

VICTORIA FAMILY COURT & Youth Justice Committee



ANNUAL
REPORT
2025



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Territorial Acknowledgement

The Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee meets on the unceded Coast Salish territory of the Lekwungen-speaking and WSÁNEĆ nations. We acknowledge and thank the Lekwungen-speaking peoples, also known as the Songhees, Esquimalt and Beecher Bay First Nations communities, for allowing us to live on their lands.

The VFCYJC further acknowledges that the Capital Region spans the traditional territories of Coast and Straits Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth peoples and that, by virtue of being represented by all 13 municipalities, our committee is responsible to help build respectful and enduring relationships with our First Nations neighbours.

Supporting Documents

An archive of Annual Reports from the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFCYJC) and regularly updated documents, resources and links to relevant organizations in the Greater Victoria region can be found at victoriafamilycourt.ca. Agendas and minutes are filed on the [CRD website](#).

2025 VFCYJC MEMBERSHIP

Marie-Térèse Little, Chair; Mayor, District of Metchosin
Kimberley Guiry, Vice-Chair; Councillor, City of Langford
Cynthia Day, Past Chair; Councillor, City of Colwood
Jeff Bateman, Communications Sub-Committee Chair; Councillor, District of Sooke
Marcie McLean, Priorities Sub-Committee Chair; Councillor, District of Highlands
Esther Paterson, Treasurer; Councillor, District of Oak Bay
Ken Armour, Councillor, Town of Esquimalt
Don Brown, Councillor, Town of View Royal
Susan Kim, Councillor, City of Victoria
Kristine Marshall, Councillor, District of North Saanich
Terri O'Keefe, Councillor, Town of Sidney
Misty Olson, Councillor, City of Colwood
Sarah Riddell, Councillor, District of Central Saanich
Mena Westhaver, Councillor, District of Saanich

ALTERNATES

Kim Jordison, Councillor, City of Colwood
Sara Duncan, Councillor, Town of Sidney
Irene McConkey, Councillor, District of North Saanich
Mike McKay, Central Saanich Police Board
Rose Stanton, Youth and Family Matters Chair; Councillor, District of Highlands
Mary Wagner, Councillor, City of Langford

SCHOOL DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

Christine Lervold, School District #62
Teri Vanwell, Trustee, School District #63
Nola Silzer, Trustee, School District (alternate)

CRD APPOINTEES

Cheryl Chators, Boys and Girls Club of Greater Victoria
Andrew Holeton, Coalition to End Homelessness in Greater Victoria
Bill McElroy, Capital Region Action Team on Sexually Exploited Youth
Samantha Rappaport, Family Lawyer, Brown, Henderson, Melbye

VFCYJC SECRETARY

Marnie Essery

CAPITAL REGION DISTRICT LIAISON

Steve Carey, Senior Manager, Legal Services & Risk Management
Sharon Orr, Corporate Services



THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026

Mission

To facilitate connections between municipal and First Nations governments, school districts, service providers, and the broader community in order to educate and advocate on the challenges and shortfalls facing youth and families who may come into contact with the justice system.

Vision

Families and youth have access to timely and appropriate supports within their communities so that they may achieve their full potential.

Goals

1. Increase awareness of the issues facing families and youth involved with the justice system while raising the profile of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee.
 - a) Identify gaps in services.
 - b) Support youth initiatives.
2. Pursue and promote meaningful reconciliation with the Indigenous community.
 - a) Committee members participate in Cultural Competency Training
 - b) Acknowledge and reduce the over-representation of Indigenous people in the justice system.
3. Advocate for policies and initiatives that improve outcomes for families and youth who may come in contact with the justice system.
 - a) Give a platform to youth/ amplify youth voices.
4. Support equity of access to resources across the region.
 - a) Help other organizations leverage their resources in support of families and youth.
5. Facilitate collaboration between community service providers and governance bodies in the interest of better supporting youth and families.

CHAIR'S REPORT



As a delegated commission of the Capital Regional District (CRD), the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFYYJC) remains focused on our unwavering commitment to educate municipal and school board leaders on the challenges and shortfalls facing youth and families who may come into contact with the justice system. We are also committed to advocating on behalf of the front-line service agencies that provide services to these youth. Education and advocacy continued to be main themes at the VFCYJC in 2025.

At the Annual General Meeting in January, members agreed to reduce the number of meetings to four per year along with an Open House. This meant that our agendas were packed solid with updates and issues of concern. We have continued to support our front-line service agencies through encouragement, activism and our grant program. In 2025, grants were awarded to the Human Nature Counselling Society and the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society.

It was a pleasure to welcome guest speaker [Jamie Maclaren](#), Executive Director of Access Pro Bono and author of the *Roads To Revival* review of BC legal aid services, to our April meeting. Mr. Maclaren discussed the priority recommendations within the 2019 review. The province has addressed some of the gaps identified, and we are urging uptake on so-far unaddressed priority recommendations to establish a client-centred legal aid system, including creation of an Access to Justice Commissioner position.

In June, Dr. Rebeccah Nelems reviewed her research on the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) and she emphasized the need to continue our advocacy on MYST's behalf. And in October we hosted a substantial panel discussion on three critical Greater Victoria Integrated Police Units.

Our annual VFCJC Open House at Victoria City Hall was a perfect opportunity to connect with representatives from nearly two dozen service agencies within the region. This event was hugely successful, and we look forward to the next such meet-and-greet in 2026.

I continue to be inspired by the hard work of the service agencies, and I am deeply grateful to be in this position as we make a small but significant impact on the lives of youth and families in Greater Victoria. I extend my gratitude to the members of this commission, and I look forward to another year of meaningful work ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie-Térèse Little, PhD
Chair, Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee
Mayor of the District of Metchosin and Vice-Chair of the CRD

VICE-CHAIR'S REPORT



The year 2025 was one of meaningful engagement, learning, and advocacy for the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFCYJC). The transition to a four-meeting annual schedule introduced new dynamics for committee operations. This shift required greater focus within each meeting and more intentional coordination across initiatives. While the reduced schedule proved challenging at times, the planned addition of two more meetings in 2026 is expected to provide a more balanced and productive structure.

