

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Calgary Youth
Justice Society

Celebrating 20 years
Est. 1998



Calgary Youth
Justice Society

20
YEARS



YOU
ARE
HERE

YOU ARE HERE IS THAT MARK ON A MAP THAT WE ALL LOOK FOR AS THE STARTING POINT TO GET FROM WHERE WE ARE, TO WHERE WE WANT TO BE

Our young people are standing on that mark,
ready to take a step in the right direction.

BECAUSE OF YOU they are not alone.

BECAUSE OF YOU they will see what's possible.

BECAUSE OF YOU they will believe in themselves.

BECAUSE OF YOU they will create
a promising future.

VOLUNTEERS

COMMUNITY
PARTNERS

INVESTORS

YOU
ARE
HERE



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ABOUT US

Calgary Youth Justice Society connects adult volunteers in a positive way with young people who are at risk of or have involvement with the criminal justice system. Our approach is always strength focused, seeing beyond what's wrong to nurture what's strong.

Our impact is young people who feel valued and supported to be a part of our community in a meaningful way.

IN THE LEAD PROGRAM

Youth participants, despite facing obstacles and challenges in their life, are not referred to the program based on need; rather, they are nominated for the program based on possibility. By attending a weekly class, in one school semester, Young Leaders (youth participants) recognize, nurture and practice individual strengths and character competencies that are known to build resilience. Upon completion, Young Leaders that are in the school system can earn credits towards their diploma. Beyond the contribution of valuable financial resources, our corporate partners are engaging their employees as Volunteer Coaches to connect one on one with Young Leaders, providing valuable encouragement and support.

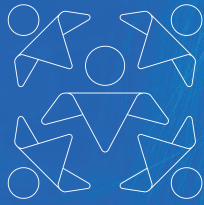


YOUTH JUSTICE COMMITTEE PROGRAM

A community-based alternative to court that gives young people a second chance on a bad decision. Youth Justice Committee volunteers help young people move through and past a minor offence by holding them accountable without holding them back. With support, young people from all walks of life turn their mistakes into opportunities to grow and give back to their communities.

YOUTH
JUSTICE
COMMITTEE





**20 YEARS:
13,000 YOUNG
PEOPLE CONNECTED
TO A BRIGHTER
FUTURE.**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result." - Mahatma Gandhi

2018 marks the 20th Anniversary of Calgary Youth Justice Society.

Over the past 20 years, CYJS has helped over 13,000 young people facing challenges in their teen years, to see their potential, connect with their community, and feel hopeful about their future. Today, we know that many are using their strengths and resilience to overcome adversity, are in University, have rewarding jobs, enjoying travelling, raising families and giving back to their community in meaningful ways. Through the support of donors, volunteers and partners we have made a lasting difference in the lives of young people, their families and the community.

When we began in 1998, our purpose was to establish and sustain Youth Justice Committees. Volunteers paved the way to provide an effective and meaningful alternative to court for young people with a minor offence, by holding young people accountable without holding them back. In 2011, In the Lead was launched, extending our reach even further to engage vulnerable youth through a strengths-based leadership program. Knowing what works and doing what matters has been key to our success. We know that it works when we see and nurture what's strong in young people, and it

matters when we connect them in a meaningful way with caring adults and their community.

In 2017 the organization focused on three strategic imperatives:

- Raise the profile of CYJS in the community
- Increase CYJS reach to serve more youth through current programming
- Build the capacity of CYJS.

Some highlights this past year include: our first-ever fundraising and awareness event raising over \$40,000; expansion of In the Lead Outreach with our new partner, The Alex Youth Health Centre; collaboration with Calgary Police Service to build awareness and increase referrals to Youth Justice Committees; engagement of new individual and corporate donors; and improvements to IT infrastructure.

Moving forward in this next year we hope to continue to serve more young people through the Youth Justice Committee and In the Lead programs and increasing awareness and financial resources remains a priority in this pursuit.

As we reflect on the last 20 years, and look ahead to the next, we are confident that our young people and our community will be in good hands. We can always depend on the Calgary community to volunteer, to give, to support, to encourage, to believe. We have so much gratitude for all of those who have been a part of our journey so far. Thank you! Because of you, we will all enjoy a brighter future.

Carrie Zimmerman

President - Board of Directors

Denise Blair

Executive Director

RECOGNITION

Every year, CYJS recognizes a partnership and an individual or organization who have helped us along the way. Whether the contribution is short or long, big or small, it all makes a difference.

The **Strong Not Wrong Community Partner Award** is presented to The Alex for their support in the delivery of In the Lead Outreach at their Youth Health Centre.

the
alex.

The **You Rock Difference-Maker Award** is presented to Gordon Sand, Executive Director with Calgary John Howard Society and to Michelle Clarke, Executive Director with Burns Memorial Fund for their vision 20 years ago that led to the formation of Calgary Youth Justice Society in 1998.



