



Manitoba's Youth In Care
"EMPOWERING YOUTH"

New Year, New Opportunities



Marie,
Director

Hi Friends! The child welfare system here in Manitoba is going to be getting an update. There is a team of seven people who will review child welfare legislation and make recommendations about policies that need to be changed, so that all children and youth in the sys-

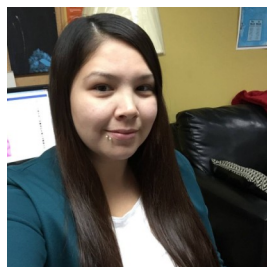
tem receive better care. **Your Voice Matters.** The team will be asking for input, and as a youth in care, or alumni of care, you have the expert advice they need. Your experience, good, bad, and otherwise, combined with the experiences of our other brothers and sisters

in care can help to create a system that works. Helping families that need support stay together. Finding extended family or other lifelong supports so that kids don't bounce around so much. **Your Voice Matters**, and we're here to help you make it heard.

Meet the team



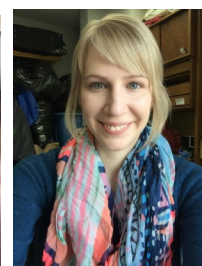
Dustin and Amy host our weekly radio show, System Kidz



Amber, practicum student, youth outreach team



Johnathan, Youth Outreach Worker



Laura, practicum student, youth outreach team

Hello and Happy New Year!

My name is Katrina and I am the interim Program Coordinator while Jainna is away.

I completed my Social Science degree at the Canadian Menonite University and have been working at community outreach programs since I was 20. Now for a few other fun facts about me:

1) I love breakfast foods, give me waffle, crepes, omelets or a classic bacon/ egg any time of day

2) I spend a lot of time at thrift stores and finding a good deal

3) In the summer months you'll find me outside hiking, swimming and camping with my friends

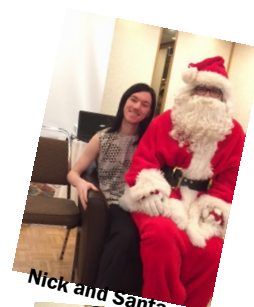
4) I should not be trusted giving out directions, and get lost all the time

5) To Write Love on her Arms is my favorite blog, it's real stories of hope and finding help for people struggling with depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide.

While I know I'm at Voices for just a few more months, I look forward to meeting you and hearing your ideas on how Voices can walk along side youth in care.



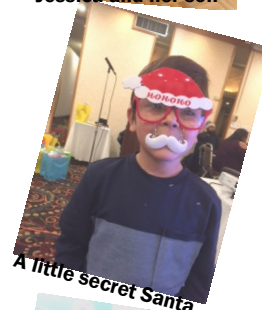
Katrina,
Interim Program Coordinator



Nick and Santa



Jessica and her son



Kenny's Karaoke Krew



VOICES: MANITOBA'S YOUTH IN CARE NETWORK is the only youth-driven provincial network whose sole purpose is to **engage, equip, and empower** youth in and from care. We offer ~~support, encouragement and peer-advocacy~~ to youth in care and those transitioning from care to **IN(TER)DEPENDENCE**. We raise awareness of the challenges that youth-in-care face, and make our voices heard through our radio broadcast '*System Kidz*', presentations and workshops. We share our stories to help create a **better system of care** for children and youth who live away from their bio families in foster homes, group homes, independent living programs, and other care arrangements. We offer **scholarships and opportunities** so that youth-in-care may empower themselves with post-secondary education, and participate in activities around the province.



Your Voice

Your words, thoughts and ideas about being in care



Mental Health in Care

By Aaron Steinberg and Keegan Munn,
Voices Leadership Team

Healthy living is the key to a healthy life, but what happens when our needs are neglected? As kids in care, our physical and spiritual needs are often neglected. Our mental health is very fragile and doesn't get the attention it needs.

Youth: Neglected and Recognized

Being neglected is one of the major issues surrounding mental health. For kids in care, a stigma is immediately placed upon us, rendering our mental problems as "invalid". Mental illness can often go years without notice, due to improper diagnosis and being forgotten by the system. Being able to recognize your own mental state is one of the most important parts in treating a mental illness. However there is a strict line between self-recognition and self-diagnosis.