The committee's grant distribution program remained a cornerstone of its commitment to youth. Presentations from the grant recipients, Youth Empowerment Society, Umbrella Society, and Human Nature Counselling Society, offered valuable insight into the vital supports these organizations provide throughout the region. Their contributions enhanced the committee's understanding of emerging needs and reinforced the importance of continued advocacy and sustained community partnerships.

The committee also continued to feel the absence of former Vice Chair Adam Flint, whose sudden passing in 2024 had a lasting impact. His dedication to supporting vulnerable youth and families remains deeply appreciated, and continued reflections on his contributions were a meaningful part of the year's work.

Looking ahead to 2026, the committee is preparing for the upcoming fall elections, which are expected to bring changes among municipal leaders and school district trustees. Anticipating new perspectives and membership, the committee is focused on creating a smooth transition that will support continuity of its mandate and the ongoing success of its initiatives.

The VFCYJC remains grounded in the strength and commitment of its members. Committee discussions continued to be marked by respect, openness, and a willingness to engage thoughtfully with complex and often emotionally charged issues. Their dedication to serving youth and families, combined with their thoughtful engagement on challenging issues, continues to inspire. It is an honour to support this work, and I look forward to contributing to the committee's efforts in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Kimberley Guiry
Vice-Chair, Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee
Councillor, City of Langford

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

January 23, 2025

At the Annual General Meeting, members welcomed back Marie-Terese Little (Metchosin), Kimberly Guiry (Langford) and Esther Paterson (Oak Bay) in re-elections as Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer respectively for 2025. Returnee [Sub-Committee](#) chairs are Marcie McLean (Priorities/Grants), Bill McElroy (Capital Region Action Team), Rose Stanton (Youth & Family Matters) and Jeff Bateman (Communications/Website).

The [2024 Annual Report](#) was received and approved. Members agreed to cut the annual meeting schedule to four per year plus an Open House; sub-committees will continue their work in interim periods and meetings can be called by the Chair as required.

At our regular meeting, Chair Little presented the [2025 orientation](#) for returning and new committee appointees. Good news from Bill McElroy's [report on the ad hoc MYST planning group](#), which confirms the Pacific Centre Family Services Association has secured federal funding for sexual assault and exploitation prevention work through mid-2027; how these funds might apply to the MYST work of Mia Golden and her new Saanich Police partner Shauna Bainbridge is to be determined.

The committee approved a [Marcie McLean motion](#) for the VFCYJC to develop a call-to-action strategy to alert responsible Provincial ministries to service shortfalls and other critical gaps in the youth justice system. The latest [School Police Liaison Officer Program backgrounder \(Ver. 8\)](#) updated through early this year was received for information, as was a report on last fall's [youth issues panel discussion](#).

April 24, 2025

Access Pro Bono's Jamie Maclaren provided a PowerPoint update on priority recommendations within his 2019 [Roads To Revival](#) review of BC legal aid services. He extended full credit to the Province for heeding the report's priority calls for more [Indigenous Justice Centres](#) and independent community legal aid clinics; establishing the [Immigration and Refugee Legal Clinic](#) at the [Immigrant Services Society of BC](#)'s Welcome Centre in Vancouver; and delivering support to pro bono lawyers working on complex criminal cases.

There is much still to accomplish, Maclaren added, in creating an effective client-centred legal aid system in BC as the report envisions. Maclaren suggests that the Attorney General next be asked to establish an Access to Justice Commissioner to provide independent oversight on justice institutions, including courts and government, and create standardized performance data on the principle of "what's measured gets managed." The Committee plans to advocate with Attorney General Sharma accordingly.

Jamie Maclaren of Access Pro Bono Society outlined priority recommendations for creating client-centred legal aid systems in BC





Reaching Recovery Together



Evan James, Manager of Strategic Initiatives for the Umbrella Society, shared outcomes from last year's VFCYJC grant in support of its Navigating Substance Use and Mental Health for Students program.

Another guest, [Youth Empowerment Society](#) Operations Director Kisae Petersen, spoke of the effectiveness of Umbrella's work with young people experimenting with substances, primarily alcohol and nicotine.

In other business:

- The VFCYJC's third annual open house is set for Wednesday, May 28 from 3 to 6 pm at Victoria City Hall
- The committee voted to ask Chair Little to [write to the Attorney General](#) in support of recommendations raised by the [Be Amazing](#) campaign's Cathy Peters
- The VFCYJC is joining a growing number of local governments that have suspended their X accounts
- The latest [School Police Liaison Officer Backgrounder](#) was circulated; and there was initial talk of a panel discussion this fall that would focus on three of the essential youth services delivered by [Greater Victoria Police Integrated Units](#), namely the Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team, the Regional Domestic Violence Unit and the Mobile Youth Services Team.



May 28, 2025

Greater Victoria frontline resource agencies joined VFCYJC members at our third annual Open House at the City of Victoria's Centennial Square municipal hall. This annual meet-and-greet welcomes an active and caring community to say hello and educate each other about everyone's respective work. Another good turn-out and we'll do it again in 2026.

