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Child and Youth Advocate's Message

I see a growing level of interest and engagement in children and youth rights. This encourages and energizes me. And I find it really exciting when I see young people become involved directly in learning more about rights, speaking up, and organizing activities. Sometimes your efforts are about creating more awareness, and sometimes you are working to make needed changes so that children and youth rights are respected.



Jackie Lake Kavanagh,
Child and Youth Advocate

Those of us who are adults need to walk with you on this journey. We need to trust in your abilities and knowledge. You have access to unique perspectives and experiences that are extremely valuable in tackling some very difficult issues. We can learn a lot from you if we listen. We are at a time when new energy and insights are needed. Your leadership and commitment gives me great comfort because I know we are in good hands, now and in the future.

A million thanks for all that you do.

Jackie
Jackie Lake Kavanagh
Child and Youth Advocate

Review of the Child Protection Services to Inuit Children

In April 2018 we launched a comprehensive, Independent Review of the treatment, experiences and outcomes of Inuit children and youth in the Newfoundland and Labrador child protection system. The Nunatsiavut Government approached Child and Youth Advocate Jackie Lake Kavanagh to request this independent Review.

We believed it was vitally important for people affected to have a voice in this process and we thought this would be especially true for young people. We held community sessions and interviews in Inuit communities in Labrador as well as other communities in Labrador and on the island where Inuit children are in care. We also completed a comprehensive file review, and a literature review. We have now completed all of this work and are putting the finishing touches on our report which we plan to release over the summer.

In total we connected with approximately 575 people. Most of these connections were in Labrador. However, some were on the island while others contacted us from other parts of the country.

Over the past year we have had many discussions about people's experiences and their views for improvement in the future. We offer our sincere thanks to the elders, young people, families, foster families, community leaders, extended family members, and service providers in each community who came out to speak to us. Your stories touched us deeply.

Thanks to the communities of Hopedale, Makkovik, Nain, Rigolet, Postville, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River and others that welcomed us with open arms and helped support this important work. We appreciate your interest and participation. The support

and interest of Nunatsiavut Government has also been very important in the review process.

We look forward to the release of this significant piece of work and the fundamental systemic change that is needed in order to have better outcomes for Inuit children and their families. A series of recommendations will be included in the final report to guide the needed changes.

Did you know it's your right to:

have your **Best Interests** be the **Primary Focus** in **Decisions** that affect you





ADVOCATE
CHILDREN & YOUTH
SERVICES AND LABOUR

Article 3: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Self Advocacy Workshop

We are very excited to announce that we have a new workshop for youth! It's called

You Can Speak Up: Self Advocacy Workshop



It's important to us that you know about your rights. All children and youth in Canada have rights. Rights are statements about what you as a young person should have (or have access to) or how you should be treated. One of these rights is to be heard about issues affecting you.

YOU are the expert on YOU!



In this fun and interactive workshop, we help you learn how to speak up for yourself. We build on communication skills, focus on rights and responsibilities, and identify supports and resources in your community. You will learn some new things to help you be a great self-advocate when you need to be!



We did a couple of pilots before we finalized this workshop. We really appreciate the Social Justice Group of Crescent Collegiate of Dildo and the student government group of Waterford Valley High in St. John's. You welcomed us to your schools and you were amazing. Thank you for providing such great feedback!

Why Advocate?

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It's not."
- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax



If you are interested in our new workshop and would like to know more please contact our office. We love spending time with students sharing the work of our office and young people's rights.

Community Support

We always enjoy supporting Community initiatives.

Tweeted on Bell Let's Talk Day in support of mental health



Wore pink on Pink Shirt Day



Attended the pancake breakfast in support of the NL Housing and Homelessness Network



