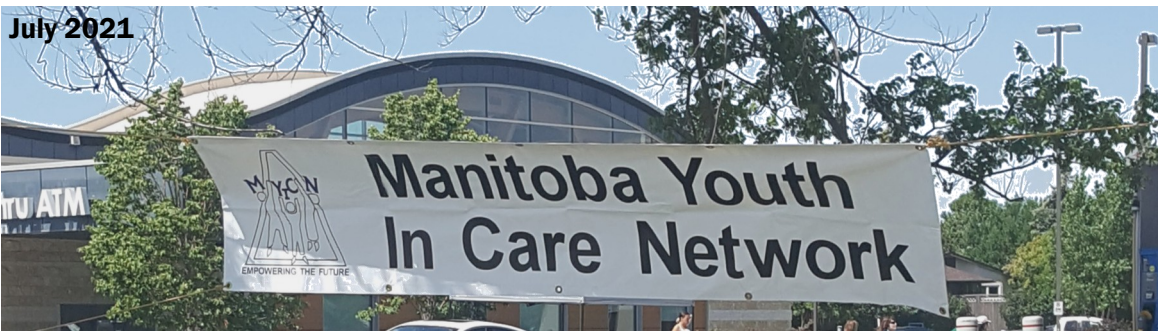


July 2021



Marie's Messy Desk

By Marie Christian
Voices Director

Hi Fam! How are you doing? Really— how are you doing? It has been a long time since we have been able to spend time together, face to face. I am going to be honest: the office is not the same without your energy here in this space. We miss you walking in, grabbing a snack, and plopping down on the couch to chat, or making a bee-line to the computers to check your socials and play us your favourite songs.

While the office is still closed for the time being, we are so excited to have opportunities to visit in per-

son in safe and savvy ways this summer! From the BBQ kick off on Thursday, a couple beach days, a whole lot of group home visits for rights workshops and snacks— we look forward to spending time with you in person as well as over zoom!

A lot of youth in and from care felt isolated and lonely during the pandemic. A lot of professionals are concerned about the impact of COVID on your mental health. One way to begin to heal and recuperate is to re-build and re-establish real relationships, in real life, out in the sunshine. Or if you're like me, under a shady tree. This is your Network. We'd love to be a part of your healing and recuperating process. See you soon :o)

Year 25, Newsletter 1

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@VoicesMYICN



My LGBTQ+ Journey

By Caleb White
Voices Member



I felt like I was born in the wrong body since I was about 5 years old. At that age I didn't know what being transgender meant, I just thought that I was a Tom-boy. Most girls my age

were all about playing with Barbies and dolls; I played with Tonka trucks, mud, and climbed trees.

When I was 10 years old I got placed into the foster care system. Growing up in the system I was supposed to have rights that were not met. Being placed in the group home was the worst place that my social worker could have put me. I was happy in my foster home before the group home, but according to my social worker I was to needy,

and prone to attention-seeking behaviour. So she placed me into a level 5 group home that had 24/7 workers. My worker thought that me having 24/7 workers would help with my needy-ness and attention-seeking behaviours, but because the staff didn't pay much attention to me I grew even needier. I have been self-harming since I was 13 years old, but it took the staff until I was 16 to even notice.

Growing up in the system I noticed all the things that are broken, but the main thing that I want to discuss is the way 2SLGBTQ+ youth are treated. I was placed in a girls group home at the age of 11. Right away I knew something was wrong and that I wasn't going to fit in, not because the girls called me "goody two shoes", but because I knew that I wasn't a girl. Being placed in a girls group home shoved me so far into the closet that I questioned my gender identity for years.

I officially came out as transgender about a year and a half ago. I would have come out sooner if I

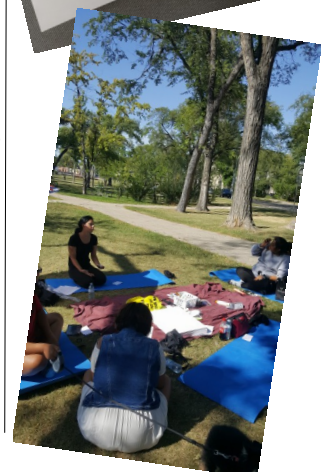
had the right supports and the right environment, if there had been an 2SLGBTQ+ friendly home, or even staff that would have helped me figure things out.

2SLGBTQ+ youth are not treated properly in the system. Even if they identify as a different gender they get forced to live in a placement that is of their birth gender. What the system needs is 2SLGBTQ+ homes with staff, or foster parents who are accepting, loving, and understanding. We need places that we can feel safe in.

If I was placed in a group home, or a foster home that was 2SLGBTQ+ friendly I would have come out a lot sooner. Youth in care are already discriminated against every day. 2SLGBTQ+ youth get discriminated against severely. We get brushed off, and told that the way we feel is just a phase. That we will just grow out of it. But we won't grow out of it. It is a part of who we are.

