



# ViewPoints

## Canadian Council Address

Greetings Nova Scotia Child and Youth Care Worker Association.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the Nova Scotia Child and Youth Care Workers Association (NSCYCWA) for their recent success in hosting the 2011 Provincial Conference. I'd like to thank all who participated as delegates, presenters and organizers. Conferences provide an opportunity to learn, connect and reenergize. Your commitment to our profession continues to make a difference in the lives of the children, youth and families.

The Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations (CCCYCA) Annual General Meeting was held in London, Ontario, June 6-7 and Kelly Shaw, Nova Scotia's Representative was in attendance to provide an update on the events and news of the past year in Nova Scotia. Kelly was also involved in discussions with the other Provincial Reps in planning for the coming year.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Triennial/17<sup>th</sup> National Conference will be hosted in conjunction with one another in October of 2012 in Canmore, Alberta. Nova Scotia has been a strong supporter of National and International Conferences in the past and I look forward to seeing a strong representation again in Canmore.

I thank you for your ongoing support of the NSCYCWA as your support not only supports the NSCYCWA but the CCCYCA and allows us to work towards our goals:

To promote the development of child and youth care as a profession in Canada and ensure the delivery of quality care.

To encourage the formation of new provincial CYC associations where none exists.

To promote the use of Provincial Code of Ethics for CYC professionals.

To provide discounts on membership fees at national conferences to members of provincial and territorial associations.

To act as an agent for the promotion of professional child and youth care training within colleges, universities, and other educational institutions.

To advocate for children and youth at a national level.

To assist in the development of educational and training materials.

To stay abreast of current issues and developments in the field of child and youth care in Canada

David Connolly  
President, Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations

Go to [www.cycscanada.ca](http://www.cycscanada.ca) for additional information

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## Reflections from the Field: Conference Edition

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Earlier in May I was able to attend the Nova Scotia Child and Youth Care Conference that was held at the Truro NCSS. The conference was a great experience and I think that anyone who has the opportunity to attend next year's conference definitely should. The speakers and all the seminars held were great learning experiences. The one's I attended were Youth and Mental Health, Sexually Intrusive Behaviour in youth , and the Working with GLBTQ Youth. They were all very informative and opened my eyes to some new 'tools' for my CYC tool box!

I would like to thank the association for providing me with a bursary to attend the conference and everyone who had a part in putting it together. Great job! Hope to see everyone there next year Ω

Amie Leslie      Student Bursary Recipient

### *EYES WIDE OPEN.*

As a future graduate of this year's NSCC's Child & Youth Care program, I felt that the Nova Scotia Child & Youth Care Association's Provincial Child and Youth Care Conference, Reviving Our Youth: Heart, Mind & Soul was essential for my own professional development. Since I am currently a student completing my diploma in Child and Youth Care, my learning experiences have been limited to my schooling and my work experience at the Nexus program. Although those have been essential learning experiences, the conference has been an excellent addition to it.

Prior to attending the conference I really didn't know what to expect. I assumed based on my faculty's recommendations to attend, that it would be beneficial for me, but I really did not think that I would learn so much, in such a short period of time, and in an environment where other Child and Youth Care professionals, all in different stages in their development, are also there to take new learning along with them on their journey.

Thom Garfat was an amazing opening key note speaker. As someone who has learned so much from him, and yet never met him until now, for me it was a similar experience to seeing a celebrity on the street. I really enjoyed learning about the Circle of Courage and about the brain and neurons and about how everyone makes *Bids for Connection*, especially our youth.

I attended three workshops that were extremely helpful and educational. The three that I attended were: Sexually intrusive behaviours, Working with Families and The Youth Project's LGBT presentation. All three that I had chosen were excellent workshops. I actually struggled with choosing between all the workshops since they all were really interesting on paper. I took a lot away from all three:

Doreen Coady-Shadbolt did an excellent job talking to us about Sexually Intrusive Behaviours in Children. She talked about the four main groups that go from group one being 'expected development' to group four being 'children who molest'. She talked about which behaviours and actions may be seen in the groups and she also talked to use about green, yellow and red light behaviours and when to be concerned.