Recognizing that your mental health is struggling is very important. If something doesn't seem right, advocating for yourself is very critical. Talking to an adult you trust or visiting your doctor is a good first step. Every child has the right to feel safe and the right to be healthy. These rights are often violated for kids in care, and this is where self-advocating comes in. It may be difficult; however as an individual, you must believe in and take care of yourself. Never stop until you get what you need. As kids in care we may have

some difficulties, but that does not mean that we aren't strong.

Myths and Stereotypes

With the stigma attached to kids in care, there are many stereotypes attached as well. One of the more prominent stereotypes about youth in care is that we are all "delinquents"; that our mental struggles are just "trauma" that will go away over time. We often cry for help, but not all of our cries are cries for bad attention. Self-harm is very common in the community, and those suffering from it are often labeled as "attention seekers" when they are not, this is just a way of coping, an unhealthy way. **When a youth says they need help, they need help, no questions asked.** Being in care is a serious and straining process, with serious mental health effects. None of us are "delinquents" and none of us are bad kids. People need to give kids in care a chance, because all of us have potential.

Self-Coping and Loving Yourself

Getting help is always important in overcoming a mental illness, but it is not just the responsibility of whoever is helping you. Coping with an illness is heavily dependent on yourself. Find something to help you are feeling down. Help will always be there for you, but finding ways to cope when you need short term relief, or even long term help, is key. There are so many ways to help yourself cope! Why not try some of the following?

Find a comfort item: Maybe a sentimental item someone gave you, or maybe even a special blanket or stuffed toy.

Try music therapy: Listen to your favourite music for fifteen minutes, or even explore new music.

Art therapy: Colour or draw how you are feeling, or how you wish to feel.

Writing or talking: Venting through words is an easy, healthy way to express yourself.

Try a stress ball: Stress balls are easy to make, and they help to squeeze when you are stressed or anxious.

Another way to cope with a mental illness is to understand and come to terms with it. Love yourself for yourself. Things may seem rough at the moment, but for every negative, there is always a positive. Everybody has the potential to do something amazing, and letting your illness drag you down will never help. Love yourself! You're worth it and you can get through anything if you put your mind to it!

Mental illness and coping resources:

Mobile Crisis Services:

204-949-4777

Toll free: 1-888-383-2776

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Klinik Crisis Line: 204-786-8686

Manitoba Suicide Line:

1-877-435-7170

Macdonald Youth Services:

204-477-1722

Anxiety Disorders Association of

Manitoba: 204-925-0600

Your Questions

Q: I am 19. I'm not in care anymore. Sometimes I feel so many different things at once, it's overwhelming. Angry, sad, frustrated, hopeless. Like, it took so long to find my apartment, but now that I live here it's so lonely, and empty and cold. Is this what life is always going to feel like? Is there someone I can talk to about what it's like to be on my own? When I was younger my worker made me go to see a therapist, but it felt so fake, I hated it. A friend would be nice.

A: Thanks for reaching out. Figuring out life after care will be a process that is filled with personal victories and challenges, as you have already experienced. Finding an apartment is a huge victory-way to go! Learning to make it feel like home will come one step at a time. Education, employment, holidays and other life moments are things we learn to navigate one at a time. The Network has so many alumni of care who are figuring out life, and may be able to help with some of your questions. Please come out to some of our programs and meet young adults who have been where you are now.

There are some things that friends and peers may not be able to help with. You mentioned you tried therapy when you were younger and you didn't like it. If you would like to try again, youth in and from care ages 15+ can access **free counseling** through the Futures Forward program. Kristy is friendly and approachable.

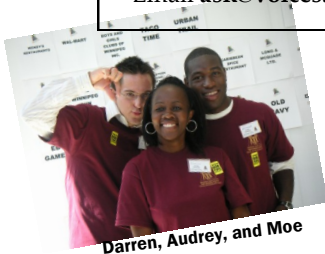


Learn more about the Futures Forward program at www.futuresforward.ca

Peer-to-Peer: Do you have some advice?

Do you have a question you need to ask?

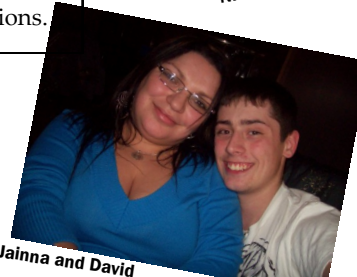
Email ask@voices.mb.ca with your feedback and/or questions.



Darren, Audrey, and Moe



Korrdel



Jainna and David

Looking Ahead...

