



Message from the Youth Participation Expansion Project Coordinator

As I near the end of my role coordinating the *Youth Participation Expansion Project* – a partnership between the Family Justice Innovation Lab (FJIL) and the TFJS Collaborative, I wanted to share some reflections about what I've learned! The purpose of the project was to get more youth involved in both groups and find ways of sustaining youth engagement. Some things we learned through our efforts include:



- **The importance of outreach in the spaces youth already gather:**
Our Lunch & Learn with law students is one example of this. It would be excellent to do outreach events in other youth spaces that are tailored to the needs and interests of the young people who gather in those places.
- **Shifting language from a focus on lived experience to a shared commitment to changing the family justice system with child & youth well-being centred:**
Young people highlighted how even youth with lived experience may self-exclude if they feel their experience isn't "bad enough." They also shared that interest and commitment are a better focus. Broadening the language we use to invite more youth in, while still centring the needs and perspectives of youth with lived experience could be a useful approach moving forward.
- **The need to have youth involved at all levels of planning & discussion:**
Moving the "default" away from professionals gathering without youth present towards bringing youth into discussions early on and providing information so they are able to meaningfully share their views is a paradigm shift we should all be striving for. Paid roles for young people are an important part of this.

My hope is that these and other learnings can be built upon in future work the Lab and the Collaborative carry out. I am grateful for the opportunity to have learned from youth so committed to systems change within family justice so that the experiences of children and youth who come after them improve. I have appreciated connecting with many of you, and I'm wishing you all the best in your work to advance child and youth rights and well-being in your corners of the world!

Frankie McGee

Know a young person that should be highlighted here?

Let us know at contact@accesstojusticebc.ca

www.tfjscollaborative.com

Express your support, here.
Reach out at contact@accesstojusticebc.ca

Highlights from the TFJS Collaborative

UBC Allard Law Lunch & Learn Event

On February 11, the TFJS Collaborative & the [BC Family Justice Innovation Lab \(FJIL\)](#) hosted a Lunch & Learn event at the [UBC Peter A. Allard School of Law](#).

The session featured a conversation on children's rights and the realities of the child-welfare system. Tanya Chamberlain, KC, an experienced family law practitioner, and Daniell Sunshine, a change-making young person, spoke to the importance of hearing directly from children to ensure decisions truly reflect their best interests.



A shared message was highlighted:

Child-centred processes, consistent & supportive adult relationships, better access to information, and meaningful participation all contribute to safer, more informed, and more restorative outcomes for families.

Students were encouraged to consider how advocacy, whether interpersonal, legal or systemic, plays a role and can shape the experiences of children & youth. They also had an opportunity to ask questions about the practice of family law and child rights.

We extend our appreciation to the students who co-organized the event as well as those who attended and contributed to the discussion!



Shaking the Movers

On March 4, TFJS Collaborative & FJIL teams joined in to support *Shaking the Movers* or STM, a youth-facilitated workshop for youth, initiated at a national level by [the Landon Pearson Centre](#) at Carleton University. The 2026 theme was *Freedom of Expression and Identity*.



In BC, STM events use restorative circle practices. [North Shore Restorative Justice](#) led this year's workshop at Mountainside Secondary, in North Vancouver, with [Equitas](#) and [SFU's Centre for Restorative Justice](#) as other key partners. Fourteen youth, ages 15 to 18, took part. They reflected on human rights values, created youth characters to explore rights in daily life, and mapped community spaces where they feel free to express themselves and where they do not. Discussions highlighted what youth need to thrive, who makes them feel heard, and what a rights-respecting community could look like. We will share the report link soon!

Equality Breakfast 2026



On March 6, TFJS Collaborative team members spent a meaningful and uplifting morning at West Coast LEAF's 2026 Equality Breakfast. We joined the broader community to commemorate International Women's Day and to hear Tracey Lindberg share insights from her new book, *The Cree Word for Love: Sâkhitowin*, through a keynote that was powerful and deeply inspiring. We have highlighted this book as a recommended read in this issue!

With Gratitude

The TFJS Collaborative extends its heartfelt thanks to Paige Thombs for her dedication and thoughtful contributions over these past months. Her energy, insight, and care have strengthened our collective work toward system change. We're cheering her on as she steps into all the good things ahead.