Thom Garfat gave the workshop on Working with Families. He talked about how it's necessary that a family needs courage as well as resiliency in order to face life's challenges and how families have all the same needs that need to be met in the Circle of Courage.

The Youth's Project's, LGBT presentation was a really great and knowledgeable presentation. We learned a lot about language in this workshop and by the end of it, I left the presentation, knowing that I wanted to become an Ally member, so that youths in my community can recognize that I am a safe and supportive person.

The banquet in the evening was a lot of fun. It was also really great because we were able to socialize and network with others in the Child and Youth Care field.

As for the closing key note speaker. I really enjoyed Jeff Reid's closing speech. He has a sense of humour that can make everyone laugh, and that's just what he did, while at the same time talking a lot about the importance of preventing burnout. It was also interesting to see Jeff in a different light, since I had only known him as one of my faculty members this year.

By the end of the conference, I knew that I want to become more involved in our Nova Scotia Child & Youth Care Workers Association and that my next step is saving up to attend the next conference. I feel that as a member of the NSCYCWA I feel a sense of belonging and I'd like to take on some responsibilities in the association in hopes that I can help others in the field also feel a sense of belonging and that their voice can be heard Ω

**Sara Biddle**

## Reflections from the Field: Conference Edition

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This year was my first year at the conference and what an exciting event it was. I'm going to try and make sure that it's not my last. This year, financially I was not able to pay to go due to being a student taking Child and Youth at Eastern College so the association granted me a bursary to go based on a letter I had wrote. You see, being in child and youth care is personal to me; I was raised in 'the system'. I spent my life in and out of foster homes and group homes and now I'm trying to do whatever I can to give back to everyone else. I work in group homes I used to be a resident in and work with the homeless in Halifax. Today is May 25<sup>th</sup> 2011 and tomorrow, I will graduate with a Child and Youth degree. I'm not sure where life will take me but I'm trying to raise awareness for people around the world with my words of resilience. I'm trying to be an inspiration for people that need it, especially some kids in care. Inspiration is something that everyone needs at one point in their life and I'm just trying to do what I can to help others in situations I used to be in. I thank the association for granting me and a fellow classmate a bursary to attend the conference as it was very enjoyable. I had never heard of Thom Garfat before this conference and he has been in this field for a long time. It was a pleasure to hear you speak. Your voice was heard by volumes and it is very noticeable that you have learned a lot in the time you have been around. I found myself drawn to some of the things you had to say. Jeff Reid did the closing speech and I had never heard of him either. He brings a new spin on things that included a lot of humor and his presentation was extremely enjoyable. I have always said that humor can solve anything if used in the right context. Thank you to the association and all the speakers, thank you to Kelly Shaw for organizing such a wonderful event and thank you to all of you whom attended. As of tomorrow I am officially a college graduate in the Child and Youth Care field and I hope to see you all again soon Ω **George Dean** Student Bursary Recipient

## The Learning Curve: One Future CYC's take on her Placement

I am a nervous person, before interviews, first day of college, anything and everything, so the drive to my first day of placement in January 2010 felt like the longest drive ever -or at least longer then the usual 20 minutes it takes me to get to town. I thought of every possible thing that could go wrong, would I get along with all the team members, would they think I'm too young, am I going to freeze up, will the youth like me...

When I finally arrived at my placement I slowly began to calm down and relax. I met with the team leader to go over what I would be allowed to do and not allowed to do, as well as fill out some forms for school. I also had a chance to meet with some of the team members that were on shift that day. They asked why I chose my placement, why I wanted to be in this field, and other questions along that sort. When I came home my from my first day of placement I couldn't wipe the smile off my face, I finally felt like I could succeed.

My first placement lasted only three weeks, and then I went back to class in Truro for two months of classes and then back to my placement for eight weeks.

During my placement I had to go out of my comfort zone and have a chat on personal boundaries with a youth. I was very nervous and anxious beforehand because confrontation wasn't necessarily my thing yet. It ended with me setting boundaries with the youth and stating that if it happened again there would be consequences; for example I would cue the youth by saying personal space then I would say a phrase like 'Back Off!' and if that didn't work I would then ask for help from team members.