Your Voice

Your words, thoughts and ideas about being in care



WHAT IS VOICES ALL ABOUT?

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 and kinship care, group homes and shelters, 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.

2021 Voices Scholarship Program

This year, the **Voices Scholarship Program** consists of **five** awards:

The **Voices Bursary**, made possible through the fundraising efforts of Voices members, staff and donations from the public. **Two awards of \$1000** are given to a youth in or from care from any community in Manitoba;

The **Marie Christian Award** (also known as the **Lemonade Award**) is **2- \$1000 awards** given to youth in or from care who exhibit a positive attitude and determination to take sour circumstances and create delicious opportunities.

The women of Philanthropic Educational Organization (P.E.O. Chapter H) are sponsoring a **\$500 scholarship** called the **Reaching for the Stars Scholarship**,

to help one female in or from care reach for the stars and obtain her highest aspirations;

The **Honouring Our Youth Scholarship**, valued at **\$1000**, is sponsored by the Child and Youth Care Workers Association of Manitoba (CYCWAM), a non-profit, volunteer association of child and youth care workers in the province of Manitoba.

The Kiwiytin Scholarship is **5- \$4000 scholarships**, generously funded by The Northpine Foundation.

5 awards, one application form. All of the scholarships awarded by Voices are open to young people in and from care across Manitoba. There is no age limit. For more information visit our website, www.voices.mb.ca. Applications are due **Sunday, August 15th, 2021**.

Checkin' In with Jainna

By Jainna Cabral
Voices Program Coordinator

Hello Friends,

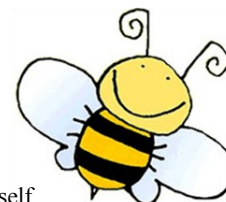
Here at Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network, we believe in the power and potential of every youth in and from care. We engage and equip young people with the tools and resources needed, so youth can empower themselves and advocate for their rights while navigating the system.

There are 42 articles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that outline the things you must be provided with, protected from, and allowed to participate in so that you grow and develop to your best potential. You can read them all at www.unicef.org. We like to keep it simple and summarize them all down to 4 main themes..

You Have the Right to be **Healthy**
You Have the Right to be **Safe**
You Have the Right to be **Heard**
You Have the Right to be **Yourself**

If you would like to learn more about your rights, make new friends, be heard, and have fun in a COVID-savvy way, give us a call or send us a message on our socials to sign up for one of or all of our events.

If you are unable to come out in person, or you don't have access to join us on zoom, the Summer Outreach Team is happy to come to you for safe distanced hang out. We will bring the treats, games, and the fun. Call us for more details.



Volunteer Opportunities at Voices:

- ☐ Advisory Committee (alumni of care, 18+)
- ☐ System Kidz (co-hosts, music, poetry)
- ☐ Newsletter Contributor
- ☐ Mentors
- ☐ Voices Family Christmas Party Team
- ☐ Youth Speakers (solo or on a panel)

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

Other Great Volunteer Opportunities:

Youth Ambassadors Advisory Squad (YAAS) works with the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth to improve effectiveness and responsiveness of *all* services provided to children and youth. Learn more at www.manitobaadvocate.ca

Futures Forward Youth Advisory meets every second Friday at 2pm. They focus on issues affecting alumni of care, like education and housing. Feedback is included in program proposals that improve the services Futures Forward provides. Call Hafiz at 204-987-8661 ext 667 to register.

**Your direction
is more important
than your speed.**

Numbers to call if you need help:

MYS Emergency Shelter is open 24/7 for youth 12-20 yrs old 204-477-1804

MYS crisis line: Text "MYS" to 686868 or call 204-949-4777

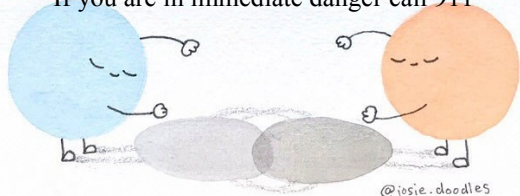
Ndinawe Tina's Safe Haven provides 24/7 support for youth 13 - 24 yrs old. 204-391-2209

WE24 offers safe space and safe rides for youth from 11pm -2am. 204-333-9681

Rossbrook House is a 24/7 safe space and offers safe rides for ages 6 to 24 yrs old. 204-949-4090

Klinic 24-hour Crisis line: 204-786-8686

If you are in immediate danger call 911

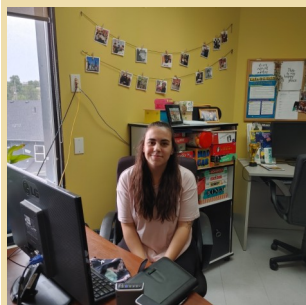



Meet the 2021 Summer Outreach Team

For the past few summers, Urban Green Team has generously supported Voices to hire young people from care to work as our Outreach Team! This summer, we are glad to welcome back Samara Vonrichter as one of our Summer Outreach Workers. We will introduce our second team member in next month's newsletter, so stay tuned. Up first, meet Samara:

"Hello, my name is Samara and I am excited to be back working with Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network. I was part of the summer outreach team in 2019 and had so much fun connecting with young people in and from care while participating in a variety of excursions such as: Beach Day, BBQ at Kildonan Park, medicine picking at Birds Hill, and so much more. This summer along the safe distanced outside adventures, I hope to help create a fun and safe environment for youth while teaching them their rights and how to safely advocate for them. My favorite right in the UNCRC is: **the right to have a say in decisions that will affect you**. I believe that being heard is very important. I hope to one day help youth feel heard by supporting and fighting for youth in care/inner-city youth from a legal stand point.

I hope to see you this summer!





FREE Monthly Cellphone Plans for Young People From Care


In partnership with TELUS, Children's Aid Foundation of Canada is excited to announce the expansion of the **TELUS Mobility for Good™** program.

Young people who were in permanent or temporary care of a child welfare agency in Manitoba on their 18th birthday*, ages 18-26 can apply for a TELUS smartphone and monthly plan at \$0 for 2 years. This plan will include unlimited nationwide talk and text and 3GB of monthly data usage.

TO FIND OUT IF YOU'RE ELIGIBLE AND TO APPLY PLEASE VISIT: cafdn.org/telusmobilityforgood

You read that right - FREE!

Apply online! Go to <https://www.telus.com/en/social-impact/connecting-canada/youth/application> for a link to the online application. You will need a letter from your agency verifying that you were in care.



Looking Ahead...

September: Focus Group on Education and Absenteeism

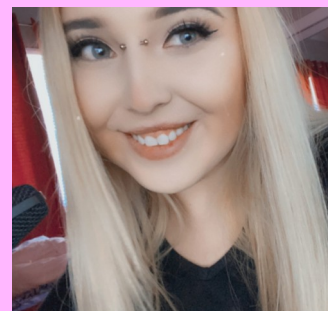
September: IFCO Delegation (for June 2022)

Things to Remember...

If you transitioned from care within the past year, you are eligible to receive \$250 per month to help with the cost of rent through the Canada-Manitoba Housing Benefit. Visit <https://www.gov.mb.ca/housing/progs/cmhb/cmhb-youth.html> for more info and an application form.

There is a **moratorium** in place on transitions from care during the pandemic. That means **you do not have to leave care until after September 23rd, 2021**, no matter your care status or your age. Call us if you have questions or need help talking to your worker.

Facilitator Spotlight: Karlii Beaulieu, Voices PRIDE Chats



Hi my name is Karlii, I'm a 23 year old self proclaimed advocate who wants to make a change in the child and family services system! My pronouns are she/her and I am transgender female.

I was in the system for almost my whole life and I had to make the executive decision to come out while in care. And it was tough!

I want to hear your thoughts and stories about your accomplishments and also the issues you face with being LGBTQ2S+ while under the care of CFS. Join our workshop every second Wednesday over the summer. Everyone is welcome to come, participation is appreciated however if you want to just listen and observe that's no problem.

Voices Pride Chats are held on ZOOM July 14th, 28th, and August 11th. Email ask@voices.mb.ca for the link!

July 2021

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Closed for Canada Day	2	3 Transition Peer Support 1pm on zoom <i>Post-secondary Education</i>
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Voices PRIDE Chat (on zoom) 12-1pm	15 Summer Kick-Off BBQ and Games 12-2pm	16	17 Transition Peer Support 1pm on zoom <i>Health and Well-Being</i>
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 Voices PRIDE Chat (on zoom) 12-1pm	29 Beach Day! 11am to 4pm	30	31 Transition Peer Support 1pm on zoom <i>Building Relationships</i>



August 2021

Sunday	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Closed for Terry Fox Day	3	4	5 Art in the Park 1:30-3:30pm	6	7 Transition Peer Support 1pm on zoom <i>Culture and Spirituality</i>
8	9	10	11 Voices PRIDE Chat (on zoom) 12-1pm	12 Storytelling at the Forks 1:30-3:30pm	13	14
15 Voices Scholarship Program Applications due!	16	17 Brandon Net- working Day	18	19 Beach Day! 11am to 4pm	20	21 Transition Peer Support 1pm on zoom <i>Future Goals and Wrap Up</i>
22	23	24	25 Celebrating 2021 Post-Secondary Graduates from Care!	26 Yoga in the Park 1:30-3:30pm	27	28
29	30	31	System Kidz is back on the radio starting Tuesday, September 1st! Represent your corner of the province and share your voice to help Manitobans understand what it's really like to be in care: the good, the bad, and everything in-between. Tune in to System Kidz every Tuesday at 5pm on ckuw 95.9fm, or online at www.ckuw.ca . Call 204-082-4956 (toll free in MB 1-866-982-4956) to get involved!			