The Centre for Youth & Society mission is to promote the health and well-being of youth from diverse social, economic and ethnic backgrounds in evolving societal circumstances. The Centre facilitates university-community partnerships to generate and mobilize knowledge regarding the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of youth. Current research clusters include: mental health, literacy, youth and new technologies, Indigenous youth, youth and the economy, health and recreation, community-youth engagement, and knowledge mobilization for youth audiences.

An emerging area of work at CFYS involves youth and international contexts. A new partnership with UN Habitat, Office of Livelihoods led a review Refugee Youth: Good Practices in Urban Resettlement. The project focused on: youth mental health, arts & sports initiatives, language learning, housing, transitions to employment and the particular situation of refugee girls and young women.

The Refugee Youth report was presented at the non-governmental organizations side events of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul April 2016. CFYS discussed the Refugee Youth report at the UN Headquarters in New York during UN Habitat Agenda preparatory meetings (June 2016) and in Ottawa on Parliament Hill hosted by the United Nations Association of Canada (June 2016).

CFYS is delighted to congratulate the four Fall 2016 Myer Horowitz Award winners, Sandra Marquis (Social Dimension of Health Program), LeeAnna Deringer (Indigenous Communities Counselling), Jessica Cummings (Counselling) and Leah Lychowyd (Indigenous Communities Counseling).

Winner Sandra Marquis (PhD Candidate, Social Dimension of Health) writes:

Thanks to the generous contribution from the Myer Horowitz Award, I was able to attend the 5th Health and Wellbeing in Children, Youth and Adults with Developmental Disabilities Conference in Vancouver Nov. 17-18, 2016 and to present a poster of my preliminary dissertation findings.

The subtitle of this conference was “Moving from Diagnosis to Practical Strategies”. As a result, I was able to attend a wide variety of speakers covering topics from the erosion of inclusive education, to advances in genetics, to recommendations for changes in primary and emergency medical care for people with developmental disabilities. Much of the information that I learned will use in my work with families of children with developmental disabilities.

The topic closest to my own work was the two sessions I attended on changing primary and emergency medical care. The research explores strategies to engage high school girls in physical education activities. Relatedness-support refers to the social environments in which individuals have the opportunity to develop healthy relationships with others. By designing physical education classes that encourage the development of supportive environments, the study finds that girls are able to build relationships with others, and motivate each other to grow as leaders in their communities.

The research team included teachers from across BC and encouraged girls’ participation either by organizing one-day extra-curricular activities (hiking), offering a variety of physical activity classes for girls (fitness, tai chi), service leadership activities, and/or by using technology and social media in classroom-based activities designed to keep track of personal fitness accomplishments.

All these activities facilitated building the environment, which produced relatedness between the girls through mutual support, coming together to increase participation and promote physical activity. The next step in the project will be to interview students about their individual experiences. We look forward to more on this research as they complete year 3.
Welcome to New Students

CFYS welcomes a crew of new Research Assistants for the 2016-17 academic year. From the left Claire Sauvage-Mar (Kinesiology), Brooke McDonald (Psychology), Jessica Sahliström (Child and Youth Care), Shana Girard (Counselling Psychology), Teresa Hartrick (Kinesiology), Allison Murphy (English), and Karolina Karas (Psychology). Missing from photo Jen Poole (Educational Psychology) and Fanie Collardeau (Clinical Psychology).

New Website

CFYS is launching a new website soon. You will find information on research underway, detailed research summaries and reports, and information on Faculty Fellows and graduate student affiliates of the Centre. Our url will still be: www.youth.society.uvic.ca

Becoming a CFYS Member

There are four membership categories within the Centre for Youth & Society: Research Fellow, Research Affiliate, Student Affiliate, or Community Member. Membership is free. Members support the mission and goals of CFYS and are expected to adhere to high ethical principles in the conduct and dissemination of research.

To apply for membership, download the application package on our website and email it to cys@uvic.ca or fax to 250-472-5470.

Message from Our Director

The approaching new year is a time of renewal and 2017 will see new directions and changes at Youth & Society. Our 5-Year Review process site visit takes place in January - this will be an opportunity to review our progress and consider new pathways, projects, and partnerships. The Centre’s self study document and the Review team’s report will provide the base for Phase 2 of our strategic planning process in the spring.

2017 will also see a new Director at the Centre. You will soon have an update from the search committee. I will have had nine stimulating and rewarding years as Director at Youth & Society when my term ends next June. I look forward to working with the new Director during the transition time.

We’ve had a strong team of research assistants this fall to work on our projects involving social entrepreneurship, youth engagement in philanthropy, and refugee youth. Stay tuned for more on the results of these initiatives.

Happy holidays to everyone and best wishes for the new year!

- Anne

Roy Watson Traffic Safety Fund

The Roy Watson Fund supports student research relating to traffic safety topics. Here are four recent paper descriptions. For detailed research summaries see our website.

Cannabis Use and Driving

(Emmerald Pringle, Psychology)

While many public education campaigns have increased awareness of drunk driving, “drugged driving” remains less prominent in public health discourse. Notably, cannabis is the illicit drug most commonly identified in impaired drivers (Hartman & Huestis, 2013) and is the illicit drug most widely used by young Canadians (Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 2016). This paper summarizes research on the effects of marijuana use on driving. It presents marijuana’s potential to negatively impact driving performance and safety, both when taken alone and as commonly used in conjunction with alcohol. Slowed reaction time, drifting and maneuvering, and limited attention and cognition are explored.

Right Design for Right Response

(Claire Sauvage-Mar, Kinesiology)

Excessive speed is one of the top three contributing factors to road fatalities in British Columbia, following driver impairment and weather or road conditions (British Columbia Coroners Service, 2015). A meta-analysis of 33 studies reported that urban traffic calming schemes – techniques employed to slow down motorists – reduced the number of injury accidents by about 15% once implemented. This paper outlines several promising traffic calming strategies which modify existing road environments.

Walking School Buses

(Hannah Kim, Leadership)

A Walking School Bus (WSB) is a group of children walking together to and from school under the supervision of one or more adults. WSB is an integral part of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs, which originated in Denmark in the late 1970s as a successful initiative to reduce the number of children killed while commuting to school (Rothman, Builtin, Macarthur, To, & Howard, 2013). In Canada, WSB runs under the umbrella of Active and Safe Routes to School (AST) program across Canada. This paper illustrates the potential benefits of the WSB: to enhance children’s pedestrian safety, improve physical health through increased exercise, reduce congestion and the environmental impacts of transportation, and improve community cohesion.

Distracted Driving

(Kate Borsato, Counselling)

The majority of drivers today engage in some kind of distracted behaviour each time they get behind the wheel (Carter, et al., 2014). Distracted driving happens when drivers divert their hands, eyes, or mind away from the primary focus of operating their vehicle. 95% of young drivers have sent text messages while driving even though they acknowledge the risks. Excessive speed is one of the top three contributing factors to road fatalities in British Columbia, following driver impairment and weather or road conditions (British Columbia Coroners Service, 2015). A meta-analysis of 33 studies reported that urban traffic calming schemes – techniques employed to slow down motorists – reduced the number of injury accidents by about 15% once implemented. This paper outlines several promising traffic calming strategies which modify existing road environments.

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