fyfe

SYD Intake Coordinator: Haillie O'Brien

F/T Withdrawal Management Counsellors: Dasi Rae, Caleb Beale, Melissa Thornton, Natasha Toth, Matt Lundin, Tony Morsby

P/T Withdrawal Management Counsellors: Jette Midtgaard, Justin Robertson, Vanessa Bar, Caleb Beale, Sandra Rumbold, Amanda Fantillo, Tasha Waite, Marwo Abdi

SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (SIL)

*SIL supports youth **15-18yrs** who have Youth Agreements (YAG), Independent Living Agreements (IL), or are otherwise transitioning out of MCFD services to independence. The SIL program also supports young people **19-24yrs** who are aging out of MCFD services and are pursuing or have secured Agreements with Young Adults (AYA). SIL counsellors work one on one with these young people to assist each of them to address the independence goals detailed in their personal intake assessment and work to ensure that the needs of the youth are met in a developmentally and culturally appropriate manner. SIL provides flexible support to accommodate youth who are employed, or attending school, or are parenting or meeting other family obligations.*

Pattern of Utilization

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, SIL received **67** referrals from:

- MCFD Youth Services Protection Team: 18
- MCFD Youth Services Guardianship Team: 5
- MCFD Aboriginal Services: 5
- MCFD Aged Out Youth: 10
- Non-MCFD: 29

Youth Demographics

MCFD Status of Youth Referred to SIL:

- Youth Agreement: 19
- Independent Living: 7
- Agreement with Youth Adult: 2
- Applying for MCFD services (YAG or AYA): 10
- Child in Care (Continuing Custody Order): 2
- VCA: 2
- No MCFD involvement:
 - Never: 17
 - Historical involvement: 8
- 44 (66%) of referrals were for female youth, 21 (31%) were for male youth and 2 (>1%) identified as transgender.

Along with the 21 referrals that resulting in open files this fiscal year, there were an additional 45 clients carried over from the previous year for a total of **66** youth who received services during this fiscal year. In addition to the ongoing case load, 15 more youth received short-term support, information and referral services from SIL but chose not to receive ongoing support.

Outcomes

A total of 1,028 referrals were made to support client outcomes this past year and SIL counsellors helped clients with a total of 356 individual goals. (Youth often require multiple interventions in each category.)

Some of the highlights of the SIL outcomes achieved by youth include:

- All 66 youth received support to transition to independence
 - Improve personal management skills and self-sufficiency.
 - Improve social, economic and health outcomes.
 - Enhance practical life skills in areas such as: self esteem, healthy relationships, risk reduction, family dynamics, stress/anger management, decision making/ problem solving. Communication, budgeting, standards of hygiene, substance use, mental health, independent living, healthy recreational/ social/ cultural activities, parenting skills and transitional supports.

- All 66 youth received housing support
 - Secured appropriate and affordable housing.
 - Self advocate with landlords and rental marker proprietors.
 - Connected with agencies offering supported housing and subsidies.
 - Linked with emergency shelter.

Trends

- This fiscal year the SIL program saw a trend towards youth being placed on Youth Agreements at a younger age than previous years. These youth identified securing housing as their priority within the SIL program. The process for youth of securing safe and affordable housing has become increasingly challenging due to the current housing market in Victoria as well as the lack of youth specific housing options.
- SIL clients continue to re-refer themselves in times of transition and appear to benefit from the established relationship with SIL counsellors.

Supported Independent Living Counsellors: Lindsay Dolling and Molly Reid

SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

The Summer Opportunities Program (SOP) is a voluntary, drop-in, day program designed to provide at-risk, vulnerable, and street-involved youth (aged 13-19) with a safe and healthy environment, fun activities, basic needs and emotional support during July and August each year. SOP aims to: ensure youth are able to meet their basic needs, enhance social inclusion by engaging youth to participate in experiences to which they may not otherwise have access, build meaningful and trusting relationships and provide individualized support and referrals to facilitate youth in moving towards positive and healthy life situations.