Another obstacle I had to overcome at my placement was low numbers and how it was difficult to engage with youth if they always had something on the go (e.g., school, outings, work term). On my first day of placement in January there had been six youth in program, two females and four males, by my second week it went down to two females and two males. During my second placement there was one female youth and three males at first, then there was one female and one male plus one male youth who is going through a transition into a foster home. Therefore with two team members on shift and myself during placement, it was sometimes hard to have opportunity to engage with a youth.

I also learned about myself during the eleven weeks of my placement; for example how much about myself I was willing to share with the youth, they knew I was 20 years-old, that I had graduated from the high school that two youth are attending, however I never told them my last name, the youth knew it started with a 'B' but I never told them anything else. Why? I'm not sure, at first it started as a joke between a youth and myself then I just decided that if they wanted to guess then they could and if they happened to guess right I would tell them so. There are many other things I've learned about myself as well either through figuring it out myself or having team members point it out for me. For example, I am young compared to other team members however I never did let that affect anything I did, I didn't go to placement to make new friends in the youth, I went to learn about the field and how everything works in it. I've learned that I can adapt to almost anything that goes on and I always came prepared with something to do with the youth.

My final day of placement has come and gone and I was sad to leave. I learned and overcame so much during the eleven weeks of my placement, I had to come out of my comfort zone and in the process of doing so learned about myself. I feel like I've grown from this experience, so Thank-You! Ω **Laura Briggs**

## One Youth Care Worker's Hope: Gender Neutral Language

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Gender Neutrality is something that I believe should be a part of everyone's daily vocabulary and written word. People will often associate certain behaviours and appearances with being masculine or feminine or easier said; male or female and I don't feel like it's necessary to do that.

Have you ever had that moment when meeting or talking to a new person in your life and you're kind of unsure if they identify as a male or female; or they identify as gender fluid or gender queer? Maybe this new person is transgender but is not taking testosterone or estrogens? You don't want to be blunt and ask, but then you feel like an idiot because you just called someone who identifies as female by a male pronoun.

It's

impossible for you to identify how someone else feels about their gender.

That's the positive of gender neutral pronouns and using a gender neutral way of speaking. There are many positives to this new and upcoming way of maintaining dialogue.

Based on my opinion it seems that in the society we're a part of, mostly everyone has been taught by their guardians that a person with long hair, breasts, and pink belong to 'females' and short hair, muscles, and blue belongs to 'males'. I think it's going to be hard for our gendered culture to re-establish new ways of looking at what gender and sex are.

As a CYC Worker, we're the first person a new youth will see while we're doing the intake or tour of their new home. I think we need to be more aware of how we use gender. Example: intake forms have a spot where the youth has to identify their gender and has boxes to pick 'male' or 'female'. First problem, what if the person does not identify as either of those? Also, what if the youth is fluidly changing between what we see as male and female? Second problem is about transgendered youth, what is a trans youth supposed to put on that form? Maybe the youth does not want to come out to you, therefore does not ask the question!

If they are pre-operation trans-man; do they put female based on their biological sex, or male because that's who they really are? Realistically, asking them this question is kind of forcing them to out themselves to you when maybe they didn't want you to know. Third problem is who the hell cares? Why do we as caregivers need for the youth to identify?

Also, as CYC Workers it might be beneficial to think about the 'girls' section and 'boys' section of the bedroom set up that can be seen in mostly all of the group homes that I've heard of. Is it to separate them from having sex or performing sexual behaviours with one another? That's called heterosexism.

Heterosexism is the as-

sumption that all people are heterosexual. Who is to say that two boys in their private section of their home aren't going to participate in sex? Are the genders separated because it's easier for male and female identified staff to do gendered bedroom checks? That's also heterosexism. I don't think that is okay!

Let's go back to trans youth or gender queer youth: what section of the bedrooms do they sleep in? Their sex definition or their gender definition? Sex is the biological parts that you were born with, gender is who you really are! I think it might be interesting for us to ask the importance of this split and challenge it if no real reasons exist.

