

Year In Review 2025

January 23, 2025

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. Guest speaker [Jamie Maclaren](#), Executive Director of [Access Pro Bono](#) and author of the [Roads To Revival](#) review of BC legal aid services, could not attend due to illness and will be invited to a meeting later this year. (His AGM keynote in 2021 led to [VFCYJC advocacy](#) and we look forward to his update).

At our regular meeting, Chair Little presented the [2025 orientation](#) for new committee appointees (see [2025 membership list](#)). Bill McElroy's [report on the ad hoc MYST planning group](#) states that 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. 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. Much still to accomplish, he argued, in creating a client-centred legal aid system 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.

Evan James, Manager of Strategic Initiatives for the Umbrella Society, shared outcomes from last year's VFCYJC grant support of its Navigating Substance Use and Mental Health for Students program. Another guest, [Youth Empowerment Society](#) Operations Director [Kisae Petersen](#), confirmed 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 Wed. May 28 from 3 to 6 PM at Victoria City Hall; the committee voted to ask Chair Little to [write 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 are invited to join VFCYJC members at our third annual Open House - 3 to 6 PM at the City of Victoria's Centennial Square municipal hall. An annual opportunity for all of us in this active and caring community to say hello and educate each other about our respective work. Snacks will be served. You're welcome to drop-in anytime during our open house hours.

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; early intervention is essential to prevent higher costs in adulthood; long-term impacts of not supporting youth include increased criminal justice, healthcare, and mental health expenses; and long term funding challenges related to MYST programming. 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.

The [Capital Region Action Team](#)'s Bill McElroy reported on CRAT's June meeting, including an update on a near-complete graphic novel funded in part by the VFCYJC and intended to inform young people about sexual exploitation. Two motions were approved: i) To organize a panel discussion at our Oct. 23 meeting 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 a pair of recommendations from [Jamie Maclarens](#) [Roads to Revival](#) report, namely the creation of an independent body to collect and analyze performance data across BC's justice system and the launch of a child protection resource centre. A new VFCYJC advocacy letter in support of [Cathy Peters' BeAmazing](#) campaign was shared with members along with a note of thanks from Ms. Peters, who recently published a new edition of her [Child Sex Trafficking in Canada and How to Stop It](#).

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 Regional 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.

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 award 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; and confirmation that BC's Representative for Children and Youth [Jennifer Charlesworth](#) will be our AGM speaker in the new year.

[Explore [our meeting agenda](#) to read our motions, reports and other material related to all of the above.]

2026 Annual General Meeting Notice

New and returning Committee members and representatives from front-line service agencies are invited to our 2026 AGM on Thurs. Jan. 22 at 11:30 AM in the CRD boardroom at 625 Fisgard Street. An election for executive members will be held and we're honoured to be joined by keynote speaker [Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth](#), British Columbia's Representative for Children and Youth. Please [RSVP our Marnie Essery](#) if you plan to attend. Virtual attendance on [Zoom](#) is available for those who can't join us in person. (*Meeting ID: 846 8038 0192; Passcode: 190753*)