HOPE TODAY LEADS TO A BETTER TOMORROW.

CYJS helps young people who are struggling through their teen years, to see their potential, connect with their community, and feel hopeful about their future.

In a recent evaluation of our In the Lead program, we were elated to learn that those youth who could be considered to be most vulnerable and facing significant challenges, also reported having experienced the highest degree of impact. They identified the biggest change in their lives to be in these three areas.

- I feel like my life has purpose. I matter.
- I feel like most things I do will turn out OK. I believe in myself. I have hope for the future.
- I have someone to talk to about life. Someone cares about me.

I matter; I believe in myself; I have hope for my future; someone cares about me.

Our next thought was this...What if we had not been there for these youth? What would they have said? And what is being said by countless other young people in our community today?

- My life has no purpose. Most things I do, turn out badly. I have no one to talk to.
- I don't matter; I feel hopeless; no one cares.

Together, we can help even more young people to write a different ending to that story.

“I hear this organization talking a lot about giving young people a second chance. But for me, it gave me my first chance.”
- Past Youth Participant

YOUNG PEOPLE ON
THEIR WAY TO A
BRIGHTER FUTURE:
389

LETTER TO MYSELF (FROM MY FUTURE SELF)

We ask In the Lead youth participants to fast forward to a point in the future when life is good, and imagine: where they are, what they are doing, what it feels like...and then from that place and time, write a letter to their current day self, offering advice and encouragement. Here is one example of how our young people are creating the life they envision.

Dear Self,

I'm just here to tell you that you are one strong and wise girl. Growing up with all the struggles that have been laid out for you and all the obstacles you had to jump over; I promise you that you will come out stronger, wiser and more knowledgeable. Life isn't meant to be easy but I know for you, life has been harder for you than most. But are you still alive and pushing? You aren't a quitter, you aren't one to give up, you are a winner and you always rise up for anything.

Don't let yourself get the best of you, don't let the past cause you to be stressed, don't make everyone else's struggles your own, you have too big of a heart and you care too much, that's not necessarily a bad thing but people always take advantage of you.

Focus on your schooling a little bit more. Don't let the stress and depression eat away at you any longer. Because I know how strong, smart and intelligent you are.. You will grow up to not just hold a degree in sports journalism but a Phd in Political Science. Just don't give up on yourself anymore, you need to be strong for not only yourself but your family. The most important thing to you now is your



family and when your my age family will be more important. Your siblings are a handful now but I tell you, when you are homesick and lonely, thinking back on all the troubles now, you know that without your strong loving family, you wouldn't be who you are today.

Mom's gone now, but you know what? She isn't really, because she is living through you. Remember when you always said, "she is such a strong women and I hope when I grow up that I will be as wise and as strong as she is." Well, now you are. You raised a beautiful family, you don't give up with struggles are getting the best of you and you just know how to roll with the punches.

One last thing, love yourself, continue working to improve your mind and physic. You are amazing in every way possible. You are intelligent and beautiful. Don't give up on yourself anymore. Push through and give yourself more credit for doing it all even though you think you can't. Life is good when you live it to the fullest and you figure it out as time goes. Bye for now, remember, you can't fix the past, you can change today and help what happens tomorrow.



**YOUTH VOLUNTEERED,
SOME FOR THE FIRST
TIME, TO HELP
THOSE IN NEED:
5,593 HOURS**

CHANGING LIVES ONE VOLUNTEER AT A TIME!

"After decades of forming hypotheses, conducting surveys, crafting and rewriting definitions, analyzing data, and writing journal articles, Search Institute researchers and practitioners have arrived at a surprisingly simple conclusion: nothing—nothing —has more impact in the life of a child than positive relationships." (Search Institute, Relationships First: Creating Connections that Help Young People Thrive, 2017)

Volunteers with Calgary Youth Justice Society are changing lives of young people in our communities every day, and in the process they are often changed too.

"It's an amazing opportunity to build a real connection with a young person who needs some guidance/direction in their life. You have the ability to really make a positive impact in a young person's life and at the end of the day, you both will grow from the experience."

- In the Lead Volunteer Coach

"Being a Youth Justice Committee volunteer has been a meaningful experience. Although I have been a volunteer for only a short period of time, I am amazed to see how the program has positively affected youth and our communities. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to support youth and their families, and it is rewarding to see how resilient youth are during challenging situations. I am grateful for having the experience to be part of this program, and I look forward to further supporting youth in our city."

- Youth Justice Committee Volunteer



VOLUNTEERS WHO
MADE MEANINGFUL
CONNECTIONS WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR
COMMUNITY:

332

HOURS INVESTED:

**6,180
HOURS**

STRONGER TOGETHER. WE ARE HERE, BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE.

