

Message from the Advocate

It is truly hard to believe it has been almost a year since I came to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. One of the things that always amazes me is the variety of activities we are involved in for a small office. While this includes our mandated activities: individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, investigations and reviews, education/outreach; it also involves other activities in the community. All this is possible through the commitment and energy of the staff at the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. I am happy to share this with you for the next several pages.

I believe we have made some important inroads in our direct connections with young people over the past six months and since our last newsletter. This is vitally important because we must be informed by the voices and experiences of young people. We have visited communities in Western, Central and Eastern with a particular interest in schools, as well as child and youth organizations. We have launched our on-site outreach program at Thrive, Choices for Youth, and NL Youth Centre. We have established a Young Artist Program so that we will have art from children and youth in the province for various resource materials, and to profile on our Young Artist Wall of Fame, Twitter, and website. And we have reached almost 1300 young people through our summer outreach program, and courtesy of the hard work and dedication of two outstanding young facilitators.

Two investigative reports have been released. You will find summaries as you read further. The public reports now contain significantly less personal information about the children and youth at the focus of the investigations, and we have received positive feedback about this approach.



Jackie Lake Kavanagh, Child and Youth Advocate

We have also been making a true effort to improve our connections and communications on a provincial basis. This has involved regional visits, multi-lingual resource materials, and speaking at regional or provincial gatherings and events. We recognize that while there may be consistent issues in many regions regarding the rights and services to children and youth, different parts of the province may have unique experiences and perspectives. We want to hear from you. And we also want to help you learn more about what we do, and how we may be able to help you with advocacy. I invite you to call us with requests for assistance, suggestions for improvements, issues and ideas for systemic reviews, or just to give us your opinions on matters related to children and youth rights and services. What you have to say is important.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jackie".

What's New

OUTREACH SERVICES

We are really excited about our new outreach services thanks to partnerships with Thrive Community Youth Network St. John's, Choices for Youth St. John's, and the NL Youth Centre in Whitbourne. If you are a youth involved in any of these services and programs, we want you to know we are now providing regular on-site outreach services in these three locations. We recently started this new outreach services so we want to spread the word.

During these outreach visits, we're taking our services to you. One of our staff will be available to meet with you privately and listen to your experiences, issues and concerns. We can also use the opportunity to talk with

your group about young people's rights. We may be able to advocate for you, or perhaps we can help you advocate for yourself. It's all about listening to you and helping you get your voice heard. In addition to helping you, this will also ensure we have a good understanding of your issues. This may also help us to help others in similar situations. We want to ensure we get it right.

We want to extend our sincere appreciation to Jill Doyle at Choices for Youth, Angela Crockwell at Thrive, and Trudy Smith at NL Youth Centre for your leadership in partnering with us. We look forward to continued opportunities to connect with children and youth.



TWITTER @OCYANL

We are excited to announce we have launched into the social media world with our twitter account. (We know, it has taken a long time!) We are excited to be able to connect with so many people through this platform. Make sure to follow us at [@ocyanl](https://twitter.com/ocyanl) for all our latest updates!



Young Artist - Tyler Young, Grey River



Young Artist - Cameron Young, Grey River

OCYA WELCOMES SOCIAL WORK INTERN FOR FALL SEMESTER 2017

We wish to welcome Ellen Maher, BSW intern who is completing her first placement with us. Ellen will spend 13 weeks engaged in a number of activities and



Ellen Maher

learning opportunities, building her knowledge about the role of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, and begin developing her advocacy skills. She will also be collaborating with service providers and assisting children and youth in advocacy activities. The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate plays a critical role in the education of professionals and in the promotion of collaborative practice. We want to thank the School of Social Work for including the Advocate's Office as a valuable learning site.



Young Artist - Michael Lushman, Grey River



If you are a young person with a problem involving a foster home, group home, mental health service, justice system, or other government services, we are here to listen and help. We can:

- Help you get heard
- Help you learn about your rights
- Speak up for you
- Find someone who can help you
- Contact others involved
- Help you identify your options



OCYA INFORMATION CARD

Have you seen our new information cards? We were very happy to develop and release our new information card this Summer. It provides you with information about the kinds of things you may want to ask us to help you with and how to reach us. In developing this card, we reached out to the Choices for Youth Leadership Council to seek feedback on content and format. The feedback was really helpful, so thanks and hats off to CFY Leadership Council.

