

The following is assembled in support of programming for Youth in the Capital Regional District, including services such as **School Liaison Officers**. Programs designed to support youth and families have been supported or not supported over the years, based on the degree of political support, interest and availability of community champions. It is a work in progress, attempting to learn from the past. I invite all members to contribute to our learning – **Cynthia Day, Chair, Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee March, 2019**

Following the history:

- the letters written in support of school liaison officer positions
- recent & older articles in the Times Colonist
- reports as far back as 2012, and
- feedback from school resources gathered to support our 2018 letter

- 1992** The Youth Empowerment Society came into being. 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 late in 1992. At the time of amalgamation, the only programs that existed within YES were the Alliance Club, GOALS and the Storefront Drop-in. There were 5 staff and a budget of approximately \$200,000. Currently, YES has approximately 60 full and part-time staff and a budget nearing \$2,000,000.
- 1994** The **first Youth Outreach Team (YOOTs)** is formed, pairing a youth outreach worker and a Victoria City Police Officer. A **second team is added in 1996**.
- 1998** The Liaison Worker for Sexually Exploited Youth begins at YES
- 1998** **CRATSEY** – Capital Region Action Team for Sexually Exploited Youth formed
- 2000** **Area police departments create MYST** (Mobile Youth Services Team) a regionally funded position designed to focus on the problems of Sexually Exploited Youth and find strategies for assisting young people in living safe productive lives
- 2002** **over 1500 youth** estimated **involved in the sex trade** in greater Victoria
- 2003** Specialized **Youth Detox goes full time** and moves to a new location. YES is awarded the contract for the Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter
- 2003** **NCECC – National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre** established
- law enforcement component of Canada's National Strategy to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet. **Targets the exchange of child sexual abuse images and child luring.**
  - Mandate to reduce the vulnerability of children to Internet-facilitated sexual exploitation by:
    - Identifying victimized children
    - Investigating and assisting in the prosecution of sexual offenders
    - **Strengthening the capacity of municipal, territorial, provincial, federal and international police agencies through training and investigative support**

- 2003 Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) Mandate to:**
- Educating the community about the severity of youth exploitation
  - Targeting pimps, johns and recruiters
  - Gathering criminal intelligence on the activities of child sex workers
- 2004** YES continues to work with the Victoria Youth Clinic and various funders and supporters to open a Youth Clinic at the 533 Yates location.
- 2005 Youth medical clinic opens** at 533 Yates
- 2006** YES opens The **OARS (Outreach and Recreational Services)** one-year program.
- 2007** YES begins **The Mental Health Liaison Program** (3-year project).
- 2007 VicPD hires 18 new officers and 8 civilian employees**
- Aging demographic and fierce competition with other police agencies leads to approval of 19 new officers (total of 241 sworn members for 2008).
  - Since 2004 calls for service in the downtown core have increased by almost 90%.
  - Computer Forensic Investigators assisted international investigations regarding child pornography
  - Promises additional officers in 2008
- 2008** Youth Hospitality Training Centre opens at the Taj on Herald St.
- 2009 Esquimalt requests Provincial Audit of Victoria Police**
- “It is imperative to note that there are key components of any policing service – such as infrastructure, specialized forensic and investigation services, and **community liaison**, to name a few – that are difficult to quantify for the purposes of this review. As such, these policing functions are not fully reflected in the analysis. However, **the intrinsic value of these services was considered** in the audit team’s major findings and recommendations.”
  - “Victoria’s daily population is much higher than its resident population.” ... “Adding full time commuters to Victoria’s resident population could increase its daily population by as much as 27%.”
  - “In 2008, case loads ranged from a high of 61 cases per member ... to a low of 28 .... The average for all independent municipal forces was 44 cases. The comparative figure for Victoria was 55.”
  - “factors such as dispatched calls for service or share of Criminal Code offences should not be used alone to determine the breakdown of costs between Esquimalt and Victoria. The audit team also **agrees with the practice in other jurisdictions of subjecting the funding allocation formula to periodic review**, such as every three years.”
- 2010 Esquimalt Hosts Public Input Sessions**
- “School Liaisons Great” identified as Strength in October 27 workshop
  - “Youth Officer or School Liaison” Opportunity identified as part of November 10 workshop
  - “Not enough community involvement – this is our problem to work with police” barrier at Nov 10 workshop
  - “Opportunity – to develop policing model separate from criminal” Nov 10 Workshop
- 2011** YES is awarded the Core Victoria Youth Services contract. The **Life Skills Program, Youth Services Outreach Program** and the **Youth and Family Outreach Program** begin. YES is awarded the contract for the **Supported Independent Living Program (SIL)**.
- 2011 MYST reports out** to local Councils (details from Sooke presentation)
- **over 65 files** since the New Year, many significant that ended with charges