Youth Demographics

This summer, youth accessed the Alliance Club space and/or our SOP programming **1746** times. **133** youth participants specifically attended SOP programming over eight weeks. Most of the youth accessing the Alliance Club this summer were female-identifying and between the ages of 16 to 18 years old.

Basic Needs

SOP and the Alliance Club provide youth with access to basic needs such as healthy meals and snacks, showers, laundry facilities, second hand clothing and hygiene products. On average, 76 lunches were provided to youth per week, with a grand total approximating **686** lunches over the course of the summer.

Referrals and Supports

In July and August 2018, SOP staff provided roughly 66.5 hours of individual support. SOP and Alliance Club staff provided a total of 305.5 hours of individual support. This a 24 percent increase in individual support hours provided by Alliance Club and SOP staff compared to 2017, where 232 hours of individual support were provided.

In total, SOP staff made 166 referrals to support systems and community resources. The five most common referrals made were: Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter, Specialized Youth Detox, The Foundry, VYES Lifeskills, VYES Outreach.

Outcomes

The 2018 Summer Opportunities Program was very successful in providing an increased number of youth with access to basic needs. This alone demonstrates the necessity of longer hours and providing a second meal in the months of July and August. Given that most of youth accessing the space at this time are pre-contemplative and intending only to meet their basic needs, the adaptability of SOP activities was integral to relationship building that supported goal-setting and distancing youth from unhealthy environments and behaviors.

SOP Staff: Emily Maxwell and Elena Trenholm

YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES (YFSS)

The Youth and Family Support Services (YFSS) program provides interventions and support to youth (12-19 years of age) and their families in resolving conflict and/or crisis. This program consists of two staff; the YFSS Counsellor and the YFSS Outreach Counsellor. The program facilitates the reunification and/or reintegration of youth with their families and/or communities. When appropriate, the counsellors strive to safely maintain youth within their current family system while helping to increase the family's capacity to deal with the concerns that led to the breakdown. Interventions to address crisis and restore stability are presented to youth and their families to develop effective coping skills. Youth and families are offered these tools in order to enhance healthy relationships through parent-teen mediation, conflict resolution and one-on-one counselling. This approach is based on a model of family resilience and designed to enable, empower and strengthen families.

The YFSS program operates from the Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter (KEYS) facility. When a stay at KEYS has precipitated contact with the youth/family, the goal is to reunite, as appropriate, the youth with their family and commence a reconciliation process.

Patterns of Utilization

During this past year, 71 new files were opened in addition to the 38 ongoing files from the previous year for a total of **109** families receiving services. Those 109 open files translate into a total of **215** clients.

Caseload

A total of 442 appointments were attended and are broken down as follows:

- Youth Appointments: 158
- Parent Appointments: 220
- Family Mediation: 58
- Group Meetings: 6
- Another 104 appointments were scheduled but either resulted in a no show or cancellation

Youth Demographics

Of the 71 new youth files receiving services:

- 61% (43) identified as Female, 37% (26) as Male and 2% (2) as Other (Transgender, Gender Fluid, Genderless and/or Pan-gendered).
- The average age of youth referred was 15 years old.

Program Referrals/Connections

A total of 117 referrals to community resources were made to connect youth and their families with additional supports to meet their needs. YFSS' top referrals were to Child and Youth Mental Health, Ministry of Children and Development and Youth Clinic. YFSS counsellors also frequently made referrals internally to other YES programs.

Outcomes

A total of 117 referrals were made to support client outcomes this past year and YFSS counsellors helped clients with a total of 109 individual goals.

