



March 8, 2024

Attention: The Honourable Niki Sharma, Attorney General

Attached please find the 2023 Annual Report of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee as per the requirement under Capital Regional District Bylaw No. 4553 (2022) to report out annually to the Attorney General and local governments within Greater Victoria.

Established in 1966 under the BC Provincial Court Act, expanded under the Federal Youth Criminal Justice Act and now a delegated CRD commission, the VFCYJC is uniquely positioned to connect regional and municipal decision-makers with frontline service providers. Our voting members are elected representatives from the CRD's 13 municipalities and three school districts as well as CRD citizen appointees.

Highlights from the report:

- * Eight regular VFCYJC meetings and eight steering committee meetings*
- * Approval of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan*
- * First annual Open House allowing members to meet with service providers*
- * Grants awarded to the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society and Cornerstone Youth Society*
- * Advocacy in support of the Pacific Centre Family Services Association's Crime Reduction & Exploitation Diversion (CRED) program in association with the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST)*
- * Presentations by the Hon. Mitzi Dean, SD #61 Chair Nicole Duncan, the Village Initiative's Cindy Andrew and University of British Columbia researcher Bill Warburton.*

As I trust the report demonstrates, the VFCYJC remains a relevant, meaningful body dedicated to educating and advocating in support of the region's most vulnerable young people. Please visit our [website](#) to learn more.

Sincerely,

Marie-Terese Little
Chairperson, VFCYJC
Mayor, District of Metchosin

cc CRD Municipal Governments
cc School Districts in Greater Victoria



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Presented February, 2024



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VFCYJC Code of Conduct	2
2023 VFCYJC Membership List	3
Three-Year Strategic Plan 2023-2026	4
Chair’s Report	5
Vice-Chair’s Report	6
2023 Year-In-Review	7
Financial Statement	9
2023 to 2024 Budget	10
Sub-committees Report	11
Priorities Sub-Committee Report	12
Communications Sub-Committee Report	14
Capital Region Action Team	15
Correspondence	16
Restorative Justice Victoria	20
BC Resource Directory	21

Supporting Documents

An archive of Annual Reports from the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFCYJC) and a regularly updated wealth of supporting documents, resources and links to relevant organizations in the Greater Victoria region can be found at the VFCYJC website. victoriafamilycourt.ca

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 Nuuchahnulth 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.

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 & Youth Justice (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 have the best interests of the VFCYJC in mind at all times.
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.



2023 VFCYJC MEMBERSHIP LIST

Marie-Terese Little, Chair and Mayor, District of Metchosin
Adam Flint, Vice-Chair and Citizen Representative, Town of View Royal
Cynthia Day, Past Chair, Youth & Family Matters Sub-Committee Chair and Councillor, City of Colwood
Bill McElroy, Treasurer, CRD Appointee and Capital Region Action Team on Sexually Exploited Youth
Marcie McLean, Priorities Sub-Committee and Chair, Councillor, District of Highlands
Jeff Bateman, Communications Sub-Committee Chair, Councillor, District of Sooke
Sara Duncan, Councillor, Town of Sidney (alternate)
Kimberley Guiry, Councillor, City of Langford
Kim Jordison, Councillor, City of Colwood (alternate)
Krista Loughton, Councillor, City of Victoria
Ron Mattson, Councillor, Town of View Royal
Jack McClintock, Councillor, District of North Saanich
Terri O'Keefe, Councillor, Town of Sidney
Esther Paterson, Councillor, District of Oak Bay
Jim Rondeau, District of Central Saanich appointee (alternate)
Darlene Rotchford, Councillor, Township of Esquimalt
Rose Stanton, Councillor, District of Highlands (alternate)
Celia Stock, Councillor, District of North Saanich (alternate)
Mena Westhaver, Councillor, District of Saanich
Corey Wood, District of Central Saanich (appointee from District of Central Saanich Police Board)

School District Representatives

Cendra Beaton, Trustee, School District #62 (alternate)
Karin Kwan, Trustee, School District #61
Nola Silzer, Trustee, School District #63
Trudy Spiller, Trustee, School District #62
Teri Vanwell, Trustee, SD #63 (alternate)

VFCYJC Secretary

Marnie Essery

Capital Region District Staff Liaison

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

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026

The VFCYJC reviewed the Strategic Plan in 2023 and has adopted the following Plan for 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, and raise 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



As Chair of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFCYJ), it is my honour to present the annual report for 2023.

