

2023 AGM



**COWICHAN
VALLEY
YOUTH
SERVICES**

Serving Cowichan Valley Youth and Families
since 1973

Report from the Chair

As we enter our 50th year, CVYS has continued to focus on its mandate to provide counselling and various outreach services for youth and their families in the Cowichan Valley. Despite an increased need in our community and more complex issues and trauma, our incredibly resilient team continues to go above and beyond. We as a board are proud to be part of a group of such dedicated people who are making a difference in the lives of people here in our community.

Our outreach efforts continue to be supported by our community. Last year's Purica Foundation gala raised \$150,000 and the foundation has generously donated \$250,000 over the two galas. We continue to receive support from the Canadian Women's Foundation, Trans Care BC and donations by key community sponsors such as Island Ford, Home Depot and the United Way, among many others. We are looking forward to continuing to build relationships and obtain grants and donations from government and private sources to help us manage our wait list and continue to meet our mandate to provide free counselling and outreach to the people who need it most.

Sadly, we are saying goodbye to our long-time board member and former Board Chair, Grant McKinnon, who will now have more time to enjoy his retirement. Among his many contributions to CVYS, we will especially be grateful for his efforts with the refurbishment and renovations of our new home. Not only did he invest significant sweat equity in this building, he also canvassed his contacts to donate time and materials to create this welcoming space. We wish him the best and know that he will continue to be an avid supporter in our community.

After the pandemic, a couple of changes in management and a move to our new home, it was nice to have a year with less change, although many challenges remain. We will continue to seek funding and opportunities to support the staff and reduce the waiting list. To Ryan and our incredible staff, the Board is grateful for your continued dedication and hard work. You continue to inspire us in our volunteer roles to support all that you do. Thank you!

Chris Schultz - Chair



Richard presenting Grant with the CVYS Champion Award

Executive Directors Report

Cowichan Valley Youth Services has accomplished much this past fiscal year. After many significant deliberations and discussions that involved both staff members and the board, we made an intentional shift towards purchasing a permanent location. As a collective, we decided that it was time to settle in a space that meet both our programming needs and reflected our grassroots and community integration that originates 50 years ago. Our board worked tirelessly to reach this goal and I am happy to report that the finished product of 294 Coronation Avenue far exceeds our grandest vision and embodies our positionality within community and our approach to those we serve: warm, inviting, welcoming, low barrier, and nurturing. Purchasing, renovating, and setting up an office space is no small feat and this simply would not have come together without the collective efforts of the team. After finally setting up our new space, we were able to showcase our hard work at our open house. Many service providers and community members attended the event, and the prevailing response was how welcoming, calming, and beautiful the building is. Having the community come together in such a meaningful and positive way was the perfect way to commemorate our new home.



Open house!



Thank You Island Ford! What a surprise!!



Lots of treats to share!

The excitement for the year did not end here, shortly following the purchase of 294 Coronation Ave, the Purica Foundation announced CVYS as the recipients of their 2022 Gala. Witnessing the community coming together to support us was astounding. The many volunteers, community members and board members from Purica, organized and executed a wonderful event. From the set design, to the live auction, and the enthusiasm and passion of the volunteers, the general atmosphere of the event was overwhelming in the most positive way possible. I want to extend a genuine thank you to our supporters and the Purica Foundation for believing in the work that we do. Your generosity truly allows us to be present for the people we serve.