LET'S STAND UP FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Do you have a copy of our new diversity poster, or the stickers? (We hear that lots of youth like to put these on phone cases). In

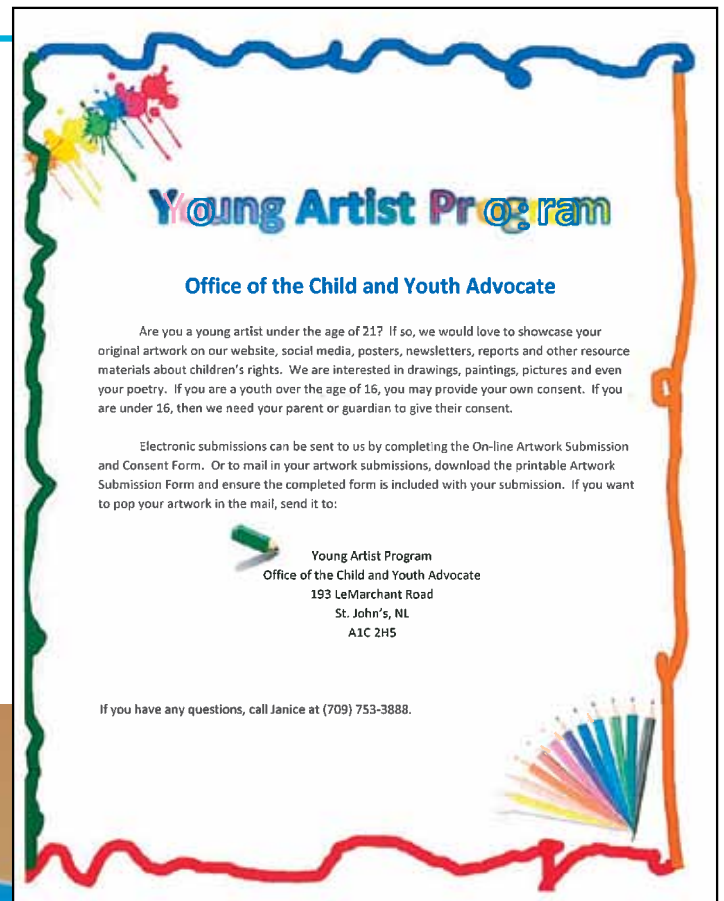
July, we launched a poster promoting a message of diversity and inclusion. The poster shows the colours of the Pride flag and has an important message *"This is a Positive Space that Welcomes and Supports Everyone"*. LGBTQ2S members of our communities frequently experience stigmatization and are sometimes unsure which spaces are safe and supportive. We understand this is especially true for young people, and we want you and the community to understand that our space and our advocacy work is supportive and welcoming.

We are so excited about the interest in this poster and stickers. Since July, we have provided approximately 500 copies of this poster to community organizations, government offices, schools, public agencies, and businesses to display as a clear sign of support for inclusion and diversity. We are happy to say that there has been so much interest that we have gone to reprint on both the posters and the stickers. We have also just released the multi-lingual version with French, both dialects of Innu-aimum and Inuktitut. If you, your youth group, or school doesn't yet have these posters and stickers, let us know and we will get them out to you. Of course we are happy to distribute to the general community as well.



YOUNG ARTIST PROGRAM

We want to promote young people, grow your profile, expand your audience and celebrate your talents and accomplishments. In August, we launched our Young Artist Program for any young artists under the age of 21. We put a call out for artwork, including: drawings, paintings, pictures and poetry. We plan to showcase the artwork on our website, social media, newsletters, reports and other resource materials about children's rights. Visit our website at <http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca/YoungArtistProgram.htm>




Young Artist Program

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

Are you a young artist under the age of 21? If so, we would love to showcase your original artwork on our website, social media, posters, newsletters, reports and other resource materials about children's rights. We are interested in drawings, paintings, pictures and even your poetry. If you are a youth over the age of 16, you may provide your own consent. If you are under 16, then we need your parent or guardian to give their consent.

Electronic submissions can be sent to us by completing the On-line Artwork Submission and Consent Form. Or to mail in your artwork submissions, download the printable Artwork Submission Form and ensure the completed form is included with your submission. If you want to pop your artwork in the mail, send it to:

 Young Artist Program
Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
193 LeMarchant Road
St. John's, NL
A1C 2H5