As a delegated commission of the Capital Regional District (CRD) we continue to work towards our 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.

In brief, our goals are two-fold: To educate and to advocate.

To educate by providing a safe space within which regional decision makers and leaders can meet and learn from those doing the frontline work and take these lessons home to their own councils, service providers and local contexts.

To advocate for service agencies as they work on behalf of families and children throughout the CRD.

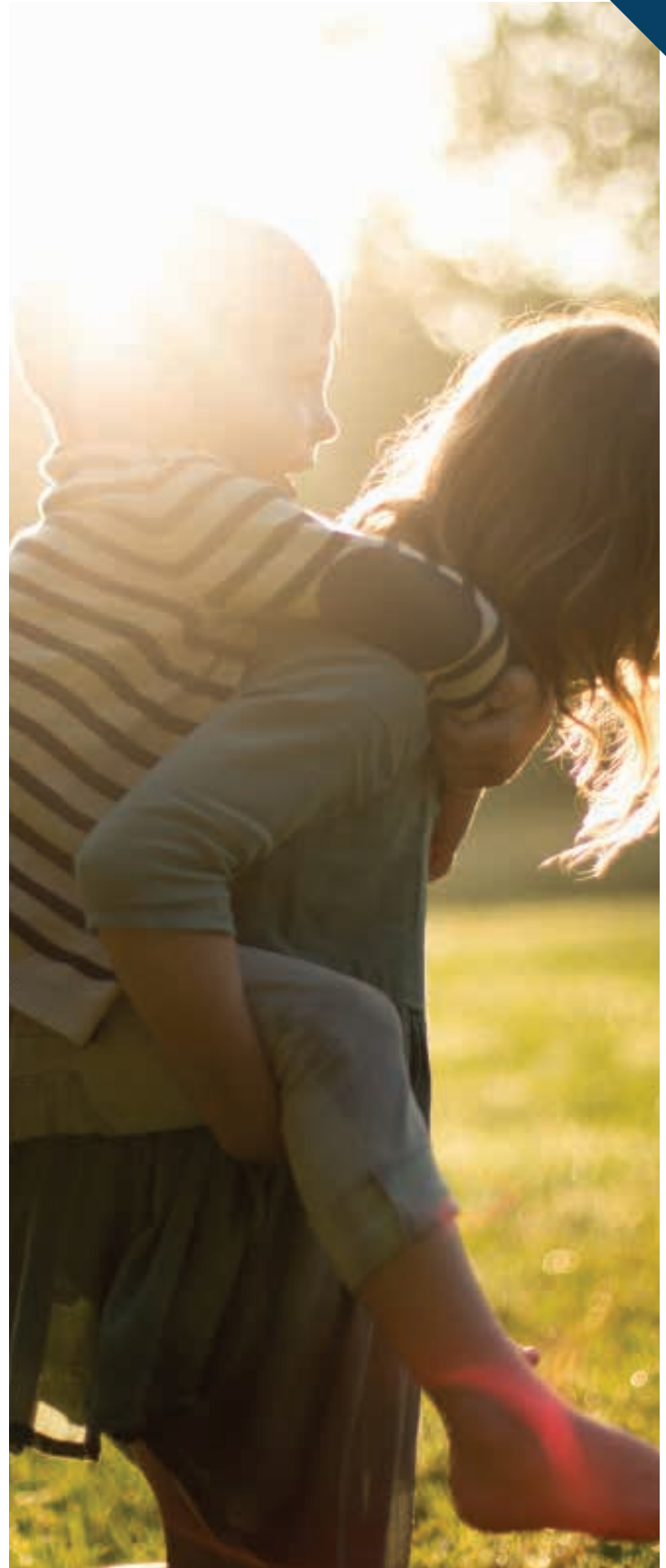
This year we have refreshed our sub-committees. The Grants and Priorities Sub-Committee has been particularly active and aims to support initiatives that will enhance the quality of public education and youth advocacy. We continue to implement the “Experience Matrix” to recruit future committee members with experience in education, health, probation or welfare. A very successful reception was held to engage front-line service agencies and to remind them of the committee’s role and encourage their presence at future meetings.

