



**University  
of Victoria**  
School of Child  
& Youth Care

# Newsletter

March 2012



## Letter from the Director:

Daniel G. Scott

We are in the midst of another exciting year with new cohorts of students in our BCYC, MA and PhD programs being selected to join us in the fall. We have strong application numbers and the challenge of selecting from a large and rich pool of qualified applicants. We have a growing number of high school applicants and continue to have significant number of students wishing to transfer into our program to complete their undergraduate degrees.

We also have a range of awards and achievements to celebrate. Congratulations to Jin-Sun Yoon for receiving the HSD Award for Teaching Excellence and to Sue McTavish who was presented the SCYC Exemplary Practicum Supervisor Award at our Alumni/Pluricultural Potluck in February. Dawn Johnson was awarded a advocacy award and Lilia Zaharieva a youth leadership award by the BC Representative of Children and Youth. Congratulations also to Madelynn Slade for her participation as a representative of Indigenous children and youth at the UN in Toronto and Geneva where she spoke to her experiences of the child welfare system and its impact on her life and the lives of Indigenous children and youth. As well congratulations to Emily Rogers who was elected chairperson of the University of Victoria Students Society. CYC skills are useful in many environments.

As you may all know we are in a near of budget cuts that affect all of us: students, faculty and staff. We are asked to be doing more with fewer resources and students are facing higher tuitions. We know it is taking many students longer to finish their degrees as they juggle work and study. Our task in the school is to maintain enrolments and the quality of our program and support students and each other through this era.

Change continues in other ways. I am coming to the end of my five-year term as director and will be on study leave for a year beginning July 1. Dr. Marie Hoskins will be acting director for a year and I will do an additional year as acting director following that before the appointment of another long-term director. Thanks to everyone for their dedicated work during the changes and challenges facing us.

Have a good semester.

Daniel Scott

## "I found my voice at the UN"

<http://ring.uvic.ca/news/i-found-my-voice-un>

Madelynn Slade Community engagement Experiential learning Issues Student experience Faculty of Human and Social Development

In September 2011, I received an email detailing an opportunity to attend the pre-session for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Geneva, Switzerland. The email, from the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCSC), was calling for youth ambassadors to speak about their life experiences being Aboriginal Canadians in today's society.

The UNCRC is a piece of international law that has been ratified by 190 nations and ensures that the rights of a child are upheld to an international standard ([www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm)).

The FNCFCSC wanted youth to speak to the inequalities that Indigenous children face, and how, under the UNCRC, these children should be receiving more and better supports.

They wanted strong youth voices that could provide personal perspectives on their initiatives such as Shannen's Dream, supporting safe Aboriginal schools providing culturally based and equitable education; Jordan's Principle, which helps ensure that First Nations children are not denied government services; and the I Am a Witness campaign, which calls on Canadians to be involved in the human rights tribunal case regarding the unfair treatment of First Nations children in the child welfare system.

I immediately started my preparation for applying and in early December I received confirmation that I was chosen, along with 5 other youth across Canada, to represent Indigenous children and youth at the UN. My excitement at being chosen was soon replaced with a dramatic influx of nerves at having the opportunity to present in front of the UN.



*Madelynn Slade, CYC undergraduate student*

As soon as I received the e-mail that I was attending, my workload increased dramatically. I was determined to learn as much as I could about the UNCRC, so that when I presented, my ideas, experiences and thoughts would be taken seriously by the UNCRC committee. Before leaving for Geneva, I was given training in Toronto by the FNCFCSC at the Office for the Ontario Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. I was given quick courses in addressing media, the UNCRC and related laws and documents, what to expect in Switzerland and how to present oneself at the UN. This two days of training was a blur of information that was all very vital to my understanding of the issues. I struggled to retain it all and studied as much as I could before I left, on the flights to Geneva and in my hotel rooms.

I presented to the UN on Feb. 6. My presentation revolved around the inadequacies surrounding the child welfare system in Canada in regards to Indigenous children and youth. I shared how I had personally been taken from my home when I was six and was unceremoniously tossed back and forth from my family and foster homes until I was 14. I let representatives of the 19 nations in attendance know how that experience affected me and how it continues to affect thousands of children today. (I am one of the incredibly lucky ones; I have the chance to speak out.)

