

**?** @foundrypenticton



PENTICTON YOUTH CENTRE



YES Project Ambassadors

# HOW IT ALL STARTED

Nearly ten years ago, a group of youth came together to address the urgent needs of young people in the community. The Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) Project championed what today is a successful and growing resource and service centre for youth and families in need.

The Community Foundation of South Okanagan Similkameen was integral to finding this project a home – with the innovative idea of purchasing a 21,000 square foot building, and then leasing it back to youth-serving community partners to create a one-stop shop for youth in need of support.

The Penticton Youth Centre opened its doors in the summer of 2019 and we're pleased to say that the Centre has been successfully serving the needs of Penticton youth ever since.

# THE NEED FOR A YOUTH CENTRE

## **Troubling signs**

At the time the YES Project was formed, multiple reports and surveys, including the Foundation's Vital Signs reports, found that today's youth faced unbelievable challenges. Youth needed a safe place where young people could come for a range of resources and supports that would help them to thrive, grow in self-esteem, and become healthy adults. A Youth Centre was long overdue.

"We need to de-stigmatize struggle. All youth need help at some point"

Mia McBryde,
 YES Project

## 2016 FINAL REPORT FOR CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH:

"Youth-friendly centres would more effectively utilize and integrate existing programs and services through a "onestop" location that includes primary care physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologists, addictions counselors. mental health social workers. and employment advisors."

2018 ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY OF OKANAGAN YOUTH BY MCCREARY CENTRE SOCIETY:



almost 1/5 of youth had seriously considered suicide

The most common topic Okanagan youth wanted to learn about was:

- mental health, followed by
- physical and sexual health

20%

did not access needed mental health services

48%

of those that had self-harmed were non-binary youth **42**%

reported that they didn't know where to go to access needed services

# FOR COMMUNITY, BY COMMUNITY

## Thank you to our supporters!

The road to the Youth Centre was a long one, but by no means a lonely one.

The YES Project started with an estate gift that the Community Foundation and the United Way received at the same time. We pooled our resources and collaborated with other youth serving agencies to create a vision for youth services in the community.

Youth engagement and consultations guided us in the direction of the project, ultimately leading to the idea of the Youth Centre and the Future Starts Here campaign. The community came together to donate funds and organize creative fundraisers. Thanks to the efforts of the community, it didn't take long to reach our \$1 Million milestone.

The Youth Centre is truly a by-community, for-community project and it would not have been possible without the support of our generous donors, actions by community members, and endorsements from numerous youth organizations throughout the campaign.













# COLLABORATIVE CARE

## Meet the service providers at the Youth Centre

#### **FOUNDRY PENTICTON**

The anchor tenant of the Youth Centre, Foundry Penticton offers young people (ages 12-24) access to mental health and substance use support, primary care, peer support and social services.

Since the opening, Foundry has been busy adapting services to meet growing demands in the community. They also continue to evolve to meet the emerging needs of youth and their families. They've expanded their primary care hours, counselling sessions and peer supports to better meet the physical and mental health needs of youth with eating disorders, addictions, anxiety, and other mental health concerns.

Additional partnerships ensure ongoing collaboration in the team-based care clinic.

With a 58% increase in youth visits from the previous year, Foundry's rapid growth is a testament to how much our youth need this place.

"Youth enjoy the building and having a safe space to go to for help, or to hangout. We hear so often from parents and caregivers that they wish they had something like this when they were younger. It would have changed their life. Youth now have a place to go that's safe, welcoming and inclusive."

- Melisa Edgerly Youth Peer Support Supervisor

#### **ARC PROGRAMS**

ARC Programs is a multi-service community agency, based in Kelowna and operating in communities of the central and south Okanagan, as well as the Kootenays. ARC Programs serves children, youth, families, and individuals in their own communities, schools, and homes. ARC Programs has provided services for more than 32 years, and has achieved accreditation of all our programs by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Families of all walks of life come to ARC, and they know we have created a safe and inclusive space for them. Knowing that it takes courage and vulnerability to ask for support, ARC emphasizes the importance of meeting the clients at their level and the Youth Centre has allowed them to offer a comforting environment.