Thank you for your support this year and in the months ahead. I look forward to working with all the Commissioners, staff and the CRD, to demonstrate the VFCYJC’s renewed relevance and commitment to the region’s young people and their families.

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



2023 was an interesting year! Lots of things happening for me personally, and it was inspiring to see my fellow VFCYJC members so willing to carry the work of the committee. Without the help of Marie-Térèse Little, Esther Paterson, Marcie McLean, Marnie Essery and Jeff Bateman, the VFCYJC simply wouldn't continue on.

We have a wealth of new members this year, with new people coming in for all over the region. It is exciting to see an increase in interest for the work that we do and I look forward to seeing the great things that are set to come over the next few years.

As Marie-Térèse stated, our two main goals are to educate and to advocate. To me, the real benefit of the committee is that education piece. Being able to hear from and learn from those of you on the front-lines is incredible, and to bring that back to our organizations and councils is vital to us being able to advocate on their behalf.

We hope to receive many applications this year for our grants, much thank you to Marcie McLean for all of her work on the Priorities Sub-Committee!

Communications is a key role of what we do here. Sharing the good work accomplished in our community happens daily via our social media channels. Without the support of Jeff Bateman, who diligently makes these posts, we would not have near the presence that we have.

Our transition back to in-person meetings has been very welcome, there is so much more to be shared and appreciated when we are brought together.

Heres to a fantastic 2024!

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Flint

Vice Chair, Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee



2023 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

January

New and returning members were welcomed to the Annual General Meeting by Chair Marie-Terese Little and Vice-Chair Adam Flint; both were returned to these positions for 2023 during the AGM election. Revised versions of the VFCYJC Terms of Reference and Constitution were adopted, the annual budget was approved and the 2022 Annual Report received. The Capital Regional District's Steve Carey shared a power point on the background of the VFCYJC and its new status as a designated CRD commission.

February

Chair Little presented an orientation for new and returning VFCYJC appointees. A reminder was shared that trainings offered by Victoria's Indigenous Perspectives Society are available at no charge to committee members. The Committee extended its appreciation for Bill McElroy's long-term role as treasurer and welcomed Esther Paterson to the role effective in June.

April

A new three-year Strategic Plan (2023-2026) that strongly reaffirmed the previous plan was approved by the Committee. Restorative Justice Victoria's Gillian Lindquist and the Mobile Youth Service Team's Mia Golden and Gord Magee provided updates on their respective organizations; each noted a marked increase in sexualized violence and gang activity in Greater Victoria.

May

The VFCYJC data base of Greater Victoria service providers and resource agencies was fully updated. A \$5.3k grant was awarded to the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society for its 2023 Summer Opportunities program.

June

A \$3k grant was approved for the 2023 Wellness Wednesday program run by the Cornerstone Youth Society (aka Sanctuary Youth Centre). Representatives from 13 resource organizations and three law-enforcement agencies attended the VFCYJC Open House, held June 13 at Victoria City Hall. This enjoyable meet-and-greet introduced VFCYJC members to a wide range of local heroes delivering essential services to young people and their families in Greater Victoria.

September

The Committee welcomed new appointees Karin Kwan (Vice-Chair, SD #61) and Corey Wood (District of Central Saanich Police Board). MYST's Mia Golden and Gord Magee spoke about the daunting new South Island challenge posed by gang recruiters from the Lower Mainland. SD #61 Chair Nicole Duncan addressed the school board's decision regarding the School Police Liaison Officer Program (see VFCYJC background). Members were reintroduced to the Qualification Matrix (Fillable), which identifies the skill sets and interests ideal for committee members and their alternates.