CYC workers, being caregivers and important support persons for these youth need to understand gender and fight against societies norms and push it away from us and just be more gender neutral and never assume a person is a certain gender without asking them first. Use the gender neutral pronouns and gender neutral language and make things easier on yourself and maybe we can soon get to a world where gender does not control us and our words Ω

*Jennifer Clark*

[Child and Youth Care student at the Nova Scotia Community College – Truro]

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The logo for NSCYCWA (Nova Scotia Youth Care Workers Association) features the acronym in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a white rectangular area that is flanked by black shapes on the left and right, creating a stylized, modern look.

The NSCYCWA is a non-profit, volunteer membership organization. Currently we are aiming to provide membership with the most current and up to date information. Our goal is to have youth care workers involved in this by submitting articles, updates, summaries, acknowledgements, etc.

We wish to support our field, we hope our field supports us by contributing.

Thank- You, NSCYCWA Executive

**Note: Information will come under scrutiny of the NSCYCWA Executive and inappropriate language, or information which is determined to be detrimental to individuals or organizations will not be published.**

## A Note of Thanks...

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Earlier this spring, at the provincial conference the NSCYCWA quite spontaneously awarded me a honorary life membership in their association. I was quite gob smacked by this as I had been useful putting together a conference web site program for the provincial conference. It was fun, advanced the goals of the Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations and allowed me to give back to an association with a special soft spot on my behalf. And yet, it was so much more. Like many who were in on the ground floor of the child and youth care association movement, I have held every position on my provincial board except V. P. and P., as they were too limiting considering the task at hand. So many years in the trenches with the Child and Youth Care Workers Association of Manitoba serving as membership, treasurer, newsletter editor and web master. Webmaster is my favourite role, as my association and the Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations have the distinction of being the first child and youth care organizations to have an online presence. My role as membership was essential as well and like many associations at the time, we dutifully copied the membership outline of the leading associations creating a honorary category which was ignored in the push to develop membership itself. I did not see the category used until the NSCYCWA quite properly employed it to thank Wilfred Jackson for his contribution to the association on his retirement. While not yet being the retiring kind, I have had the regretful distinction of being at the center of an event that was deeply painful to me yet perhaps instructive to those of you coming up. I was the victim of a planned vote off of the Child and Youth Care board. After twenty five years of acclamation elections a fellow board member who had taken offence to one of my decisions used the power block of the CYC student membership to elect me off the board. However painful; this event was; it was also liberating in that it forced an end to a spiral of work that had taken over my life and exhausted me at the time. Good things can result from bad events.

While technically no longer a member of any association, the task of building the association movement remained. With an assigned special status as member emeritus, I was allowed to continue my work for the Council. Time does heal, and yes, what goes around does tend to come around and the suspect administration did ultimately see its own end. To seal the deal, so to speak, CYCWAM kindly and quite properly recognized after the requisite amount of work on our third national conference in 2010; by awarding me a honorary membership. Perhaps, the provincial associations do not use this membership category enough. While attending the recent OACYC provincial conference I heard Joanne Cox, Conference Chair and Past President refer to her own honorary status as convenient for allowing her to relax around the annual drill of membership renewal. For her as well as myself, it was more than that of course, as for most who receive this honour remain in the traces like Joanne right up to the moment of retirement itself. This particular honorary membership has a special connection for me in that I have always felt a kind of kinship while working over the years with Wilfred, Karen Crossley and others as the NSCYCWA, like CYCWAM operates, in shall I say a more modest market than the larger provincial associations and each roughly paces the other in terms of history and development. In any case, it was great to attend the Council AGM this year with all concerns about sitting there being a member removed, twice over, in fact. Still, it is the work that counts, the honours a kind cherry on top of it all. To share this status in the company of Wilfred Jackson means a lot to me and I thank you for it.

## Celebrating Our Commitment!!



During their Annual General Meeting on June 22 at the Waterfront Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College HomeBridge Youth Society recognized the following individuals for their dedication to the organization.