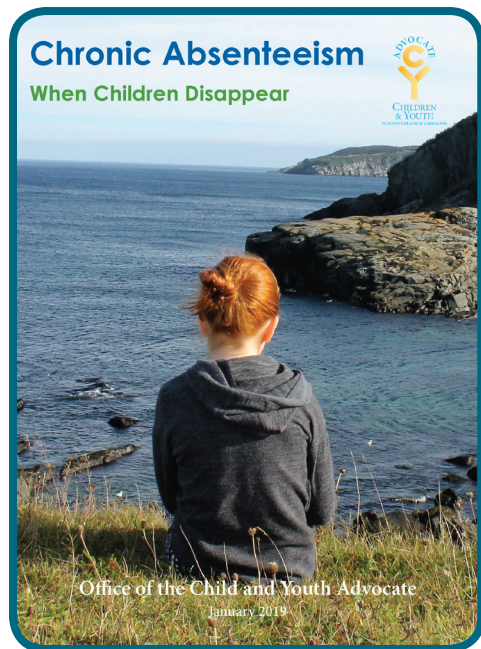
Wore our shades to #BeCoolForAutism



Wore green to support #MentalHealthWeek2019

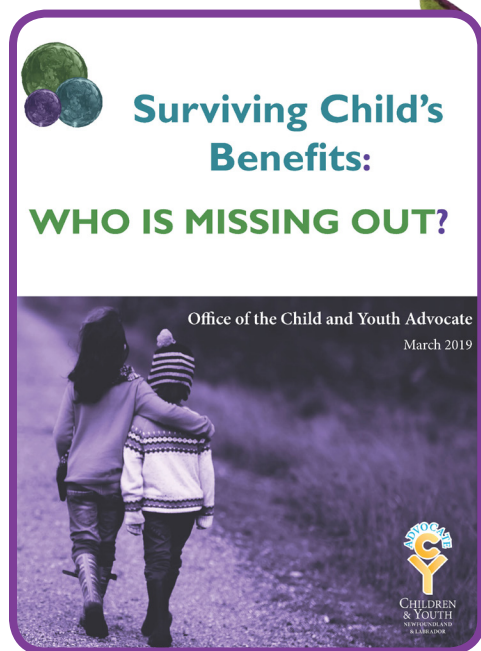


Reports, Reviews and Investigations



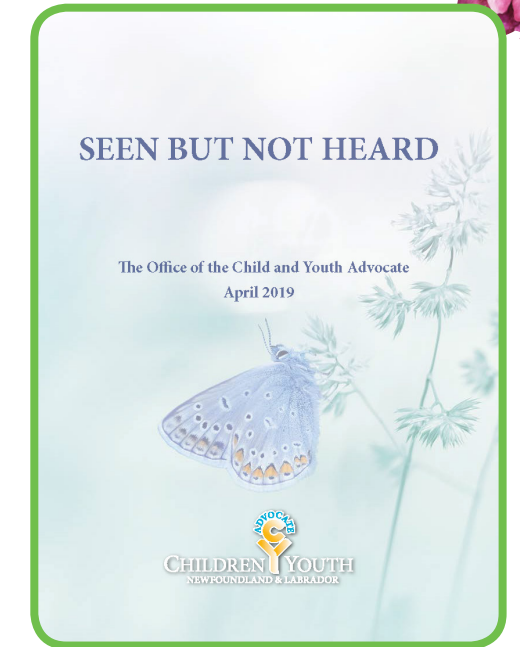
In January 2019, we released **Chronic Absenteeism: When Children Disappear**. In Newfoundland and Labrador, many children and youth are routinely absent from school without reason. When children become disconnected from their teachers, friends, curriculum and school activities it can be very hard to reconnect. Every child has a right to an education. It is important to address the barriers in children's lives that often prevent them from going to school.

This systemic review focuses on chronic absenteeism, factors influencing it, impacts on students, and promising strategies to address the problem. The report makes four recommendations to government departments and agencies that have shared responsibility for solutions. This review shows how children who are absent can have complex needs and require responses from many different government services, not just schools. All four recommendations focus on the collaborative work of all service providers. This report shows that there is research and practice to guide action now.

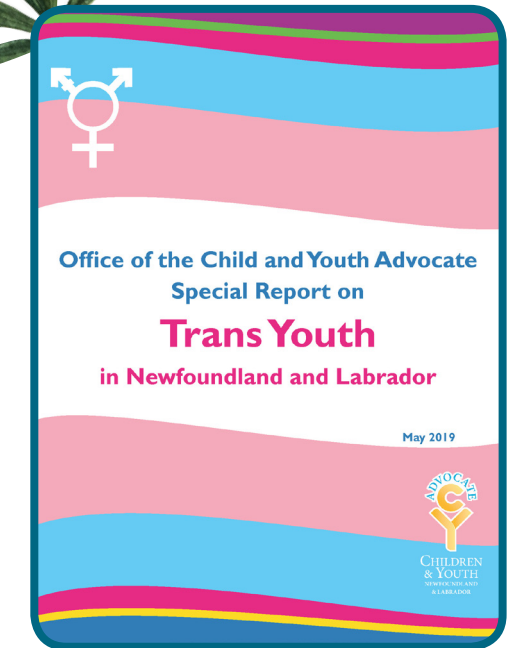


In March 2019, we released **Surviving Child's Benefits: Who Is Missing Out?** This Review concludes that some children of deceased parents in Newfoundland and Labrador do not receive Canada Pension Plan's Surviving Child's Benefit. In some cases, these funds are treated as provincial government revenue and never directly reach these children. And these children are among the most vulnerable – children in care, children whose surviving parent receives Income Support, or youth requiring residential services under the Youth Services Program. This issue was identified by family members after the release of a related report (**Making Waves: Ensuring Children Benefit from Child Support Payments**) in 2018. Thank you for reaching out to us so that we could investigate this issue and make recommendations to address it.

