



University  
of Victoria  
School of Child  
& Youth Care

# Newsletter

Fall 2012



## Letter from the Director:

Marie Hoskins

The School of Child and Youth Care is only seven months away from becoming 40 years old. Although originally a school of child care it has now grown into becoming a school of child and youth care that addresses the needs of children, youth, and families. To prepare practitioners for the field, we offer a range of educational opportunities from first year through to doctoral studies. We are also fortunate to have post doctoral fellows in our hallways. We have a wide reach offering traditional on campus and on-line programs, community based Indigenous programs and international ones overseas. We have much to celebrate now that we are a few months away from celebrating our 40th birthday on May 3rd, 2013. In the meantime, there are other noteworthy reasons to celebrate.

UVIC is also reaching an important milestone. Our university is now 50 years old and is named one of Canada's top research-intensive universities. The Times Higher Education ranks UVIC in the top 200 of all universities in the world and places UVIC at number 11 globally for universities under 50 years old. Check out the UVIC website for a detailed listing of upcoming events.

Within the school there is much activity. All of our courses were launched in September without any glitches. While attempting to be fiscally responsible, we have now increased some of our class sizes and have the added benefit of graduate teaching assistants in several courses. Fourteen masters and five doctoral students joined our large undergraduate community.

Faculty and graduate student research continues to flourish. Please check out faculty websites for a full listing and also try to attend the various scheduled Research Conversations organized by Jennifer White and Sandra Curran. In addition, there are several graduate thesis defences booked throughout the year that are open to everyone. Both of these opportunities provide valuable ways of learning more about research in Child and Youth Care.

## **"We have much to celebrate now that we are a few months away from celebrating our 40th birthday on May 3rd, 2013."**

Although there is much to celebrate this year in terms of milestones as well as valuable learning opportunities, we are unfortunately faced with a challenge—one that looms overhead as we take financial stock at UVIC. With an across the board 4 percent cut facing us, we are being asked by the upper administration to tighten our belts. And even though the School has met all of its enrollment targets, some schools and faculties are struggling due to a variety of variables. In the School of Child and Youth Care, these cuts will be handled internally and will not impact the quality of education we offer students. We are fortunate to have staff, sessional instructors and faculty committed to supporting student learning.

So let's continue to work together, celebrate our successes, explore new avenues, and revisit traditional ideas in order to offer the best possible services for children, youth and families locally, nationally and internationally.



## News headlines create risk for youth, experts say

By Carlito Pablo, October 18, 2012

Straight.com

A UBC psychologist is worried that the high-profile media coverage of the Amanda Todd story may lead other teens to kill themselves.

E. David Klonsky says he's concerned about the repetitive front-page stories and publication of the late Port Coquitlam teen's photo, which fly in the face of guidelines on reporting suicide as well as established evidence that links prominent media attention to contagion, or copycat, suicides. Speaking from Ontario by phone on the sidelines of a conference of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, the associate psychology professor described the Todd coverage as "potentially excessive".



Suicide-prevention expert Jennifer White says "romanticizing" a teen's death by suicide may send the wrong message to vulnerable young people.

"If you create sort of a vision of suicide, [it] leads to a lot of positive attention. Suicide leads to your picture on the front page or your picture in the yearbook and leads to a lot of reactions and interest from all the friends and community and family members who didn't give

you what you were looking for while you were alive. If suicide gets paired with any of these kinds of positive outcomes in the media, that could encourage more teens to attempt suicide," Klonsky told the Georgia Straight. "And that's what we want to avoid." But he also said he recognized that news reports have not provided details about the suicide act and a sense that taking one's own life is approved of, which conform to guidelines on suicide coverage. He admitted that it's difficult for him to say whether or not he would have preferred low-profile coverage of the Todd story because it's an "important topic."

"I don't know that coverage itself needed to be less, but certainly, the sensationalism of the front-page headlines and posting the deceased's picture everywhere, that certainly could have been less," Klonsky said.

Suicide-prevention expert Jennifer White pointed out that the circumstances around the Todd coverage demonstrate the complex times in which mainstream-media outlets find themselves. It's a situation where social media have become ubiquitous channels for public information.

"There's a recognition that because she was so public already online in terms of her YouTube video, that that already put it into the public domain," White, an associate professor in the University of Victoria's school of child and youth care, told the Straight in a phone interview. "So I think it's hard to say, well, that that isn't newsworthy. I can see for the news media how they could construe that as, you know, in the public interest because it was already in the public zone."