June 26, 2025

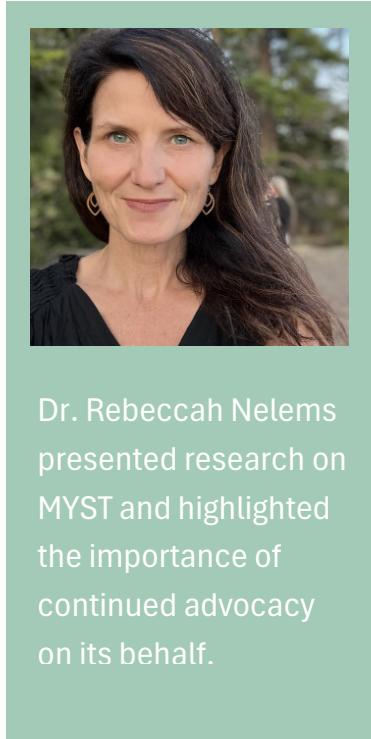
Guest speaker [Dr. Rebeccah Nelems](#) and her colleague Laura Lee shared their [substantial research](#) on the Mobile Youth Services Team and highlighted the need for continued advocacy on its behalf. The committee discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Police Board; success of MYST and its model of unique support to youth; the proven value of early intervention when weighed against potential long-term criminal justice, healthcare, and mental health costs; and the continuing long-term funding challenges faced by MYST. Representatives from the [John Howard Society](#) were in attendance and shared their perspective.

In other business, members received a 2024 grant report from [Human-Nature Counselling Society](#), then approved a \$8k grant request from the [Victoria Youth Empowerment Society](#) to fund a temporary support worker for its Alliance Club drop-in centre. Known as Helen's Place in honour of long-time City of Victoria councillor and VFCYJC stalwart [Helen Hughes](#), the welcoming space on Yates Street provides street-entrenched youth with meals, shower and laundry facilities, and a safe, secure hang-out spot complete with support services.

Two motions were approved:

- i) To organize a panel discussion on October 23 focused on the future of three youth-serving agencies in Greater Victoria: Island Health's [Integrated Regional Mobile Crisis Response Team](#); the [Integrated Regional Domestic Violence Unit](#); and the [Mobile Youth Services Team](#); and
- ii) To write the Attorney General in support of recommendations from Jamie McLaren's [Roads to Revival](#) report.

A new VFCYJC advocacy letter in support of Cathy Peters' [Be Amazing](#) campaign was shared with members, along with a note of thanks from Ms. Peters, who recently published a new edition of her book, [Child Sex Trafficking in Canada and How to Stop It](#).



Dr. Rebeccah Nelems presented research on MYST and highlighted the importance of continued advocacy on its behalf.

October 23, 2025

The Committee hosted a lively, moving and meaningful panel discussion focused on the three Greater Victoria Integrated Police Units impacted by 2024 strategic funding withdrawals by West Shore RCMP and Central Saanich Police. Representatives from the [Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team](#), the [Regional Domestic Violence Unit](#) and the [Mobile Youth Services Team](#) were joined by senior officers from the aforementioned services and Saanich Police. Each participant provided context and details on their respective work and plotted the myriad connection points that link health-care professionals and police as they support vulnerable youth and adults. Among much else, we learned that the funding changes have led to new localized initiatives along with regional innovation to maintain critical services in the face of multiple and growing social crises in our region. All three services intend to continue in 2026 and beyond.

Our sincere thanks to IMCRT's [Lorraine Bates](#) (Island Health's Manager, Mental Health and Substance Use) and [Debra Johnsen](#) (Coordinator, Crisis Response & Outreach Services), the MYST team of [Mia Golden](#) and Constable Shauna Bainbridge, the RDVU's Detective Sergeant [Jon Cawsey](#), Central Saanich Police Service Chief of Police [Ian Lawson](#), Saanich Police Dept. [Deputy Chief Of Operations Paul Douglas](#), and [West Shore RCMP Acting Officer In Charge Stephen Rose](#). A Q&A with members followed and all will be detailed in a report now being prepared by the VFCYJC.

A full agenda also included:

- Approval of a \$5,500 grant to the [Human Nature Counselling Society](#) for its spring 2026 [New Roots Youth Anxiety Program](#)
- A report from the [Capital Region Action Team](#)
- An update on the status of the Greater Victoria School District and the school police liaison officer program (see [our latest backgrounder](#))
- Passage of a motion from CRD appointee Bill McElroy calling for a 2026 schedule of six regular meetings given the volume of committee business
- The [VFCYJC advocacy letter](#) to Attorney General Sharma in support of further action on the [Roads to Revival](#) report
- Confirmation that BC's Representative for Children and Youth [Jennifer Charlesworth](#) will be our AGM speaker in the new year.



Greater Victoria Police Integrated Units

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

January to December 2025

1.126 Vic Family Court & Youth Justice Committee
Fiscal period January-December 2025

Draft

	2025 BOARD BUDGET	2025 JAN-DEC ACTUAL
<u>OPERATING COSTS:</u>		
Internal Allocation	1,172.00	1,172.04
Honoraria	-	-
Meeting Costs	8,160.00	5,623.76
Operating - Other Costs	-	3,050.00
Grants in aid - unspecified	37,820.00	14,207.05
Third Party Payments	1,500.00	
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	48,652.00	24,052.85
TOTAL COSTS	48,652.00	24,052.85
Internal Recoveries	-	-
Recoveries - Other	-	-
OPERATING COSTS LESS INTERNAL RECOVERIES	48,652.00	24,052.85
<u>FUNDING SOURCES (REVENUE)</u>		
Balance C/F from Prior to Current year	(32,849.00)	(32,849.33)
Interest Income	-	(878.42)
Grants in Lieu of Taxes	(803.00)	(802.24)
Requisition	(15,000.00)	(15,000.00)
TOTAL REVENUE	(48,652.00)	(49,529.99)
(Surplus)Deficit	-	(25,477.14)

- Format subject to change.
- Fiscal year is January to December in alignment with all CRD services.