Some highlights of YFSS' outcomes include:

31 clients received assistance with family issues

- Family reunification/improved stabilization/reduced conflict
- Improved communication, effective boundary setting and family resilience
- Improved understanding of adolescent development and appropriate parenting strategies

31 clients received assistance with mental health issues

- Reduced distress through emotional support, improved coping/self-care strategies and/or safety planning
- Increased understanding of mental health concerns through psychoeducation
- Increased awareness of mental health resources
- Client connected with mental health resources/services

25 clients received assistance with alcohol and drug issues

- Substance use psychoeducation provided
- Youth connected with substance use resources/services
- Improved risk reduction and safety planning

**The above statistics may reflect multiple outcomes per youth and/or family member as identified by clients and/or YFSS counsellor*

Youth and Family Counsellor: Margaret Howard **Youth and Family Outreach Counsellor:** Jess Temmel and Madeleine Harber

YOUTH SERVICES OUTREACH TEAM (YSOT)

The Youth Services Outreach Team (YSOT) connects with youth and their families/caregivers to reduce risk, to resolve current and emerging issues and offers: prevention, diversion, and crisis intervention services.

YSOT is a direct access point for youth, families, social workers, probation officers, community service agencies, teachers, and police to connect with outreach counsellors twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.

YSOT services include: assessment and stabilization, treatment, brief interventions such as counselling, family mediation and conflict resolution, referrals and follow up as needed. The outreach workers provide opportunities for youth and families to connect with one key worker that can support them throughout the duration of their service plan, help guide successful reunification of families as appropriate and facilitate the coordination of services to enhance individual youth and family resiliency.

Patterns of Utilization

YSOT worked with over **281** individual clients over the course of the year. This includes 131 formally referred clients and an additional 150 individual youth connected to YSOT via outreach and community meetings/consultations.

Demographics of Referrals

Of the 109 direct “formalized” and brief intervention referrals received this year:

- 11 youth (10%) were in the care of MCFD and 98 (90%) were either not in the care of MCFD, were on Voluntary Care Agreements or their status was unknown.
- 68% of referrals were for female youth, 29% of referrals were for male youth and 1% of referrals were for gender fluid youth.
- 81 youth identified as non-Indigenous, 15 youth identified as Indigenous and 13 youths’ ethnicity was unknown.
- The youngest referral was 12 years of age, however the clear majority, 90 youth (83%), were between the ages of 14 to 18 years old.

Referrals/Connections

Last year YSOT made 2156 formal referrals to other community supports. A few of the highlights include:

- YSOT made 273 referrals internally to other YES programs such as Specialized Youth Detox, Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter, Youth and Family Services and Life Skills.
- YSOT made 178 referrals to MCFD, which included advocating for services such as Voluntary Care Agreements, Youth Agreements, Agreements for Young Adults and foster placements.
- 213 referrals were made to a number of community partner agencies including: Boys and Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria, Mustard Seed, Together Against Poverty, Victoria Native Friendship Centre, etc.
- Employment and school programs such as Artemis, SIDES, Bladerunners, Springboard to Success and GT Hiring received 220 referrals.

Trends

- YSOT has witnessed the prevalence of youth, some as young as 14 years old, using Xanax. This observation came from outreach workers' caseloads showing an increased dependency on the drug compared to previous years. In addition YSOT has also learned of an increase in use of crystal meth in the youth population within the last year. This past year YSOT has also learned of more overdoses on Xanax that contained a lethal dose of fentanyl than previous years.
- In the past year YSOT has noticed an increased number of sexual relationships between older males and young females that are not within the age of consent. YSOT has struggled to find appropriate services that address consent issues and healthy relationships.
- This past year the majority of YSOT referrals have been mental health related. Accessing mental health services continues to be difficult due to large waitlists and specific criteria for service eligibility.
- A continued challenge facing youth is homelessness. YSOT has observed that youth are choosing to sleep outdoors or access shelters, rather than work on a plan to secure them housing year round.

Youth Services Outreach Counsellors: Josh Clarkson, Sean Scott, Katarina Mauro, Leigha Foster

Youth Options Programs

In addition to the core services YES provides, the Agency is also committed to growing and creating new opportunities for youth to engage in positive activities. YES seeks to provide youth with varied opportunities to begin building a sense of belonging and participate in skill development focused on addressing the root causes of the many barriers they are facing. In 2017-2018, over 150 individual youth participated in the Youth Options programming that YES offers.