- **located missing youth, gathered intelligence**, liaised with outside agencies
- over 10 **presentations on Drug/Sexual Exploitation** to school students in grade 10
- worked closely with the youth investigators, Victoria youth officers, Saanich youth officers, SCIT workers, and Social services.
- Met monthly for high risk youths, Regional Crime Unit, West Shore Probation, Capital Region Action Team for Sexually Exploited Youth and Family Court & Youth Justice & youth court

**2013** YES partners with GT Hiring Solutions on a pilot project, the **Employment Liaison Program**

**2012 – 2014**

- the number of webpages dedicated to the sale, trafficking, sharing of **abuse materials up 147%**
- Children **10 and under portrayed in 80% of images** shared
- **355 offenders** actively engaged in the trade of child exploitation materials on Vancouver Island
- **149 offenders associated with IP addresses in the Capital Regional District**

**2014** YES - **Victoria Youth Clinic** opens fulltime at the 533 Yates location. **Employment Liaison Program ends.**

**2015** **The Crime Reduction Exploitation Division (CRED)**, of Pacific Centre Family Services created

- Clinical Counselor works with MYST and youth exiting gangs throughout the CRD
- gang and sexual exploitation issues are closely intertwined
- Mainland gangs actively recruiting in the Capital Region

**2016** **MYST reports:**

- Mobile Youth Services Team is under review
- Most youth they serve are **girls who are drug addicted and chronically go missing**
- Homes are primarily foster homes, group homes etc.
- Youth continue to be highly mobile within the Capital Region
- available services in short supply: many **agencies losing funding, closing or reducing services**
- Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee writes letter to support MYST:

“Broad municipal support for MYST is at risk whenever this difficult job (a job that relies so much on the relationships with youth and youth serving agencies) is not done extremely well. It works best when the worker is consistent and experienced, and every municipal government wants the best value for their budget dollar.

**2016** YES begins You(th) Can Cook program.

**2017** YES begins The Mental Health Liaison Program and Down to Earth program ends. YES celebrates 25 years of youth services in Victoria



March 4, 2019

Dear Police Chief Manak,

I am writing to apologize for comments made on twitter regarding the attached letter drafted by our Youth Matters subcommittee chair. The Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee works hard to be a collaborative, facts based partnership advocating for the best possible resources for our communities.

We are charged with being aware of the circumstances for youth and families who may come into contact with the justice system. Our members represent all 13 municipalities, the CRD and all CRD based school districts, as well as our service delivery partners throughout the region. We understand the incredible pressure that our resource partners are under in meeting the diverse needs in our region and the fact that when every other agency has gone home, the police step up and offer whatever resources they can to make our community better.

We want to support you in making the case for needed services to ensure that youth and families have the best possible community support to enable them to live well, play happily and work towards an inclusive and supportive community. We work best when we have open, respectful dialogue and time to carefully consider our actions. We don't usually meet in March due to spring break. Not having that venue to discuss our advocacy may have contributed to this moving forward without an opportunity for the committee to discuss the best way to influence this important resourcing.

We agree with your comments in the Times Colonist that the crime statistics can be deceiving. Our understanding is that while the number of files may be declining (depending on location), in many cases youth may have had 50 or more interactions with police before they are charged with a first offense. This increasing complexity is having an effect on policing throughout the region, on alternative measures like Restorative Justice, and on our Court Resources and was discussed recently at the committee.

Committee members would welcome the opportunity to present facts about the importance of Liaison Officers in schools (and elsewhere). We will also be seeking to present to the Council's of Victoria and Esquimalt. We know that the Police Board and their Municipal Councils are the decision makers and that those decisions are taken in the best interests of the community.

Please accept my sincerest apologies for any discomfort we may have caused. I hope that we can find ways to work together to ensure that the best possible resources are available.