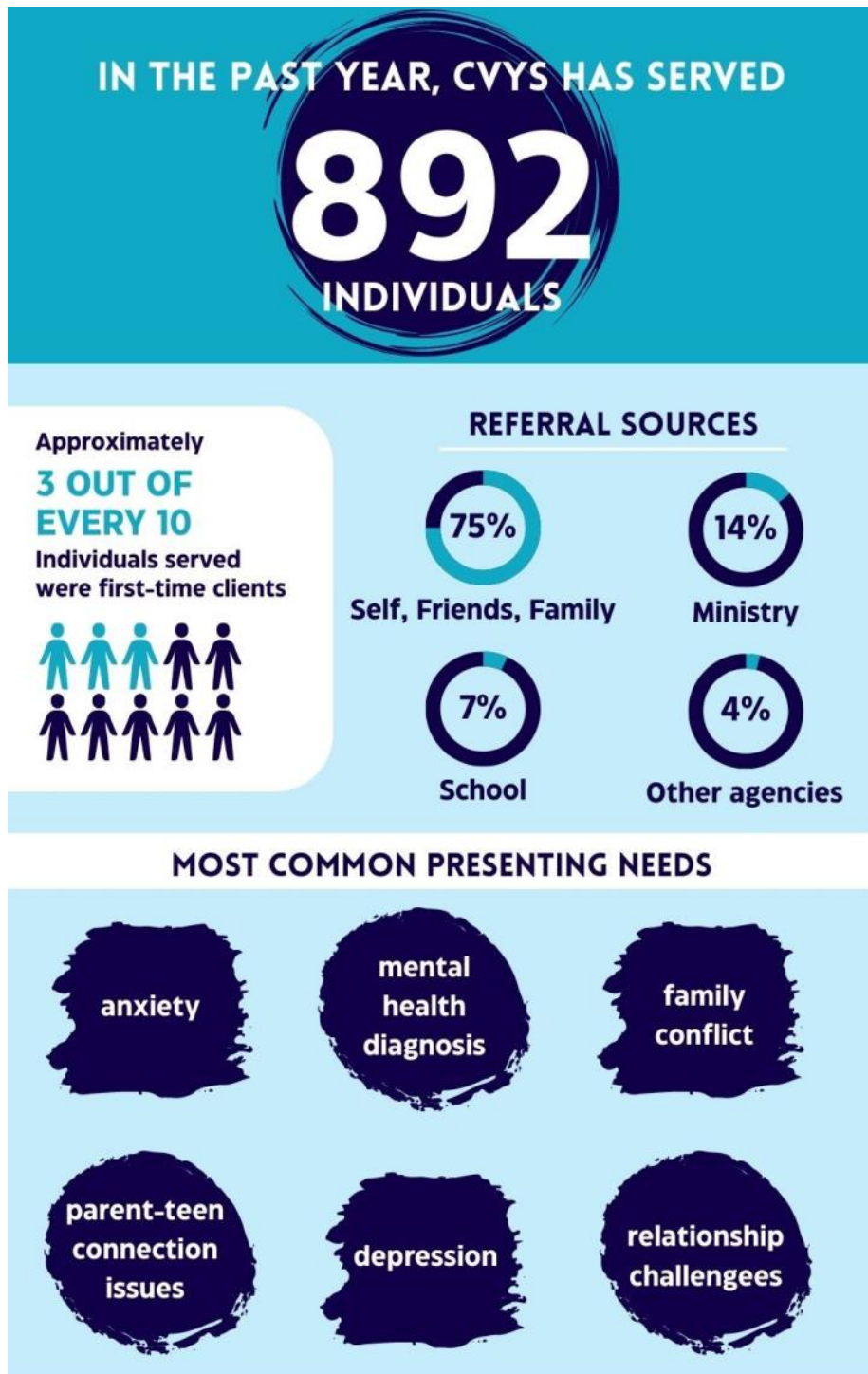
Trevor, Marnie and Ryan helping with set-up



Our Fabulous looking CVYS team!!



Marianne, Kaitlynn and Courtney looking Amazing!



While I want to celebrate all of our achievements as an agency, I also need to make space for how hard this work is, and how high the community needs have become. Our team has experienced a significant increase in both request for services and case complexity across all programs. This has been a challenge, but I have also been amazed by the passion, skill, and determination of our team to tirelessly respond to these needs. Not only has the team gracefully held our clients, they have also donated their time and efforts to numerous community events to support the agency. I am immensely grateful to be surrounded by such wonderful individuals who are passionate advocates for our community and youth mental health.



Purica presents CVYS with \$150,000 cheque!!

On a personal note, I am thankful for the relationships we have developed in the community. This past year has been one of the most challenging and rewarding in my career. I have leaned on mentors, community partners, and our board members, to navigate the nuances of this role and have been met with support and kindness. From these relationships I have gained a number of opportunities to advocate for our community and youth mental health services.

As I finish reflecting on this past fiscal year, I can't help but feel that we are carrying an immense amount of positive momentum leading into future. Between purchasing a permanent space, hosting an open house, and our largest fundraiser to date, 2022/2023 was an unequivocal success for CVYS. Thank you again to our staff, board, and the community for supporting us throughout all of these changes.