2025 BUDGET EXPENSES

Submitted by Treasurer Esther Paterson

1.126 Vic Family Court & Youth Justice Committee

Fiscal period January-December 2025

Detail

Meeting Costs	
Over accrual 2024	409.64
January 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
Ali Baba Pizza	87.80
February 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
March 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
April 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
Ali Baba Pizza	87.85
Truffles Catering (VFCYJC Open House)	525.80
May 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
Dollarama	7.49
Save on Foods	25.72
June 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
Ali Baba Pizza	74.91
July 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
City of Victoria (Security)	141.47
August 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
September 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
Ali Baba Pizza	78.61
October 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
November 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
Marie-Terese Little (Reimbuse Flowers for Staff Nov 2025)	90.95
December 2025 Secretarial (Including WCB)	409.40
	5,623.76
Other Operating Cost	
iStock (January)	50.00
Honeycomb Webworks December 24 (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks January (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks February (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks March (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks April (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks May (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks June (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks July (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks August (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks September (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks October (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
Honeycomb Webworks November (Web Site Mgmt)	250.00
	3,050.00
Grants in aid - unspecified	
Victoria Youth Empowerment	8,000.00
Cathy Peters	307.05
Caileigh Owen	200.00
Meghan Klymchuk	200.00
Human Nature Counselling Society	5,500.00
	14,207.05

VFCYJC SUB-COMMITTEES

We ask that members join one of the sub-committees to assist in developing materials to bring forward to the main committee. Meetings may be held via email, at any appropriate venue, and chairs may incur expenses up to \$200 to facilitate meetings without advance approval. Chairs are encouraged to present a motion to the main committee for extraordinary expenses. Our goal is to make it easier for volunteers to meet while still maintaining fiscal accountability. The practice has been to try to reserve funding for work that supports youth and families while also supporting those who give freely of their time and expertise.

Capital Region Action Team for Sexually Exploited Youth (CRAT) advocates with expertise to address issues related to sexual exploitation, grooming, pimping, coercion, youth sex work and pornography. **2025: Bill McElroy (Chair)**

Communications supports outgoing communications, website content, advocacy efforts, agenda creation, and maintenance of the Facebook and Twitter accounts. **2025: Jeff Bateman (Chair), Christine Lervold, Marcie McLean, Teri Vanwell**

Court Watch coordinates Indigenous and regular Court House visits to observe and report on the circumstances for youth and families. **Inactive.**

Priorities/Grants reviews completed applications in conjunction with existing VFCYJC policies and makes a recommendation in the form of a proposed motion together with their rationale to the main committee for their consideration at a regular meeting. **2025: Marcie McLean (Chair), Marie-Terese Little, Esther Paterson, Rose Stanton, Teri Vanwell**

Youth & Family Matters brings information to the main committee on Family Matters, Youth Matters and monitors the circumstances that youth and families encounter during separation, divorce, and custody arrangements as well as documenting hot button issues for youth and encourages youth involvement. **2025: Rose Stanton (Chair)**

Capital Region Action Team

This will be my last Annual Report to the VFCYJC since becoming the Chair of CRAT in 2007 and serving in this position for almost 19 years. CRAT was created in 1998 to undertake three functions: 1. Raise awareness about the issue of sexual exploitation of youth in the Greater Victoria area; 2. Make presentations to students, youth groups and parents so that youth will be informed about methods used by groomers to lure them into sexual exploitation; and 3. Identify gaps in service for exploited youth.

During 2025, CRAT met electronically three times. The turnout at meetings was sparse, mainly due to the residual impacts of Covid. There has been a high staff turnover at youth-serving agencies, which often meant that replacement staff were not assigned to CRAT. There needs to be a serious effort to contact relevant agencies and ensure their future involvement with CRAT. Otherwise, we will not be able to follow-up on trends with youth and sexual exploitation, nor will we be able to identify gaps in youth services.

The educational program Taking Care of Ourselves, Taking Care of Others (TCO2) is no longer part of the Children of the Street Foundation. We have tried to find an alternative way to deliver interactive presentations in schools about sexual exploitation but have not found an effective replacement. This is a major setback as we had facilitated presentations to some 20,000 students in Greater Victoria between 2008 and 2020. These were critical in helping youth to understand the issue and be aware when they are being groomed or exploited. This is all the more important given the increased activity of gangs in our area, as sex trafficking has become one of the biggest sources of income for gangs.

The luring and grooming of youth has now shifted significantly to the internet, and we need to provide tools to youth so they can defend themselves against exploitation. To this end we have completed our draft graphic novel, including the cover. Final tweaks are needed, but the 14-page booklet will soon be available for distribution at school and youth group presentations.



GRAPHIC NOVEL

Given the shift to online luring and grooming of youth, and the lucrative appeal of sex trafficking to gangs, a graphic novel will soon be available as a tool for youth to understand and prevent sexual exploitation.

Some five years ago we received a \$12,000 bequest to make a graphic novel about the issue of youth sexual exploitation, and so far, we have spent about \$11,000 of those funds on the script and the artwork. We have consulted with a professional about how best to lay out the graphic novel and found that the least expensive printing method would be to use 11x17-inch white paper, fold it in half and staple it. There will be a cost to print the graphic novel, but funds to do so will have to be raised in the coming year.

The biggest disappointment during the year was a decision by Central Saanich Police and the Westshore RCMP to withdraw from the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST). This unit is made up of a Police Officer and a counsellor. They have the ability to cross municipal boundaries to follow up with exploited youth and potential exploited youth. Those who work with these youth understand that it is not just a downtown Victoria issue. A youth from Colwood may hang around in a mall in Saanich, where they are groomed by an individual from Oak Bay, who buys drugs from Langford and who tries to exploit youth in View Royal.

The only way to provide effective countermeasures on a regional basis is with coordination from all 13 CRD municipalities. MYST is able to cross these municipal boundaries and work with youth “where the rubber meets the road”. I would like to thank the various MYST officers whom I have met since 2007; Laura from Saanich, Theresa from Victoria, Pat from Central Saanich, Jennifer from Oak Bay, Gord from Victoria and now Shauna from Saanich. All of you have worked tirelessly to protect our youth in the Greater Victoria area.