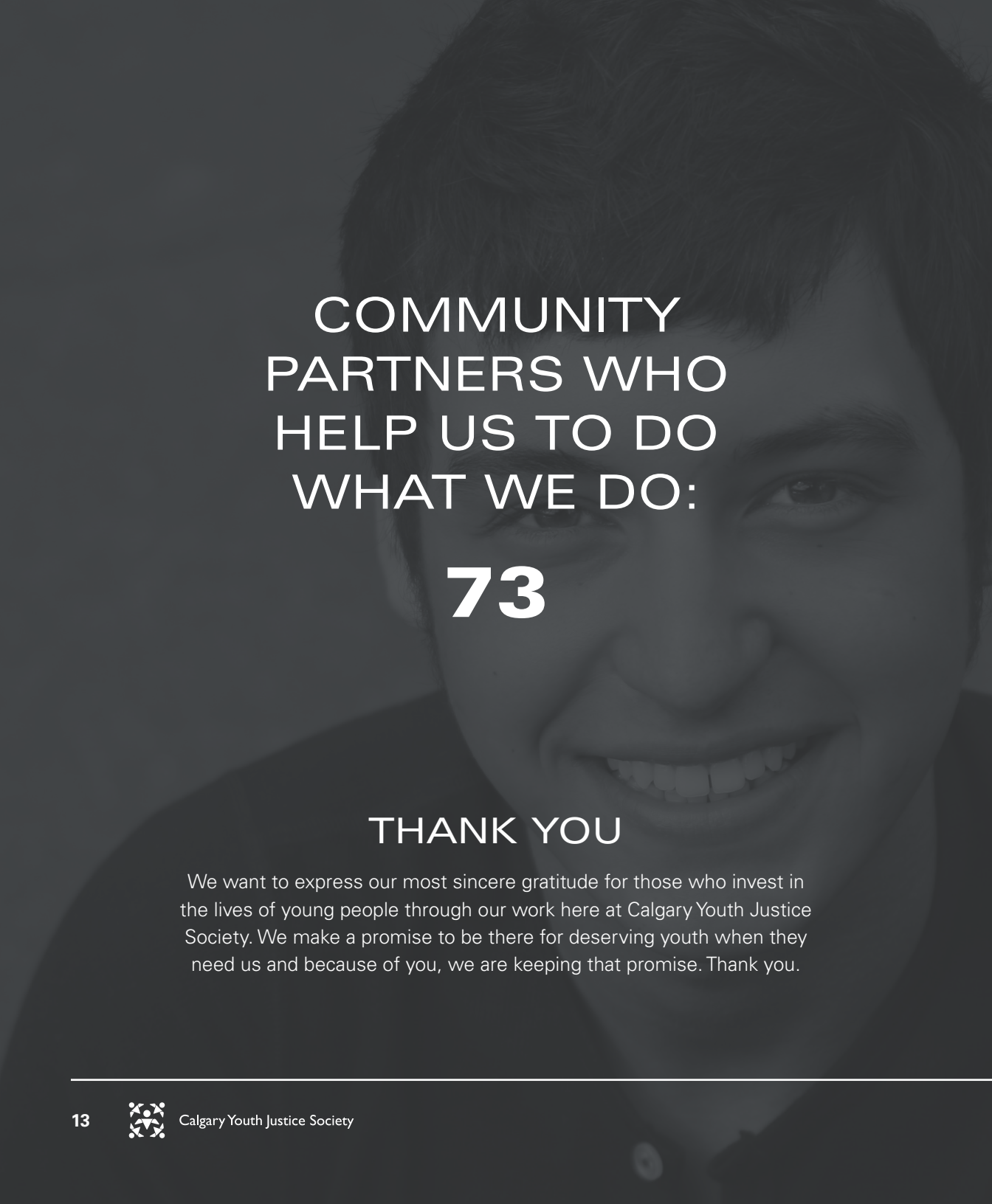
Calgary Youth Justice Society works with many partners from all over our city and province. We couldn't do what we do without support from school, agency, justice, and community partners. The Alex helps to run In the Lead Outreach with their young people. Here is what they had to say.

"In the lead is such a wonderful program and so valuable for a lot of our youth. This program has really given these young leaders the opportunity to be themselves and to give them a voice, which they may not otherwise have. I have definitely seen changes in these young leaders. They have opened up a lot and shared so much about themselves throughout the program, and I feel it helped them cope with some struggles they are dealing with. Some of the young leaders have really made connections with their coaches and even though the program is over, I know that some of them will continue to connect." - Alex Staff Member

IN PARTNERSHIP NEWS!