October

The Hon. Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development, former Executive Director of the Pacific Centre Family Services Association and a VFCYJC member herself (2008-17), highlighted our multi-jurisdictional role in supporting service providers and the region's most vulnerable young people. "Your work is needed, recognized and appreciated," she said. UBC-affiliated researcher/economist Bill Warburton, another VFCYJC alumnus, shared a powerpoint presentation on his recent co-authored study identifying high-school graduation as a critical factor in healthy, happy adult lives. The data clearly shows that investment in strategic upstream intervention for young people falling behind can have dramatic implications for BC's social, health and youth justice systems. Capital Region Action Team's long-time lead Bill McElroy delivered a 25th anniversary organizational update that included news of a refreshed website and an ongoing commitment to raising awareness about child and youth sexual exploitation in Greater Victoria.

November

Julie-Anne Hunter, ED of the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society, reported out on the impacts of this year's VFCYJC grant in support of the Summer Opportunities Program; 143 young people were welcomed off the street for counselling, group activities, life-skills training and healthy lunches and snacks. The Village Initiative's Cindy Andrew provided a powerpoint overview of this growing inter-disciplinary network of 40 organizations, each of which recognize that children, youth and families in the Sooke/West Shore region are best served through "an all-hands-on-deck approach – a Village." She discussed TVI's new Trent's Trajectory infographic charting the ROI on upstream intervention; the campaign to bring a Foundry BC youth counselling centre to Langford (with affiliated outreach to Sooke and Port Renfrew); and other TVI priorities. A renewed MYST advocacy letter calling for steady, long-term funding and additional councillor/officer teams has been sent to Solicitor General Mike Farnworth; and the committee's X feed is operational again after technical difficulties, with posts again keeping pace with those on Facebook.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Fiscal period January-December 2023

	2023 BOARD BUDGET	2023 JAN-DEC ACTUAL
<u>OPERATING COSTS:</u>		
Internal Allocation	321.00	321.00
Honoraria		-
Meeting Costs	5,450.00	6,065.27
Operating - Other Costs	-	-
Grants in aid - unspecified	48,354.00	
Third Party Payments	1,500.00	8,300.00
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	55,625.00	14,686.27
TOTAL COSTS	55,625.00	14,686.27
Internal Recoveries	-	-
Recoveries - Other	-	-
OPERATING COSTS LESS INTERNAL RECOVERIES	55,625.00	14,686.27
<u>FUNDING SOURCES (REVENUE)</u>		
Balance C/F from Prior to Current year	(39,828.00)	(39,827.50)
Interest Income	-	(1,942.58)
Grants in Lieu of Taxes	(797.00)	(796.12)
Requisition	(15,000.00)	(15,000.01)
TOTAL REVENUE	(55,625.00)	(57,566.21)
(Surplus)Deficit	-	(42,879.94)

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

2024 BUDGET AND 5-YEAR PLAN

1.126 Vic Family Court & Youth Justice Committee			BUDGET REQUEST			
	2023 BOARD BUDGET	2023 ESTIMATED ACTUAL	2024 CORE BUDGET	2024 ONGOING	2024 ONE-TIME	2024 TOTAL
OPERATING COSTS:						
Internal Allocation	321	321	316	-	-	316
Meeting Costs	5,450	8,000	8,000	-	-	8,000
Third Party Payments	49,854	9,800	7,481	-	38,946	46,427
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	55,625	18,121	15,797	-	38,946	54,743
*Percentage Increase		-67.4%	-71.60%			-1.59%
FUNDING SOURCES (REVENUE)						
Estimated balance C/F from current to Next year	-	38,946	-	-	-	-
Balance C/F from Prior to Current year	(39,828)	(39,828)	-	-	(38,946)	(38,946)
Interest income	-	(1,442)	-	-	-	-
Management Fee Offset	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grants in Lieu of Taxes	(797)	(797)	(797)	-	-	(797)
TOTAL REVENUE	(40,625)	(3,121)	(797)	-	(38,946)	(39,743)
REQUISITION	(15,000)	(15,001)	(15,000)	-	-	(15,000)
*Percentage Increase		0.0%	0.00%			0.00%