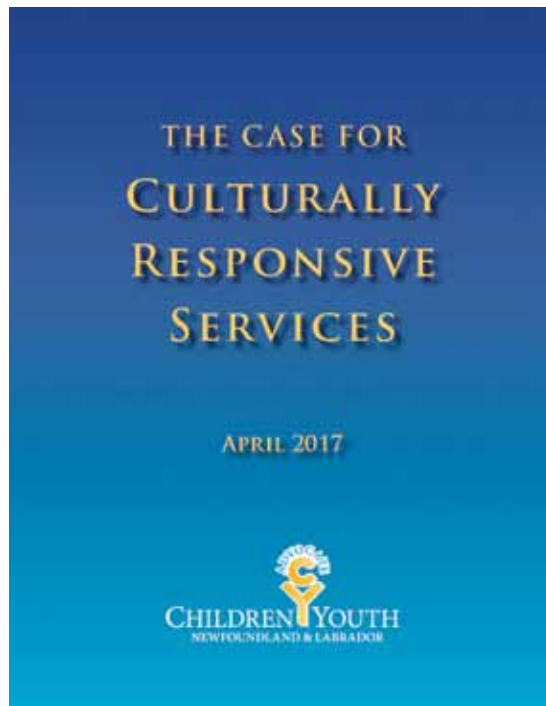
If you have any questions, call Janice at (709) 753-3888.



for further details on how you can participate in this program and to see the artwork we receive. We will also display all artwork on our Young Artist Wall of Fame in our office. We will provide a prize pack for all art submissions we receive, so don't delay...share your artistic talents with us!

Recent Investigative Reports

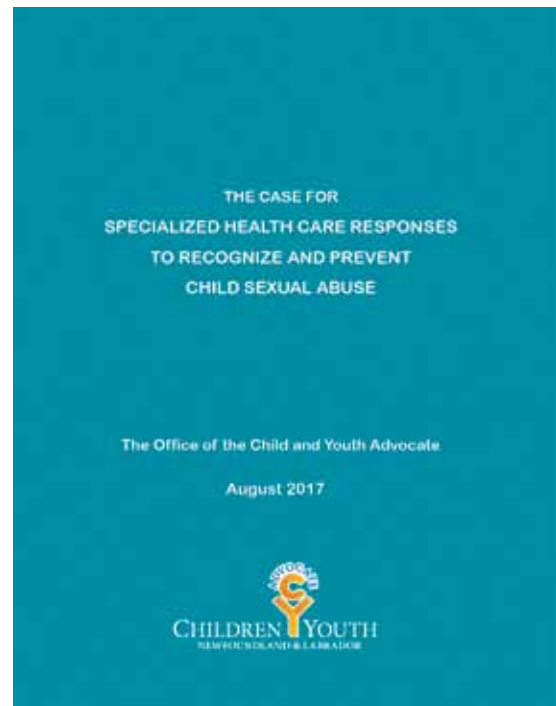
Readers will notice a new report format for investigative reports. The new report format includes significantly less personal details and information about the children and families involved, and contains a section after each recommendation for the respective department or agency to provide its response. This enables the public to see our recommendations as well as the official response to them in one place.



The Case for Culturally Responsive Services

The Child and Youth Advocate released *The Case for Culturally Responsive Services* investigative report in April, 2017 and tackled the issue of culturally responsive services.

The Case for Culturally Responsive Services involved a family that relocated to this province from another country. During this time, they were involved with the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. The Advocate made recommendations for three primary systemic areas for improvement: diversity and cultural competence, collaborative practice for joint removals, and mental health services.



The Case for Specialized Health Care Responses to Recognize and Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

The Child and Youth Advocate released *The Case for Specialized Health Care Responses to Recognize and Prevent Child Sexual Abuse* investigative report in August, 2017. The focus was a 12-year-old girl who was sexually assaulted by her stepfather, and received completely inadequate health care responses. The child and her siblings were also the focus of multiple separate reports to the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development regarding supervision and safety concerns.

The Advocate made seven recommendations and identified several systemic areas for improvement including: child-focused screening and coordination of services; improved knowledge among health care professionals on relevant protection legislation; policies and practices on consent for minors; and appropriate protective intervention and follow up.