Down to Earth

In the spring of 2017, YES began pursuing ways to provide youth with outdoor recreational activities and launched the Down to Earth program. The Down to Earth's program vision is to connect youth to wholesome outdoors activities that promote healthy recreation, prosocial relationships and self-growth while providing a safe place for youth develop and learn new skills. These activities have included hiking, fishing, and paddle boarding in the south Vancouver Island district.

Outlet

Outlet is a group that supports youth who identify as LGBTQ+ within Greater Victoria. Outlet services youth by engaging in community collaboration to encourage connection building. Outlet continues to serve the LGBTQ+ youth community in a variety of different ways including fun, recreational activities such as button making, movie nights and games nights where youth can engage with their peers and work on building a safe community.

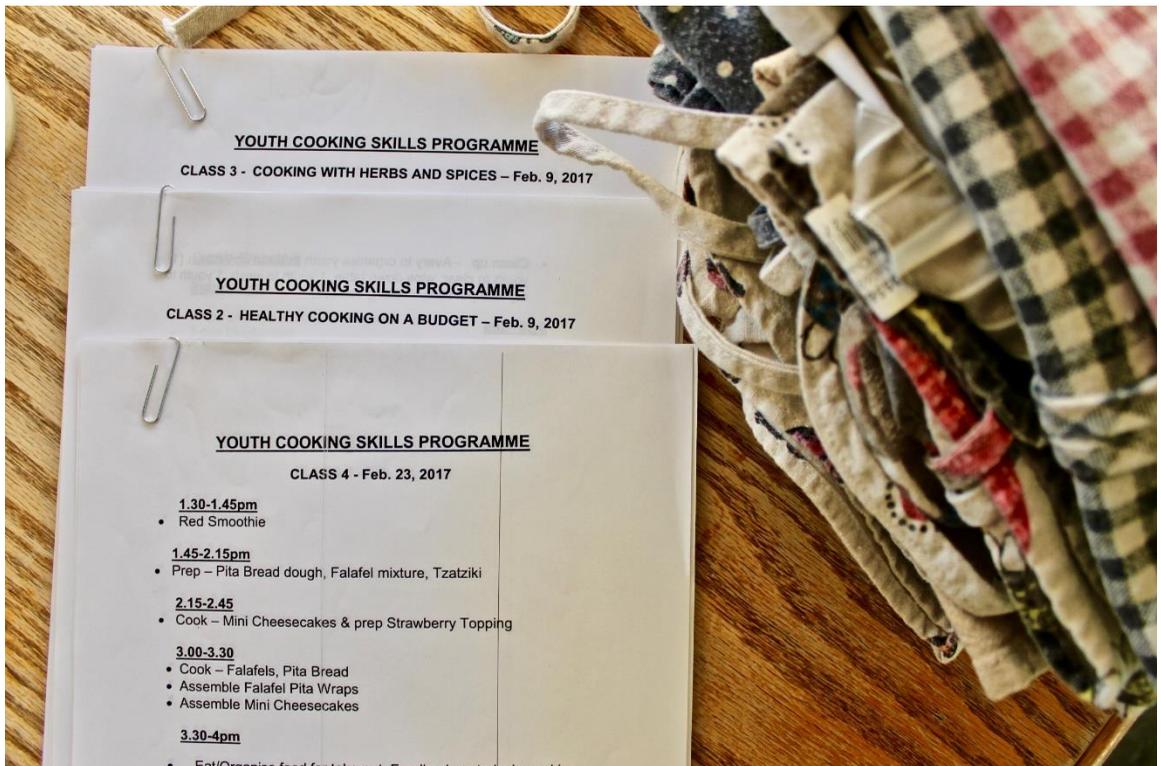
Anxiety Group

The Anxiety Group was designed to be a safe, welcoming and less clinical experience for youth ages 13- 24. The group provides a learning experience for youth to make meaningful connections not only to other youth experiencing anxiety but also connections within themselves when it comes to their own coping skills and self-awareness. The Anxiety Group focuses on an introduction to basic Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to support youth with coping skills, understanding their anxiety more and learning tools on how to manage their anxiety. The group discusses topics such as mindfulness, self-compassion and appreciation skills and accepting and identifying emotions. There are also optional individual exercises, concentrating on self-reflection and personal growth, for the youth to take home. The group incorporates activities and crafts that are beneficial to supporting youth when coping with their anxiety.

