

VICTORIA FAMILY COURT & Youth Justice Committee



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2024**



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Territorial Acknowledgement

The Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee meets on the unceded Coast Salish territory of the Lekwungen-speaking and WSÁNEĆ nations. We acknowledge and thank the Lekwungen-speaking peoples, also known as the Songhees, Esquimalt and Beecher Bay First Nations communities, for allowing us to live on their lands.

The VFCYJC further acknowledges that the Capital Region spans the traditional territories of Coast and Straits Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth peoples and that, by virtue of being represented by all 13 municipalities, our committee is responsible to help build respectful and enduring relationships with our First Nations neighbours.

Supporting Documents

An archive of Annual Reports from the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFCYJC) and regularly updated documents, resources and links to relevant organizations in the Greater Victoria region can be found at victoriafamilycourt.ca. Agendas and minutes are filed on the [CRD website](http://CRD).

2024 VFCYJC MEMBERSHIP

Marie-Térèse Little, Chair; Mayor, District of Metchosin
Adam Flint, Vice-Chair; Citizen Representative, Town of View Royal
Kimberley Guiry, Vice-Chair; Councillor, City of Langford
Cynthia Day, Past Chair; Councillor, City of Colwood
Jeff Bateman, Communications Sub-Committee Chair; Councillor, District of Sooke
Marcie McLean, Priorities Sub-Committee Chair; Councillor, District of Highlands
Esther Paterson, Treasurer; Councillor, District of Oak Bay
Ken Armour, Councillor, Town of Esquimalt
Don Brown, Councillor, Town of View Royal
Sara Duncan, Councillor, Town of Sidney
Krista Loughton, Councillor, City of Victoria
Jack McClintock, Councillor, District of North Saanich
Mena Westhaver, Councillor, District of Saanich

ALTERNATES

Kim Jordison, Councillor, City of Colwood
Terri O’Keefe, Councillor, Town of Sidney
Jim Rondeau, District of Central Saanich
Rose Stanton, Youth and Family Matters Chair; Councillor, District of Highlands
Celia Stock, Councillor, District of North Saanich

SCHOOL DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

Karin Kwan, Trustee, School District #61
Christine Lervold, School District #62
Teri Vanwell, Trustee, School District #63
Nola Silzer, Trustee, School District (alternate)

CRD APPOINTEES

Cheryl Chators, Boys and Girls Club of Greater Victoria
Andrew HOLETON, Alliance to End Homelessness in Greater Victoria
Bill McElroy, Capital Region Action Team on Sexually Exploited Youth
Samantha Rappaport, Brown, Henderson, Melbye

VFCYJC SECRETARY

Marnie Essery

CAPITAL REGION DISTRICT LIAISON

Steve Carey, Senior Manager, Legal Services & Risk Management
Sharon Orr, Corporate Services

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026

Mission

To facilitate connections between municipal and First Nations governments, school districts, service providers, and the broader community in order to educate and advocate on the challenges and shortfalls facing youth and families who may come into contact with the justice system.

Vision

Families and youth have access to timely and appropriate supports within their communities so that they may achieve their full potential.

Goals

1. Increase awareness of the issues facing families and youth involved with the justice system while raising the profile of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee.
 - a) Identify gaps in services.
 - b) Support youth initiatives.
2. Pursue and promote meaningful reconciliation with the Indigenous community.
 - a) Committee members participate in Cultural Competency Training
 - b) Acknowledge and reduce the over-representation of Indigenous people in the justice system.
3. Advocate for policies and initiatives that improve outcomes for families and youth who may come in contact with the justice system.
 - a) Give a platform to youth/ amplify youth voices.
4. Support equity of access to resources across the region.
 - a) Help other organizations leverage their resources in support of families and youth.
5. Facilitate collaboration between community service providers and governance bodies in the interest of better supporting youth and families.

CHAIR'S REPORT



Another eventful year has quickly passed as the VFCYJC continues its work as a still relatively recently delegated commission of the Capital Regional District.

Supporting front-line service agencies via our grant program and overall annual budget is one of the Committee's main purposes. We were delighted this year to extend funding to the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society, the Umbrella Society and the Human Nature Counselling Society in support of their work with vulnerable young people in Greater Victoria.

It was a pleasure to welcome a series of guest speakers at our regular meetings and to host our second, now annual, VFCJC Open House at Victoria City Hall. Our members again valued this opportunity to connect with representatives from nearly two dozen service agencies in the region. We plan to meet-and-greet again in 2025.

We continued our multi-year campaign to secure stable funding for the Pacific Centre Family Resource Association's councillor Mia Golden in her work with the Mobile Youth Services Team. We wrote advocacy letters to the Premier and the Minister of Public Safety. We funded a persuasive [business case study](#) authored by Royal Roads University's Dr. Rebekah Nelems. And we prepared a [Times Colonist editorial](#) that, we believe, offered compelling arguments in support of MYST's critical work.

The Committee also tracked unfolding issues relating to the School Police Liaison Officer program through meeting discussions and a regularly updated [backgrounder](#). A panel session with representatives from MYST and the Saanich and Victoria police departments pointed out the rising tide of gang recruitment and sexploitation and argued that caring, compassionate police officers in school settings is critical.

On a sad note, we all grieved the sudden death of our [Adam Flint](#), a CRD appointee and long-term member of the VFCYJC. His keen spirit, collaborative skills, good grace and kind heart are deeply missed. It was an honour to join his many friends and family members at a memorial service that demonstrated he was a loved and special man.