In April 2019, we released **Seen But Not Heard**. We called this investigation when we learned that a group of siblings had disclosed years of physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and neglect by their parents while they were receiving protection services. After a detailed investigation, we identified several systemic areas for improvement that included the importance of early intervention and prevention, mental health responses, in care services, and permanency planning for children and youth in care.



In May 2019, we released the **Special Report on Trans Youth in Newfoundland and Labrador** that focuses on the struggles and challenges of many gender diverse youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Report presents the stories and experiences shared by young people in focus groups and builds awareness and amplifies the voices of these youth. The Report also highlights challenges in several key areas, such as school, medical, and social support services. We make five recommendations informed by these young people's views.



Look for our Annual Status Report on Recommendations in the fall. We provide an update on the status of all recommendations we have made up to March 31, 2019.

Poster Contest Winners

When we launched our poster contest on young people's right to education, we had no idea hundreds of very creative posters would come our way. In fact, we received more than 300 entries from all over the province. We have been so pleased with the response. We are very excited and love all the creative artwork. Thanks to all who submitted.

While we had a really difficult job in selecting winners, we are happy to announce our winners for the poster contest are Sanuda Jayasinghe from Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Bridget Little from St. John's.

We were delighted to recently visit their schools and present them with their posters as well as t-shirts with their winning designs on the front.

We have had tremendous art work submitted from all over the province and we want to profile it. You will be seeing much of it on our website, Twitter and perhaps even in our resource materials in the near future!

Education: Every Child's RIGHT!
 L'éducation : un droit pour tous les enfants
 Kekina'matimk: E'tasiw Mijua'ji'j Wejkuiaqmit
 Ilinnianik: Atunik Sugusiup Pivitsanga
 Skutumashun: Mashuei Uass Naspetenitakushu
 E tshishkutamashunanut nutem auass apishtau

Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Super Reader

SCHOOL

By Young Artist: Bridget Little

A winner of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate's 2019 Poster Contest

For more information on Children's Rights call us at 1-877-753-3888



Education: Every Child's RIGHT!
 L'éducation : un droit pour tous les enfants
 Kekina'matimk: E'tasiw Mijua'ji'j Wejkuiaqmit
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 E tshishkutamashunanut nutem auass apishtau

Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

School Rules!

Here are some before and after pictures of people who went to school, and then became successful doing all of what they love!

School is a great place to learn, make friends, and have fun! Going to school prepares us for the future!

By Young Artist: Sanuda Jayasinghe

A winner of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate's 2019 Poster Contest

For more information on Children's Rights call us at 1-877-753-3888



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For more information on Children's Rights call us at 1-877-753-3888

Outreach

Over the Winter and Spring, we had a fabulous time traveling around the province for our outreach program. Thanks to you all for being so welcoming. It is always great to share information about our services and the rights of children and youth, and to also learn about the many organizations throughout the province that support children and youth and how we can work with you.

Labrador

In February 2019, as part of our work with the comprehensive Inuit Review we spent another week in Nain meeting with families, students at Jens Haven Memorial School and the Nain Youth Centre. Thank you for sharing your time, thoughts and experiences.

In April 2019, Jackie and Karen had the privilege of visiting Sheshatshiu. Sincere thanks to Anastasia Qupee for hosting at the Mary Mae Healing Centre. We were very impressed with the traditional Innu tent where programs are offered.



Northern Peninsula

In February we visited the Northern Peninsula. We would like to particularly thank Cloud River Academy for the interest and hospitality.



Central

In March we were in Springdale, Baie Verte and Grand Falls-Windsor and visited the Ice Cap Youth Centre in Springdale, Copper Ridge Academy in Baie Verte, Family Resource Centre in Baie Verte, Hope Valley Centre and the Exploits Valley Community Coalition in Grand Falls-Windsor. Great to visit your facilities and also share information about young people's rights and our advocacy services..