Asked if mainstream media should have exercised more restraint, White gave a nuanced reply. "It's hard to answer that because I don't know the conversations that led them to decide how they did frame it," White said. "Maybe the fact that they didn't talk about the method, and maybe the fact that they didn't use suicide in the headline, is their own attempt to be restrained. I'm not sure. So that's hard for me to say. But I think the one thing we do know is this kind of glorification—with lots of photos and kind of a romanticizing of the person who has died by suicide—is problematic in the way that it could invite other young people to identify. And so that's always a concern.

"And at the same time, I see the tension," White continued, "because I see also her parents saying, 'We want her YouTube video to be circulated because we think this is the best way to honour her memory.' So media are in a very, I think, difficult position in terms of balancing the interests of the public's right to know, the parents' wishes, and the scientific evidence about contagion. I mean these are all the things that need to be balanced."

Elizabeth Saewyc is the lead investigator at UBC's Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Consortium. She said she is unsure whether mainstream-media coverage of the Todd story will cause a contagion effect, because young people are less plugged into it and are more connected through social media. She also suggested that social media may have the opposite effect of discouraging youth from committing suicide. "I don't know that the regular media are on Twitter feeds or the Facebook pages of young people today," Saewyc, who is also a professor of nursing and adolescent medicine, told the Straight by phone.

The Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of B.C. provides several suggestions about what media should "avoid" in reporting suicides. These include running stories on the front page or using them as lead items in news broadcasts. Media should also refrain from "repetitive, ongoing, or excessive reporting of suicide" in the news. The Vancouver Sun covered the Todd suicide on the front page above the fold for four consecutive days.

Crisis centre spokesperson Stephanie Cardwell maintained that the Todd story was "not in any way sensationalized by the media because the facts were presented": "A big focus of the story was on bullying, and we find there are opinions on how bullying has led to Amanda's suicide, and there were many perspectives on what the community can do to stop bullying," Cardwell told the Straight by phone.

Reminded about her group's recommendations against prominent media reporting, Cardwell said: "I think it was important to provide this high-profile story and to open a conversation and shed a light on bullying."

But providing what appear to be easy answers to questions about why a person committed suicide is another danger that UBC's Klonsky is worried about. "Everyone's attributing the suicide to the bullying, which I'm sure was a very important cause, but it's probably not quite that simple," he said.

### The 2012 Representative's Award of Excellence: Service Provider

<http://www.rcybc.ca/content/home.asp>

Mitchel du Plessis is a Youth and Family Counsellor at Lansdowne Middle School in Victoria, where she developed the Youth Creating Inclusion Crew (a social justice group) and the Full Circle Backpack Club which brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. She has also fostered 13 children, is the president of the South Vancouver Island School-based Youth and Family Counselling Association, sits on the School District 61

Gay/Straight Alliance Advisory Committee, and provides supervision and mentoring for practicum students at the University of Victoria's School of Child and Youth Care. She is also completing her master's degree in education counselling and leadership.



BC Representative for Children and Youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lanfond, Mitchell du Plessis, Jin-Sun Yoon, Senior Instructor, School of Child and Youth Care.

Mitchel cares for children and youth at home and works in school with youth and their families who have varying needs from diverse cultures. She counsels and advocates for the children and families who require intense support and social services. She works with all children and youth in a strengths-based manner. Mitchel works holistically and is not beyond delivering newspapers with her foster children, re-homing cats from people who can no longer care for them and creating interesting adventures for children, youth and their families. She works to expand who is considered family, what it is like to live a life rich with purpose and meaning, and believes that building communities and empowering relationships are at the heart of positive change for children and youth.

### ***"Mitchel is a critical thinker with an ever expanding heart."***

Mitchel is relentless at pursuing the best services possible for her clients and foster children. Although on occasion she has been discouraged and disappointed because her efforts didn't reap the kind of resources she was looking for, this has never diminished her spirit or motivation to continue.

### **Nominator and supporter comments:**

I have known Mitchel for 14 years as a colleague, friend and neighbour and she has achieved more in those 14 years than many do in a lifetime. She is a tireless advocate for children, youth and families and Victoria is a better place for her continued efforts over the last three decades.

Mitchel is one of the most beautiful people I know. She has enriched my life in so many ways. Any child that is put in her care, for a short or long stay, is the luckiest child in the system.