You(th) Can Cook and You(th) Can Garden

You(th) Can Cook is a community kitchen program geared towards at-risk youth, ages 16 to 24 who are working towards living independently or already live independently but are in need of cooking and nutrition skills. Each class involves an educational component (such as budgeting for food, reading a nutrition label, how to be eating a healthy diet, etc.) as well as a hands-on cooking class that allows each youth to take meals home. The program has involved professionals in the community such as local chefs and nutrition specialists to come as guest speakers and provide knowledge and expertise to the youth.

You(th) Can Garden is a hands-on urban gardening experience for youth. It has allowed youth to learn gardening skills, make delicious food and gain experience in an outdoor setting. The garden is located at the Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter and fruits/vegetables have been planted that maximize the growing season in Victoria. This program allows youth the opportunity to learn about nutrition while also gaining practical skills.



Additional Services Provided

Daytime Drop-In

The YES Office acts as a daytime drop-in centre that connects youth to healthier opportunities by providing drop-in access to counsellors, supports and referrals. The drop-in services is located and operated out of the Main YES building at 533 Yates Street. Services are available Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Youth receive assistance and support to meet their needs which may include: emergency housing/shelter, drug and alcohol counselling/withdrawal management, mental health assessment/support, food/basic needs, drop-in facilities, individual/family counselling, life skills training, independent living support/transitional planning, linking/referrals and outreach services.

Computer and internet access along with access to a phone and message system is available through the drop-in service. Youth are also assisted in acquiring personal identification, resumes and bus fare to connect with various supports such as family, social workers, school, doctor, employers, etc.

High Risk Youth Reconnect System

The Reconnect System is a provincial program that has developed an integrated approach to assist parents/caregivers, the police and other community supports in tracing youth deemed to be at extreme risk. A Reconnect is filed through the Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter (KEYS) for youth who are deemed to be high risk in the community. A Reconnect does not have to accompany a Police Missing Person's Report, but can be filed in conjunction with one if there are concerns. Reconnects are mostly filed for youth who are street entrenched, who are involved in exploitation or criminal activity, who are at increased risk of suicidal ideation, or mental health concerns or who do not have a stable housing situation. A Reconnect allows members of the community to watch out for at risk youth and to stay in contact with that youth's guardians or supports. Reconnects can be filed for youth up to the age of 19. KEYS is the central contact point for the Greater Victoria Reconnect System and, in collaboration with the youth serving community, has filed 47 Reconnect Missing Persons Reports this fiscal year.



Souper Bowls of Hope brings the citizens of Greater Victoria and the Downtown Business community together to help fund programs for youth at risk in the downtown core. Each year this iconic event attracts approximately 400 supporters. Attendees are given the opportunity to select a free hand crafted bowl, dine on delicious soup prepared by some of Victoria's master chefs (served by local celebrities and business owners) and be serenaded with live music by local talented musicians. Souper Bowls is supported by the talented members of the South Vancouver Island Potter's Guild who make both 'take home' bowls and remarkable other clay creations for purchase. In addition, Fired Up Ceramic Studios and various schools show their support through the concept of youth helping youth by creating and donating bowls for your enjoyment. The event is also sponsored by numerous members of the business community in several different capacities.

YES would like to thank all the volunteers who make this fundraiser possible. This past year, this event raised over \$100,000 to support the youth of Victoria. This event is crucial to YES being able to offer unique services to thousands of youth every year.



We salute the youth and families that we serve, your resolve and courage to improve your life situations through challenging situations motivates our daily efforts.

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Specialized Youth Detox

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Alliance Club

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