Ryan De Buysscher-Nailor (MA in progress)

Executive Director



Purica and CVYS get together !

Counselling Report

Spring 2022

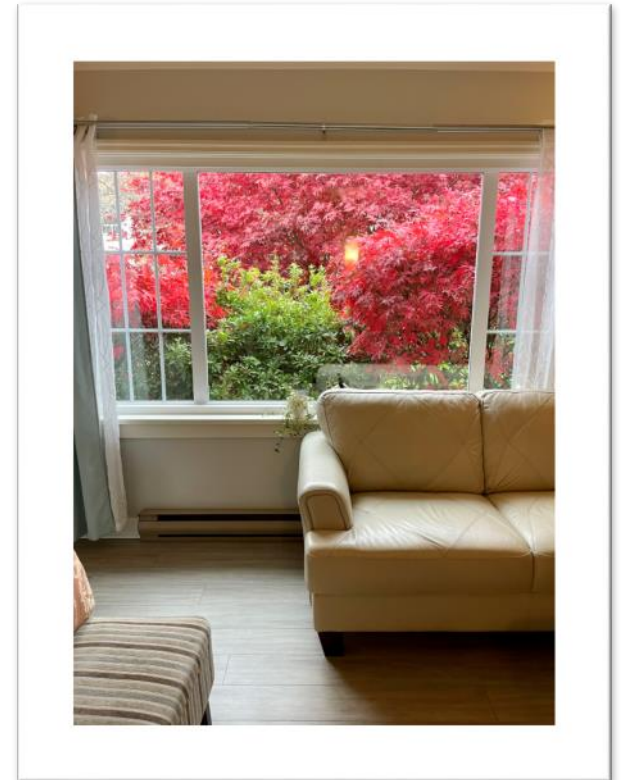
In March the counselling team was excited to begin group programming again after the long pandemic. We held Art Group, Pride Group and Parenting Support. These groups ran through March and April. Near the end of April we welcomed a new counsellor Alex who brought a wealth of knowledge and experience – and he came just in time to help us pack and move!

April was a busy month for the counselling team (and all staff) packing up the offices to prepare for our big move to the newly acquired house on Coronation Avenue. This process helped to let go of old materials and things no longer useful in order to make room for the new!

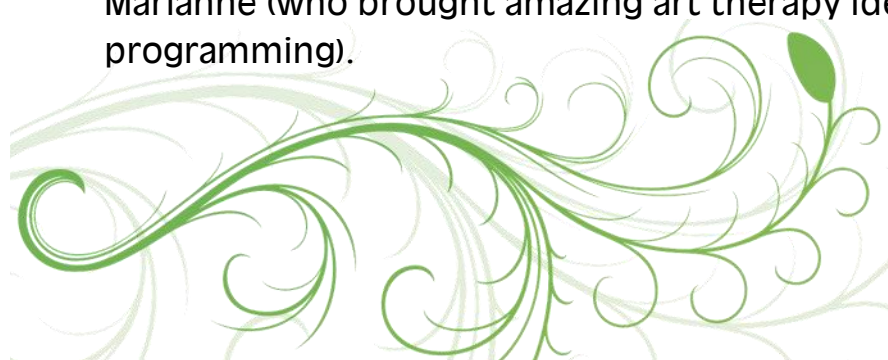
Our waitlist grew consistently through the spring but we continued to reach out to clients and families to check on their safety and to ensure they were feeling connected to CVYS.

May was the time for moving and settling in to our newly renovated and beautiful new home (thank you so much to Grant and the Board for making this happen so quickly). While the office was closed to accommodate moving, counsellors kept outreach sessions with those clients we were concerned about. The dedication of our staff to ensure our clients are safe and connected is admirable.

At the end of May we welcomed a new outreach counsellor to our team, Marianne (who brought amazing art therapy ideas to our group programming).



Our beautiful new waiting area



Summer 2022

In June we resumed Art Group just until the end of school. This was a small but well attended group and the youth reported enjoying and benefitting from the regular art sessions. Heading into the summer we moved our Pride Programming away from regular weekly sessions to monthly activities. In June our group facilitator Cass organized an outdoor Pride Celebration on our property. The event was open to the community and was well attended. Many staff came on the weekend to help out. In July, Cass organized a small but cozy (daytime) Pride Slumber Party at our new space.

Our intake worker left CVYS to pursue employment where she lived in Victoria and Deidra one of our youth and family counsellors moved into the role of intake counsellor. Thankfully, our waitlist lessened a little through the summer months. For the first time in nearly a decade, we ran a youth summer group. Our counsellor, Sinthu, was instrumental in organizing a very successful summer program and all of the counsellors contributed with facilitating, offering rides or helping with the preparation. We ran two groups each for eight half-days throughout the summer months. Some of the activities included going to the Raptors, making pottery with Marianne, bowling and a few trips to Fuller Lake (that other staff gladly participated in as you may recall it was a very hot summer and our office didn't have air conditioning at the time!). The youth thoroughly enjoyed themselves and the staff reported having a great time as well.

Just prior to the start of school, Cass held the final pride event – a Pride Picnic and the youth really enjoyed being out at the park together.



Cass in front of Pam's booth, at Pride Fest!



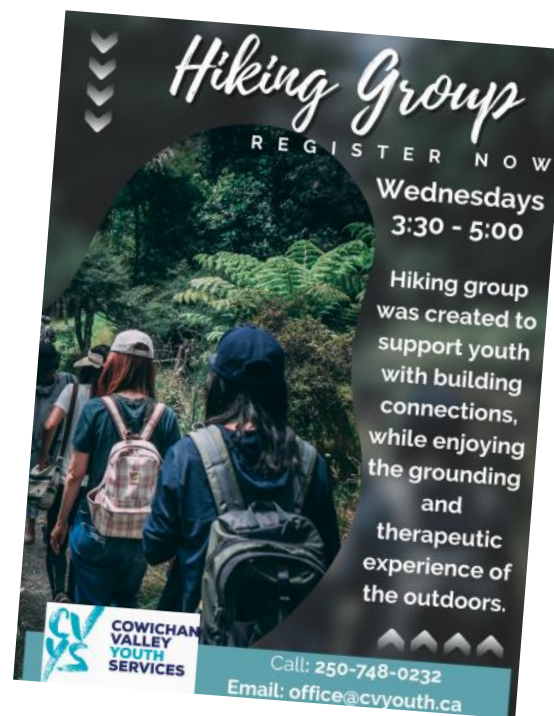
Hungry Bubbas fed us at the Pride Fest!!

Fall 2022

We welcomed Kaitlynn as a part-time outreach counsellor who came with experience from Discovery Youth outreach. Kaitlynn was a great addition and assimilated into our work family quickly and easily.

With back to school, we began weekly groups again with Art, Pride and a newly formed Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) group hosted by Ryan and Cortney L. Our groups continued until winter holidays in December. One of our counsellors Courtney J. held a hiking group in September and October. Although the hiking group had low attendance (maybe this generation of youth aren't as keen about leaving their devices to get out in nature!), the ones who attended really enjoyed themselves.

In November Deidra organized five Parent/Caregiver Support sessions. Many of our counsellors helped with facilitation and preparation. The parents reported getting a lot of useful information and helpful tips for communicating and supporting the youth in their lives.



Winter 2022/2023

After the New Year, we commenced our group programming with Art Group, Pride Group and D&D. Most of these were well attended and ran regularly until the school district's spring break.

During this time, we said good-bye to one of our youth and family counsellors, Cortney L, who had been filling in for a maternity leave but was also leaving to have a baby herself! We wished Cortney well - and she has already been back to show off baby to the CVYS staff J

With Cortney leaving, we welcomed back Meghan who was returning from her maternity leave. Meghan assimilated quickly into her role but unfortunately had challenges securing daycare and after a month and a half decided it was best for her to leave CVYS.

By our fiscal year end of March 31st, 2023 our waitlist grew substantially. Our intake worker has worked tirelessly to continue holding intake sessions with new youth and families as well as stay in touch with those on our waitlist to ensure they are continuously feeling connected and supported.

Final Word

I am so immensely grateful for all of our counsellors: Courtney, Sinthu, Deidra, Alex, Marianne and Kaitlynn who continue to hold their challenging caseloads with grace, kindness and skill. Our counsellors enjoy their work with the youth and their families and also enjoy working at CVYS and connecting with the other counsellors (so they tell me!).

Wendy Montgomery, MA
Youth and Family Counsellor
Team Lead



Parenting Group

In keeping with offering resources for Parents/ Guardians in our community, CVYS offered Spring and Fall Parent's Groups in 2022 from our beautiful "New Home" Coronation Avenue location. All of our participants remarked at how "at ease" and "welcoming" our new space is to attend. Topics covered in our Parent Groups ranged from Internet/ Device Use, Communication with Teens, Suicide Ideation and Self harm to Anxiety and Depression. Parent Group participants were made up of caregivers/parents who represented a varying age spectrum, with grandparents attending as well. Our facilitators were impressed with the level of engagement the participants brought to the group dynamic, as well as the peer support and connections made while sharing with each other. Group participants received resource information as well as handouts about topics covered.

This Spring 2023, CVYS is excited to offer a series of Parent Workshops in June. We have had great interest in our June Parent Workshop series. Our facilitators are working together to develop resources applicable to the current challenges which face Youth and Families in our Cowichan Community. With registration and participation in our workshops, CVYS facilitators recognize parents and caregivers are embarking to be the change they want to see in their families and youth.

~ **Deidra Cline CVYS Intake Coordinator/ Youth and Family Counsellor/ Facilitator**

D&D Group

The CVYS Dungeon and Dragons group allows participants to use their imagination and problem solving skills, while building meaningful relationships with their peers. This was our first time running the group and the youth reported significantly enjoying the opportunity to make friendships in a facilitated and fun space. As most of us, myself included, are still trying to learn the rules, a number of youth stepped forward in the group to lead our sessions. The two groups ran across fiscal 2022/2023 were made up of a diverse group of youth both in terms of age and presenting needs. In spite of their differences, the participants beautifully held space for each other to learn rules, all while laughing along the way. I can't wait to see the adventures we embark upon in the future!

~ **Ryan De Buysscher-Nailor**



Books Donated from Green Dragon Games



These beautiful murals are on display at the Villages on Trunk Rd

Hiking Group

Hiking group was created to support youth with building connections, while enjoying the grounding and therapeutic experience of the outdoors.

~ **Courtney Johnson**
CVYS Youth and Family
Counsellor



Is this an official Rob Purgavie Lego guy?!?

Art Group

Art Group was a group of youth interested in learning new techniques and skills using a variety of mediums to visually express themselves. We created a mural for The Village shelter site in Duncan which is now on display along their fence visible from Trunk Road. We also created some functional pottery pieces that were fired and glazed and lots of other fun and unique projects. Art group ran for almost the entire year and was weekly. Attendance likely averaged around 8 participants throughout and switching participants after a few months to help take care of some of the waitlist we had for art group. There was a great interest amongst clients as well as in the community.

Participants expressed really enjoying art group and are keen to get started in a new round of art group sessions and the waitlist still remains high. Participants made a lot of connections through this group and worked really well together on a number of projects, especially the creation of the mural.

~ **Marianne Boldt CVYS Group Facilitator and**
Youth Outreach Counsellor

Summer Group

Summer Group was created in the summer of 2022 to provide services for clients on the growing waitlist while CVYS was settling into the new building and introducing new staff. There was an average of 8 participants in the 2 groups conducted and each group ran for 8 days over a period of 2 weeks. We did a number of activities including bowling, tie dying at the park, pottery, visiting an animal sanctuary, the Raptors Birds of Prey center, and beach days at Fuller Lake where participants could paddleboard, swim and have a BBQ lunch. Besides the beach day where we brought a portable BBQ we were able to get lunches premade for participants through Cowichan Greens which was an amazing contribution from them and very much enjoyed by the youth.

The participants were very consistent about showing up for the sessions in the 2 weeks series and reported having a wonderful time. There were a lot of connections made and contact info exchanged amongst participants. It was also incredible to see the participant's bravery in trying new activities and open to new experiences. There were a lot of proud moments and small and large achievements!

Marianne Boldt -Group Facilitator and Youth Outreach Counsellor



Tie die shirts in the park day



Pottery Day!



Raptors Birds of Prey presentation



Lake day, floating and paddleboards!



Visiting the animal sanctuary



One of the Sanctuary residents



Hot and sunny day at the lake, floating on the unicorn!



The goats were friendly!!

YEMP Report

Service Canada has extended the current contract by nine months, it will now align with our fiscal year end of March 31, 2024. This means we have the opportunity and the funding to deliver services to an additional 18 youth in 3 cohorts within this contract extension.

Yemp focuses on employment and life skills in ways that are relevant and necessary in today society. All of our lessons are created with purpose in order to help the youth we serve understand the importance of continued learning and self improvement. We embrace feedback and try to implement good suggestions into future lesson plans. For example, we have heard multiple times from youth that they want to know more about filing income tax returns. We have since introduced an income tax workshop delivered by a CPA. The purpose is to give a brief overview of the income tax process, filling out onboarding tax forms, understanding why we

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAM 2023 STATISTICS

SINCE THE BEGINNING
OF THE CONTRACT,
YEMP HAS SERVED

73
YOUTH

54% identify as female
39% identify as male
7% identify as non-binary



Approximately

**9 OUT OF
EVERY 10**

Youth have successfully
completed the program*

*Successful completion is defined by having found employment or returned to school



Of youth identify as
having a disability*

*Including mental health

40

Individuals identify
as Indigenous

24%

Of individuals
reported unstable
housing conditions



30%

Of individuals
live in
remote areas

Less than

**2 OUT OF
EVERY 10**

Youth had their Driver's Licence



Of youth have
not completed
secondary school



Of youth have
not completed
middle school



WAGE SUBSIDY

32%

or **24** youth were
employed **with** a
wage subsidy

41%

or **30** youth were
employed **without**
a wage subsidy

- 10** Youth returned to school
- 2** Youth are self-employed
- 2** Are actively job searching
- 2** Youth are not recorded
- 3** Have not remained in contact

Employment was most
often obtained in

**FOOD AND
BEVERAGE**

followed by retail then housekeeping



pay taxes, the importance of filing tax returns. They receive a demonstration on how to complete a basic return on-line, and are provided with some community resources.

Often youth ask for assistance with other areas of their life, such as applying for housing, renewing ID, advocacy for medical treatment among other things. The youth who graduate our program leave here with much more knowledge in many areas, we are a safe place to ask questions that some are reluctant to ask because they feel that they should already know the answer. The youth who graduate our program leave here with great sense of pride and accomplishment, the friendships forged, teachings and better understanding of themselves combined with the certificates enable the youth to leave here excited to begin the next chapter of life.

We have a network of employers who are very aware of our program and often look to us if they are looking for a new hire. The employers are happy to know that our youth have worked hard during their time with us and have accomplished a lot. The youth all have the opportunity to receive certifications in multiple short-term courses including: First Aid level 1 with CPR, FoodSafe, Serving it Right, Selling it Right, WHMIS, Bill 14 (addressing bullying in the workplace) and RentSmart (considered by many landlords as favorable and demonstrates a good understanding of what it takes to be a model tenant).



The Youth Employment Mentorship Program allows youth to gain more than just employment skills, they also have the opportunity to develop meaningful connections with their peers. Over the past year, the YEMP team have seen many youth enter the program timid and quiet, complete the 6 weeks in group, and leave the program feeling confident and empowered having gained important skills for employment as well as new friendships.

The youth work really hard to complete their certificate trainings and get their resumes handed out, so we make sure to reward their hard work with fun activities.

In group time we also have the opportunity to work on important life skills that will help with maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Some of these activities include cooking workshops, self-care, and communication skills.

Elaine Webb -Program Manager

Sierra De Buyscher-Nailor –Program Facilitator

Fun Times!

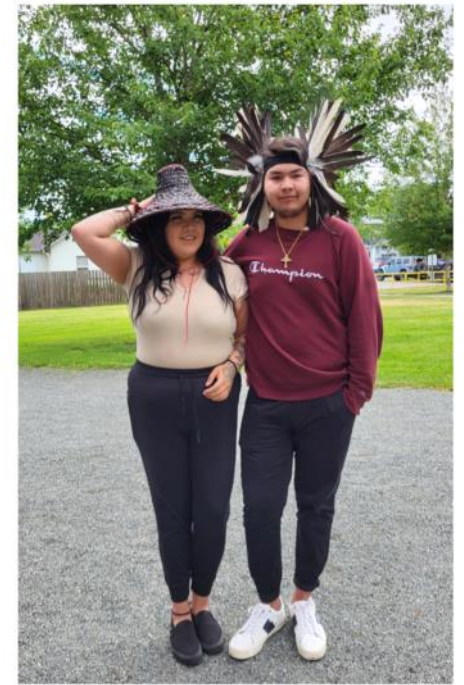


Positive Vibes!

Quotes from YEMP Participants

"This program helped me to get out of my comfort zone"

"The program made the employment process seem way less scary"



"I think this is a great program and it very much helped me look at life in a way better way"

"I received even more than I was hoping for"

"Elaine is the best person that I have met"

"This is a beyond amazing program and I'm so thankful for all the time and care you put into helping all of us"

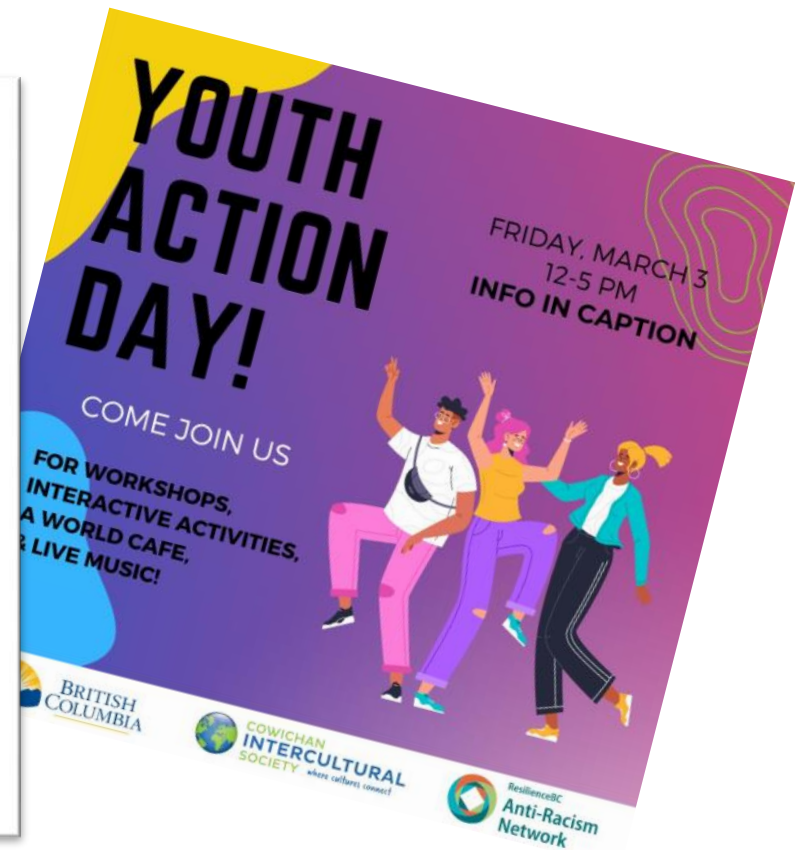
"I really appreciate all the workers here for being understanding and helping me through the program"

Community Events Report

This past year, I took on the role of community liaison. It has been such a great experience to connect with other service providers and really work as a team in our community. It shows the importance of community and working together to serve our families in the Valley. During my time as community liaison, I have attended various community meetings ranging from small, one-to-one meetings, to larger multi-organization meetings. As well as, participated in the planning of the upcoming Pride Parade. I also have had the opportunity to attend many community events such as Youth Action Day and Day of Services, along with others. Some of the services providers I have met with are Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, Lalum'utul' Smun'eem, House of Friendship, Volunteer Cowichan, Cowichan Tribes and many more. Overall, it has been such a joy to take this position on!

Sinthu Ratnasami

CVYS Community Liaison and Youth & Family Counsellor

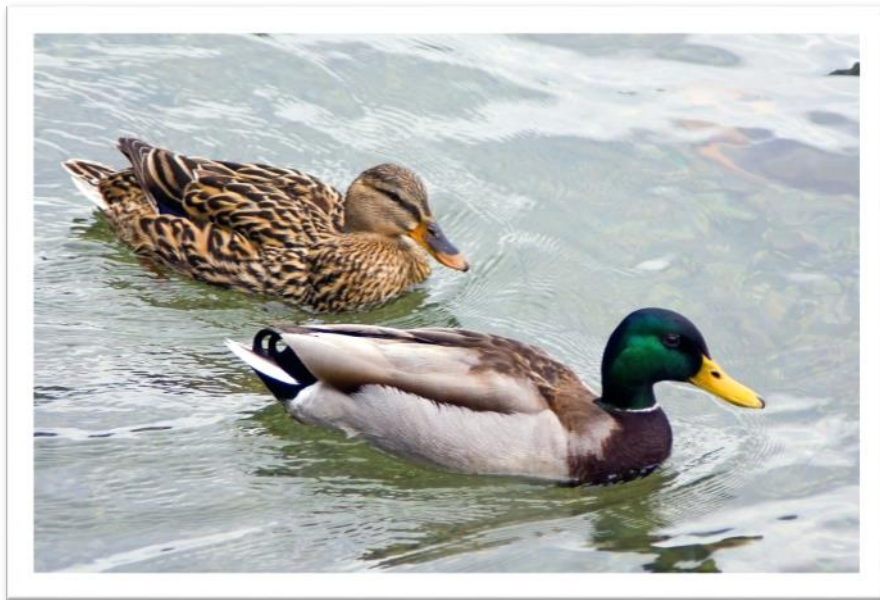


Outreach Report

Offering counselling on an outreach basis has provided the youth we serve with more accessible supports. For instance, I have worked with many youth who are not able to come into the office from the community they live in and they have expressed that without outreach they may not have been able to access counselling. With CVYS counsellors being able to offer to come to our clients, it removes a very vast barrier. Additionally, many youth have also expressed that outreach can be fun and they feel more comfortable opening up when we're out doing something together rather than sitting in an office. Youth often request to go for a walk, skip rocks, feed the ducks at Art Mann Park or simply sit somewhere outside. It's truly a privilege being able to give the youth we serve autonomy in their counselling journey, particularly in the environment of their sessions.

Kaitlynn Fawkes

Youth and Family Outreach Counsellor



*The youth love it when we bring bird seed to the park,
and so do the ducks!!*



Kaitlynn and Marianne, our amazing Outreach Team!!

A sincere **THANK YOU** to our funders and donors.

The work we do here at CVYS would not be possible without your generous support!



Ministry of
Children and Family
Development



Community Donations

Alpine-Pacific Leasing Ltd

Doyle Childs

G Weinstein

J Maree

P Seymour

M Huotari

Peninsula Co-Op

R Dresen

S Koop

Saigon Subs

Cowichan Mobile Power Washing

MNP

G Rosenberger

Youth 20/20

Cowichan Green Community

Nourish Cowichan

Queen Margarets School

PECSF

Duncan Lions

Shawnigan Lake School

Frances Kelsey Vital Youth

D Handle

OodyOos

Green Dragon Games

Brentwood School

S Palmer

R Silver

M Tokarek

SD79 School Board Office Staff

A Acton

J Cosh

John Finlayson

Purica Gala

Victoria Truss

Hilberry Group

Catalyst Crofton

Ai Wealth

Valley Carpet One

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E. Nydahl Construction

Jason Finlayson

Kate Roome Notary Public

Columbia Ice Logo

Purica



Ryan De Buysscher-Nailor, BA
Psy, MA (in progress)
Executive Director



Kerri Anderson
Office Manager/Bookkeeper



Jazz McKenzie
Admin & Program Support



Wendy Montgomery, BA Psy, MA
Counselling Team Lead
Youth & Family Counsellor



Alex Rugens, MA, MSc
Youth and Family Counsellor



Courtney Johnson, BA Psy
Youth and Family Counsellor



Kaitlyn Fawkes, BA CYC
Youth and Family Outreach
Counsellor



Marianne Boldt, BA CYC
Youth and Family Outreach
Counsellor



Sinthu Ratnasami, BSW
Youth and Family Counsellor



Deidra Cline
Intake Counsellor
Youth and Family Counsellor



Cassidy Anderson
Youth Groups Facilitator



Elaine Webb
YEMP Program Manager



Mitch McCreedy, B.A. MA (in progress)
YEMP Group Facilitator
Youth and Family Counsellor



Seirra De Buysscher-Nailor, BA, Hon
YEMP Group Facilitator

Our Board of Directors

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Our Team