Since its beginning in 1998, CRAT's financial records have been maintained by the District of Oak Bay, which not only provided financial statements, but accepted donations and grants and issued cheques for expenses incurred by CRAT. As of January 2026, that function will be taken over by the Capital Regional District, as the CRD is now home to the VFCYJC, of which CRAT is a member. As of October 2025, the balance in the CRAT account with the District of Oak Bay was \$4,858.29. I would like to thank the many staff of the Oak Bay Finance Department, with whom I've worked since 2007. They have done an outstanding job providing financial stability and accountability, not only to me, but to my predecessors as well.

I am often asked how we as a society can end the sexual exploitation of youth and I believe it is simple: Men have to stop buying sex from youth. Educating men and boys about the negative impacts that arise from their actions is critical. CRAT is very much part of the solution.

I have been involved with this issue for some 27 years, beginning with the “Out From the Shadows” conference at the University of Victoria in 1998. I have met some wonderful youth and terrific adults. I have seen a shift in attitude toward the youth, from being treated as criminals to being treated as victims.

Now it is time for me to step down and let someone else take the helm. I want to thank all the members of the VFCYJC who supported CRAT and me specifically over the past 18 years.

Bill McElroy
Chair, Capital Region Action Team
CRD Citizen Appointee to the VFCYJC

Communications

In 2025, I was joined on the Communications Sub-committee by VFCYJC members Christine Lervold, Marcie McLean and Teri Vanwell. The sub-committee met online twice in 2025 to coordinate activities on multiple fronts related to our various responsibilities: Website content creation, agenda development, advocacy letter-writing, the annual report, updates to the VFCYJC's [Facebook account](#) and work arising from Committee resolutions.

We supported the VFCYJC through an [advocacy letter](#) to Attorney General Niki Sharma in support of further strategic action on priority recommendations within the 2019 *Roads to Revival* report as identified by its author, Jamie Maclaren, at our June meeting.

We organized the October panel discussion focused on three Greater Victoria Police Integrated Units and were able to secure participation from seven expert speakers who collectively could call on over 100 years of frontline experience and wisdom. A report on this wide-ranging discussion is being finalized.

Another work-in-progress arises from a Committee motion to prepare call-to-action letters for submission to a range of BC provincial ministries. These will identify shortfalls and gaps in services directed to children, youth, students and their families who are navigating issues related to addictions, poverty, public and community safety, education and other support needs.

The [VFCYJC website](#) was routinely updated with fresh content arising from regular meetings. It remains a hub for committee updates, grant information and links to resources and reports related to our mandate. All credit to Ryan Labelle with Pixel Makers Creative for keeping it operational.

We maintained a social media presence for a small audience of followers. Thanks again to VFCYJC Secretary Marnie Essery for regularly forwarding links for posting on Facebook. Joining a wave of local governments and public organizations, the committee voted unanimously to suspend its X account.

Communications plays a role at VFCYJC Steering Committee meetings in developing agendas for regular meetings. These agendas are drafted on-screen and forwarded to Ms. Essery and CRD Corporate Services for final preparation. Agendas and minutes are now routinely posted on the CRD website at a [dedicated VFCYJC page](#).

Sincere thanks and much appreciation again to my colleagues for their good work and initiatives.

Jeff Bateman
Chair, Communications Sub-Committee
Councillor, District of Sooke

Priorities Sub-committee (Grants)

The 2025 Priorities Sub-committee consisted of Sub-committee Chair, Chair of (VFC&YJC), the Treasurer, plus two VFC&YJC non-executive members as per the VFC&YJC Terms of Reference. The members were Marcie McLean, Marie-Terese Little, Esther Paterson, Rose Stanton and Teri Vanwell.

VFC&YJC is able to provide small grants to qualifying, approved applications via Bylaw, *only if* there are sufficient funds within their annual budget.

The Priorities Sub-committee Chair reviews all required grant application material for completion, correctness and potential eligibility before distribution to entire sub-committee for their review. The Sub-committee chair prepares a report to VFC&YJC with recommendations from the sub-committee, their rationale for support or denial, potential granting amount, plus a proposed motion for the main Committee's consideration. It is the main Committee's decision, which is final. Notification is sent from VFC&YJC Chair of the Committee's decision to the applicant on file. As per a requirement of an approved application, the applicant must, within two months of the completion date of the program/project or event, submit a brief written summary report of their "outcomes". A template is provided for that final report, which they may present at a VFC&YJC meeting.

Below are summaries of the two 2025 grant applications: one from Victoria Youth Empowerment Society, the second from Human Nature Counselling Society. Both societies' application(s) projects serve Greater Victoria residents being: children, youth and their families, which is one of the requirements of the application.

Victoria Youth Empowerment Society (YES)

Grant Application received June 11, 2025.

www.yes.ca

VFC&YJC Priorities Sub-committee recommendation and summary report to main Committee for their June 26, 2025 Agenda.

YES is a BC registered Society and a Federal registered Charity.

The applicant requested **\$8,000.00** for their **intended pilot project for the Alliance Club Youth Pathway's Project** for: a temporary, one-time, part-time support worker for 12 hours per week, for 6 months anticipated from July 15, 2025, to January 15, 2026, taking place at YES's facility on Yates Street at the Alliance Club. Program supplies such as ID fees, transportation to appointments & snacks. **YES will contribute \$2,360.00 from their own fund-raising budget.**

The needs/problems that YES plans to address through the pilot project work are [summarized here](#) and located on page 4 of their application in their entirety. From application page 5, for youth aged 12-19 with emerging needs, to reduce significant barriers to accessing critical support services and reduce wait list periods (often 2-6 months) for programs like mental health counselling, housing, and family mediation. YES intends to provide short-term, flexible interventions, advocacy, and system navigation services to youth currently waiting for long-term support at YES, **where they currently have over 70 youth waiting to immediately access their**

support services. The applicant believes that this proposed short-term program project would enhance support for these youth and provide needed interventions over the next 6 months. **The proposed project would prioritize work such as:** immediate assessment prioritization of support needs for these youths on wait lists and, early risk reduction by addressing emerging challenges before they escalate into crisis that could involve the justice system, provide connections sooner so these youth do not become a result in need of crisis intervention.