1.126 Vic Family Court & Youth Justice Committee	FUTURE PROJECTIONS			
	2025 TOTAL	2026 TOTAL	2027 TOTAL	2028 TOTAL
OPERATING COSTS:				
Internal Allocation	322	329	335	342
Meeting Costs	8,160	8,323	8,489	8,659
Third Party Payments	7,315	7,145	6,973	6,796
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	15,797	15,797	15,797	15,797
*Percentage Increase	-71.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
FUNDING SOURCES (REVENUE)				
Estimated balance C/F from current to Next year	-	-	-	-
Balance C/F from Prior to Current year	-	-	-	-
Interest income	-	-	-	-
Management Fee Offset	-	-	-	-
Grants in Lieu of Taxes	(797)	(797)	(797)	(797)
TOTAL REVENUE	(797)	(797)	(797)	(797)
REQUISITION	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)
*Percentage Increase	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

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.

Priorities 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.

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

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.

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

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



PRIORITIES SUB-COMMITTEE (GRANTS) REPORT

All fully completed Applications will be reviewed by the Priorities Sub-Committee. The Chair will be responsible for inquiries and clarifications, and will circulate relevant information back to sub-committee members electronically. Through their considerations the sub-committee will provide their recommendation for each application as well as, their rationale for each qualifying application to the sub-committee Chair who will prepare a proposed resolution with a brief written report to the main Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFCYJC) for their considerations and their vote at a regular scheduled meeting.

The following are some of the current objectives' 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 service(s) that your proposal would provide for youth and families of the CRD that ties in with the mandate for VFCYJC.
- 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.

The Priorities Sub-Committee for 2023 was composed of (VFCYJC) Chair: Marie-Terese Little, Treasurer: Esther Paterson, sub-committee Chair: Marcie McLean, and members Rose Stanton, and Sara Duncan. Current policy is that there should be 5 sub-committee members including the Chair of VFCYJC and its Treasurer.

In 2023 the sub-committee reviewed 3 applications, one of which was not supported for a grant.

The first application approved was from the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society (YES) in the amount of \$5,300.00 (their full request) towards their Summer Opportunities Program (SOP) which provided funds for a youth program (ages 13-18 from within the Capital Regional District) for the months of June, July and August, weekdays for 4 hours a day providing opportunities with trained, experienced staff to engage in recreational activities/outings and education in a number of areas relevant to life skills 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 can provide wrap-around services.

The SOP grant funding would also:

- Facilitate connections between service providers and the broader community for youth and families in the Capital Regional District,
- Help the Society leverage their resources in positive support of families and youth,
- Continue to be a cost efficient program if the Summer Opportunities Program has the past numbers of 120-200 youth participate,
- The Society's identified goals and objectives appeared to be relevant to the VFCYJC mandate as they focus on prevention and diversion during the summer months in order to reduce youths' overall risks, thereby also reducing the risks of youth possibly becoming involved with the judicial court system.

The second application approved was from Cornerstone Youth Society also known as Sanctuary Youth

Centre (SYC) for their proposed Wellness Wednesday Program (WWP) held on Wednesdays for 15 youth participants (ages 14-22 from within the Capital Regional District) in the amount of \$3,000.00 (which was not their full requested amount) towards mental health and skills training and curriculum materials.

Brief background from their application: Sanctuary Youth Centre (Sanctuary) serves youth aged 14-22 years who are actively seeking to exit hard drug usage and/or street life. Sanctuary has established a program called Wellness Wednesday Program (WWP), for 1 day a week on Wednesdays for up to 5 hours those days. To engage and mentor youth with outdoor recreational activities and education within a safe supportive supervised environment for street engaged youth providing opportunities for life skills and mental health and training skills curriculum, developing healthy relationships and lessening risky behavior and develop conflict resolution skills, potentially reducing involvement with the judicial court system, which appears to be relevant to the VFCYJC Mandate.

The Wellness Wednesday Program (WWP) also mentors, builds and reinforces protective factors against delinquency, lessening risky behavior and emphasizing skills for resiliency and coping, including conflict resolution skills. The WWP is intended to be a recurring program for the foreseeable future.