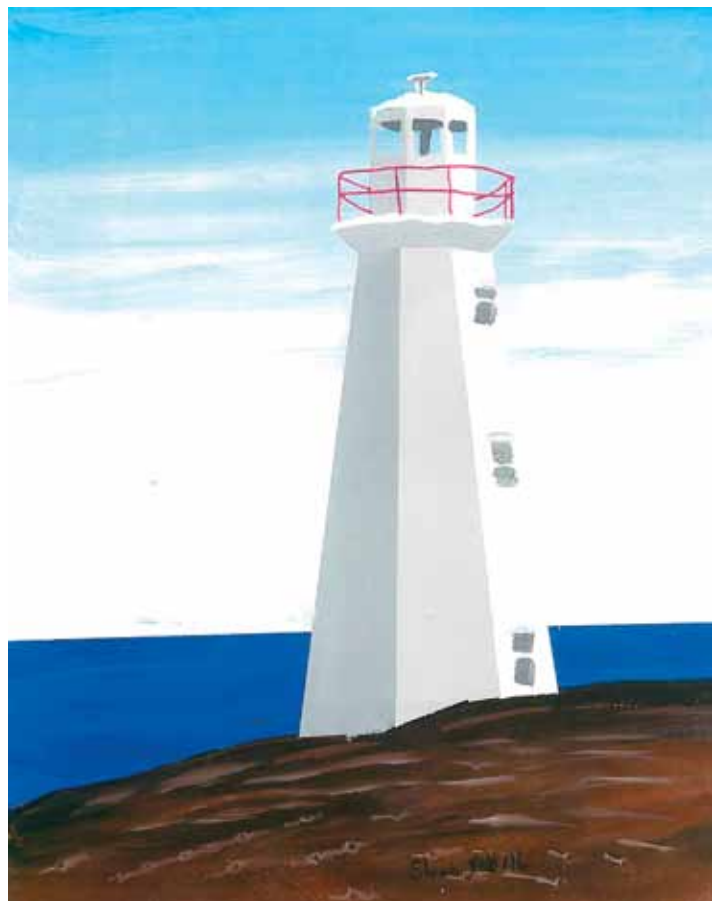
CHALLENGES FACING YOUNG PEOPLE IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is concerned about the challenges facing young people in Indigenous communities. The office issued a news release and the Advocate conducted follow up media interviews in June regarding the challenges facing young people in Indigenous communities. Jackie Lake Kavanagh stated: “My Office strongly encourages the Province to build new ways of supporting Indigenous communities to ensure sustainable and culturally responsive

services that can grow and thrive within the communities. The active role of communities and their leadership is central to success. In many discussions with community members and leaders, I have heard clearly that necessary supports must also extend beyond child protection approaches, and need to support broader community healing from histories of intergenerational trauma. Children do not exist in isolation, and they need to be able to rely on healthy families and healthy communities.” The Advocate was very pleased to host former Grand Chief of Innu Nation, Anastasia Qupee for a discussion on mutual concerns for young Indigenous people. At time of print, the Office awaited details of the announced Innu Inquiry.



Grand Chief Anastasia Qupee & Jackie Lake Kavanagh



Young Artist - Shawn Taylor, CBS

Out and About

It has been another busy few months at the office as we continue to connect and work collaboratively on important issues for children and youth in the province. We would like to extend special thanks to the following people who shared your time and provided information sessions, training, or consultation, and for your interest in our office. Thanks for your hospitality if we visited you, and thanks for your time and effort if you visited us.

- Jim Oldford - *Janeway Family Centre - Eastern Health*
- Kim Grant - *Mental Health and Addictions Program - Eastern Health*
- Colleen McDonald - *Pre-Trial Services Program - Department of Justice and Public Safety*
- Youth at the Mundy Pond Boys and Girls Club - *Boys and Girls Clubs of St. John's*
- Youth Leadership Council Members - *Choices for Youth*
- Chief Anastasia Qupee - *former Grand Chief of the Innu Nation*
- Michelle Kinney, *Deputy Minister, Nunatsiavut Government*
- Dr. David Philpott, *Memorial University*
- Trudy Smith - *NL Youth Centre, Whitbourne*
- Dr. Donna Hardy-Cox - *Memorial University*
- Hon. Lisa Dempster - *Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development*

We have been very pleased to participate in the following activities from April to September 2017:

- Annual Roots of Empathy Baby Celebration - *Roots of Empathy*
- Annual Symposium - *Foster Families Association of Newfoundland and Labrador*
- Orientation - *Choices for Youth*
- Annual General Meeting - *Daybreak Childcare Centre*

- Annual General Meeting - *Choices for Youth*
- Transformational Leadership Training - *Centre for Learning and Development*
- Annual Provincial Conference - *Child and Youth Care Association Newfoundland Labrador*
- Provincial Housing and Homelessness Conference - *Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network*
- Youth Week Luncheon - *City of St. John's*
- Wish 150 - *The Rooms*
- Mental Health Academy Conference - *Halifax*
- Roundtable on Cannabis Legalization in Newfoundland and Labrador - *Engage NL*
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training - *Centre for Learning and Development*
- Diversity Fair - *St. James United Church*
- Networking Event - *Community Sector Council*
- Annual General Meeting - *Thrive*
- Biennial Conference - *Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates*
- Presented at Annual In Service - *Victim Services Program, Department of Justice and Public Safety*