When Mitchel gets a new child in her home, the first thing she tries to do is make him or her feel comfortable. Lots of times the children come to her with just what is on their backs. She takes them shopping for clothes and buys them a suitcase because she feels it is very degrading for them to be shuffled around with their possessions in a black garbage bag.

Mitchel's philosophy is that safe homes are not enough and that we need to be working for safe and connected communities that work harder to be child-centered. Her capacity to build diverse and culturally responsive networks for her kids speaks to this vision. Mitchel is a critical thinker with an ever expanding heart.

## Residential Care

Jim Anglin recently returned from twelve days in Portugal where he presented seminars on grounded theory and parent education/support to faculty members and students at the University of Lisbon and Coimbra University joint doctoral program in psychology. In addition, he gave a public lecture on **Using Practice-Based Evidence for Theory Development and Organizational Transformation in Residential Care**. Coimbra University is over 700 years old, and thus one of the oldest universities in the world. The faculty and students combine tradition and innovation in an impressive manner. The ancient library is patrolled at night by a family of bats who keep the valuable old texts free of pests by each ingesting up to 500 insects each "shift". They then retreat to sleep by day, allowing scholars to get on with their work amidst the stacks. While on academic leave, Jim is revising and updating his 2003 text on residential care ("Pain, Normality and the Struggle for Congruence") and gathering material on the history of professional child and youth care.

## ECD Scholars to meet February 2013

Those who work in ECD in Sub-Saharan Africa know how difficult it is to locate African based and African led research. The issue has long concerned ECDVU as it has sought to locate such materials for incorporation into its courses.

In 2008 ECDVU Director Alan Pence and ECDVU Professor Kofi Marfo responded to a call for special topics workshops from the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) to identify key issues that challenge child development research globally. Their proposal, Strengthening Africa's Contributions to Child Development Research, was one of only four workshop

proposals funded in that inaugural year (see story, 2011 ECDVU News, p. 3, and papers from that workshop at <http://www.ecdву.org/publications.php>).

One of the key calls to action that came out of the Victoria SRCD workshop was to organize a similar event to take place in Africa. With the support of the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA) and the Open Society Foundation (OSF), that African-based workshop is now planned for February 2013.

This by-invitation workshop will bring approximately 20 scholars from across Sub-Saharan Africa together for three days of discussion and planning designed to promote greater scholarly and research capacity for child development and ECD across Africa. The majority of the invited scholars are based at tertiary institutions as the institutions themselves have a key role to play in advancing this scholarly work.

The workshop will be coordinated by the ECDVU office, with Marfo and Pence being joined by Drs. Robert Serpell (Zambia) and Bame Nsamenang (Cameroon) as co-facilitators.

## New School Publication

The School of Child and Youth Care is celebrating its 40th anniversary! A new publication was produced by an in-house team and highlights our successes and ongoing programs of research and professional education, and our commitment to contributing to achieving UVic's Strategic Objectives.



Inspiration to create this booklet came from a School visioning day held in February of this year. Starting with a review of the draft UVic Strategic Plan, we identified core ways in which the School of Child and Youth Care has and can continue to align its goals with those of the Strategic Plan. The booklet highlights some of these theme areas, and indicates the Strategic Objectives that are advanced by activities of the faculty, students, staff, adjunct professors, and alumni.

The booklet contains descriptions of faculty research,

student achievements, community partner engagements, and school-wide conferences that illustrate the School of Child and Youth Care's commitment to excellence, creativity, and open transfer of knowledge with a broad range of audiences.

We hope that the spirit of discovery through research, innovation through education initiatives, and outreach through meaningful community engagement is evident as you read the booklet. We intend the booklet as a way to communicate not only our achievements but also our capacity to continue to advance UVic's Strategic Objectives in our fifth decade as a research-intensive professional school. To receive a copy of our new publication and for others who may be interested or wish to become involved, please do not hesitate to contact Shelley Henuset at [shenuset@uvic.ca](mailto:shenuset@uvic.ca) for a copy.



## Faculty of Human and Social Development Award for Teaching Excellence

The Ring, <http://ring.uvic.ca/news/celebrating-excellence-teaching>

Jin-Sun Yoon (child and youth care) shows heartfelt dedication in supporting students and practitioners in developing an ethical and mindful approach to professional practice. She provides an optimal learning environment where inclusion and belonging are the foundation. Her wide range of professional work in many countries has given Jin-Sun an intergenerational and intercultural lens that informs her teaching of social justice and diversity in working with children, youth, families and communities. She is committed to providing opportunities for students to expand on their classroom learning as she engages them in community practice, advocacy and activism.