The sub-committee Chair sincerely acknowledges the time and efforts that the sub-committee members provided to the VFCYJC in reviewing grant application materials, their questions and thoughtful considerations in their recommendations with their rationales put forward to the main committee for their considerations and decisions through reports from the sub-committee Chair. Thank you!

The sub-committee chair also follows-up as needed in writing with applicants of approved applications if they have not complied with the Application's Terms and Conditions of Funding within the specified timeframe.

Information on VFCYJC Priorities/Grant application can be found at: victoriafamilycourt.ca

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie McLean, Priorities Sub-Committee Chair, and Councillor District of Highlands



COMMUNICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

www.victoriafamilycourt.ca | www.facebook.com/vfamcourt | www.twitter.com/vfamcourt

Communications is responsible for website maintenance and content creation, advocacy letter-writing, agenda creation and regular updates of the VFCYJC's Facebook and X accounts. In 2023, the sub-committee was comprised of myself, Darlene Rotchford, Adam Flint and Krista Loughton.

A prime focus was continuing advocacy on behalf of Greater Victoria's Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST). Following up last year's campaign that led to Minister Farnworth's announcement in the spring of one-year funding, the sub-committee sent additional letters of thanks for this action (May) along with a renewed request (November) for stable, long-term funding and additional councillor/police officer teams to intervene with a growing number of Greater Victoria youth in crisis. Advocacy also included in-person discussion by Chair Little and Councillors Loughton and Rotchford with Ministers Mitzi Dean and Grace Lore.

For the first time, the VFCYJC website is being routinely updated with fresh content arising from regular meetings. Grant opportunities are now highlighted prominently on the site's home page along with easy access to the application form. The Community Resources and Reports page has been extensively revised with additional organizational contact information and links to new reports. The website's Members Area is refreshed with agendas as they're released.

Social media posts continue on a semi-regular basis for a small audience of followers. Facebook posts have been consistent. Technical difficulties plagued the Twitter (now X) feed for some months however the problem has been resolved and tweets are again on track. Thanks again this year to VFCYJC Secretary Marnie Essery for regularly forwarding links to articles and other noteworthy items for posting on these pages.

Communications plays a role at VFCYJC Steering Committee meetings in developing agendas for upcoming regular meetings. These draft agendas are prepared on-screen and forwarded to Ms. Essery for final preparation and circulation to the committee.

In 2023, Communications took responsibility for booking speakers for regular meetings, thus renewing a VFCYJC tradition that ended when the pandemic broke out. School District #62 Chair Nicole Duncan (addressing the School Police Liaison Program), UBC researcher Bill Warburton and The Village Initiative's Cindy Andrew were featured guests this year.

Thanks to my colleagues for their support, interest and good work.

Sincerely,

Jeff Bateman

Communications Sub-Committee Chair



CAPITAL REGION ACTION TEAM REPORT

2023 marks the 25th Anniversary of the Capital Region Action Team for Sexually Exploited Youth. It was formed as a result of the “Kiddie Stroll”, where underaged youth were selling themselves quite openly and visibly on the streets in Victoria. This created demands that the City do something about the issue. We have come a long way, but unfortunately, the issue of the sexual exploitation of children and youth has not gone away. The big change in the past 25 years is that it has moved from the streets to the internet. There is also an increase in gang involvement in the exploitation of our community’s youth.

There have been many challenges in 2023. Covid has meant a turnover of staff in many of the agencies that work with youth, and in many cases replacements have not been named. The Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee was restructured and in the process, there was some confusion about where CRAT would fit into the new structure. All our meetings were conducted via Google Meet, and we only met 4 times during the year, down from our usual 5. In 2024, we expect to meet 4 times per year.

One other complicating factor this year has been our website. For some reason, we were not notified that our crat.ca website was up for renewal. We found out only when we were notified that someone else had secured the website, and was trying to sell it for \$5,000! We did not buy it, but instead worked with our computer developer to secure a new website, which is capitalregionactionteam.ca. We have now transitioned all our material to the new website, and are just working on the details to keep it updated.