FOSTER FAMILIES ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

The Foster Families Association held its annual symposium from June 2-4, 2017. As Child and Youth Advocate, I was honoured to be invited to speak at the banquet. I met truly amazing and committed caregivers, and was humbled and inspired by the courage and dedication that came through in many of our conversations, and by a former foster child's reflections. Thanks for all you do. JLK



Bowl For Kids Sake - Jillian Roberts, Jackie Lake Kavanagh, Janice Mullins, Karen Gray, Bonnie Poole, Jacob Kimball, Andrew Mallam and Lori-Ann Byrne

BOWL FOR KIDS SAKE

On May 7, 2017, our office raised over \$1000.00 through our participation in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kids Sake fundraising event. Our team captain Jillian Roberts, along with OCYA staff Jackie Lake Kavanagh, Janice Mullins, Karen Gray, Bonnie Poole, Jacob Kimball, Andrew Mallam and Lori-Ann Byrne 'had a ball' bowling in support

of Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs. Thanks to all financial sponsors and participants who contributed to this effort.

PITCHING IN / HELPING OUT

The Office also took the time to support great causes, including organizing runs to McDonalds on May 3, 2017 to support McHappy Day, and Tim Hortons on May 31, 2017 for Tim Hortons Camp Day.



Young Artist - Karli Young, Grey River



Young Artist - Gabriel Lushman, Grey River



*Mental Health Academy Conference
Janice Mullins*

Grand Falls - Windsor and Botwood connections:

- Exploits Valley Intermediate High School – *Staff and Peer Counsellor Group*
- Botwood Memorial Academy
- Forest Park Academy
- Youth Centre Canada
- Youth Council Committee
- Family Resource Centre

Corner Brook connections:

- Community Youth Network, Corner Brook & Bay of Islands – *Staff and Youth*
- Loretta Bartlett Home for Youth
- Blomidon Place, Western Health
- Corner Brook Regional High School – *Staff and Students*
- Pathfinders Program
- Family Outreach Resource Centre – *Staff and Health Baby Club Participants*

Deer Lake connections:

- Elwood Regional High School – *Staff and Students*
- Tree House Family Resource Centre



*Exploits Valley Intermediate Peer Counsellors and
Guidance Counsellor, Grand Falls-Windsor, NL*

LISTENING TOUR

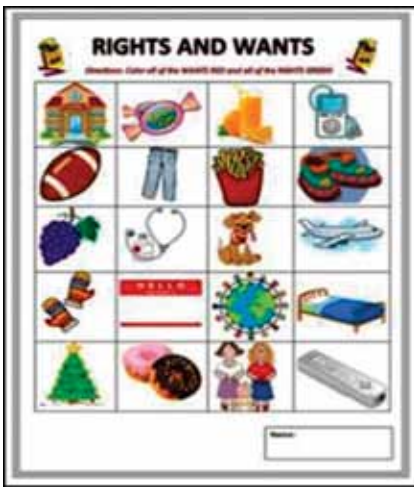
In May 2017, we were delighted to officially begin our listening tour with visits to Central and Western regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. This built upon the work we began with young people in Labrador in March. During these outreach trips, we met some very dynamic and interesting young people with great ideas and informed viewpoints. We talked about the issues, challenges and opportunities happening in your communities and about child and youth rights. Thank you for all your contributions.

A big thank you to all adults and youth who offered us your time. Hearing from you on the issues impacting your lives will help us in all aspects of our advocacy work. Learning about your ideas and progress inspires us. We can't wait to hear more!

SUMMER OUTREACH AND EDUCATION – THE DYNAMIC DUO

Summer 2017 provided many fun and exciting opportunities for outreach at our office. We were fortunate to have our “Dynamic Duo” hard at work. Our Duo consisted of Nicole Withers, BSW Student, and Megan Matthews. We hired Megan through a partnership with Choices for Youth’s Mama Moments Program. Here is Nicole’s reflection on her summer job.

As a social work student, I was hired to develop child outreach education based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), as part of a summer position with the OCYA. I began the summer researching child development, and developmental milestones of ages, based on play. I gathered this information and started forming games that children appeared to enjoy,



and centered the content of learning through the UNCRC, knowing that children and youth learn from playing and having fun. Within each activity developed and/or tweaked from other sources, I attempted to ensure the games were inclusive and children could see themselves represented. This proved to provide great discussion amongst the children and youth throughout the summer at various programs.