Every day I was in Toronto and Geneva, I was interviewed by the media. I was asked questions that ranged from rather simple ones about how I was chosen to attend the UNCRC, to more serious ones about why my experiences in the child welfare system make me speak up today. The interviews were always challenging, but the information I was able to provide made the challenge worthwhile.

I am now back from my foray into international policy and public speaking. My ongoing mission is to continue to speak on the issues of inequality and abuse directed towards Aboriginal children in Canada's care system. This abuse is occurring right now, as I type this and you read it. This abuse must stop, and I am one of many voices actively advocating and fighting for a change and solid action by the Canadian government. This is a voice that is getting louder day-by-day and one that will not go away.

Further information:

### **FNCFCS biographies of youth ambassadors**

<http://www.fnccaringociety.com/youth-ambassadors>

### **PRNewswire media release**

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/first-nations-youth-tell-the-un-it-is-time-for-canada-to-keep-its-promises-to-first-nations-children-138559184.html>

Madelynn Slade is non-status Michel Cree from Alberta and a third-year student in the School of Child and Youth Care. She is an advocate for children and youth and is currently preparing for her next trip to the UN headquarters in New York in May where she will be presenting with the Native Sexual Health Network. She also continues to speak at various venues in Victoria to raise awareness of these vital issues that affect children and youth.



*Jin-Sun Yoon, Senior Instructor, SCYC*

### **HSD Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence for 2011**

Congratulations to Jin-Sun Yoon who has been awarded the HSD Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence for 2011. Jin-Sun Yoon is an extraordinary and inspirational teacher as evidenced by the number of students who stay in touch long after graduation. Her heartfelt dedication in supporting students and practitioners in developing an ethical and mindful approach to professional practice is commendable. Jin-Sun provides an optimal learning environment where inclusion and belonging are the foundation. Her cultural teachings and interdisciplinary career journey led to a perfect fit as a senior instructor at the School of Child and Youth Care in 2002 where she combines her appreciation for academic theory and her commitment to professional practice. A wide range of professional work across her lifespan and in many countries has given Jin-Sun an intergenerational and intercultural lens influencing the local and global perspectives imbedded in her teaching of social justice and diversity in working with children, youth, families and communities. Jin-Sun enthusiastically models engaged practice through her committee and leadership work at the university, her community work with grassroots organizations and her governance work on government advisory councils.

### **“Jin-Sun Yoon is an extraordinary and inspirational teacher as evidenced by the number of students who stay in touch long after graduation.”**

Providing opportunities for students to expand on their classroom learning is crucial to Jin-Sun's pedagogical world view as she engages them in community practice, advocacy and activism. Jin-Sun models the change she wishes to see in the world through her transformational teaching. The Faculty of Human and Social Development is delighted to have Jin-Sun Yoon recognized as the recipient of the 2011 Award for Teaching Excellence by faculty.

## **IMPACTING EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN CANADA**

The School of Child and Youth Care's Unit for Early Years Research and Development (EYRD) is hosting International Innovations in ECE, a major Canadian conference on early childhood education, care and development (ECCD) July 13-15 at UVic. The conference features the following keynote presenters—each one a major leader in her country and internationally:

- Dr. Margaret Carr (New Zealand), Co-creator of the innovative and influential Te Whaariki, New Zealand's bi-cultural early childhood curriculum framework
- Dr. Jennifer Sumsion (Australia), Co-leader of the national consortium that recently developed *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*
- Dr. Carl Rinaldi (Reggio Emilia, Italy), President and inspirational leader of Reggio Children.

The conference program encompasses many themes relevant to the contemporary ECCD agenda, with particular focus on the development and implementation of early childhood frameworks. These frameworks have profound implications for early years policies, programs, research, and practice—they have provided the opportunity for numerous innovations in the field, both internationally and in several Canadian provinces, including BC.