Yours truly,

Cynthia Day  
Chair, Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee

Attachment: March 1 Letter by Ryan Painter, Youth Matters Subcommittee Chair

Cc: Ryan Painter, Youth Matters Subcommittee Chair  
Andrew Kerr, Vice-Chair Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee (VFCYJC)  
Geanine Robey, Communications Subcommittee Chair, VFCYJC  
Bill McElroy, Treasurer, VFCYJC  
Secretary, VFCYJC

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10



March 1, 2019

Victoria Police Department  
Attn: Chief Del Manak  
850 Caledonia Ave Victoria, BC V8T 5J8

Dear Chief Manak,

I write to you in my capacity as Chair of the Youth Matters Committee, which is a subcommittee within the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee. Our committee is particularly seized with issues of import to the youth and families of the South Island, which range from mental health and addictions to youth and family engagement with the justice system.

I write with respect to the recent announcement that the Province of BC has ordered that Esquimalt and Victoria work to hire six new police officers.

On September 5, 2018 the Chair of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee, Colwood Councillor Cynthia Day, wrote about concerns regarding the loss of school liaison officers. As you know, when the initial decision to not fund additional officers was made by the Municipality of Esquimalt, three school liaison officers were redirected to general duty. You have heard from many in the community, including the Greater Victoria School Board and the Greater Victoria Teachers Association, that these school liaisons play an important role in their local school communities. I am writing to express our hope that, within the framework that has been set out by the province, three police officers be provisioned to fill the three school liaison officer positions that were repurposed.

We look forward to a positive response to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Ryan Painter  
Greater Victoria School Board Trustee Chair,  
Youth Matters Committee Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee

cc: Lisa Helps, Mayor of Victoria  
Barbara Desjardins, Mayor of Esquimalt  
Jordan Watters, Chair, Greater Victoria School Board  
Jason Gammon, President, Greater Victoria Teachers' Association



September 5, 2018

VICTORIA-ESQUIMALT POLICE BOARD  
c/o Victoria Police Department  
850 Caledonia Avenue  
Victoria, BC V8T 5J8

Dear Co-Chairs Mayor Lisa Helps and Mayor Barb Desjardins,

The Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee have great concern about the loss of School Liaison Officers in Victoria and Esquimalt. I understand that the Police Board will be meeting on September 18 and would appreciate your consideration of our input at that time.

From your last meeting in July, it is clear that "digital technologies are producing unprecedented levels of online child abuse material and incidents of exploitation and trafficking. From 2012 to 2014, the number of webpages dedicated to the sale and trafficking, as well as the sharing of sexual abuse materials of children, increased by 147%, with children 10 years and under portrayed in 80% of incidents" and that "355 offenders were identified as actively engaging in the trade of child exploitation material on Vancouver Island, with almost half (149) of the offenders associated to Internet Protocol (IP) Addresses located in Victoria and the surrounding area."

Our committee includes the Capital Region Action Team for Sexually Exploited Youth (CRAT) and we are doing our very best to educate youth about the risks of online exploitation. The lack of Police Liaison Officers in our schools will not help to address this major issue and represents a considerable loss to our youth police relationships. Relationships are the greatest defence for our youth.

In February of 2019 we will again be bringing TC02 presentations free of charge to local schools, put on by Children of the Street Society and facilitated by CRAT and MYST. This major undertaking of the Family Court Committee has been accomplished annually for more than 10 years and represents our continued commitment to preventing child exploitation and increasing youth safety through education, which will now be even harder for us to do without partners like our school liaison officers. (Please feel free to share the attached poster.)

Sincerely,

Cynthia Day, Chair

Cc: Del Manak, Victoria Police Chief  
Victoria City Council  
Esquimalt Council

### **Times Colonist Editorial Mar 1, 2019**

“For this year, Manak asked for a six per cent increase to add six officers and one civilian. Instead, council limited him to a \$1.8-million increase, which effectively cuts \$1.1 million or nine officers and civilians.

Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps and Esquimalt Mayor Barb Desjardins said Thursday that the department shouldn't be forced to cover the new employer health tax out of its regular budget, which adds about \$690,000 back into the mix. Victoria council wants to see a new budget breakdown before it approves even that.

Nevertheless, even though Helps said the councils will have to fund the six officers requested last year, it looks as if the department still won't have all the officers it asked for.

### **Times Colonist Feb 28 Katie Derosa/Bill Cleverly:**

“Simon Fraser University criminologist Rob Gordon said it's curious that the province used a heavy hand with Esquimalt while being cautiously hands-off when it comes to Surrey Mayor Doug McCallum's bid to replace the RCMP with a municipal police force.

“It's a game of tippy-toe in Surrey and a clashing of antlers in Esquimalt,” Gordon said.

Gordon wondered whether the province's strong response to the disagreement between Esquimalt and Victoria could be a “dress rehearsal for what the province wants to do in Surrey.”