Over the summer, a team of 3 people met to update our purposes. At the end of this process, it was decided that our purpose would remain the same: raise awareness of the issue of the sexual exploitation of children and youth, educate youth about the issue and identify gaps in services for youth who have been or might become sexually exploited. We will monitor how we fit in with the new structure of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee and review our structure toward the end of 2024.

CRAT is in a healthy financial position, with \$13,693 in its account. It should be noted that CRAT received a legacy in 2010 of \$12,000 in order to develop a graphic novel on the issue of the sexual exploitation of youth. We have been moving forward with this project and hope to have it completed by the fall of 2024.

In the past, we brought over Taking Care of Ourselves, Taking Care of Others (tco2) every year to put on interactive presentations to school children, mainly at middle schools. We have not done this for 3 years due to Covid and also because of some concerns about the quality of the presentations. This issue will be re-examined in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill McElroy
CRAT Chair





May 5, 2023

The Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Dear Deputy Premier Farnworth,

On behalf of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee, I would like to sincerely thank you and your staff for securing one-time funding last month to enable another year of essential work by the Pacific Centre Family Services Association's Crime Reduction & Exploitation Diversion (CRED) program in association with Greater Victoria's Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST).

CRED's Mia Golden and her MYST partner, Constable Gord Magee from the Victoria Police Department, have told the VFCYJC in recent months that the crisis continues to escalate alarmingly. As the only two-person CRED/MYST team in the region, the pair are currently working on 150+ active case files involving children and teenagers at severe risk of exploitation, homelessness, sexualized violence, drug addiction and gang recruitment.

Ms. Golden noted at our April 27 meeting that she's seen an influx of gang representatives from the lower mainland seeking new members in Greater Victoria. The tide of violence on our streets is rising and online exploitation is increasingly normalized, she said. Young victims are experiencing trauma, including suicidal ideation. Even more disturbingly, the perpetrators themselves are often very young themselves.

VFCYJC members, who include municipal councillors, school district trustees and Capital Regional District appointees, recognize the complexity of these issues and applaud the response by all orders of government, your Ministry and Greater Victoria Integrated Police Units very much included.

This said, we wish to echo our original advocacy letter of Oct. 7, 2022 (which was supported by the CRD Board of Directors and municipal councils in Metchosin, Colwood and Sooke) by re-stating the following:

- * **the critical need for stable, long-term funding for CRED/MYST;**
- * **the extension of MYST police officer postings to five years given the extended period required for officers to deliver the unique skills required to work with vulnerable youth; and**
- * **the creation of two additional CRED/MYST teams in Greater Victoria.**

On this latter subject, Const. Magee told us at a recent VFCYJC meeting that he believes 24/7 MYST service is required given the heavy case load of at-risk children, the necessary work required with parents and families, and the critical upstream intervention needed within the school system. This round-the-clock effort would be possible if two additional councillor/police officer MYST teams were established, making three in all.

Sincerely,

Marie-Terese Little,
Chair, Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee
<https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca>

cc Regional Governance Council - Integrated Police Units
cc Paula Kully, Executive Assistant, Oak Bay Police Department (pkully@oakbaypolice.org)
cc Kevin Murdoch, Co-Chair, RGU-IPU ("Kevin Murdoch" <kmurdoch@crd.bc.ca>)
cc Premier David Eby
cc Hon. Niki Sharma, Attorney General
cc Hon. Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
cc Mitzi Dean, Minister of Child and Family Development
cc CRD Chair Colin Plant
cc CRD Vice Chair Maja Tait
cc Liz Nelson, Executive Director, Pacific Centre Family Services Association
cc CRD Municipalities
cc SD#61, SD#62, SD#63, SD#93



November 20, 2023

The Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Dear Deputy Premier Farnworth,

On behalf of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee, I would again like to sincerely thank you and your staff for securing funding earlier this year to enable another year of essential work by the Pacific Centre Family Services Association's Crime Reduction & Exploitation Diversion (CRED) program in association with Greater Victoria's Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST).