"It gives [clients] a sense of comfort and confidence when I'm able to walk down the hall alongside them and be the one to introduce them to another service provider at the Youth Centre, rather than have them face it alone."

Terri Willoughby,
 Program Director

Attention and care to the little things goes a long way for the clients they serve. You can see the effect it has on the gratitude board -- a space completely filled with little thank you notes from youth and their families.

# MINISTRY OF CHILDREN & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT - CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

The Ministry of Children and Family Development's Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) provide a range of free and voluntary mental health assessment and treatment options for children and youth (up to 19 yrs of age) and their families.

CYMH uses a team approach and works collaboratively with our community partners to support youth who are experiencing moderate to severe mental health challenges.

The CYMH team has found that the Youth Centre has made it much easier for them to help youth access important services by providing an alternative meeting place for clients who want a more private, or "less-medical" space.

In 2022, they used their Youth Centre space to run group sessions such as:

- 8-12 year olds with anxiety
- psycho-education for parents around ADHD
- Indigenous girls group

"The Youth Centre has been warm and welcoming to the youth they serve, and has offered us opportunities to collaborate. [The other youth service providers] shared their space with us, and are always working to flexibly build relevant services into what they do"

- CYMH Clinician

#### **YMCA**

YMCA offers a welcoming and safe community eager to help youth gain the skills and confidence to find and keep a job in today's market through free training and certification, aiding in job applications, and facilitating work placements.

YMCA is no stranger to the concept of "warm referrals", working with other organizations to provide wrap-around support to the client. They meet collectively with the other service providers to go over support plans, participate in presentations to better understand what each service provider offers, and have made it part of their intake process to give their clients a tour of the Foundry.

As they operate, YMCA continues to identify gaps to be able to offer services to youth, no matter their barriers, resulting in new developments such as addressing food security for Jumpstart clients, or starting up the Job Shadows Program to offer preliminary exposure to work environments.

"When people are facing barriers, it's not fair to expect them to overcome them completely on their own. It's up to us as social service providers to bring the services to them and make what seems scary, accessible."

- Shelley Hunt Manager, Community Programs

Contact Info
PENTICTON YOUTH CENTRE

501 Main Street Penticton BC V2A 5C6 **FOUNDRY:** 778-646-2292

**ARC PROGRAMS:** 250-492-2987

MCFD CYMH: 250-487-442

YMCA: 250-770-7873

## **ONE STOP SHOP**

## The Youth Centre offers a full suite of services and programs:

45%

of youth wouldn't have recieved help if the centre was

5000+

Foundry services accessed in the 21/22 vear

900+

visited Foundry
Penticton in the
21/22 year

## **FOUNDRY PENTICTON**

- Counselling and mental health supports
- Substance use supports
- Primary care (physical health)
- Youth and family peer support
- Employment support
- Social services
- Community connections and resources
- Group support and activities



"A lot of the work we've done is about breaking down that barrier of focusing on just one service. A real goal of ours is for a young person to come in one door and get what they need."

- Kim Conroy Manager of Foundry Penticton 99

youth taking part in YMCA employment programs

200+

clients served at **ARC Programs** in the past year

### **YMCA**

- Youth Employment Programs
  - Youth Connect
  - Jumpstart
  - Job Shadows
- Y & I (Youth & Inclusion)
- Teen After-School Program
- Family Play Time (Admin)

# MCFD - CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

- Intake
- Assessments
- Treatment
- Case management
- Consultation services
- Therapeutic groups
- Individual therapy
- Parenting skills sessions
- Psychiatric services

## **ARC PROGRAMS**

- Family Treatment Program
- Wraparound/Foster Parent Support Program
- Personalized Supports
   Initiative and
   Developmental Disability
   Program
- PENRAP Program
- Behaviour Assessment Support Services Program
- Community Inclusion and Transition Support Services Program

## YOUTH EMPOWERING YOUTH

### Interview with Honor Hollman



We had a chance to catch up with Honor, former YES Project Youth Ambassador and Foundry Penticton Peer Support Worker.

# Q: It's been nearly ten years since the start of the YES Project! Can you tell us about how you became involved with the project?