When the six new jobs weren't approved, Police Chief Del Manak responded by redeploying all three school liaison officers, one intelligence officer, one reserve constable and one community services officer to patrol duty.

Tonia Enger, acting director of the Police Services Division said in a letter to Esquimalt Mayor Barb Desjardins and Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps, who co-chair the police board that the officers are a “necessity.” Enger added a condition that when the six officers are deployed, there must be an allocation to meet Esquimalt's needs “without regard to the demands driven by the downtown core and to ensure consistency with the Framework Agreement.”

Desjardins said she was disappointed with the decision, but happy that Enger ensured some of the new resources will be dedicated to Esquimalt.

### **Times Colonist Feb 17, 2019 Ruth Annis:**

“That emphasis on being visible to the community, establishing relationships with community members, using those relationships to respond more safely and effectively, and working in partnership with other systems, serves our downtown best. Cuts to these kinds of services hurt.”

### **Times Colonist Jan 16, 2019 Letter from Police Chief Del Manak :**

“A more reliable comparison would be that of net police expenditures as a percentage of general operating budget, excluding utilities, capital and debt. While Bartlett is correct that VicPD's budget for providing policing in Victoria is 22 per cent of the City of Victoria's general operating budget, this is the same as in Saanich (22 per cent) and less than for the other police services he highlighted, New Westminster (23 per cent) and Abbotsford (26 per cent), in an “apples to apples” comparison.

VicPD has not had a single permanent officer added to our strength in eight years, a period that has seen significant growth in the population of our jurisdiction and the region as a whole. Our officers are bearing the brunt of this growing gap every day and every night, and that story is being told, unfortunately, through the increase in operational stress injuries, both physical and mental, among our men and women.

I welcome and encourage a meaningful conversation about police resourcing in our part of the world. I would only encourage that it be based on fact and evidence, so we can all make the best decisions possible.”

## Backgrounder: School based Police Liaison Officers

Excerpt from the Youth Matters Subcommittee **Oct 2012 Report**:

"School Counsellors Caseloads Rising. School counsellors play an important role in ensuring every child has the best possible chance to thrive. But increasing workloads and a widening ratio of students to school counsellors means that counsellors in BC are facing difficult challenges in giving children the support they need. Carrie Swiggum highlights the problem in an article for The Tyee. In BC, the number of school counsellors has decreased by 11.2% over the last 9 years. Dr. Lynn Miller, professor of counselling psychology at UBC, says that prior to 2002 the BC government set the maximum number of students per counsellor at 360, but in 2002 teacher-student staffing ratios were removed from teachers' contracts, including school counsellor staffing ratios. According to Miller, this means that today a counsellor can have as many as 1,200 students in their care. Even though the bills passed to make these changes were deemed unconstitutional in April of this year by the BC Supreme Court, staffing ratios have not yet been put back into contracts, according to BCTF president Susan Lambert. School counsellors are overstretched, and their work has become reactive. Miller says that: "A very significant part of your day is reacting to whatever the big problem is that day, that week, in that child's life rather than being proactive and preventive... we're trained to be thinking about preventive activities. So, teaching kids skills of emotional regulation, making good decisions, friendship development, conflict resolution. These are very hard to plan when you're reacting to a death, a crisis, a divorce, a fight or suicide threats." Counsellors have also seen their roles change. Jameel Aziz, president of the BC Principals' and Vice Principals' Association, says that their administrative responsibilities have increased, leaving less time for personal counselling." <http://thetvee.ca/News/2011/09/08/Fewer-Counsellors-BC/index.html>

In 2012 both Youth Outreach Officer positions were cut from the Victoria/Esquimalt Police. The committee felt that the presence of Officers with whom youth had a trusting relationship was supportive of both the youth and the community and represented a continuum of care 'safety net'.

The **Committee sent a letter to the Police Board on January 8, 2013.**

The Chair **met with Insp. Keith Lindner, Victoria Police Department**, OIC West Division on January 22, 2013 to follow up on concerns that youth resources were critically important, and cuts would result in less services to those youth in need and less trust in the resources that they did not have a relationship with.

The committee also heard from the Youth Matters in February 2013 that "In liaising with community partners who have also tried to run youth focus groups, suggestions for better attendance include 'taking the groups to the youth' by holding the sessions in schools, malls or other locations where youth congregate." This supports having police participate with youth 'where they are' including at school.