YES already provides wrap around support services for youth (see page 5 of the application) which the temporary part-time contracted support worker can access such as: mental health services, family counselling, and housing assistance which the applicant indicates ensures a continuum of care, with this unique low-barriers approach to stabilizing the youth during the critical summer period, helping bridge gaps in services, build resilience, ultimately reduce justice system involvement from the applicant's perspective and experience.

Pages 7 & 8 outline in detail the intended work that the Alliance Club Youth Pathways Project Support Worker would do. Data on service delivery & demographics would be compiled and reviewed monthly and YES will assess the project's "outcomes" and complete a final brief written summary report to VFC&YJC.

Their application's proposed project budget indicates: Requested grant amount of **\$8,000.00**. YES's contribution of **\$2,360.00**. For one-time temporary, part-time contract support worker for 6 months, 12 hours a week at **\$9,360.00**, plus: youth transportation, ID fees, & snacks at **\$1,000.00** for a **total budget** amount of **\$10,360.00**.

The evaluation framework is on page 9 & 10 of the application, which indicates a target of 75 youth interventions offered, 40 youth they plan to connect to needed services, and 30 potential youth would have improved skills such as emotional regulation & decision-making, and 40 youth would be transitioned to long-term support.

Priorities Sub-committee Rationale: YES's grant application proposes "by example" to address known identified gaps in services urgently needed for marginalized youth in the Greater Victoria area, and to accelerate reducing existing wait lists, increasing connections and assistance in a number of services for youth with a skilled temporary, part-time contracted support worker. YES has also contributed their own funding towards the proposed pilot project. YES appears situated well to offer such a program as they have a facility with appropriate staff and, YES already provides wrap around services seamlessly for youth at their facility on Yates Street, all possibly elevating the success of the proposed 6-month program for youth.

Therefore, the Priorities Sub-committee's Rationale and recommended proposed motion to VFC&YJC was as follows:

"That the Priorities Sub-committee recommends to Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee, that the grant application request of \$8,000.00 (the full amount) from the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society (YES) be approved for YES's temporary pilot project as outlined in their grant application of June 11, 2025 for the Alliance Club Youth Pathways Project and Temp. Support Worker with a proposed completion date of January 15, 2026." CARRIED

Human Nature Counselling Counselling Society (HNC)

Grant application received September 29, 2025.

www.humannaturecounselling.ca

Application background summary information for VFC&YJC.

The Human Nature Counselling Society (HNCS) a BC Registered Society and Federal Registered Charity. HNCS's Mission is to enhance mental health and well-being of children, youth, and families through effective, innovative, and low-barrier mental health counselling services and programs using nature-based therapy. With a Vision for everyone in the service area who strives for mental health and wellness has access to affordable counselling services and programs that foster a sense of belonging within family, community, and the non-human natural world. **It should be noted that HNCS does not charge clients for this program.** Their application indicates that their team includes 23 highly skilled practitioners, most of whom hold master's level degrees in counselling psychology.

Their goals in establishing programs are to: identify gaps in services and supporting youth initiatives, by designing programs that address unmet needs in the community, promoting meaningful reconciliation, amplifying youth voices by creating age group settings where young people can develop confidence, emotional regulation skills, and a sense of belonging and establishing relationships with school district, municipalities, First Nations, and community service providers. **Their application further indicates** that through this combination of expertise, partnerships, and alignment with the Committee's strategic priorities, HNCS staff and volunteers are well-positioned to deliver impactful, culturally responsive, and barrier-free programming for youth and families in the justice system or at risk of involvement.

Their project **New Roots Youth Anxiety Program** would take place at **Government House Gardens** for 3.5 months for 8 sessions of 2 hours each from **February 16, 2026 to May 30, 2026**.

The project target population is youth ages 12-16 in the CRD who identify their main mental health concern as anxiety and are motivated to learn skills to better cope, but are unable to access private counselling or government funded services due to a myriad of factors including long-lists, costs, the indoor environment not being appealing to them, and preference for a peer group versus doing individual sessions. The program also offers 2 sessions to parents/caregivers to assist them in better understanding anxiety and how best to support their youth and strengthen the home support system.

Their grant request is **\$5,500.00** and the funds are intended to be used for: program planning and facilitation, equipment and supplies, staff mileage, celebration and snacks. **The entire proposed budget for their program is \$9,700.00.** With potentially VFC&YJC providing **\$5,500.00** and the additional balance of funds being provided by private donor and grants in the amount of **\$4,200.00**. They report that those funds, if received, would go towards the 2026 fall program, as HNCS plans to hold two programs a year in spring and fall.

They report each participant is initially assessed on needs and to establish goals, and personalized support, there will be program monitoring, outcome tracking, and evaluation to ensure effectiveness, guide improvements, and report impacts to funders.

Priorities Sub-committee rationale for approval: The HNCS appears to have professionally qualified staff to carry out this type of youth and family mental health education and programming. Other resource agencies working within the CRD have reported out many times over past recent years to VFC&YJC that anxiety for children and youth has escalated and become critical, as well as Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth BC's Representative for Children and Youth reports and recommendations to the Province of BC on the matter of youth anxiety (even prior to impacts from Covid 19). It appears that youth, their families and caregivers gain better coping skills for behaviours and coping skills will improve peoples' decision-making and potentially reduce them coming into contact with justice systems such as: family law and the youth criminal justice. Thus, potentially aligning with VFC&YJC Mandate, and Strategic Goals of their Strategic Plan.