The conference is clearly resonating with the interests of many in the Canadian ECCD field, as the conference reached its full capacity of 350 during the Early Bird registration. For more information about the conference, please visit the conference website at <http://uvicearlyyears.ca>

### **Global Compact on Learning**

Jessica Ball, School of Child and Youth Care, is one of 15 world experts asked to join a Research Task Force formed by the Brookings Institute to create a research agenda to support the Global Compact on Learning (GCL). The GCL is a multi-donor initiative aimed at closing the gap in education equity and quality for over 75 million children of primary school age who are not enrolled in school, including 88% in Africa and Asia. Girls, children with disabilities, and Indigenous and ethnic minority children are the most affected by lack of equity and quality of educational opportunities. As well, many children who start school drop out before learning

to read and write or acquiring other skills needed for success in life. Driven by the global Education for All (EFA) movement and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), some progress has been made in recent years. However, knowledge gaps are one of the barriers preventing innovative policies and practices that could contribute to reaching out-of-school children with formal and non-formal education that is economically, culturally, linguistically and geographically accessible, meaningful and safe.



The Brookings Institute, Global Compact on Learning: Research Task Force

The Global Compact on Learning – Research Task Force will identify a research agenda for international donors to consider investments in generating new knowledge. Dr. Ball's international reputation in the areas of mother-tongue based, multilingual education and parent-child interactions that stimulate self-regulation and cognitive development earned her a place on the Research Task Force. Topics addressed include formal and non-formal education; literacy, numeracy, and higher-order cognitive skills; conflict and emergency situations; roles of information and communications technologies, and assessment, monitoring and evaluation. In addition to an intensive period of collaboration this winter via skype, the group is meeting at UNESCO in Paris in mid-March and at the Comparative and International Education Society conference in Puerto Rico in mid-April.



Out-of-school children who are the focus of the Global Compact on Learning – Research Task Force

## The 2011 Representative's Award of Excellence: Advocacy

### Dawn Johnson, Youth Engagement Coordinator, Ministry of Children and Family Development

[http://www.rcybc.ca/Content/Awards%2011/2011-Awards-of-Excellence.asp](http://www.rcybc.ca/Content/Awards%202011/2011-Awards-of-Excellence.asp)

As a tireless supporter of children's rights, Dawn Johnson continually advocates on behalf of the young people that she works with to ensure their rights are upheld and respected.

Dawn has worked as the Youth Engagement Coordinator for the Ministry of Children and Family Development for just over three years and in that time she has led numerous influential projects and initiatives that have significantly improved services through out the Coast Fraser region. Most notably, she has led the creation of fully-functioning, sustainable youth advisory councils in both Vancouver and Squamish.



Award presenter Maureen Young from Coast Capital Savings (L) and award winner, Dawn Johnson, Youth Engagement Coordinator, MCFD (R).

Through these councils she has given young people in and from government care an opportunity to voice their opinions in a safe, respectful and meaningful way. Dawn works in partnership with council members and other young people to identify youth priorities and make recommendations on how services could better meet the needs of young people.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is a large, complex organization that can make people sometimes feel powerless. Dawn has strategically navigated the system to find appropriate opportunities to give children, youth and staff new advocacy skills. In addition, the courage and passion that she regularly

demonstrates has inspired people to advocate for change even in the face of resistance.

Dawn has helped to change the attitudes to young people who past experiences with the ministry left them angry, disempowered and silent. Young people involved through her work are now finding opportunities for positive interactions with the ministry and are able to use their own experiences to change the system for the better.

Dawn is an exceptional leader with a grace and generosity rarely seen amongst someone so early in their career. There is no doubt that the voices of children and youth are heard, listened to and acted upon because of Dawn Johnson's inherent belief that positive change is possible.

For anyone who has seen Dawn work with high-risk youth, it is easy to see that it is a labour of love. Her dedication is infectious and she exemplifies the quality of an outstanding, dedicated leader who possess personal integrity and a natural gift in connected with youth.

Due to her unique life experiences, Dawn understands and can relate to numerous perspectives, including challenges, struggles and opportunities that can face vulnerable populations. I believe this gives Dawn a quiet determination, knowledge and courage and makes her an excellent advocate for children, youth and families.