This said, we wish to echo our original advocacy letter of Oct. 7, 2022 (which was supported with motions from the CRD Board of Directors and municipal councils in Metchosin, Colwood and Sooke) by re-stating the following:

- * The critical need for stable, long-term funding for CRED/MYST;**
- * The extension of MYST police officer postings to five years given the extended period required for officers to deliver the unique skills required to work with vulnerable youth; and**
- * The creation of two additional CRED/MYST teams in Greater Victoria to deal with the rising case load.**

We have continued to hear this year from CRED's Mia Golden and her MYST partner, Constable Gord Magee from the Victoria Police Department. As the only two-person CRED/MYST team in the region, the pair continue to handle 150+ active case files involving children and teenagers at severe risk of exploitation, homelessness, sexualized violence, drug addiction and gang recruitment.

Ms. Golden noted at our Sept. 25 meeting that gang representatives from the lower mainland continue to recruit new members in Greater Victoria. These gangs include Glory Boys, Brothers' Keeper and Red Scorpion. The tide of violence on our streets is rising and online exploitation is increasingly normalized, she said. Young victims are experiencing trauma, including suicidal ideation. Even more disturbingly, the perpetrators themselves are often very young themselves.

VFCYJC members, who include municipal councillors, school district trustees and Capital Regional District appointees, recognize the complexity of these issues and applaud the response by all orders of government, your Ministry and Greater Victoria Integrated Police Units very much included.

On this latter subject, Const. Magee told us at a recent VFCYJC meeting that he believes 24/7 MYST service is required given the heavy case load of at-risk children, the necessary work required with parents and families, and the critical upstream intervention needed within the school system.

This round-the-clock effort would be possible if two additional councillor/police officer MYST teams were established, making three in all.

Sincerely,

Marie-Terese Little,
Chair, Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee
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cc Regional Governance Council - Integrated Police Units
cc Kevin Murdoch, Co-Chair, RGU-IPU
cc Paula Kully, Executive Assistant, Oak Bay Police Department
cc Premier David Eby
cc Hon. Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development
cc Hon. Grace Lore, Minister of State for Child Care
cc Hon. Niki Sharma, Attorney General
cc Hon. Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
cc Liz Nelson, Executive Director, Pacific Centre Family Services Association
cc CRD Chair Colin Plant
cc CRD Vice Chair Maja Tait
cc CRD Municipalities
cc SD#61, SD#62, SD#63, SD#93
cc Sharon Orr, Senior Committee Clerk, Legislative Services, CRD

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE VICTORIA

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.



BC RESOURCES DIRECTORY

Anxiety BC

www.anxietybc.com

BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services

www.bcmhsus.ca

Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance

www.caddra.ca

Chatterblock (Parenting Resources)

www.chatterblock.com

Dr. Ross Greene, Collaborative Communication

www.drrossgreene.com

Families for Addiction Recovery

www.farcana.org

Foundry (Health & Wellness Resources for Youth)

www.foundrybc.ca

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

www.keltymentalhealth.ca

Kids Help Phone

www.kidshelpphone.ca

Need2

Suicide Prevention Information and Support

www.need2.ca

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

Island Sexual Health

Text line for youth with sexual health questions and concerns.

250-812-9374

First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition

www.firstcallbc.org

Advance the interests of children and youth through public education, community mobilization and public policy advocacy.

BC School Centred Mental Health Coalition

www.bcscmhcoalition.ca

Office Representative for Children and Youth

www.rcybc.ca

Serves children, youth and families who need help dealing with the child-serving system.

Disability Resource Centre

www.drcvictoria.com

Indigenous Perspectives Society

www.ipsociety.ca

Offerings include Cultural Perspectives Training and Gladue Report Writing.

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc.

www.ictinc.ca

Crisis and Trauma Resources Institute – Canada

ca.ctrinstitute.com

Training and resources for mental health, counselling skills and violence prevention.

Ku'uus Aboriginal Crisis Services

1-800-588-8717

Capital Region Action Team

www.crat.ca

Mobile Youth Services Team (M.Y.S.T.)

www.pacificcentrefamilyservices.org/crime-reduction-exploitation-diversion

Restorative Justice Victoria

www.rjvictoria.com



victoriafamilycourt.ca