### Perry Shawana Award

[http://www.acc-society.bc.ca/files\\_2/perry-shawana-awards.php](http://www.acc-society.bc.ca/files_2/perry-shawana-awards.php)

Jessica Ball has just won the Perry Shawana Award given by the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society. The award annually honours "an individual or group not directly involved in the ECE field but who through volunteerism, advocacy, research and policy has contributed to and advanced the notion of safe /nurturing communities and/or quality child care and early learning services for BC First Nations children and their families." Particularly noteworthy is that other recipients in previous years were Mary-Ellen Turpel Lafond and Cindy Blackstock so Jessica is in very good company.

### Course pairs up grad students and BC ministry and everyone benefits

<http://ring.uvic.ca/news/course-pairs-grad-students-and-bc-ministry-and-everyone-benefits>

Nine students brought their graduate program to life this past spring by adding a crash course in knowledge mobilization to their schedules. GS 505: Research and Evaluation in Children, Youth and Family Services Policies is a multi-disciplinary internship, spearheaded by UVic Knowledge Mobilization Services and instructed by Dr. Gord Miller, (child and youth care). The program paired graduate students with practitioners and policymakers in British Columbia's Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to produce research that is immediately applicable to the world around them.

***"One of the most attractive features of the course is that it's multidisciplinary, meaning that it connects MCFD with a real array of study areas. There's a richness to be found in this kind of diversity."***

Projects ranged from a comparative look at early childhood services in Nordic countries to building a survey to quiz parents in British Columbia on their childcare needs and an investigation into the jurisdiction associated with international adoption services.

The questions posed by the ministry were complex but the course itself is fairly straightforward: the sponsoring area of government poses 10–15 project proposals related to different business areas of the unit and then pitches each research question to the class, complete with context and a mentor on hand to answer questions. Each student then chooses the research question that piques his or her interest most and works closely with a mentor over the course of the term to keep work in scope.

"This is our third year running the program," explains Chris Welch, manager of research and knowledge translation with MCFD. "One of the most attractive features of the course is that it's multidisciplinary, meaning that it connects MCFD with a real array of study areas. There's a richness to be found in this kind of diversity."

The 2012 incarnation of the course brought a number of dispute resolution students to the table, including Jennie Aitken, a first-year graduate student with a background in history from Queen's University and dispute resolution volunteer work at a military base in Kingston, Ontario.

"My project took a look at the possibilities for innovation at MCFD," explains Aitken, saying that the ministry works well with government mandates but was looking for a way to systematically find and leverage promising methods of practice that are in action across the province.

"I wanted to know what kind of framework would support sustainable input from people working in the field in areas related to the ministry."

"Grad school can be a bit cerebral," she adds, "so I was initially interested in the course for the internship aspect. Getting the opportunity to connect theory and practice in a really accessible way has opened up a whole new realm of possibilities in knowledge mobilization."

Aitken's paper was one of nine successful projects this

term, ensuring MCFD's interest in running the course again in spring 2013.

"I'm again really pleased with the papers that came out of the course," says Welch. "They're all very useful and that's what we're after."

### Student Awards

The school would like to extend congratulations to the following graduate award winners:

#### SSHRC:

Fikile Nxumalo, PhD student

#### UVic Fellowships:

Emily Ashton, PhD student

Cherie Toronchuk, MA student

Kimberley Ainsworth, MA student

#### UVic Graduate Awards:

Ann Fisher, PhD student

Nicole Land, MA student

#### Outstanding Graduate Entrance Scholarship:

Priscilla Healey, MA student

Anna Verspoor, MA student

The school would like to extend congratulations to the following undergraduate award winners:

#### Jamie Cassels Undergraduate Research Award:

Mattie Walker, BCYC student

Angela Cooper

Jessica Renfrew

### Upcoming Events 2013

SCYC Alumni Week Reception, February 6, 2013

First Peoples House, Ceremonial Hall

4:30 pm – 6:30 pm

"Continuing the Circle" is an opportunity for the School of Child and Youth Care Alumni to meet the current students, staff, and faculty at the First Peoples House in recognition of the growing importance of cultural awareness and Indigenous knowledge in the field. Networking activities, light refreshments, and the annual Exemplary Practicum Supervisor Award are among the offerings of this annual event.

#### 40th Anniversary Celebration

Friday, May 3, 2013 at the University Club

\* Details to follow.

Visit our website "News & Events" to stay current with SCYC.