At our November 23, 2025, meeting the following motion was endorsed by the main Committee:
"That the Human Nature Counselling Society's grant request for \$5,500.00 for their spring 2026 New Roots Youth Anxiety Program be approved by Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee." **CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie McLean
VFC&YJC Priorities Sub-committee, Chair
VFC&YJC Communications Sub-committee member
Councillor, District of Highlands

APPENDIX

Agendas and Minutes 2025

Four regularly scheduled meetings. All documentation posted on the [CRD website](#).

Documents and Related Links

- VFCYJC Terms of Reference
- Capital Region District Establishing Bylaw #4553
- School Police Liaison Officer program backgrounder ~ prepared by the VFCYJC Communications Sub-Committee; latest update: October 2025

Background Materials for October 27, 2025 Panel Discussion

- Greater Victoria Integrated Police Units Annual Report 2024 (see pp. 41-54 of Saanich Police Board's September, 2025 agenda)
- Proposal to Increase Strategic Support and Budget for the Mobile Youth Services Team: Critical Status Report and Recommendations ~ Presented to the VFCYJC by Dr. Rebeccah Nelems, June 2025
- No Private Matter: Honouring Christian Lee (2008, BC Representative for Children & Youth)
- West Shore RCMP Service Delivery Update (2024, West Shore RCMP public notice)

2025 Motions Requiring Action

[January 25, 2025](#)

Service Gaps – Calls to Action

MOVED by M. McLean, SECONDED by C. Day

“That the Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee (VFC&YJC) directs the Communications sub-committee to prepare letters to the various BC Ministers listed below but not limited to, for a Call to Action(s), to address some of the many provincial shortfalls in providing services and/or gaps in services including integrated services which indeed are the responsibility of the Province of BC for children, youth, students and their families’ at risk including but not limited to: their mental health, health, including potential addictions and addictions to illicit drugs, poverty, safety including public & community safety, education and support needs including lack of funding and/or removed funding for such provincial responsible services. For example, services such as provided by the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) Criminal Reduction & Exploitation Division (CRED), through Pacific Centre

Family Services Association, Victoria BC and, currently City of Victoria/Esquimalt Police Departments who function within the Greater Victoria area including Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, as well as the Regional Domestic Violence Unit (RDVU) also involved with youth and families at risk.

And further that specific core members of VFC&YJC request to meet with the Ministers to speak to the concerns in the very near future as these matters are critical and urgent due to the current issues within the Capital Region for youth, vulnerable youth, youth at risk and their families within the Capital Regional District”.

These future letter(s) to be sent to:

*Premier David Eby
* Attorney General & Deputy Premier: Niki Sharma,
*Minister of Public Safety & Solicitor General: Honourable Gary Begg,
*Minister of Health: Honourable Josie Osbourne,
*Minister of Children and Family Development: Honourable Grace Lore,
*Minister of Education and Child Care: Honourable Lisa Beare.”

CARRIED

April 24, 2025

Be Amazing Campaign Recommendations

MOVED BY J. Bateman, SECONDED By K. Guiry,

“THAT Chair Little write BC Attorney General Nikki Sharma in support of recommendations raised with the Committee by the Be Amazing campaign’s Cathy Peters, namely:

- *Funding/training for law enforcement to better enforce the federal Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act.”*
- *A BC provincial public awareness campaign.*
- *A human trafficking task force in BC similar to those in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.”*

CARRIED

Deletion or pause on posting to the VFCYJC X Account

MOVED by J. Bateman, SECONDED by S. Kim,

“To pause posting on the Committee’s X account.”

CARRIED

June 26, 2025

Victoria Youth Empowerment Society grant application

MOVED by M. McLean, SECONDED by T. Vanwell

“That the Priorities Sub-committee recommends to Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee, that the grant application request of \$8,000.00 (the full amount) from the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society (YES) be approved for YES’s temporary pilot project as outlined in their grant application of June 11, 2025 for the Alliance Club Youth Pathways Project Support Worker with a proposed completion date of January 15, 2026.”

CARRIED

In-Person Panel Discussion

MOVED by M. McLean, SECONDED by S. Kim,

"That Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee (VFC&YJC) hold an in-person Panel Discussion on one of the following 2 (two) 2025 dates: A Special meeting on Thursday, September 18th, 2025 for only the Panel Discussion and no other VFC&YJC other unnecessary business, or on Thursday October 23, 2025 a scheduled meeting. The purpose of the proposed Panel Discussion would be to have invited representatives from the current 3 Integrated Regional Units/Teams being the: Integrated Regional Mobile Crisis Response Team (IRMCRT)(Island Health), the Integrated Regional Domestic Violence Unit (RIDVU), and, the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) as it is these 3 specific Units/Teams that the District of Central Saanich Police Board and, the Westshore RCMP Commander are planning to withdraw funding of the taxpayer's financial portions for the police officers to these 3 Integrated Regional Units/Teams. The panel discussions intent would focus on their Units/Teams, purpose, work and need throughout Greater Victoria plus, the future of these Units/Teams and/or impacts, and to increase awareness and educate VFC&YJC members. VFC&YJC would also invite Police Chief Ian Lawson from the District of Central Saanich Police Board or, an alternate from the Central Saanich Police Board and, Westshore RCMP Superintendent Todd Preston or, an alternate, to also attend in-person to each speak to their rationale for withdrawing from these 3 above noted Unit/Teams including providing accurate Unit/Team data such as call outs for 2024 -2025 and financial data as well such as accurate "municipal financial contributions" for the police officer staff for these 3 Integrated Regional Teams/Units. VFC&YJC would also invite Chief Constable Fiona Wilson Victoria/Esquimalt Police Department or, an alternate, to participate in-person for perspectives on each of these 3 Integrated Regional Unit/Teams for the Greater Victoria Areas."

