**2023 In Review**

**Nov. 23 Report**

[Julie-Anne Hunter](https://www.vyes.ca/yes-executive-director/), ED of the [Victoria Youth Empowerment Society](https://www.vyes.ca), reported out on the impacts of this year’s VFCYJC grant in support of the [Summer Opportunities Program](https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/VFCYJC-Summer-Opportunities-Program-Report.pdf); 143 young people were welcomed off the street for counselling, group activities, life-skills training and healthy lunches and snacks.  [The Village Initiative](https://thevillageinitiative.ca/)‘s [Cindy Andrew](https://twitter.com/CindyPAndrew1) provided a [powerpoint](https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Vic-Family-Youth-Justice-Committee-Nov-2023.pptx)overview of this growing inter-disciplinary network of [40 organizations](https://thevillageinitiative.ca/our-network/), each of which recognize that children, youth and families in the Sooke/West Shore region are best served through “an all-hands-on-deck approach – a Village.” She discussed TVI’s new [Trent’s Trajectory infographic](https://thevillageinitiative.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/TVI-Trent-Poster-11x17-Web.pdf)charting the ROI on upstream intervention; the campaign to bring a [Foundry BC](https://foundrybc.ca/)youth counselling centre to Langford (with affiliated outreach to Sooke and Port Renfrew); and other [TVI priorities](https://thevillageinitiative.ca/our-priorities/) (including [data on the wellbeing of children and youth](https://thevillageinitiative.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/WS-Sooke-Youth-Wellbeing-Infographic-Fall-2022.pdf) in the region; she tipped us that a five-year update of the [McCreary Centre Society](https://mcs.bc.ca)‘s BC [Adolescent Health Survey](https://mcs.bc.ca/about_bcahs) is due in 1Q 2024).  Also: A [renewed MYST advocacy letter](https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Nov.-2023-CRED-MYST-advocacy-letter-to-Minister-Farnworth-.pdf) calling for steady, long-term funding and additional councillor/officer teams has been sent to Solicitor General Mike Farnworth; and the committee’s [X feed](https://twitter.com/vfamcourt) is operational again after technical difficulties, with posts again keeping pace with those on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/vfamcourt/).

**Oct. 26 Report**

Two guests this week: The [Hon. Mitzi Dean](https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members/42nd-Parliament/dean-mitzi), Minister of Children and Family Development, and UBC-affiliated researcher/economist [Bill Warburton](https://ca.linkedin.com/in/william-warburton-phd-1026a370).  Dean, former Executive Director of the [Pacific Centre Family Services Association](https://pacificcentrefamilyservices.org) and a VFCYJC member herself (2008-17), highlighted our multi-jurisdictional role in supporting service providers and the region’s most vulnerable young people. “Your work is needed, recognized and appreciated,” she said. Warburton, another VFCYJC alumnus, shared a [powerpoint](https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Victoria-YJ-FC.pptx) presentation on his [recent co-authored study](https://docs.iza.org/pp199.pdf)identifying high-school graduation as a critical factor in healthy, happy adult lives. The data clearly shows that investment in strategic upstream invention for young people falling behind can have dramatic implications for BC’s social, health and youth justice systems. Capital Region Action Team’s long-time lead [Bill McElroy](https://ca.linkedin.com/in/bill-mcelroy-b3304656)delivered a 25th anniversary [organizational update](https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/CRAT-Report-to-VFCYJC-October-2023.pdf) — including a [new website](https://capitalregionactionteam.ca) and ongoing commitment to raising awareness about child and youth sexual exploitation in Greater Victoria.

**Sept. 27 in Central Saanich**

Chair Marie-Terese Little welcomed new appointees [Karin Kwan](https://vcpac.ca/trustee-election/karin-kwan.html) (Vice-Chair, SD #61) and [Corey Wood](https://www.linkedin.com/in/coreywoodmb/?originalSubdomain=ca) (District of Central Saanich Police Board). MYST’s Mia Golden and Gord Magee spoke about the daunting new South Island challenge posed by [gang recruiters](https://www.victoriabuzz.com/2023/07/gangs-from-the-mainland-are-recruiting-and-indebting-youths-in-victoria/#:~:text=There%20has%20been%20a%20notable,getting%20themselves%20indebted%20to%20gangs.) from the Lower Mainland. SD #61 Chair Nicole Duncan addressed the school board’s decision re: the School Police Liaison Officer Program (see VFCYJC [backgrounder](https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Backgrounder-Ver.-2-Sept-15-SD-61-School-Liaison-Officer-program-.docx)). Members were reintroduced to the [Qualification Matrix (Fillable)](https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/VFCYJC-Experience-Matrix-final-fillable.pdf), which identifies the skill sets and interests ideal for committee members and their alternates.

**June:** A $3k grant was approved for the 2023 Wellness Wednesday program run by the Cornerstone Youth Society (aka Sanctuary Youth Society).Thanks to representatives from the 13 resource organizations and three law-enforcement agencies who attended the VFCYJC Open House, held June 13 at Victoria City Hall. A most enjoyable meet-and-greet that introduced our members to a wide range of local heroes delivering essential services to young people and their families in Greater Victoria. *(See the Open House*[*hand-out*](https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/VFCYJC-Open-House-Info-Sheet-draft.pdf)*.)*

**April:** A new three-year Strategic Plan (2023-2026) that strongly reaffirmed the previous plan was approved by the Committee. Restorative Justice Victoria’s Gillian Lindquist and the Mobile Youth Service Team’s Mia Golden and Gord McGee provided updates on their respective organizations; each noted a marked increase in sexualized violence and gang activity in Greater Victoria.

**May:** The VFCYJC data base of Greater Victoria service providers and resource agencies was fully updated. A $5.3k grant was awarded to the [Victoria Youth Empowerment Society](https://www.vyes.ca) for its 2023 [Summer Opportunities](https://www.vyes.ca/programs/#summer) program.

**February:** Chair Marie-Terese Little presented an orientation for new and returning VFCYJC appointees. A reminder was shared that trainings offered by Victoria’s Indigenous Perspectives Society are available at no charge to committee members. The Committee extended its appreciation for Bill McElroy’s long-term role as treasurer and welcomed Edith Paterson to the role effective in June.

**January:** New and returning members were welcomed to the Annual General Meeting by Chair Marie-Terese Little and Vice-Chair Adam Flint; both were returned to these positions for 2023 during the AGM election. The annual budget was approved and the 2022 Annual Report received. The Capital Regional District’s Steve Carey shared a power point on the background of the VFCYJC and its new status as a designated CRD commission.