## The 2011 Representative's Award of Excellence: Youth Leadership, Lilia Zaharieva

[http://www.rcybc.ca/Content/Awards%2011/2011-Awards-of-Excellence.asp](http://www.rcybc.ca/Content/Awards%202011/2011-Awards-of-Excellence.asp)

Lilia Zaharieva was born in Bulgaria but has lived most of her 24 years in Victoria. She is a committed youth leader with the Federation of BC Youth in Care Network who worked on a planning committee that organized and ran this year's International Foster Care Organization's (IFCO) Biennial World Conference Youth Program in Victoria. She played an integral role in providing more than 70 youth in and from care around the world an unforgettable and positive experience.

During IFCO Lilia delivered her first international keynote speech to a youth and adult audience, a speech which moved many as she modeled someone many youth were able to relate to.

Lilia has also assembled a youth group in her own community called insideOUT aimed at connecting youth

and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, particularly when youth are living with a parent with a mental illness. Having grown up in government care because her mother suffered from mental health issues, she realized there was a lack of support for young people going through similar family experiences.



Representative, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond (L), Lilia Zaharieva (LC), Samantha Claver (RC), Dr. Hedy Fry award presenter (R)

Her natural public speaking ability provides her many avenues to connect with people about mental illness and provide them the inspiration, and support. Lilia is also able to connect with youth on an individual level, providing them personal support to help them face their challenges.

Lilia was nominated and won the United Way of Greater Victoria Youth Now Award in 2011 for volunteer leadership and was recently accepted in to the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. Nominator comments:

Having spoken at the recent International Foster Care Organization conference, I understand she will also extend her reach globally. I could not be more thrilled and hopeful for those seeking inspiration that youth in care can and do experience rich full lives. Her authenticity is the voice that is needed to be heard and recognized. Lilia's hard work, commitment and determination shines through in all the work that she does. We are empowered by Lilia.

Lilia is continuing on to school and continuing her journey as a former foster child with a positive, emotional story that has the dream and ability to change lives on a regular basis through her dedication and commitment to youth, especially youth in care.

## Exemplary Practicum Supervisor Award 2012

Michelle Koroll, Practica Coordinator, SCYC

Susan McTavish is a graduate from the School where she honed her practice as a practicum student at Shoreline Junior Secondary School. She learned how to diffuse potential riots and do intense conflict mediation. Upon graduation she became the first Youth & Family Counsellor at Vic West Elementary and is now the YFC at George Jay Elementary, both inner city schools.

**“She is an “awesome advocate” for students and parents alike and her support and guidance is much appreciated and valued by her colleagues at George Jay.”**

Sue is also the Vice President for the South Vancouver Island Youth & Family Counsellors Association which demonstrates her commitment to the professionalization of the field. According to her friends and colleagues, Sue is “a group fanatic!” She has numerous groups for her student clients at George Jay and she is a trained facilitator for the Restitution Model for working with parents and children. She is an “awesome advocate” for students and parents alike and her support and guidance is much appreciated and valued by her colleagues at George Jay.

Her guidance is also greatly appreciated by the many practicum students that she has mentored over the last ten years. She offers students a wide range of learning opportunities along with consistent and thoughtful supervision. She views her mentorship role as an obligation to the field of Child & Youth Care, and we are so lucky that she does!



Susan McTavish and Michelle Koroll

## Pluricultural Potluck and Alumni Celebration

The School of Child and Youth Care celebrated the 2012 Alumni Week with over 70 alumni, current students, teaching faculty and staff on February 7 in the First Peoples House (FPH). A delectable feast of seafood chowder, clam fritters, and bannock (provided by FPH Grill'n with Grannies Community Kitchen) added to the annual Pluricultural Potluck to celebrate the diversity of our school community. The casual event was an excellent opportunity for introductions and reunions.



Sue McTavish was honoured with the Exemplary Practicum Supervisor Award in acknowledgement of her many years of supporting practicum students in developing their skills in a culturally diverse school-based setting.



## Emily Rogers, Chairperson, University of Victoria Students' Society (UVSS)

Congratulations to Emily Rogers, 2nd year CYC student who was elected as Chairperson for the University of Victoria Student Society (UVSS). Emily first came to UVIC in 2009 from high school and was accepted into our program in September of 2011. She is such an amazing young woman! She is one of those students who consistently strives to make a positive difference. Her energy and commitment is something special.