Congratulations to Sgt. Mike Yanko, a 14-year volunteer with the Calgary Youth Justice Society. Sgt. Yanko was recognized with a Community Policing Award from the Calgary Police Commission for his contribution to CYJS. Mike has volunteered in many different capacities; starting as a Youth Justice Committee volunteer and currently as a Board Member and Training Team Member delivering training to new volunteers. Thank you Mike!





COMMUNITY
PARTNERS WHO
HELP US TO DO
WHAT WE DO:

73

THANK YOU

We want to express our most sincere gratitude for those who invest in the lives of young people through our work here at Calgary Youth Justice Society. We make a promise to be there for deserving youth when they need us and because of you, we are keeping that promise. Thank you.

THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW.

We have too many stories to print of young people who successfully participated in our programs and are now using their strengths and resilience to overcome adversity, are in University, have rewarding jobs, enjoying travelling, raising families and giving back to their community in meaningful ways. Sometimes we hear from parents too. Here's one such story.

A MOM'S STORY

I'll never forget the day I got the phone call, in the middle of the afternoon on a school day.

"It's Julie, Mom" she said into the phone from the mall where she was being detained, "please don't hate me forever – I've been arrested for shoplifting."

What? My super smart, good athlete, cute youngest daughter arrested? Okay, she was a red head and more of a challenge than our oldest but still... as a grade 11 honors student, she was already applying to universities, many in the US. My mind was racing; was this the end of her dream to attend a top school?

I hurried to the store where I found my daughter and two Calgary policemen. My daughter sobbed as the younger, and more brash, of the two officers told her she'd need to be handcuffed and taken downtown to be charged. I was beside myself. She admitted she tried to take the CD, but I just didn't understand – she had \$500 in her bank account from working over the summer, why didn't she just buy the CD? Julie later told me she had been trying to prove to some so-called 'friends' that she wasn't the goody-two-shoes they kept saying she was. Now, she faced a criminal record.

The whole situation was hard for me to understand. I never had any run-ins as a teen, but I remembered what happened to kids who were caught stealing – the store phoned your parents and left the punishment up to them. Obviously, things had changed in the last 35 years.

Luckily, the older officer convinced the younger one to release Julie and said he would try to get her into an alternative measures program. I had never heard of it before, but was thankful

Julie was being released and relieved there may be some way out of this mess that didn't involve a future for my daughter very different than the one we had both dreamed of.

A few days later, we received a call from a very calm and professional woman from our community who identified herself as a volunteer from a Youth Justice Committee. She met with our family and described the alternative measures program which Julie was fortunately eligible for. If Julie completed three tasks assigned to her by the committee as a way to make up for what she had done, then her shoplifting charges could be dropped. The volunteers made sure our whole family was involved in the process which was extremely reassuring and helped bond our family closer in the wake of the incident.

Julie completed her tasks and the charges against her were dropped. My smart, precocious, athletic and driven Julie went on to get her undergrad degree with honors at Syracuse University in New York and is now in her third year of medical school in Washington State. When we dropped her off at school, tears filled my eyes as I realized in that moment how different the trajectory of her life, and even our whole family, would have been had she not had this chance. To say I'm proud of my daughter would be an understatement – despite the poor choice she made as a teen, she's risen above and is flourishing as a bright and capable young woman.

After the process was complete, I learned that the members of the Youth Justice Committee were all volunteers. I was amazed. These wonderful people, some of whom had regular jobs as well, spent hours with the youth in their community who were in the alternative measures program. I thought that they must be compensated by the Alberta Government for this extraordinarily important work - they were saving dreams and saving taxpayer dollars, and they were doing it all without monetary incentive, with a higher goal to see youths in our community thrive and flourish to rise above their circumstances. I was, and still am, so incredibly grateful.

We would have given any amount of time or money to see that Julie did not carry a criminal record with her for the rest of her life because of one stupid lapse in judgement. Since the incident, our family has done what we can to donate time and money to the Calgary Youth Justice Society, a charity that supports Youth Justice Committees. It's been an important investment for us in not just our Julie's future, but the future of other children like her, who thanks to this organization and all of the caring volunteers, get their own second chance.

- Carol

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Cenovus - Matching Gifts Program
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United Way - All In For Youth

Byler Family Foundation
Calgary Foundation Dick and Nancy Wilson Fund

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IN MEMORIAM

Tanya Munroe (in memory of Bill O'Neil)
Rita Penner (in memory of Alfred Penner)

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Village Brewery
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OUR TEAM

Calgary Youth Justice Society is so fortunate to have all our positions filled by amazingly talented and passionate people.

AT YOUR SERVICE ARE:

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Program Coordinator, In the Lead

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The Calgary Youth Justice society is a registered charity.
Donations are gratefully accepted. Thank you for your consideration.

Charity Number: 870837044RR0001

AGENCY VOLUNTEERS

Mike Yanko

CYJC Training Team

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justice.ca**