In May we returned to the Springdale and King's Point area and did sessions with students at Valmont Academy and Indian River High. We also took in the two GSAs in Grand Falls-Windsor and Springdale. We had a wonderful week. Thanks for the interest and hospitality.



St. John's and Eastern Avalon

We presented to staff of Stella's Circle, Key Assets, and the Human Rights Commission, as well as students of the Child and Youth Care with Addictions Support Worker Program at Eastern Academy. We also visited Memorial University and presented to students of the Social Justice Course, School of Social Work and the Centre for Collaborative Health Professional Education, Faculty of Medicine.

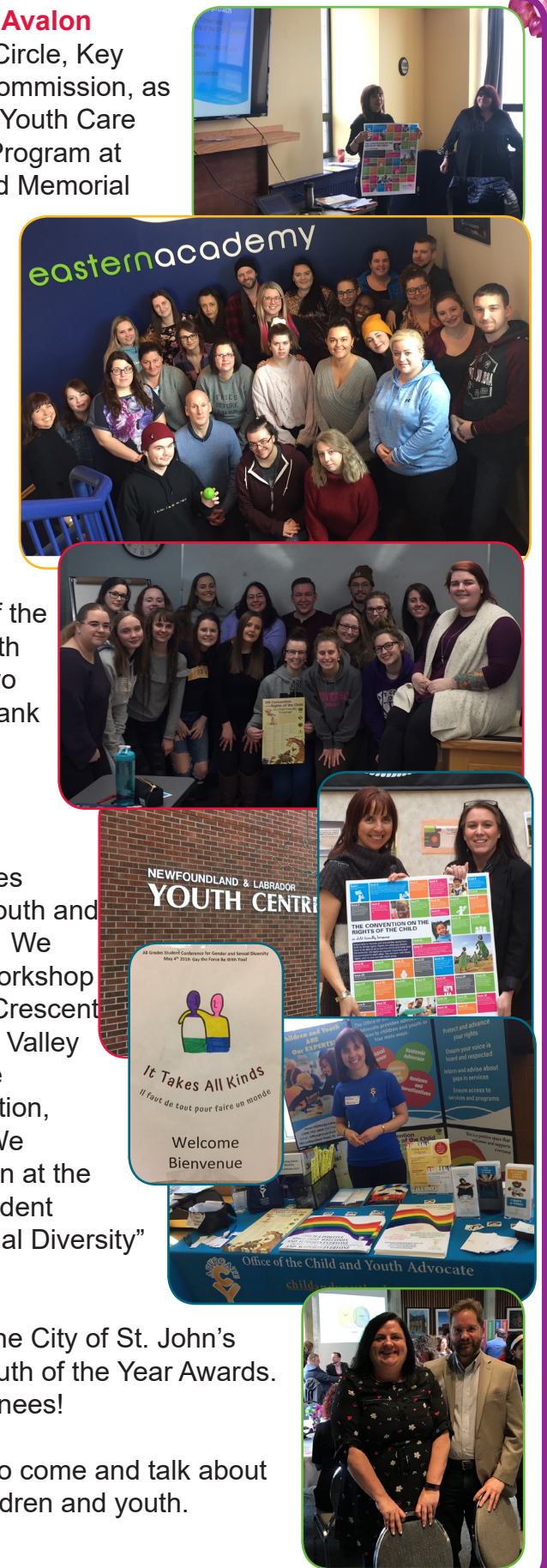
Jackie was delighted to join Rotary St. John's East to talk about the work of our office and children's rights.

Special thanks to the residents of the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre in Whitbourne. We had two great days with you all and we thank you for your work in helping us to revise the In Custody pamphlet.

We visited many local schools in our travels, including Upper Gullies Elementary in Conception Bay South and St. Teresa's School in St. John's. We piloted our new Self Advocacy Workshop with the Social Justice Group at Crescent Collegiate in Dildo and Waterford Valley High in St. John's. You folks were super!!! Thanks for your participation, feedback and great discussion. We were delighted to offer the session at the "It Takes All Kinds - All Grade Student Conference for Gender and Sexual Diversity" at McDonald Drive Junior High.

It was also a pleasure to attend the City of St. John's Youth Week Luncheon for the Youth of the Year Awards. Congrats to all winners and nominees!

Thanks to all for the opportunity to come and talk about our services and the rights of children and youth.