- **Cooking Club starts Thursday, January 18th, 2018!** Once a month we will cook together, learning ways to make our budgets stretch as we pull together delicious meals.
- **First Aid and CPR Training:** February 2nd, 2018 from 9-5pm. Space is limited and lunch is provided.
- **Leadership +:** Develop your leadership skills and work at our summer camp! Leadership + includes training by Momenta, dinner, and bus tickets. First training is Wednesday, February 21st, 4:30-7:30pm.
- **Earl Cook Classic, March 3rd, 2018:** Our annual youth vs adults hockey game. Open to all youth in and from care, and supportive adults, of all skill levels. Let us know if you need skates, a stick, or helmet.
- **Spring Break with Voices:** Come hang out with us over spring break. Activities geared to youth in and from care ages 12-18. More details in the next newsletter (send us your ideas too!).
- **Spring Network Retreat:** We're heading out to Camp Arnes for the weekend, May 4th to 6th. Weekend theme and t-shirt slogan still to be decided (send us your ideas!).

Did You Know...

We're on Facebook! Like our page and stay in touch!



Nick

YOU'LL NEED COFFEE SHOPS
AND SUNSETS AND ROADTRIPS.
AIRPLANES AND PASSPORTS AND
NEW SONGS AND OLD SONGS, BUT
PEOPLE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.
YOU WILL NEED OTHER PEOPLE
AND YOU WILL NEED TO BE THAT
OTHER PERSON TO SOMEONE ELSE,
A LIVING, BREATHING, SCREAMING
INVITATION TO BELIEVE BETTER THINGS.

-janie tworowski

Get involved! Make your voice heard!

Your Rights: Mental Health

Youth-in-care from birth to age 18 are protected by two important documents: the Child and Family Services Act Manitoba (**CFSM**), and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (**UNCRC**):

The **CFS Act Section 2(1)** says that all decisions for kids in care must consider what is in your best interest first of all, and then your mental, emotional, physical, and education needs need to be looked at.

Article 24 of the UNCRC says that all children have the right to good quality health care – the best health care possible – to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay healthy.

Your mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health are all connected to make you a whole person. It's important to take care of your mental health. Protect your mental health by finding healthy ways to express your thoughts and feelings, and ask for help when you need it. If you are taking prescribed medication to help with your mental health, you have the right to ask what it is, and what it does.



Be healthy

Be safe



Be heard

Be yourself



Volunteer Opportunities:

- ☐ Advisory Committee (youth reps needed!)
- ☐ System Kidz Guests
- ☐ Mentors
- ☐ Voices Family Christmas Party Team
- ☐ Listening Tour Facilitators
- ☐ Youth Speakers and Presenters
- ☐ Voices Network Retreat Adult Supports

Call 204.982.4956 for more information on any of these volunteer opportunities.

Please send your resume, with a cover letter to
Voices, 3rd floor, 61 Juno Street R3A 1T1 or
info@voices.mb.ca

January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 Girls Group 4:30pm MB Moose Game 7pm	9 System Kidz 5pm	10 Leadership 4:30pm	11 Voices ROx: Speedworld 4:30pm	12	
14	15 Girls Group 4:30pm	16 System Kidz 5pm	17 Leadership 4:30pm	18 Cooking Club 4:30pm	19	
21	22 Advisory Committee 4:30pm Girls Group 4:30pm	23 Voices ROx: Zumba 4:15pm System Kidz 5pm	24 Leadership 4:30pm	25 Tuition Waiver info night (Winnipeg) Scholar's Nite 5pm	26	
28	29 Girls Group 4:30pm	30 System Kidz 5pm	31 Leadership 4:30pm	System Kidz is our radio show on CKUW 95.9fm. Talking about topics that matter to youth in care in MB.		



February 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 First Aid/CPR Training 9-5pm	3
4	5 Girls Group 4:30pm	6 System Kidz 5pm	7 Leadership 4:30pm	8 Tuition Waiver info night (Brandon) Voices ROx: Swimming 4:30pm	9	10
11	12 Girls Group 4:30pm	13 System Kidz 5pm	14 Leadership 4:30pm	15 Cooking Club 4:30pm	16	
18	19 Louis Riel Day	20 Voices ROx: Zumba 4:15pm System Kidz 5pm	21 Leadership+ 4:30-7:30pm	22 Scholarship Awards Evening	23	
25	26 Advisory Committee 4:30pm Girls Group 4:30pm	27 System Kidz 5pm	28 Leadership 4:30pm 'Sleeping Beauty' RWB Outing 6pm	Our address is: 3rd floor, 61 Juno Street Winnipeg, MB R3A 1T1 ask@voices.mb.ca		