CARRIED

Opposed: K. Guiry, M. Little

Collection and Analysis of Standardized Performance Data Across BC's Justice System

MOVED by M McLean, SECONDED by S. Kim

"THAT Chair Little write BC Attorney General Niki Sharma in support of the following recommendation raised with the Committee by Access Pro Bono's Jamie McLaren, namely Recommendation #4 from his 2019 report for the Attorney General titled Roads to Revival: An External Review of Legal Aid Service Delivery in British Columbia: Task and support an independent body, like Access to Justice BC, the Access to Justice Centre for Excellence or the Office of the Auditor General, to coordinate the collection and analysis of standardized performance data across BC's justice system, and, Recommendation #15: Create a Child Protection Clinic to help parents before child protection concerns have reached the level of Ministry of Children and Family Development intervention and to serve as a practice resource centre for lawyers representing parents in contested child protection matters."

CARRIED

October 23, 2025

Human Nature Counselling Society Grant Application

MOVED by M McLean, SECONDED by B. McElroy

“THAT the Human Nature Counselling Society’s grant request for \$5,500.00 for their spring 2026 New Roots Youth Anxiety Program be approved by Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee.”

CARRIED

Committee Meeting Schedule

MOVED by B. McElroy, SECONDED by M. McLean

“THAT the number of meetings of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee be increased from four meetings to six meetings per year.”

CARRIED

Recommended 2026 meeting dates: January 22, February 26, April 23, May/June Open House, June 25, September 24 and November 26.



CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Members shall at all times conduct themselves with propriety, decency and respect and with the understanding that all members of the committee and guests are to be treated fairly with dignity, courtesy, and empathy.
2. Members understand that the meetings often discuss issues where confidential personal identifying information is included. Any such confidential information shall be treated as confidential and not discussed outside of the committee.
3. Members shall act in a manner that fulfills the mandate and the mission of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFCYJC);
4. Members shall respect the due process and the authority of the Chair, Vice-Chair or the Presiding Officer;
5. Members shall give fair consideration to diverse opinions and viewpoints;
6. Members shall demonstrate professionalism, transparency, timeliness, accountability in completing tasks undertaken by the committee;
7. Members shall strive to attend all meetings, sending apologies to the Chair for necessary absences.
8. Members will prepare for the meeting by reading the agenda, papers and any emails before the meeting.
9. Members if they need to clarify anything about the agenda, process or mandate contact the Chair.
10. Members agree to arrive on time for the meeting and strive to stay to the end.
11. Members are encouraged to fully participate in the meeting.
 - a. Listen to what others have to say and keep an open mind.
 - b. Contribute positively to the discussions.
 - c. Be concise
 - d. Be respectful of others' opinions and time
 - e. Minimize the side conversations
12. Members shall always have the best interests of the VFCYJC in mind.
13. Members shall draw attention to any potential conflicts of interest that may arise in the meeting.
14. Members shall fulfil any responsibilities assigned to them at the meeting and be prepared to report back on your progress at the next meeting.
15. Each member of the committee will receive a copy of this Code of Conduct.



While Restorative Justice Victoria is not a VFCYJC Sub-Committee, most restorative justice organizations in BC began with involvement of a Youth Justice Committee and we are particularly proud to support the one operating in the Greater Victoria region.

Each organization is unique in response to the needs identified in our communities. The VFCYJC was a contributor to RJV's evolution in Victoria – funding the production of video presentations, supporting youth-led initiatives, and facilitating volunteer education through the provision of resource materials.

It is a tradition in VFCYJC annual reports to recognize the essential work of Restorative Justice Victoria. It is very much a success story. It has evolved into an organization of accomplished, skilled volunteers who can be relied on to support better outcomes for all participants who access this 'accountable option' after a crime.

RJV's volunteers are asked to engage with increasingly complex cases throughout the CRD even while RJV funding remains critically insecure. No less than 15 resolutions about restorative justice were sent to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities between 1999 and 2018 calling on the provincial government to support restorative justice. While 11 of these resolutions were carried by the UBCM membership, substantial action is still required.

Learn about RJV's referral process at rjvictoria.com/referring-agencies.

"Skilled volunteers are welcome. As a small non-profit organization, RJV is only able to accomplish all that we do with the help of our volunteers. Whether you volunteer on cases, in the office, or at a fundraiser, you are part of a compassionate and dedicated group that is supporting justice in our community."

Keep track of RJV activities [online](#) and through its email newsletter, [available by request](#).



Visit the VFCYJC website resource pages for an extensive archive of local, regional, provincial and national links to agencies, government services and notable reports. Here is a sampling of the organizations and services listed within this online resource.

BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services
<https://www.bcmhsus.ca>

BC School Centered Mental Health Coalition
<https://keltymentalhealth.ca/bc-school-centred-mental-health-coalition>

Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance
<https://www.caddra.ca>

Capital Region Action Team
<https://capitalregionactionteam.ca>

Chatterblock (Parenting Resources)
<https://www.chatterblock.com>

Disability Resource Centre
<https://drcvictoria.com>

Families for Addiction Recovery
<https://www.farcanada.org>

First Call BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition
<https://firstcallbc.org>

Foundry
www.foundrybc.ca

Indigenous Perspectives Society
www.ipsociety.ca

Island Sexual Health
<https://www.islandsexualhealth.org>

Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre
www.keltymentalhealth.ca

Kids Help Phone
www.kidshelpphone.ca

Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST)
www.pacificcentrefamilyservices.org/crimereduction-exploitation-diversion

Need2 Suicide Prevention Information and Support
www.need2.ca

Representative for Children and Youth
[https://rcybc.ca](http://rcybc.ca)

Vancouver Island Crisis Line
[https://www.vicrisis.ca](http://www.vicrisis.ca)

Victoria Pride Society
www.victoriapridesociety.org/directory/resources

Youth in BC - Crisis Intervention Services
[https://www.youthinbc.com](http://www.youthinbc.com)



victoriafamilycourt.ca