A: I first found out about the YES Project in high school through a workshop that was led by youth workers from Vancouver. I was part of the Mental Health Club in high school, and I knew there was a lack of mental health resources in the school. When the workshop leaders asked us, "what would you love to have at a youth centre?", the top three responses were: mental health resources, access to basic needs like showers, and emergency beds". I remember the workshop leaders were in shock because we could've asked for anything, things that are fun, but we asked for basic needs.

# Q: What was the response from the youth in the community when you talked about a Youth Centre?

A: I don't think there was a single person who I talked to that wasn't interested or wasn't in support of the project. Penticton felt more rural back then, and we weren't getting the support or services that bigger cities were getting. YES Project was the bridge to bring those resources to Penticton and now Penticton Youth Centre gets to do that for our surrounding communities.

## Q: How did it feel when the Youth Centre opened?

A: It was probably one of the coolest feelings and experiences of my life. There were many times it felt impossible to get a Youth Centre here but because of the hard work of the community and youth sharing their experiences and stories, we were able to do it. All the advocacy paid off. It was so cool to see all the supporters of different ages at the official opening.

## Q: What have you been up to since the opening of the Youth Centre?

A: Since the Youth Centre opened, I went to UVic for my degree in Social Work and I was lucky enough to be able to do my first practicum at Foundry Penticton. After my practicum, I started working as a Youth Peer Support Worker at Foundry Penticton. I gained so many skills during my time there.

### Q: What was it like working at Foundry Penticton?

A: Peer Support can be described as providing "non-clinical support". It was different every single minute of the day. We would facilitate different groups, have one-on-one time with youth or connect in other informal ways. We were that someone who can just listen or help refer them to the right place. This place is especially special for someone who's not sure who they should talk to – it's a connecter to all the services in the community. I've helped youth get signed up for the food bank, try to find a shelter bed, and so on.

## Q: Do you think the Youth Centre has accomplished what it had set out to do?

A: Yes, I think the Youth Centre is saving lives. Honestly. And that's really special and it was so needed in Penticton. It did what it was set out to do and more. But youth today are facing so many challenges. My specialty at the end of my time with Foundry was around youth housing. Youth beds are still very much needed and there's a long way to go. It's the number one priority for so many community members and youth are advocating every day for this cause. I look forward to see how youth housing will be addressed in Penticton.

## Q: Any advice for youth in our community looking to learn more or get support?

A: I recommend just going in and checking out the space. If you're nervous about calling, you can follow Foundry online to see what's happening and send a message. I trust that one of our awesome Peer Support Workers will answer you.

#### Q: Anything else you'd like to say?

A: I'm just so grateful for everyone in the community who still makes the Youth Centre a priority and remind people that there is amazing work being done there, every single day.

## **EMERGING NEEDS**

## **Building capacity**

Demand for the Penticton Youth Centre is growing rapidly, and service providers are responding to emerging issues and needs by expanding their services and programs. Not only are we seeing more youth accessing services at the Youth Centre, but we are also seeing more youth dealing with higher levels of distress.

The Youth Centre is starting renovations of the basement that will add 3,500 square feet of space to be used for additional activities and programs to meet evolving needs identified by youth service providers, including recreation and activity space, laundry facilities, showers, and a care closet.

The Community Foundation is also actively pursuing opportunities to install an elevator in the building, an important addition to ensure that youth services are accessible to everyone.

"An elevator is 100% a necessity. If it's not accessible for everyone in the community, there is still a lot of work that still needs to be done."

-Honor Hollman, Former YES Project Youth Ambassador and Foundry Peer Support Worker

## Long-term sustainability

A first of its kind for community foundations in Canada, the Penticton Youth Centre is truly a self-sustaining business model that will ensure the longevity of this much needed community resource.

The purchase of the building will continue to give back over the years as, once the mortgage is paid down, the building's operating revenue will create \$150,000 in annual youth granting.

## We need your support

Our work is not done yet. Youth today still face unbelievable challenges. If you would like to support the Penticton Youth Centre or learn more about immediate and urgent needs of youth, we encourage you to reach out to us.

## Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen

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We acknowledge with humility and gratitude that we live, work, and learn within the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories of the smelqmix and syilx Peoples.