Good listens, good reads

In this issue, we are back with fresh reads & listens from our community. We've gathered books, reports, and podcasts that spark reflection and conversation. Settle in & enjoy exploring what's been inspiring us lately!



***The Cree Word for Love: Sâkhitowin* by Tracey Lindberg.** This book is a collaboration between Tracey Lindberg and artist George Littlechild, created in response to an Elder's teaching that the Western notion of "love" has no direct equivalent in Cree culture. Through story & art, the book reflects on this teaching and explores the many ways love is lived - romantic, familial, communal, and kin-based.

It's a thoughtful response on what it means to live lovingly in all our relationships. For a deeper glimpse into what's behind the book, check out Tracey's [Keynote at West Coast LEAF's 2026 Equality Breakfast](#) & [her website](#).



From Resources to Routines: The Importance of Stability in the Developmental Environment is a working paper by the [Early Childhood Scientific Council on Equity and the Environment](#) (ECSCCE), that explores how stability shapes children's health and development. The paper provides strategies to create stability where children live, grow, play, and learn. It is available [here](#).



The [Alberta Family Wellness Initiative \(AFWI\)](#) released its ***2025 Fall Event Report***, highlighting what they heard from leaders across health, education, community and justice services. Over 150 participants explored how tools like the Resilience Scale can better support families and communities. Their conversations on what's working, what's missing, and what's needed next will guide how the brain science gets woven into policy & practice.



For those new to AFWI: It's the flagship initiative of the Palix Foundation, which focuses on improving well-being across Alberta and beyond. AFWI works with partners like [Harvard's Center on the Developing Child](#) and the [FrameWorks Institute](#) to turn complex brain science into practical tools. Their Brain Story and Resilience Scale are already influencing how systems understand and support resilience at every level.



Listen to the new episodes of ***You Can't Say That in Court!*** In February & March, RISE Women's Legal Centre's podcast released part two of *Should I Have Just Stayed?* and a brand-new episode, *How Systems Fail Survivors*. The series dives into the experiences of survivors of violence as they navigate the BC family law system. Hosted by Vicky, RISE's Executive Director, and Stephanie, RISE's Community Engagement Coordinator, the podcast tackles tough but important conversations about gender-based and intimate partner violence and the systems meant to support survivors.

What's on your reading/listening list? Do you know of a helpful resource? Email us your recommendations at contact@accesstojusticebc.ca and we'll feature it in our next newsletter!



Happenings

- **April 9 & 10:** NEVR's 16th Annual Conference: "Putting Policy into Practice: A Pathway to Prevention." Venue: Kwantlen Polytechnic University – Surrey Campus. Register [here](#)
- **April 14 @ 11 am:** Virtual CoP Meeting with guest Adrienne Montani of [First Call BC](#), who will present on the [BC Child Poverty Report Card](#). Register for the CoP [here](#)
- **April 21 @ 2 pm:** Child & Youth Meaningful Participation Community of Action Meeting
- **April 21:** BC Non-Profit Network: Metro-Vancouver Leaders Gathering hosted by Vantage Point Register [here](#)
- **April 24:** Chilliwack Child & Youth Committee's Annual Conversation. Register [here](#)
- **May 1 to May 7:** BC Youth Week - See: <https://www.bcyouthweek.com/>
- **June 5 & 6:** BC Non-Profit Leadership Conference hosted by Vantage Point. Register [here](#)
- **June 16 & 18:** International Summer Course on the Rights of the Child, focusing on "Children's Rights in the Age of Artificial Intelligence", at the Université de Moncton or online via MS Teams, hosted by GRIDE. Children & youth are encouraged to take part. Complete [the registration form](#) by no later than **April 30, 2026**



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Did You Know?

The TFJS Collaborative has three Communities of Action



Intersectoral CoA

Support Finder CoA

Child & Youth Meaningful Participation CoA



We acknowledge the ancestral & unceded territories of many Indigenous Peoples that our participants gather on. We are committed to engaging with Indigenous Peoples and applying Indigenous legal principles in our work.