

UWCV JOINS CFUW BC COUNCIL IN STUDY CIRCLE PILOT PROJECT ON YOUTH AGING OUT OF CARE IN BC

Four Clubs, CFUW Kelowna, North Vancouver, Victoria and UWC Vancouver will be participating in a Study Circles Project on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care in BC. Developed through a grant from the initiative “Fostering Change” from the Vancouver Foundation, the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) BC Council, together with First Call BC: Child & Youth Advocacy Coalition are conducting a community wide Study Circles Pilot Project on B.C. Youth Aging Out of Foster Care.

Using the study circle method used worldwide (e.g. Everyday Democracy, Sweden), the CFUW club members and adult and youth community members will meet together in their neighbourhoods to discuss concerns, create an understanding of the “Caring Gap”, foster dialogue, build relationships, and stimulate community level social change regarding youth aging out of foster care in British Columbia, approximately 1,000 young people annually.

The situation of young people aging out of care in our community and province-wide is inequitable and therefore of significant concern. In 2016, the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) BC Council passed a policy calling for:

- Urgent systemic, community, and government level reforms to extend support for young people aging out of foster care until they turn 25,
- Develop a caring and comprehensive plan to ease these transitions,
- Review policy and practice (we’ve learned that there is a difference) in collaboration with young people, and
- Take steps to reduce stigma and increase permanency in their young lives

Of recent significant note from the Vancouver Foundation Fostering Change Initiative is [Opportunities in Transition](#), a new economic analysis of investing in youth aging out of Foster Care by SFU economist Marvin Shaffer and Family Policy Researcher, Lynell Anderson. This is the first report to estimate the costs associated with the adverse outcomes that many youth aging out of foster care in BC each year experience.

http://www.fosteringchange.ca/opportunities_in_transition_out_now

The report demonstrates significant annual costs – up to \$268 million – are associated with the adverse experiences which many youth aging out of foster care at 19 encounter, while a much lower level of investment - \$57 million per year – would be required to improve outcomes and reduce costs. In addition, their previous research indicates that more than 70% of British Columbians are in favour of extending financial supports for youth aging out of foster care until age 25. We now know that over 92% of typical BC parents support their children with funding or accommodation up to age 28 and older.

To hear some of the stories from Foster Youth themselves, here is a new podcast episode from First Call: B.C. Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition (of which UWCV is a member):

<https://soundcloud.com/aswordspreads/s01e02>

This podcast with real life stories (just under 20 minutes) can be both heartbreaking and thought provoking as to the question of how could we make a difference in our province to this inequitable situation.