I'll close by saying I'm deeply grateful to be in this position as we strive to make a meaningful difference for youth and families in Greater Victoria. Sincerest of thanks to my VFCYJC colleagues and I look forward to another year of meaningful work ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie-Térèse Little, PhD
Chair, Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee
Mayor of the District of Metchosin and CRD Vice-Chair

VICE-CHAIR'S REPORT



2024 marked another year of steadfast commitment to education and advocacy for the needs of youth and families in the region by the VFCYJC. Under the strong leadership of Chair Little and Vice Chair Flint, the committee benefitted from the extensive knowledge, collaboration, and dedication of its members.

In May, we faced an immense loss with the sudden passing of Vice Chair Adam Flint. A long-standing and valued member, Adam's contributions to the VFCYJC and the broader community were significant and deeply appreciated. In his absence, I have assumed the role of Vice Chair to support Chair Little, and I am grateful for the committee's trust and support in this position.

Throughout the past year, transitioning from committee member to Vice Chair, I have been continually inspired by the committee's unwavering dedication and collaborative spirit. The emotional challenges of our work are ever-present, yet our members consistently create an environment conducive to listening, learning, support, and connection to advance our mission.

I was particularly impressed by our advocacy for a sustainable future for the Mobile Youth Service Team (MYST) and our thorough examination of how different implementations of the School Liaison Officer program impacted youth across all three school districts. With each guest speaker and delegation, committee members diligently sought opportunities to support agencies through education, advocacy, and connection.

As we look forward to the upcoming year, we anticipate unforeseen challenges, especially for the youth and families we are dedicated to serving. However, I am confident that the committee will continue to leverage our privileges to amplify our advocacy efforts and strive for meaningful change.

Sincerely,

Kimberley Guiry

Vice-Chair, Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee
Councillor, City of Langford

2024 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

January

Annual General Meeting: Members welcomed back Marie-Terese Little (Metchosin), Adam Flint (View Royal) and Esther Patterson (Oak Bay) in re-elections as Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer respectively for 2024.

Returnee Sub-Committee chairs are Marcie McLean (Priorities/Grants), Bill McElroy (Capital Region Action Team) and Jeff Bateman (Communications/Website) with Highlands Councillor Rose Stanton stepping up to lead Youth and Family Matters.

The 2023 Annual Report was received and approved. Guest speaker Seth Recalma from the Moose Hide Campaign spoke of how this Indigenous-led grassroots initiative to engage men and boys in ending violence towards women and children has evolved into a nationwide movement. Five million moose hide pins have been distributed, and many Canadians wear them year-round or on weekly “Wear and Share Wednesdays.” Momentum is building for the annual Moose Hide Campaign Day on May 16.

At our regular meeting, Chair Little set the stage for another year of education and advocacy. The Committee voted unanimously to offer \$5k to the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) to help fund a business case cost/benefit analysis that would justify stable, long-term support and increased funding from the Province. All agreed that an encore open house for front-line service providers should go ahead later this year.

The Committee voted unanimously to fund the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) for a business case cost/benefit analysis that would justify stable, long-term support and increased funding from the Province.



MYST's Gord Magee and Mia Golden
(photo: VicPD True Blue podcast)

February

Caleigh Owen, a staff family lawyer at University of Victoria’s [The Law Centre](#), and recent graduate Megan Klymchuk discussed their experiences within the family justice system. They spoke of issues with the 2019 [Early Resolution & Case Management](#) model, in particular the challenge of identifying the degree coercion or manipulation is involved in intimate partner violence; additional training for police and judges is recommended. (See the [Jan. 2022 evaluation of this prototype program by a panel of BC family law authorities](#).) Flaws were identified in [Provincial Court of BC](#) procedures, including the lack of fillable PDF forms, plain-language guidelines and user-friendly sample forms and files. The pair also noted that the “best interests of the child” benchmark in the [BC Family Law Act](#) can be problematic due to high costs of private psychological testing. “In the system, youth don’t really have a say,” said Owen. “It’s about third parties making decisions on what is best for them and there is no one system the judiciary use for making that determination.”

Also on the agenda, Chair Little presented the [2024 VFCYJC Orientation](#); Youth & Family Matters Chair Rose Stanton shared the newly released [BC Adolescent Health Survey](#) based on surveys of 38,500 students aged 12-19 in BC’s 60 school districts; and members were encouraged to listen to a recent [Victoria PD True Blue Podcast](#) on the MYST program and read a [related memo](#) prepared for the VFCYJC by Const. Gord Magee.

April

Chair Little warmly welcomed three new CRD appointees: [Cheryl Chaytors](#), Director of Intervention Programs, [BGC South Vancouver Island](#); [Andrew Holeton](#), Director of Community Engagement & Impact, [Alliance to End Homelessness in Greater Victoria](#); and [Samantha Rapaport](#), Family Lawyer and Partner in the Victoria firm [Brown Henderson Melbye](#).

Roundtable discussion covered multiple topics raised by committee members, including the latest developments in the School Police Liaison Officer program (see [SD #61 FAQ](#) and comments from [Victoria PD Chief Del Manak](#); our [School Liaison Officer Background Paper – Summer/Fall 2023](#) will be revised to capture these updates and related recent motions from Oak Bay, Saanich and Victoria). The committee learned about a new [Lantzville treatment facility](#) for Indigenous youth that will offer culturally relevant detox and treatment services. Planning is underway for the VFCYJC’s second Open House, Wed. May 22 at Victoria City Hall.