This summer, Megan and I reached a total of 1265 children and youth, 27 organizations, and made 45 presentations. We received a lot of feedback from community agencies, noting how wonderful it was to see OCYA in the community and providing children with this knowledge at such a young age. Megan and I really felt a part of the community this summer, and many organizations welcomed us without hesitation into their programs. We noted that staff and children alike were engaged and eager to learn what we had to share.



Family Fun Day - Megan Matthews & Nicole Withers

A big thank you to all of the organizations who participated in our summer outreach program:

- Community Sector Council
- Public Legal Information Services Newfoundland and Labrador
- Anna Templeton Centre
- Native Friendship Centre (Youth Group, Turtle Centre)
- The Association for New Canadians
- Thrive
- City of St. John’s
- Military Family Resource Centre
- Petty Harbour Community Centre
- Newfoundland and Labrador Housing - Neighborhood Centers
- Flat Rock Recreation Complex
- City of Mount Pearl
- Suncor Energy Fluvarium
- Boys and Girls Clubs of St. John’s
- Torbay Community
- Splash Centre in Harbor Grace
- YWCA St. John’s
- Pouch Cove Recreation Complex
- Choices for Youth
- Planned Parenthood (Camp Eclipse)
- Bay Bulls Recreation Centre
- Spirit Horse



Randy Ralph



Andrew Ralph, Frankie Ralph, Victoria Ralph & Jackie Lake Kavanagh

THE LEGACY OF RANDY RALPH

On July 13, 2017, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate honoured the legacy of Randy Ralph, former Principal of the school at the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre (NLYC). Randy died in a tragic highway accident on April 19, 2016 on his commute home from work. We worked with Randy's wife Frankie to organize an event celebrating his many contributions to young people, and to dedicate our boardroom in his memory. The sign on our boardroom door now reads "Randy Ralph Boardroom." We are proud to display a beautiful traditional drum which Randy created and gifted to our office as well as a photo of Randy.

As many of you know, Randy Ralph was a family man, an educator, a friend and an elder in his community. We hosted this event with approximately 40 of Randy's family, friends and colleagues. Jackie Lake Kavanagh, Child and Youth Advocate reflected "Once in a while, truly unique and special people come into our lives and they immediately stand out. I remember that feeling when I met Randy Ralph several years ago at NLYC. He was energetic, proud of his cultural heritage, committed to his profession, incredibly dedicated to his family, had a great rapport and respect for and from his co-workers and residents, he had endless hope and compassion, and he saw huge value and possibility in young people who many had already given up on in their young lives." The ceremony concluded with a traditional song performed by a friend and member of Randy's drumming circle.



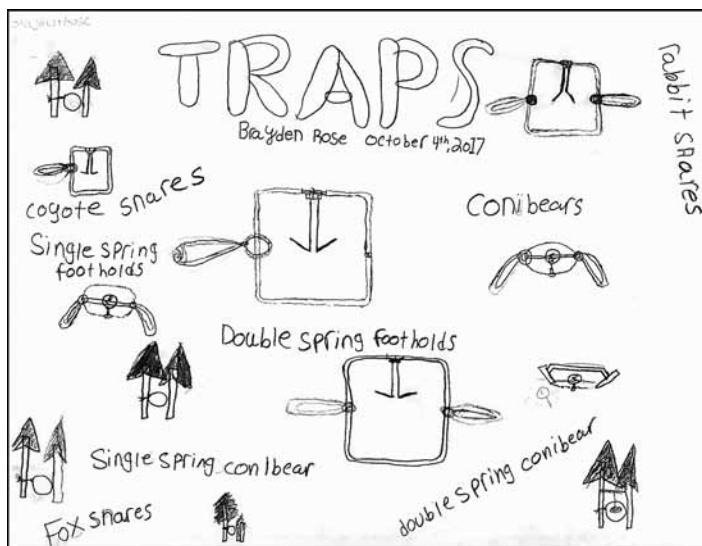
*CCCYA Biennial Conference - NL Participants
Jillian Roberts, Debbie Gillard & Karen Gray*

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATES NEWS AND NATIONAL ISSUES

The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) is a national alliance of provincial and territorial Child and Youth Advocates/Representatives. Each Advocate is appointed by his/her own province or territory. Recent Advocates' meetings have included issues such as marijuana legalization, child and youth mental health, child welfare in Indigenous communities, and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Cindy Blackstone, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and

Family Caring Society of Canada and Professor of Social Work at McGill University, also participated in specific discussions.