Multicultural Connections

We have been making some strong multicultural connections in the community. With the assistance of the Association For New Canadians Settlement Workers in the Schools (SWIS) program, we have visited McDonald Drive Junior High, Brother Rice Junior High, Leary's Brook Junior High, and Holy Heart High school. We have had great sessions with new comers discussing the role of our office, young people's rights and playing OCYA Jeopardy. At the end of January a group of students from many of the local schools came to visit us. We had such a fun, awesome afternoon with you. What a great group of students! We also enjoyed recently meeting with a parent group at the Association for New Canadians.

We were also pleased to have the Multicultural Women's Organization (MWO) visit our office along with some parents and their young children. We then had the privilege of attending the MWO's Christmas Party with wonderful food, dancing and entertainment. We even had our picture taken with Santa.



In March 2019, we had a wonderful 3 days celebrating inclusion and diversity at the annual Sharing Our Cultures event at the Rooms. Even Charlie came to visit.



Charlie

You'll remember that we named our bear, Charlie, in a student contest last year.

- C - children
- H - have
- A - a
- R - right to be
- L - loved &
- I - included
- E - everyday

We are delighted that Charlie is a permanent part of our OCYA team. Let's see what Charlie has been up to:

Sharing Our Cultures - March 2019

Charlie likes to be in the middle of the activity!



École des Grands-Vents - May 2019

Charlie loves to recognize good work!

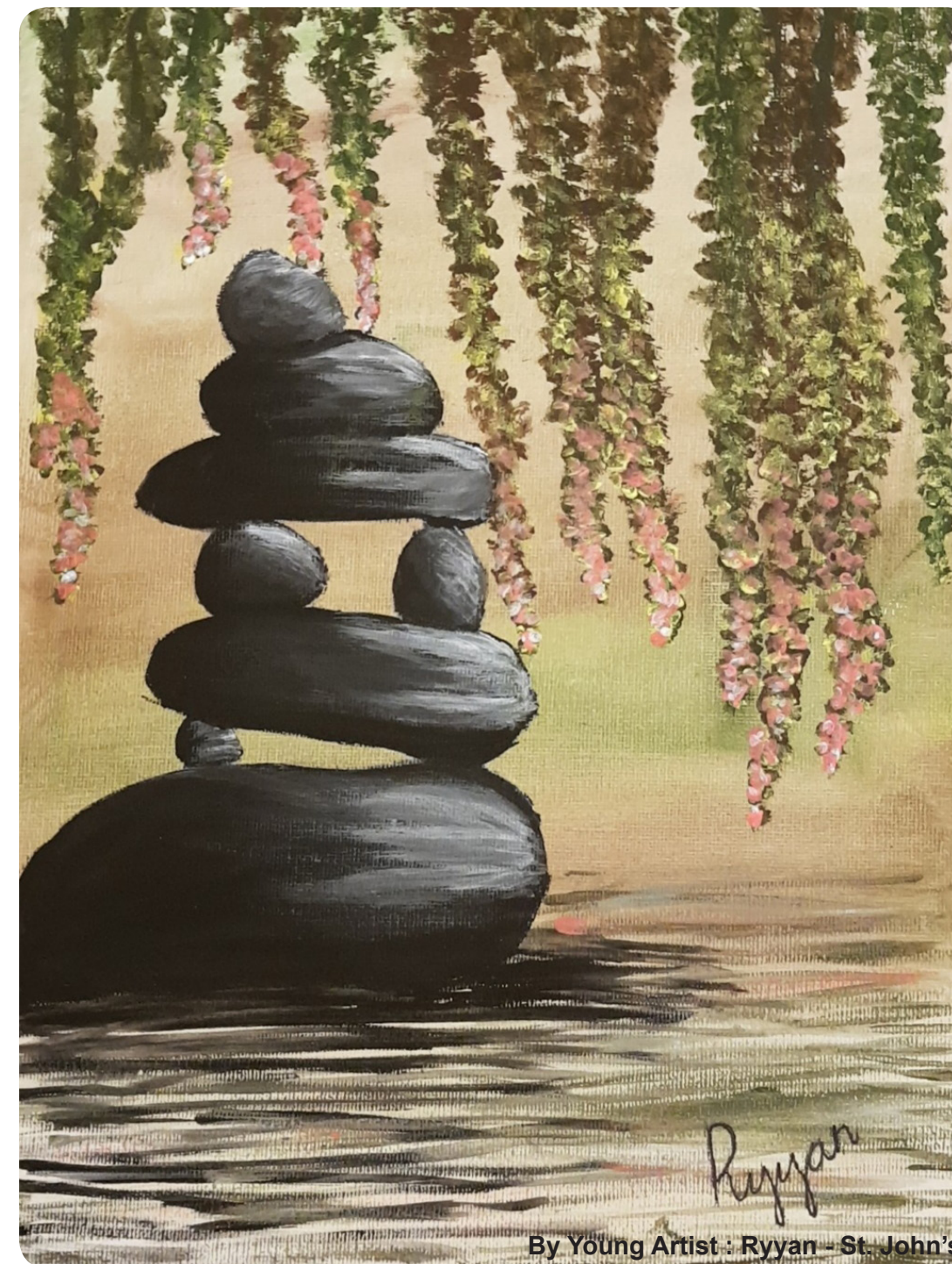


Keep your eyes open because you never know where Charlie will show up next!