The following page is from The Times Colonist, April 26, 2018 [kderosa@times-colonist.com](mailto:kderosa@times-colonist.com)



On Wednesday he announced that all three school liaison officers, one intelligence officer, one reserve constable and one community services officer would be redeployed to patrol and a new alternative response unit that will handle calls over the phone. "I have no choice," said Manak, a former school liaison officer.

"I have to prioritize. Do I not follow high-risk sex offenders or monitor high-risk offenders? "What about the illicit overdoses that are happening in our community? "Whichever way I look, there are no good options here."

Esquimalt Mayor Barb Desjardins slammed the move, saying the liaison officers are the first line of defence in preventing students from falling into criminal behaviour and are particularly crucial during the overdose crisis.

"We're extremely concerned about it. We value our school resource officers, we value our community policing approach," Desjardins told the Times Colonist. "This is taking away the preventative measure that reduces your load in other ways." Desjardins said she has already received emails from concerned Parents.

Peter Kasianchuk, a member of Esquimat High's parents advisory council, said parents feel "completely blindsided" by the news. "We're exceedingly dismayed," he said. "The value of the school liaison officers can't be overstated." The school liaison officer was particularly critical when the school was on lockdown in November due to a robbery in the area, Kasianchuk said.

Kasianchuk said it's "tone deaf" for Manak to mention the overdose crisis as a justification for the redeployment, pointing to the overdose death of 16 year-old Oak Bay High student Elliot Eurchuk as evidence this issue is affecting students. "He's playing politics with our kids' lives," Kasianchuk said.

School liaison officers maintain a presence in a school, attend school and community events and are the main point of contact between Victoria police, students, teachers and parents.

Manak agreed that "school liaison officers are critical" and acknowledged that teachers rely heavily on those officers in dealing with at-risk students. Teachers often turn to liaison officers when a student is exhibiting worrying behaviour that might not be criminal but is above the capacity of a counsellor or teacher, Manak said. "The police are in there to be able to guide and help

and mentor and to bridge the gap and provide support. Unfortunately, that support will no longer be there," he said.

Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps said Manak had to make a tough decision to ensure that officers can quickly respond to emergency calls. Helps said the school-liaison program "is a very valuable program, without question. But I think that the whole public should be concerned if they call 911 and it takes police a long time to get there because they're six officers short on the front lines.

"It's a very difficult position for the chief to be in." Desjardins said school liaison officers and community resource officers were a key part of the 10-year framework agreement reached between Esquimalt, Victoria and the police department in 2014.

The agreement ensured the Township of Esquimalt received dedicated officers and laid out a funding formula after Esquimalt threatened to contract out to the RCMP instead.

In March, Esquimalt council voted 4-3 against spending \$40,778 to fund its share of hiring six additional officers. Esquimalt is responsible for about 15 per cent of the police budget, while Victoria covers the balance. Several councillors were confused as to why the department needed new officers when quarterly police statistics have regularly shown reductions in calls and crime rates. Manak responded that disclosure requirements have made investigations more time consuming.

In January, the City of Victoria voted in favour of a \$528,000 increase to the Victoria-Esquimalt police budget to fund the new officers. Victoria coun. Ben Isitt, who voted against any staffing increase, said the move to cut the school resource officers is a political one, hopes the chief reconsiders his decision and maintains those positions and retreats from this political power play."

The province has been asked to step in and solve the dispute over the six officers, which is the process under the Police Act when two municipalities disagree on funding matters. The province has the power to overrule Esquimalt council's decision and force the municipality to pay for the new officers. VicPD, which has about 240 sworn officers, hasn't had an increase in its ranks since 2010.

2018 Police Liaison Officers (PLO) Feedback:

Esquimalt High:

Our PLO supports our school with education around policing, drugs and alcohol and driving. Our PLO often does restorative justice with us to support students in moving forward. Our PLO will go with us to student homes to do check-ins and offer support with complex home situations. Students seek out our PLO with sensitive information because of the established relationship. When something significant occurs in community (death by suicide, overdose, car accident etc) our liaison officer contacts us to let us know so we can respond, and support accordingly and then supports us through the critical phase that follows.

Rock Heights Middle School:

At Rock eights Middle School, the police liaison officer is an asset. Overall, PLO presence in the school and at events allows all our students to see police as trustworthy, caring and approachable community members. In a more focused way, the PLO is available to assist us when we have sensitive, timely or intense needs with our most at-risk and vulnerable student and/or their families. The PLO is broadly and deeply involved in the work we do to support and assist students and families, building a more powerful capacity because of the expertise and connections they possess. Our PLO is in the school several times per week and often daily, and is always available with immediacy.