In September, three staff travelled to beautiful Banff, Alberta to attend the CCCYA's biennial conference, co-hosted by the Alberta and Yukon Advocate's offices. This year's theme was "Coming Together in Alberta: Making a Difference for Children and Youth in Canada." Indigenous elder Sykes Powderface led various prayers and teachings, and Alex Shade provided traditional drumming. The keynote speakers were Dr. Ziba Vaghri, Director of the GlobalChild Program and faculty member of the School of Public Health and Social Policy at the University of Victoria, and Dr. Marie Wilson, Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Dr. Vaghri spoke about a rights-based approach to child health, well-being and development. Dr. Wilson discussed the findings and implications of the 94 Calls to Action that emerged from the Truth and Reconciliation Report. One of the conference highlights was a youth panel comprised of six inspiring young people who shared their moving experiences. The conference was a valuable opportunity to connect with and learn from colleagues, and to strengthen relationships in support of young people across Canada.



Young Artist - Brayden Rose, Grey River

JOINT INVESTIGATIVE TRAINING

On October 10th and 11th, our Office organized and co-hosted a two day investigative training program provided by the Ombudsman Ontario Office called "SHARPENING YOUR TEETH: *Advanced Investigative Training for Administrative Watchdogs*". Our co-hosts were the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Office of the Citizens Representative, and the Chief Electoral Office. 28 staff working with independent statutory offices of the Legislature participated in this training event.

Facilitators Laura Pettigrew and Wendy Ray, two senior counsel with the Ombudsman Ontario office, have delivered Sharpening Your Teeth since 2007. The program has been offered throughout Canada and internationally. The course teaches advanced investigation techniques, and covers topics including:

- Investigation Planning
- Best Practices for Objective Investigations
- Interview Techniques
- Assessing Evidence
- Report Writing

Conducting investigations is one of the core functions of our Office and it is important that they are conducted in the highest standard. This training validated many of our practices and also provided a wonderful opportunity for participants to network, share our own experiences with conducting investigations, and learn new investigative techniques.

Thank you to the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network for providing a great space for our event.



Wendy Ray, Jackie Lake Kavanagh, Laura Pettigrew

The “Rights” Stuff

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: **Article 28: Education is every child’s right**

A CHILD’S RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION

Did you know that 57 million children around the world do not attend school? Some young people are not allowed to attend school. Some young people are afraid to go to school. Some young people do not have a school at all. The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District says in 2016-2017 approximately 10% of students missed 18 or more days of school without a valid reason. All children have a right to an education, a right to feel safe in school, and a right to special help in school when needed.

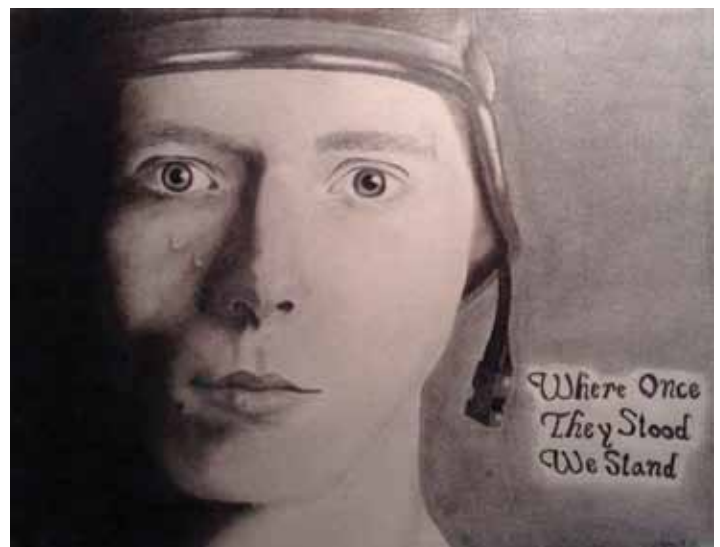
HOW YOU CAN PROMOTE THIS RIGHT

- 📌 Challenge stereotypes which can diminish feelings of belonging and safety.
- 📌 Support and encourage all children regardless of gender to succeed in all subject areas.
- 📌 Become involved in student mentoring and tutoring programs.
- 📌 As students, parents, or citizens, become involved in leadership opportunities in education and schools, and have your say.
- 📌 Always model respect in the classroom and with school sponsored activities and sports.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” ~ Nelson Mandela



Young Artist - Ellen Lushman, Grey River



Young Artist - Gabrielle Broderick, Twillingate

WORD FIND

All children have a right to an education. Find the words related to education, as listed below, by searching forward, backward or diagonally.