We are always looking for new artwork for our Young Artist Program. We provide a prize pack of promotional items for art submissions.

To submit your artwork for the Young Artist Program visit: <https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca/YoungArtistProgram.htm>



By Young Artist : Rygan - St. John's

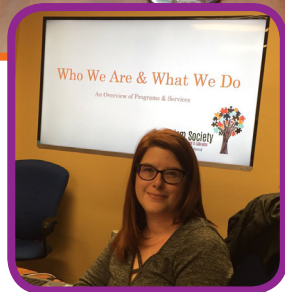
Ongoing Learning and Professional Development

We believe there is always something new to learn to help us do better work with young people.

Over the past few months we have completed sessions on many topics including: Trauma Informed Practice, Intercultural Humility, Youth Homelessness, Restorative Justice, Self-Advocacy, Working with Families of Trans Youth, Integrated Youth Services, Psychological Health and Safety, Mental Health, and Leadership.

We were also fortunate to learn more about some services in the community including: the Human Rights Commission, Coalition Against the Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CASEY), Public Legal Information of Newfoundland and Labrador (PLIAN), the Journey Project, and the Autism Society.

We thank all those who came to our office to share information and for facilitating the events we attended.



Did you know it's your right to:

have your **Rights Protected**, no matter where you live, what language you speak, what your religion is, or what your culture is



Article 2: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate



What We Do

Individual Advocacy:

We speak up for you, with you, or help you speak up for yourself so your voice is heard and your rights are respected.

Reviews/ Investigations:

We review and investigate concerns on behalf of an individual or group of children or youth.

Child/
Youth

Systemic Advocacy:

We look into issues that affect groups of children and youth.

Education and Outreach:

We love doing education sessions and workshops with youth groups, community organizations and schools about your rights.

Call Us: 1-877-753-3888 Email Us: office@ocya.nl.ca Follow Us on Twitter: @OCYANL

Visit Us: 193 LeMarchant Rd, St. John's





Young Artist Program

We would love to showcase your original artwork!

By Young Artist : Mohamad - St. John's

We are always looking for new artwork for our Young Artist Program. We provide a prize pack of promotional items for art submissions. We use the artwork on resource materials and displays.

To submit your artwork for the Young Artist Program visit: <https://www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca/YoungArtistProgram.htm>

Young Artist Wall of Fame

We post the artwork we receive on our Young Artist Wall of Fame and in other locations around our office.

As you can see, we will soon need another wall!



Feel free to use this page as a poster and place it where young people will see it.

What Happens When I Contact the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate?



Step 1 Call us and ask for help



If you are a young person, you can call, email or drop in to our office. There is no referral needed. We offer a friendly, accepting and supportive space. You can bring a support person with you if it makes you feel more comfortable.

Call Us: 1-877-753-3888
 Email Us: Office@ocya.nl.ca
 Visit Us: 193 LeMarchant Rd, St. John's

Step 2 We'll ask you for some information



We need to know a few things so we can help you:

- the reason you are calling;
- if you have contacted anyone else and what happened;
- what you would like to happen; and
- your contact information.

Step 3 We'll talk to you about how we can help



We can:

- help you get heard;
- help you learn about your rights;
- help you prepare for meetings;
- find you someone who can help;
- contact others involved; and
- help you to identify options.

Anyone can contact us!

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

Phone: (709) 753-3888

Toll Free: 1-877-753-3888

Fax: (709) 753-3988

Email: office@ocya.nl.ca

WebSite: www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca

Twitter: @OCYANL

Or drop by our office:

193 LeMarchant Road, St. John's, NL
Monday - Friday from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm



TO RECEIVE A
COPY OF THE
NEWSLETTER,
WHICH IS
PUBLISHED TWICE
A YEAR, PLEASE
CONTACT US AND
REQUEST TO BE
ADDED TO OUR
DISTRIBUTION
LIST.