- 10 Years Darrell Nogler, Lisa Morin, Karen Swaine, Carol Lethbridge, Andrew Grcic, **Caroline Moore**
- 15 Years Lisa Gallant, Bill MacFarlane, Kevin Foran, Matthew Aucoin.
- 20 Years Diana Grcic, Trish O'Brien, Patsy Thompson
- 30 Years Colleen Connors

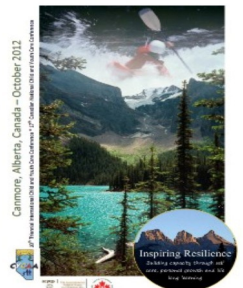


## Dive into summer...

The Council extends its Best Wishes for a safe and revitalizing summer, wherever your travels take you and those in your care.



Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations - [cyyccanada.ca](http://cyyccanada.ca)



## Roots House is here!

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The Pictou County Roots for Youth Society a non-profit organization, looking at the needs of youth in Pictou County aged 16-19 who may not have a safe place to live or they are at risk of not having a safe place to live. Some may remain in unsafe living arrangements because they have few if any alternatives or others may be “couch surfing” or “staying at a friend’s place.” This is not the nurturing, supportive environment that the youth of Pictou County deserve.

Issues surrounding Youth Homelessness in Pictou County have been recognized since at least 1998. Over time many people, committees and organizations have worked towards addressing youth homelessness in Pictou County. The Pictou County Roots for Youth Society is in many ways a culmination of this collective work. In 2009 The Pictou County Roots for Youth Society was officially formalized with the intention to provide services and housing to homeless youth.

As an organization, the Pictou County Roots for Youth Society has been working diligently to connect with existing community resources to identify the gaps in services for young people and to come up with a way to meet the needs of our homeless and at risk youth in Pictou County. They have a working board made up entirely of volunteers who care deeply about the youth in our community and put in the time and effort to sustain this organization. They have organized fundraisers, made applications for various grants, and developed a vision of what our community could look like if young people could get all of the support they need to become healthy and productive adults.

Among other funding applications, the board of directors, with the help of a part-time staff person, were able to put together an application to the federal government’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy. This application, submitted in October of 2010, was approved for funding. On February 14, 2011 the honourable Peter MacKay announced that the Government of Canada, through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, would provide over \$215,000 to the Pictou County Roots for Youth Society.

With this investment, the Pictou County Roots for Youth Society is another step closer to providing support for youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in our community. The Society purchased and renovated a facility to create a youth resource centre with bed capacity which will provide emergency housing, programming, laundry, kitchen, shower and storage facilities for the youth.

In addition to this seed funding, the Society has also received donations from many community organizations and corporations as well. For the past two years, they have participated in the *National Raising the Roof’s* toque campaign and this year the group hosted their first Annual *Heart ‘N’ Home Musical Extravaganza*, with both fundraising ventures resulting in great success. Our challenge now is seeking sustainable funding to open our doors 24 hours per day 7 days a week with a full-staff compliment. We have the vision, we have the “Roots House,” and we have the support of our community to move the issue of youth homelessness forward. For more information or to find out how you can help, please contact the Pictou County Roots for Youth Society at (902) 695-3241 or email us at [pictoucountyrootsforyouth@hotmail.com](mailto:pictoucountyrootsforyouth@hotmail.com)

*“Transitioning Our Youth from Crisis Today To Accomplishment Tomorrow”*

*Dedicated to supporting quality service for children, youth and families*

# NSCYCWA

Nova Scotia Child and Youth Care Worker's Association

## Membership Form

Date:

Name :

Address:

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Payment (Check one):

Cheque \_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_ M. O. \_\_\_

### Membership Options

**Full \$50** — Available for those meeting the standard for youth care practice. Entitled to all privileges of membership.

**Student \$25** — Available to those pursuing full-time studies pertaining to theory of child and youth care practice. Entitled to all privileges of membership.

**Agency \$150** — Available to agencies that support the goals, purposes and objectives of the NSCYCWA. Entitled to one vote and one membership rate at NSCYCWA functions.

**Honorary** — Bestowed on those who have made extraordinary contributions to the Association pending the discretion of the Executive Board.

Send Application Form To:

NSCYCWA  
C/O Membership Committee  
3045 Robie Street Suite 45  
B3K 4P6