May

Thanks were extended to all who attended our lively 2024 Open House, among them representatives from 20 Greater Victoria agencies and 15 of our own members. General agreement that the VFCYJC is well positioned to continue hosting these mix-and-mingle gatherings, perhaps next time in a more formal context where each attendee can provide activity updates.

Discussion at our monthly meeting focused on what role, if any, the VFCYJC might play in further conversations re: the School Police Liaison Officer program. We will go ahead with a solutions-oriented panel discussion. MYST's Mia Golden and Gord Magee updated us on deeply disturbing predatory activities targeting vulnerable local youth, in particular pedophiles operating online through social media. A VFCYJC-funded business case study rationalizing MYST team expansion and, critically, long-term, stable funding will be presented to the [BC Association of Chiefs of Police](#) this summer.



Adam Flint

The Committee awarded a grant to the [Victoria Youth Empowerment Society](#) (\$5,500 towards its 2024 Summer Opportunities Program).

Chair Little shared sad news of the sudden passing of Vice-Chair Adam Flint: “Adam was a fierce advocate for children and youth, and he was active on the committee since 2018 as our Town of View Royal appointee. He was kind, funny, thoughtful and hard-working, and his positive attitude will be missed. He was also an executive member of the Movember Campaign. Adam leaves behind two children and his wife Kyla. I would like to extend our condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.” ([A celebration of Adam’s life.](#))



June



The Minister of Children and Family Development, the Hon. Grace Lore, graciously shared an hour of her time with the committee for a Q&A and presentation titled Youth Justice Services: Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE). Youth aging out of care face severely heightened life challenges, and the SAJE program provides navigators, income assistance, housing and mental health support for 10,000 eligible BC teenagers and young adults.

Following Minister Lore’s talk, the committee tackled two motions: MYST advocacy continues with a request to the CRD Board of Directors to write Minister Farnworth given that just six months of renewed funding (until Oct. 1) has been provided to counsellor Mia Golden when long-term line-item commitment and additional staffing is required; and members Krista Loughton and Marcie McLean tabled, with unanimous committee approval, a motion that the Province and other BC enforcement authorities seek revisions to sections 152 and 153 of the Criminal Code to more effectively stop online sexual exploitation and grooming of children and youth. The motion concludes that “when children and youth are victims of sexual offences the sentencing is typically the minimum recommended. There should be an increase to the minimum or a recommendation that sentencing should lean to the maximum.”

The Hon. Grace Lore
(Photo: Victoria-Beacon Hill Constituency Office)

September

The Committee hosted a panel focused on issues impacting vulnerable youth in Greater Victoria. Saanich Police Inspector [Damian Kowalewich](#), Victoria/Esquimalt Police [Deputy Chief Constable Jamie McRae](#) and MYST’s [Mia Golden](#) and [Gord Magee](#) highlighted two evolving crises: [gang recruitment](#), always a deep concern in the region but now dramatically more frequent, organized and aimed at younger children; and [sextortion](#), in which young boys in particular are lured into sharing intimate images online and then subjected to shame-based blackmail (in at least [one tragic case](#) leading to suicide). Cybercrime experts are being employed by local police to investigate and stop online crime, we learned. The School Police Liaison Officer program (see our latest [SPLO Backgrounder Ver. 7 – Sept 25, 2024](#)) was again championed as a critical intervention in gang recruitment.

Inspector Kowalewich shared his [talking points](#) for inclusion in a panel summary the VFCYJC is preparing. The committee moved that an [op-ed](#) commending recent [Les Leyne](#) columns in support of the MYST team be prepared following a [disappointing funding update](#) from Minister Farnworth.

In other business, Langford Councillor [Kimberley Guiry](#) was unanimously elected as VFCYJC Vice Chair and warmly welcomed to the role by Chair Little. The Committee awarded grants to the [Human-Nature Counselling Society](#) (\$5.5k for its 2024 [New Roots](#) youth program) and the [Umbrella Society](#) (\$4,746 for its [Navigating Substance Use and Mental Health for Students](#) program).

October

The Times Colonist published the Committee’s Op Ed expressing strong support for the Mobile Youth Services Team — “The most vulnerable youth are about to lose their most valuable support team.” It was signed by Chair Little and written by the VFCYJC’s Communications Subcommittee.

Meeting guest Cathy Peters discussed the Be Amazing campaign. Her urgent message: “Organized crime and international syndicates operate freely in British Columbia. Drug and sex trafficking are lucrative and increasing with no deterrent. Currently, gang recruitment is occurring around the province. I am in touch with all 60 School Districts to warn them that youth are being aggressively targeted (online and in person).”



Cathy Peters

Her suggested next steps:

1. Funding/training for law enforcement to better enforce the federal Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act.
2. A provincial public awareness campaign.
3. A human trafficking task force in BC similar to those in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

(In June, the VFCYJC forwarded a motion to enforcement authorities seeking revisions to sections 152 and 153 of the Criminal Code to more effectively stop online sexual exploitation. Lt. Governor Janet Austin spoke at the UBCM conference last month about the establishment of the Human Trafficking Prevention Network of British Columbia.



November



Victoria Youth Empowerment Society Operations Director Kisae Petersen hosted an inspiring tour of its 533 Yates Street drop-in centre prior to this month's meeting, then joined us in the CRD boardroom to present the outcomes report from the VFCYJC grant that partially funded the YES Summer Opportunities Program. Hungry, cold, isolated and often desperate youth from across the region find safety and solace at YES, she told us. There they can access basic needs (shelter, food, clothing, hygiene), navigator services, life skills workshops, hot lunches and a relaxed, non-judgmental hang-out space. Newly established with assistance from the

Victoria Foundation is a food pantry stocked with donated dry goods and matched with food-prep training classes. (Independent youth under 19 often cannot access food bank services.) Donations are always welcome.