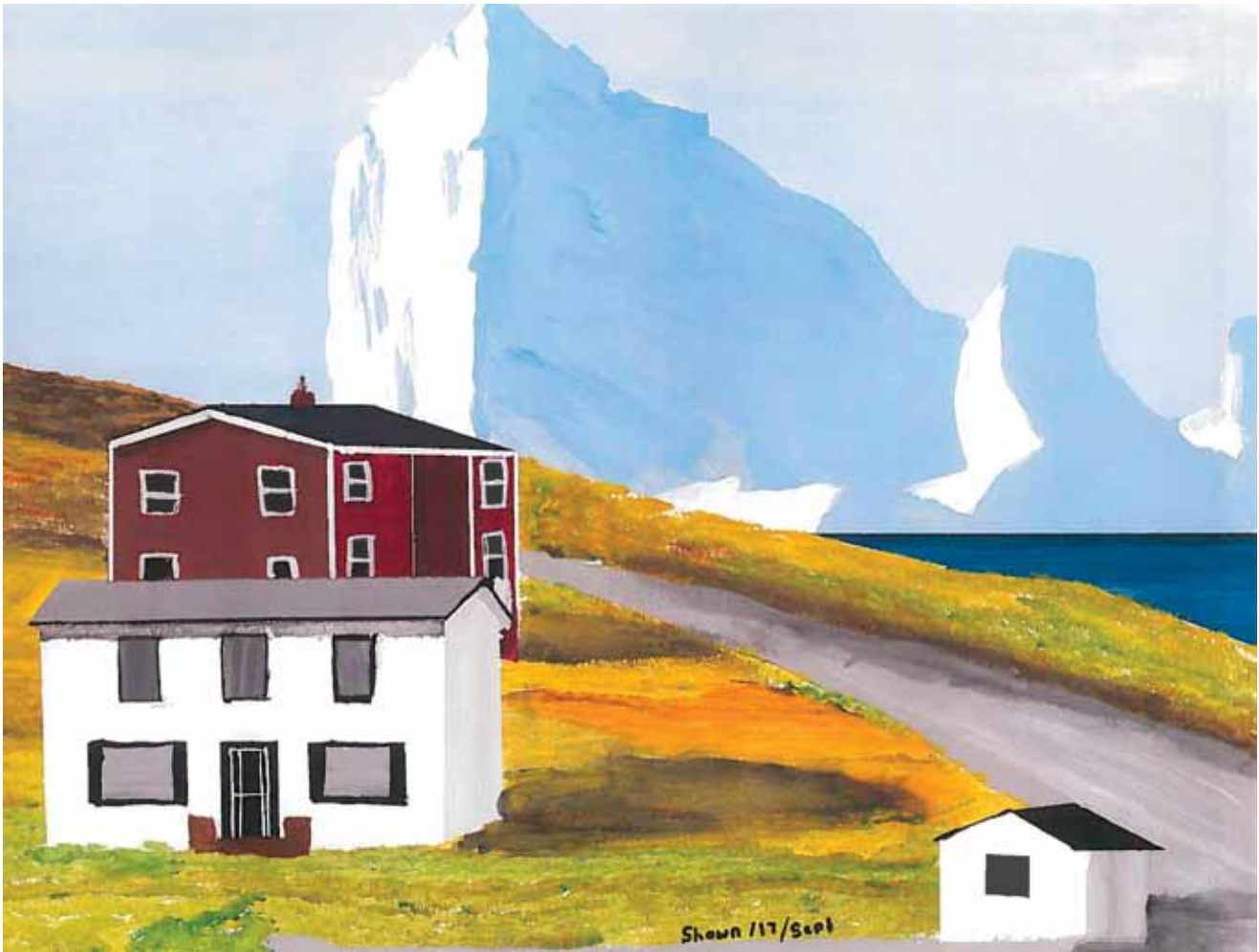
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ACCOMPLISHMENT
CLASSROOM
ENCOURAGEMENT
GUIDANCE

KNOWLEDGE
SCHOOL
SUPPORTS
UNDERSTANDING

BOOKS
CULTURE
GROWTH

LEARNING
STUDENTS
TEACHERS



Young Artist - Shawn Taylor, CBS



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To ensure we reach children and youth and the public, please contact us to add your name or organization to our distribution list and we will send copies as requested. We publish twice a year.

Contact the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate if you or someone you know needs our help:

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WebSite: www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca

Or drop by and speak with someone in our office:

193 LeMarchant Road, St. John's, NL • A1C 2H5 • Mon-Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm