

Reaching out

In the past year, the Society for Children and Youth of B.C. has continued to look outward to communities throughout British Columbia. We have spent time looking inward as well, by embarking on a process of organizational change. In doing so, we have made a formal commitment to the issues of diversity and inclusion. Our goal is to ensure that SCY reflects the diversity of the province we serve, and our method in doing so is to expand our partnerships and working relationships. This is a two-way street: the new relationships that SCY seeks out will inevitably have an impact on how SCY looks, thinks, and responds to issues concerning children and youth over time.

One of the by-products of this organizational change process has been a significant increase in our membership. This has increased our base of support and brought some new resources and energy into the organization.

We have renewed and changed the format for the Society's newsletter, renaming it Vocalpoint. Our initial issue dealt with child welfare in B.C. While SCY has continually spoken out on this issue over the years, the publication of this newsletter felt like a return to our roots. We are particularly pleased with the eminence of the contributors, the quality of the work, the importance of the messages, and the capacity of the newsletter to create new relationships for SCY while reaching out to diverse audiences. Upcoming issues specific to Aboriginal, immigrant and refugee children attest to this fact.

SCY continues to focus on children and youth who may be excluded or systemically disadvantaged in a variety of ways. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child continues to be the basis for this work. As you will read in this annual report, it has been another challenging and rewarding year for our organization and with your support, we have much to look forward to. Thank you very much to all of our members, to our volunteers who contribute so much to the work of SCY, and to our Executive Director Mary Clare Zak for her continued commitment and hard work.

Joe Rosen



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Breaking new ground in child and youth advocacy

Youth with disabilities overrepresented in the youth criminal justice system

Youth with disabilities, especially youth with learning, mental health, and developmental disabilities are overrepresented in the youth criminal justice system.

This year SCY examined the rights and needs of youth with disabilities in conflict with the law in BC to raise awareness of rights of youth, encourage social supports that enhance prevention as well as intervention, support inclusion and accessibility and a better understanding of diversity, encourage ongoing dialogue and build on good practices.

A literature review, consultation paper and a series of roundtable sessions in BC involved youth, parents and service providers. Key questions included: how can the needs of youth with disabilities best be met at various stages of the youth criminal justice system? And what can be done to

prevent young people with disabilities from coming into conflict with the law?

SCY continues to seek input on the experiences of youth with disabilities (and their parents/ caregivers) involved with the youth criminal justice system. Ultimately, we are seeking input on what an "ideal" youth criminal justice system would look like... one that realizes the rights, and meets the needs, of all youth, including youth with disabilities.

Building a BC Fit for Children: Children rights monitoring

Unlike any other international human rights treaty, the Convention on the Rights of the Child allows for non governmental organizations to formally participate in monitoring the implementation of children's rights. As such, Canada's governments and the non governmental sector share a moral obligation to ensure that provisions in the Convention are carried out. Despite this, very few non governmental organizations participate in monitoring and reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and even fewer children and youth actually participate in this important process.

A partnership involving the Coalition for Kids, the Child and Youth Advocate for the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Foundation is supporting a city wide initiative that asks: How are children and youth in Vancouver faring? Are their Convention rights being upheld? Where there are gaps, how can they best be met? A workshop series involving youth, children, parents, and service providers and a cross section of Vancouver's diverse populations will examine these questions and present results at a National Child Day conference in November 2005.

The first such initiative of its kind in Canada, the process builds on the development of a monitoring tool kit of the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children. Our goal is to establish an ongoing monitoring processes, a rights based framework for service delivery, and to expand this initiatives to other parts of BC and Canada.

Connecting

SCY continues to bring people together around issues affecting children & youth, responds to hundreds of requests for information and publications on children's rights from a variety of sources throughout BC, across Canada, and around the globe. Our expanded membership base stretches from northern BC to the African continent, attesting to the local and global nature of our work. Vocalpoint, SCY's



REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Making middle childhood matter

While we are increasingly aware of the benefits of youth participating in decisions affecting them, there is less awareness of the benefits of involving younger age groups. With developmentally appropriate means of participation these benefits may include improved relationships with adults, increased confidence, and overall better outcomes. Over the past year, the United Way of the Lower Mainland roundtable on school aged children provided a unique opportunity for

"We are thrilled to receive the Youth Friendly Communities Award!. It is an honour to be recognized by the Society for Children and Youth of BC as being youth friendly. This award lets us know that the programs and services that we provide for the youth of Abbotsford are relevant and recognized even beyond our borders."

BEV OLFERT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ABBOTSFORD YOUTH COMMISSION

revised newsletter has revitalized our capacity to share information and better serve our growing membership. Upcoming issues in 2005 will include perspectives on Aboriginal and immigrant and refugee children in BC.

Recognizing

Innovative efforts to involve children and youth in community building were recognized through the Child and Youth Friendly Communities awards. In 2004 awards and honourable mentions were presented on National Child Day to: John Howard Society of North Island, the Abbotsford Youth Commission, the New Westminster Youth Advisory Committee, the Sunshine Coast Strikers U16 Rep Soccer Team and the Chetwynd Alcohol & Drug Misuse Prevention Committee

stakeholders to explore issues of school aged children and what contributes to their healthy development. Through our Child and Youth Friendly Communities Program and commitment to children's rights, SCY will work with our partners to identify ways to ensure that the voices of 'the middle years' count.

Mary Clare Zak



Be an advocate for children and youth. Here are some ways.

- 1** Become a member
 Renew my membership

As a member I will receive the Vocalpoint Newsletter and SCY member updates, 20% discount on all SCY publications, and information on issues, initiatives, and events.

Annual membership fee*

- \$10 individual \$25 organization

- 2** Make a tax deductible donation

Here is my donation*

- \$25 \$50 \$100 I prefer to give \$ _____

- 3** Volunteer

Participate in one of our committees

- Rights Awareness
- Child and Youth Friendly Communities
- Communications
- Fund Raising and Membership

Join the Board of Directors

I want

- To contribute to SCY's endowment with the Vancouver Foundation. If so, we will contact you.
- More information on how to make a charitable bequest.
- To find out about volunteer opportunities at SCY

*Donations and fees can be received by cash or cheque only.

NAME

ORGANIZATION (IF APPLICABLE)

ADDRESS AND POSTAL CODE

PHONE

EMAIL

Please return this form to an SCY representative along with your contribution or mail to SCY office: (prior to August 1, 2004)
Society for Children and Youth of BC, 551 – 409 Granville Street, Vancouver BC V6C 1T2 TEL 604-433-4180
 EMAIL info@scyofbc.org www.scyofbc.org

After July 7, 2005 our new location will be
802 – 207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver B.C. V6B 1H7

The Society for Children and Youth of BC works with a variety of funders, networks and individuals, all of whom provide valuable support and services. We appreciate all of our volunteers and associated organizations for their hard work and commitment.

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 Global Issues Committee, Child Welfare League of Canada
 Early Childhood Development Advisory Committee
 School Aged Children Roundtable – United Way of the Lower Mainland
 Child and Youth Advocate, City of Vancouver Advisory Committee
 Coalition for Kids
 Rosemary Brown Award for Women committee
 First Call

SCY APPRECIATES THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY THE FOLLOWING FUNDING AGENCIES

Law Foundation of BC
 Ministry of Solicitor General and Public Safety
 Vancouver Foundation
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 Child and Youth Officer for BC
 United Way of the Lower Mainland



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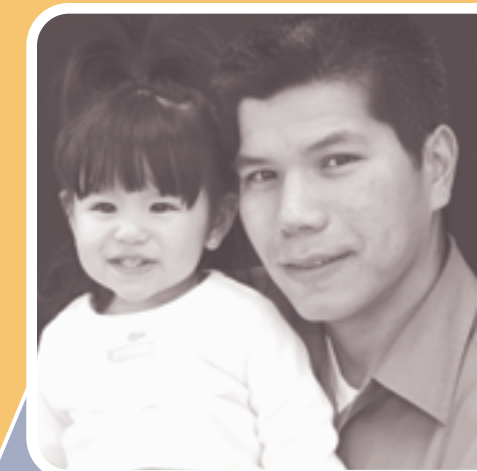
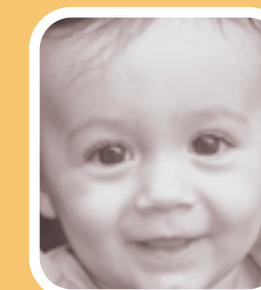
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Society FOR Children AND Youth of BC



A multi-disciplinary forum for exchange and action

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