Capital Region Action Team's Bill McElroy reported out on a new ad hoc Westshore group working to help the Mobile Youth Services Team overcome still further heightened funding challenges following Westshore RCMP's decision to withdraw support for Regional Integrated Units given other localized initiatives. Treasurer Esther Patterson presented and received approval for the 2025 draft budget. The VFCYJC-funded MYST Policy Report (Sept. 26) will be circulated to a full range of provincial and other decision-makers thanks to a motion by Priorities/Grants Subcommittee Chair Marcie McLean. Chair Marie-Térèse Little welcomed first in-person attendance by two pending 2025 VFCYJC appointees, Colwood councillor Misty Olsen and Central Saanich Councillor Sarah Riddell. Special thanks was extended by Communications Subcommittee Chair Jeff Bateman to VFCYJC secretary Marnie Essery and the CRD's Sharon Orr for their exceptional work in delivering the committee's minutes and agendas.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1.126 Vic Family Court & Youth Justice Committee

Fiscal period January-December 2024

	2024 BOARD BUDGET	2024 JAN-DEC ACTUAL
<u>OPERATING COSTS:</u>		
Internal Allocation	316.00	315.96
Honoraria		-
Meeting Costs	8,000.00	5,689.13
Operating - Other Costs	-	391.00
Grants in aid - unspecified	48,781.00	-
Third Party Payments	1,500.00	21,046.00
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	58,597.00	27,442.09
TOTAL COSTS	58,597.00	27,442.09
Internal Recoveries	-	-
Recoveries - Other	-	-
OPERATING COSTS LESS INTERNAL RECOVERIES	58,597.00	27,442.09
<u>FUNDING SOURCES (REVENUE)</u>		
Balance C/F from Prior to Current year	(42,773.00)	(42,773.54)
Interest Income	-	(1,228.25)
Grants in Lieu of Taxes	(824.00)	(824.12)
Requisition	(15,000.00)	(15,000.01)
TOTAL REVENUE	(58,597.00)	(59,825.92)
(Surplus)Deficit	-	(32,383.83)

- Format subject to change.
- Fiscal year is January to December in alignment with all CRD services.

2024 BUDGET AND YEAR-END

Submitted by Treasurer Esther Paterson

1.126 Vic Family Court & Youth Justice Committee Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Budget

	2025 BOARD BUDGET
<u>OPERATING COSTS:</u>	
Internal Allocation	1,172.00
Honoraria	
Meeting Costs	8,160.00
Operating - Other Costs	-
Grants in aid - unspecified	40,861.00
Third Party Payments	1,500.00
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	51,693.00
TOTAL COSTS	51,693.00
Internal Recoveries	-
Recoveries - Other	-
OPERATING COSTS LESS INTERNAL RECOVERIES	51,693.00
<u>FUNDING SOURCES (REVENUE)</u>	
Balance C/F from Prior to Current year	(35,869.00)
Interest Income	-
Grants in Lieu of Taxes	(824.00)
Requisition	(15,000.00)
TOTAL REVENUE	(51,693.00)
(Surplus)Deficit	-

Draft

- Balance carry forward is an estimate at time of budgeting August 2024, will be updated to actual for final budget approval in March 2025.
- Grants in Lieu of Taxes is an estimate based on 2024 and will be update to actual for final budget approval in March 2025.
- Format subject to change.
- Fiscal year is January to December in alignment with all CRD services.

VFCYJC SUB-COMMITTEES

We ask that members join one of the sub-committees to assist in developing materials to bring forward to the main committee. Meetings may be held via email, at any appropriate venue, and chairs may incur expenses up to \$200 to facilitate meetings without advance approval. Chairs are encouraged to present a motion to the main committee for extraordinary expenses. Our goal is to make it easier for volunteers to meet while still maintaining fiscal accountability. The practice has been to try to reserve funding for work that supports youth and families while also supporting those who give freely of their time and expertise.

Capital Region Action Team for Sexually Exploited Youth (CRAT) advocates with expertise to address issues related to sexual exploitation, grooming, pimping, coercion, youth sex work and pornography.

2024: Bill McElroy (Chair)

Communications supports outgoing communications, website content, advocacy efforts, agenda creation, and maintenance of the Facebook and Twitter accounts.

2024: Jeff Bateman (Chair), Christine Lervold, Krista Loughton, Marcie McLean, Esther Paterson.

Court Watch coordinates Indigenous and regular Court House visits to observe and report on the circumstances for youth and families. **Inactive.**

Priorities/Grants reviews completed applications in conjunction with existing VFCYJC policies and makes a recommendation in the form of a proposed motion together with their rationale to the main committee for their consideration at a regular meeting.

2024: Marcie McLean (Chair), Sara Duncan, Marie-Terese Little, Esther Paterson, Rose Stanton.

Youth & Family Matters brings information to the main committee on Family Matters, Youth Matters and monitors the circumstances that youth and families encounter during separation, divorce, and custody arrangements as well as documenting hot button issues for youth and encourages youth involvement.

2024: Rose Stanton (Chair)

Capital Region Action Team

2024 was a challenging year for CRAT. Clearly, we have not recovered from COVID, as there has been significant turnover in representatives from agencies that work with youth, meaning that attendance at CRAT meetings has been less than ideal. We only met three times in 2024. There will be an increased effort to recruit new members to CRAT by contacting youth serving agencies and have them delegate a representative to CRAT. Additionally, exploitation and luring of youth has shifted to the internet, as more youth use social media, particularly during COVID.

Last year was the 25th anniversary of CRAT. One of the projects created by CRAT back in 1998 was the Mobile Youth Support Team (MYST). MYST consisted of a police officer and 3 or 4 youth workers, to support youth who were vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Over the years, the youth workers were reduced until there were none. The police officer was hired on an integrated basis, that is, each of the 13 municipalities contributed toward the salary of the MYST Officer. During 2024, a youth worker from Pacific Centre Family Services joined the team and things began to improve, until the funding for that position ran out, and it looked as if the MYST team would be back to one. By reducing the hours of the youth worker, the position continued until the end of 2024, even though it was on a part-time basis. This is a critical position for sexually exploited youth, as MYST works “where the rubber hits the road.”

Of greater concern, we found out late in November that the District of Central Saanich had decided to withdraw from all the Integrated Police services, including MYST, effective at the end of 2024, with no consultation with affected groups. As we tried to find out details of the impact of this decision, the West Shore RCMP announced it too was withdrawing from all the integrated units, including MYST, effective the end of 2025. Although the core municipalities of Oak Bay, Esquimalt, Victoria and Saanich have said they will continue funding the MYST position, will the taxpayers of those municipalities be willing to pay for a regional service? How will this work in reality? Will MYST be able to cross municipal boundaries to prevent the sexual exploitation of youth? Will a youth who lives in Oak Bay, but hangs around in Victoria, goes to a party in Central Saanich, buys drugs in Colwood and/or is taken by a groomer to Langford be helped by MYST? Or will the team have to stop at the borders of non-member municipalities? If so, this will be a giant step backwards, as MYST is the only preventative agency working to prevent the sexual exploitation of youth within the Capital Region. In fact, MYST is one of the few such agencies in all of Canada.

CRAT has moved forward with our plans for a graphic novel about youth sexual exploitation. It has now been completed under budget. We received legacy funding several years ago for this project and it is a relief to see it come to fruition. It will be handed out after presentations and give our youth attendees a meaningful, reader-friendly point of reference they can access in future.

We are unable to include a financial statement with this report, as our financial records are maintained by the Municipality of Oak Bay, and they have had a change in personnel. Unfortunately to date I have not had a chance to make contact and meet with its new Director of Financial Services.

Submitted by Bill McElroy
Chair, Capital Region Action Team
CRD Citizen Appointee to the VFCYJC



Communications

The Communications Sub-Committee is responsible for website content creation, agenda development, advocacy letter-writing, the annual report and updates to the VFCYJC's Facebook and X accounts.

In 2024, I was joined in this work by members Christine Lervold, Krista Loughton, Marcie McLean, Esther Paterson. Adam Flint, a long-term sub-committee member, former chair and VFCYJC webmaster, continued as a vital participant until his sad and sudden passing in the spring. His bright spirit, positivity, good cheer and skills are profoundly missed by us all at the VFCYJC.

The sub-committee supported the VFCYJC in its continuing advocacy on behalf of Greater Victoria's Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST). Of particular note, our team came together in October to collectively write a *Victoria Times Colonist* editorial not long after the Province declined to renew MYST funding. Its closing line sums our position up neatly: "Trusted relationships built through this specialized and high-functioning team cannot be lost due to an interruption of service."

The VFCYJC website continued to be routinely updated with fresh content arising from regular meetings. It remains the go-to source for grant applications, links to resources and reports, and key documents related to the committee's work. The website was hacked in the summer and all credit to Victoria's Honeycomb Webworks for getting it back online in short order.

On other fronts, we organized a panel discussion featuring members of MYST and the Saanich and Victoria police departments that focused on youth issues in Greater Victoria, including the School Police Liaison Officer program; we hosted a second annual open house at Victoria City Hall in June that allowed our members to meet with representatives from front-line service agencies; and we maintained a social media presence for a small audience of followers. Thanks again to VFCYJC Secretary Marnie Essery for regularly forwarding links for posting on Facebook and X.

Communications plays a role at VFCYJC Steering Committee meetings in developing agendas for upcoming regular meetings. These agendas are drafted on-screen during the meetings and forwarded to Ms. Essery and the CRD's Sharon Orr for final preparation. Agendas and minutes are now routinely posted on the CRD website at a [dedicated VFCYJC page](#).

In 2023, Communications took responsibility for booking speakers for regular meetings, thus renewing a VFCYJC tradition that ended when the pandemic broke out. Last year our featured guests were the Honourable Grace Lore, Minister of Children and Family Development; anti-human trafficking advocate Cathy Peters; and representatives from the Moose Hide Campaign and the University of Victoria's The Law Centre.

Thanks and much appreciation to my colleagues for their good work, support and initiatives.

Sincerely,

Jeff Bateman
Chair, Communications Sub-Committee
Councillor, District of Sooke

Priorities and Grants

Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee (VFC&YJC)

Priorities Sub-committee (Grants) 2024 Annual Report

Prepared by: Sub-committee chair, Marcie McLean

On February 09, 2022 VFC&YJC (Committee/ Commission) became a “Delegated Commission” of the Capital Regional District (CRD) through the CRD Board’s formal adoption & execution of Bylaw No. 4453.

Being a Delegated Commission by Bylaw No. 4453 provides the VFC&YJC all the administrative powers of the CRD Board which includes ability to provide assistance and thus, VFC&YJC is formally able to consider and provide granting funds generally to resource agencies or non-profit society's within the Greater Victoria area whose work supports children, youth and their families within the CRD pertaining to education and awareness on matters of reducing possibilities of them coming into contact with the Youth Criminal Justice system. The granting program is designed with small grants in mind and within VFC&YJC annual financial means with consideration of their required operating funds being their needed top priority.

Potential applicants can find the VFC&YJC [grant application under their website home page right side at: victoriacourt.ca](#)

The Priorities Sub-committee in 2024 consisted of the VFC&YJC Chair, treasurer, sub-committee Chair as well as at least 2 other VFC&YJC voting members who are not members of the executive for a total of 5 members, as per the VFC&YJC’s Constitution and Terms of Reference which they have held for over 60 years in 2 versions.

The Chair of the Sub-committee reviews all applications thoroughly for required completion and inclusion of required document copies before circulating the entire received application to the sub-committee for their review and consideration. Incomplete applications will not be circulated for consideration nor, if requested required information or documentation is not provided to the Sub-committee chair.

Through the Sub-committee review and their individual recommendation with their rationale, a recommendation with a brief written report is provided by the sub-committee chair to the main VFC&YJC for their consideration on a regular VFC&YJC scheduled meeting agenda.

The following are some of the current objectives’ examples of information to be provided within the Priorities (Grant) application:

1. Objectives

1.1 The statement of intended outcomes within the application will be used to assess success of the project to accomplish goals.

1.2 Applicant’s statement must demonstrate in some detail the services(s) that your proposal would provide for youth and families of the CRD that ties in with the mandate for VFC&YJC.

1.3 Applicant's statement must indicate how your proposal will help educate and bring awareness to youth and families living within the CRD about reducing risks and reducing potential involvement with the judicial court systems.

In 2024 the Priorities Sub-committee was composed of (VFC&YJC) Chair: Marie-Terese Little, Treasurer: Esther Paterson, Sub-committee Chair: Marcie McLean, as well as members Rose Stanton and, Sara Duncan. I wish to sincerely thank each of them for their care and diligence in their considerations and reviews of all applications received in 2024.

In 2024 the Sub-committee received 3 applications. The first application approved was from **Victoria Youth Empowerment Society (YES)** a BC registered society, in the amount of \$5,500.00 (their full request), towards their Summer Opportunities Program (SOP), funds provided for a youth program ages 13-18 years from within the CRD for months of June, July and August, weekdays, 4 hours a day. Providing opportunities with trained, experienced staff to engage in recreational activities/ outings and education in areas relevant to life skills and positive relationships with marginalized youth, that enhance a youth's future likelihood of making better choices in life, held within a safe supervised location in downtown Victoria where YES also provides their wrap-around services and referrals.

The Summer Opportunities Program(SOP) grant funding would also:

- *Facilitate connections between service providers & the broader community for youth & families in the CRD,
- *Help the Society leverage their resources in positive support of families and youth,
- *Continue to be a cost efficient program if the SOP continues to have the past few years of 120-200 youth participate,
- *The Society's identified goals and objectives appear to be relevant to VFC&YJC's mandate as they focus on prevention and diversion during the summer months in order to reduce youths' overall risks, thereby also reducing youth possibly becoming involved with street life and/or the judicial court system.

The second application approved by VFC&YJC was from the **Umbrella Society (US)** a registered society in BC with Federal Charitable Status legal name: Umbrella Society for Addictions and Mental Health, for their 101 Program for Navigating Substance Use and Mental Health for Students (within the CRD) in the amount of \$4,746.00 (their full request).

A few years ago the NDP government implemented BC provincial legislation directing high schools in BC to provide training in administration of Naloxone for students and teachers. This was confirmed by researching the Provincial website. The intent of the US project according to their senior grants adviser is to have peer workers provide substance use and mental health education and information in schools. The project would occur at various middle and high schools within the CRD, and the application indicated that it would **not be** reoccurring. The grant funds contributed to US are to administer approximately 40 presentations in 2024 to over 1,000 students, including providing Naloxone kits.

The US-101 Project is expected to be completed by Dec. 31, 2024 with the final 5 schools. US intends to monitor and evaluate after each school presentation school and, the required final brief written summary report to VFC&YJC on the project's outcomes in early 2025. In 2024, the US-101 Project received 62% of their funding from Island Health.

The third application approved was from the **Human Nature Counselling Society (HNCS)**, in the amount of \$5,500.00 (their full request) for their **New Roots Program**. The HNCS is a BC Registered Society and their application indicates they're a registered charity. The project is intended to be reoccurring and the proposed funds are for: Program planning and facilitating, equipment supplies, snacks and a celebratory dinner, site rental, temporary part-time wages for clinical supervision, and back & forth local travel expenses.

The applicant by email reply indicated that HNCS does not charge fees for this particular New Roots program. HNCS's Constitution indicates that the Society's purpose is to enhance the well-being of people and families across the life span through delivering accessible nature-based therapy services.

The target ages for the program is ages 13-16 in the Victoria/ Westshore areas who are struggling with anxiety and are motivated to transform their relationship with it including with their parents/ caregivers. It is a nature based mental health and wellness initiative, which provides age-appropriate psychological education and therapeutic interventions to help youth understand anxiety and effective strategies to manage it. The program is for 8 weeks of 2 hour sessions plus 2 sessions for parents/ caregivers of these 15 youth and 20 parents, and the program will take place with permit at the grounds of Government House on Rockland Ave.

The completion date for the program is expected to be Dec. 31, 2024. HNCS provides the families with a final evaluation report with additional referrals (if needed). HNCS will also be providing the required brief written summary final report of their project's outcomes to VFC&YJC in early 2025.

In 2024, the total amount of small grants approved and provided by VFC&YJC was \$15,746.00. Please note that total for grants would normally be outside of our usual budget scope.

In November 2024, seven VFC&YJC members took YES's Operations Manager, Kisae Petersen's invitation up for a site tour of YES's facility in down town Victoria, those members learned even more about their work, operations facility and youth needs. Thank you Kisae!

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie McLean
Councillor District of Highlands
VFC&YJC Priorities Sub-committee, Chair
VFC&YJC Communications Sub-committee member

APPENDIX

Agendas and Minutes 2024

Eight regularly scheduled meetings. All documentation posted on the [CRD website](#).

Documents and Related Links

- [Panel Discussion Notes: Greater Victoria Youth Issues and Youth-At-Risk](#) ~ Mia Golden, Youth and Family Counsellor, Mobile Youth Services Team; Constable Gord Magee, MYST/Victoria Police Department; Inspector Damian Kowalewich, Saanich Police Department; Deputy Chief Constable Jamie McRae, Victoria Police Department, Sept. 27, 2024
- [School Police Liaison Officer program backgrounder](#) ~ prepared by the VFCYJC Communications Sub-Committee; latest update: Sept. 27, 2024
- [Proposal to Increase Strategic Support and Budget for the Mobile Youth Services Team: Critical Status Report and Recommendations](#) ~ Dr. Rebeccah Nelems, Sept. 26, 2024
- [Youth Justice Services: Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment](#) ~ presentation by the Hon. Grace Lore, Minister of Children and Family Development (June 2024)
- [2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey](#) ~ released by the McCreary Centre Society, 2024

Motions Requiring Action

- **January 25, 2024**
Future Contracted Services for Youth and Family Information Projects
MOVED by K. Guiry, SECONDED by S. Duncan
The Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee spend up to \$5,000.00 for a contractor to help MYST to create a business plan, if wanted.
CARRIED
- **May 23, 2024**
School Police Liaison Officer Program Panel Discussion
MOVED by J. Bateman, SECONDED by M. McLean
That the Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee invite Nicole Duncan, Chair School District 61; Del Manak, Victoria Police Department; Dean Duthie, Saanich Police Department; Grace Lore, Minister of Children and Family Development; and the Mobile Youth Services Team to the June 27, 2024, Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee meeting.
CARRIED

Youth Empowerment Society Grant Application

MOVED by M. McLean, SECONDED by E. Paterson,

That the Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee approve the grant funding request of \$5,500.00 from the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society towards their 2024 Summer Opportunities Program.

CARRIED

• **June 27, 2024**

Advocacy Action Regarding Pedophilia and Online Grooming of Youth

MOVED by K. Loughton, SECONDED by M. McLean

That the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee requests that the Committee Chair, Mayor Marie-Terese Little, write to the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Mike Farnworth, and all of the MPs, MLAs, Police Chiefs and Police Boards, Superintendent Todd Preston, Westshore Detachment RCMP, BC Attorney General, Nikki Sharma, and Minister of Justice and Federal Attorney General Arif Virani, and Municipal Councils in the CRD, to encourage support to stop the online sexual exploitation and grooming of children and youth. The following list of legislative changes are recommended but are not exhaustive to fight against online sexual offenses against children and youth:

- 1. Add minor amendments to S.152 of the Criminal Code to specify online activity. The language does mention “indirectly” but the Crown often misses it and thus the language needs to be clear.*
- 2. Change to S.153 of the Criminal Code by replacing language regarding the person being in a position of trust or authority to be “any person.”*
- 3. When children and youth are victims of sexual offences the sentencing is typically the minimum recommended. There should be an increase to the minimum or a recommendation that sentencing should lean to the maximum.*

CARRIED

Mobile Youth Services Team Funding Request

MOVED by K. Loughton, SECONDED by T. Vanwell

That the Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee recommends the Governance Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board that the CRD Board Chair send an advocacy letter to the Province to encourage renewed support for the Pacific Centre Family Services Association’s Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) and its Crime Reduction and Exploitation Diversion (CRED) program, with consistent and sustainable funding for the MYST youth counsellor position in the very near future due to the critical and urgent work with vulnerable youth and their families within the CRD.

CARRIED

- **September 26, 2024**

- **Human Nature Counselling Society**

- MOVED by M. McLean, SECONDED by C. Day

- That the Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee support the Human Nature Counselling Society's grant request for the amount of \$5,500.00 for their 2024 New Roots program.*

- CARRIED

- **Umbrella Society**

- MOVED by M. McLean, SECONDED by K. Loughton

- That Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee support the Umbrella Society's request of \$4,746.00 to be applied to their 2024 project titled: Umbrella 101-Navigating Substance Use and Mental Health for Students*

- CARRIED

- **Times Colonist Op Ed**

- MOVED by K. Loughton, SECONDED by K. Guiry

- That the VFCYJC directs the Communications subcommittee to write an op ed for the Times Colonist regarding continued and sustained funding for M.Y.S.T.*

- CARRIED

- **November 27, 2024**

- **Distribution of MYST Business Case Report**

- MOVED by M. McLean, SECONDED by E. Paterson

- "That Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFC&YJC) directs the Chair to send a cover letter signed by the chair together with the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) Business Case Report (Report) dated September 2024 addressed to VFC&YJC prepared by Dr. Rebecca Nelems to each municipal Council within the Capital Regional District (CRD), the JDE Electoral Area(s), and the CRD Board for informational purposes as well as for their consideration of support for the Report's proposed plan(s) and its recommendations", and further, to please copy their letter(s) to:*

- *Premier of BC David Eby,*

- *Attorney General & Deputy Premier: Honourable Niki Sharma,*

- *Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General: Honourable Gary Begg,*

- *Minister of Health: Honourable Josie Osbourne,*

- *Minister of Children and Family Development: Honourable Grace Lore,*

- *Ministers of Education and Child Care: Honourable Lisa Beare,*

- *Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation: Honourable Christine Boyle,*

- *Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction: Honourable Sheila Malcolmson,*

- *Minister of State for Child Care and Children and Youth with Support needs: Honourable Jodie Wickens,*

- *Minister of State for Community Safety and Integrated Services: Honourable Terry Yung,*

- *Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee/Commission (for our records)*

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Members shall at all times conduct themselves with propriety, decency and respect and with the understanding that all members of the committee and guests are to be treated fairly with dignity, courtesy, and empathy.
2. Members understand that the meetings often discuss issues where confidential personal identifying information is included. Any such confidential information shall be treated as confidential and not discussed outside of the committee.
3. Members shall act in a manner that fulfills the mandate and the mission of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFCYJC);
4. Members shall respect the due process and the authority of the Chair, Vice-Chair or the Presiding Officer;
5. Members shall give fair consideration to diverse opinions and viewpoints;
6. Members shall demonstrate professionalism, transparency, timeliness, accountability in completing tasks undertaken by the committee;
7. Members shall strive to attend all meetings, sending apologies to the Chair for necessary absences.
8. Members will prepare for the meeting by reading the agenda, papers and any emails before the meeting.
9. Members if they need to clarify anything about the agenda, process or mandate contact the Chair.
10. Members agree to arrive on time for the meeting and strive to stay to the end.
11. Members are encouraged to fully participate in the meeting.
 - a. Listen to what others have to say and keep an open mind.
 - b. Contribute positively to the discussions.
 - c. Be concise
 - d. Be respectful of others' opinions and time
 - e. Minimize the side conversations
12. Members shall always have the best interests of the VFCYJC in mind.
13. Members shall draw attention to any potential conflicts of interest that may arise in the meeting.
14. Members shall fulfil any responsibilities assigned to them at the meeting and be prepared to report back on your progress at the next meeting.
15. Each member of the committee will receive a copy of this Code of Conduct.



While *Restorative Justice Victoria* is not a VFCYJC Sub-Committee, most restorative justice organizations in BC began with involvement of a Youth Justice Committee and we are particularly proud to support the one operating in the Greater Victoria region.

Each organization is unique in response to the needs identified in our communities. The VFCYJC was a contributor to RJV's evolution in Victoria – funding the production of video presentations, supporting youth-led initiatives, and facilitating volunteer education through the provision of resource materials.

Restorative Justice Victoria is very much a success story, overcoming the differences in the provision of police services to become an organization of accomplished, skilled volunteers who can be relied on to support better outcomes for all participants who access this 'accountable option' after a crime.

RJV's volunteers are asked to provide these better outcomes for increasingly complex cases throughout the CRD even while RJV funding remains critically insecure. No less than 15 resolutions about restorative justice were sent to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities between 1999 and 2018 calling on the provincial government to support restorative justice. While 11 of these resolutions were carried by the UBCM membership, substantial action is still required.

Learn about RJV's referral process at rjvictoria.com/referring-agencies.

“Skilled volunteers are welcome. As a small non-profit organization, RJV is only able to accomplish all that we do with the help of our volunteers. Whether you volunteer on cases, in the office, or at a fundraiser, you are part of a compassionate and dedicated group that is supporting justice in our community.”

Keep track of RJV activities in its monthly email newsletter, *available by request*.

RESOURCES

Anxiety BC

www.anxietybc.com

BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services

www.bcmhsus.ca

BC School Centered Mental Health Coalition

www.bcscmhcoalition.ca

Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance

www.caddra.ca

Capital Region Action Team

www.crat.ca

Chatterblock (Parenting Resources)

www.chatterblock.com

Disability Resource Centre

www.drcvictoria.com

Families for Addiction Recovery

www.farcanada.org

First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition

www.firstcallbc.org

Foundry (Health & Wellness Resources for Youth)

www.foundrybc.ca

Indigenous Perspectives Society

www.ipsociety.ca

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.

www.ictinc.ca

Island Sexual Health

250-812-9374

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

www.keltymentalhealth.ca

Kids Help Phone

www.kidshelpphone.ca

Ku'uus Aboriginal Crisis Services

1-800-588-8717

Mobile Youth Services Team (M.YST)

www.pacificcentrefamilyservices.org/crimereduction-exploitation-diversion

Need2 Suicide Prevention Information and Support

www.need2.ca

Office Representative for Children and Youth

www.rcybc.ca

Restorative Justice Victoria

www.rjvictoria.com

Trans Lifeline

1-877-330-6366

Two-Spirit, Trans, Queer & Allied Youth Drop-in and Family Support

250-475-7624

Vancouver Island Crisis Line

www.vicrisis.ca

Youth in BC - Crisis Intervention Services

www.youthinbc.com

Youthspace

Online chat for youth/young adults to age 30
6 – 11 p.m. daily. Texting support 778-783-8565



victoriafamilycourt.ca

