



because youth matter



Annual Report
2016



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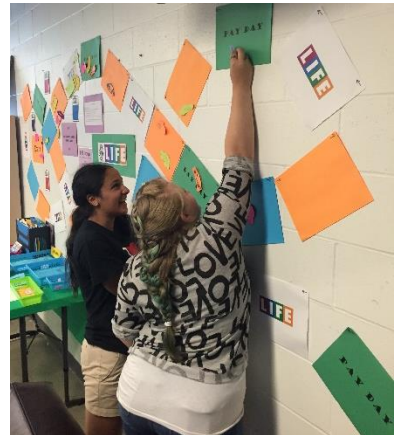
Message from the Executive Director



This summer, the Abbotsford Youth Commission celebrated 25 years of serving youth! On July 4, 1991 the Matsqui Abbotsford Youth Commission held its inaugural meeting and set the mandate, “to work toward shaping the young people of our community and to help them find a place for themselves by getting them involved in different social activities.” Over the years the faces have changed, the programming has increased, and our goal of creating belonging for youth has grown and flourished!

The Abbotsford Youth Commission’s vision is that Abbotsford is a city where every youth feels included, safe, valued, empowered and connected. For 25 years now, the AYC has been working to accomplish this vision by providing safe, productive places for youth to go after school, in the evening, and daily in the summer; encouraging youth to live a healthy balanced lifestyle through exercise and recreation; providing an opportunity for youth to talk about issues that influence their development and learn skills to respond to negative experiences; working towards crime prevention by offering youth pro-social activities during high-risk hours; providing youth with the strong adult mentors that they are seeking; giving youth a forum to have their voices heard and assisting them to create positive change in their community. The Abbotsford Youth Commission exists [because youth matter](#).

A highlight in 2016 was the development and delivery of our LIFE (Learning is for Everyone) project funded by the Envision Financial Community Endowment. LIFE provided support and life skills training for vulnerable youth aged 12 – 18 with the goal of helping to develop young people who were better prepared to face life’s challenges. The nine weeks of programming covered the topics of: employment, leadership, social media, physical health, emotional health, nutrition, financial literacy, service and friendship. All in all the LIFE project was a great success and provided the youth who participated with enriched programming over the summer months. We were thrilled to find out at the end of the program that not only did the youth learn something but they enjoyed the program as well - youth were even asking if the program could continue in Fall!



In 2016 we moved into the fourth year of our Character Project taking on the attribute of ‘empathy. In previous years we had looked to our Youth Council for inspiration and direction in developing our yearly project but this year we took it a step, or perhaps three steps, further. This year we invited youth from our Youth Leadership Team (Youth Council, LEAD, and Youth Focus) to create the project from the ground up. With funding from the Abbotsford Rotary Club to develop and implement the project the youth got to work.

We are excited to watch as the project comes together, and privileged to support the youth to achieve their goal of delivering an impactful event in February 2017.

We were also pleased to have been able to build on a program that we piloted at the end of last year. (IN)volved, a program that matches youth volunteers with opportunities in the community, was presented to more than 150 youth this year and 61 of them decided to sign up! We have also been able to get 11 organizations on board which has turned this little program into a growing success.

A final highlight from 2016 is that we counted 19,175 youth entrances to our programs and services. This does not include services provided to adults or the one to one connections that we make with youth and parents when we promote our programs in schools and at public events.

In addition to the many programs, events and presentations that we offer, we also spend many hours working to be the voice of Abbotsford's youth and to advocate on their behalf. We chair and host numerous committee meetings every month; these community collaborations help to ensure that youth in our city are not falling through the cracks. The AYC is a hub for youth programs and services providing a place for youth and parents to come in and seek advice. Every year we provide support and referrals for youth who find themselves in difficult situations such as having no place to sleep, needing drug or alcohol treatment or police and ministry referrals for youth who find themselves in unfortunate circumstances. The AYC also partners with numerous other organizations working to improve the lives of youth in our community.

The AYC functions in a community environment and receives many benefits from the involvement of our community partners. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners, our generous funders and donors, our Board of Directors, our practicum students, volunteers and our staff. Without the valuable support provided we would not succeed. Thank you.

Bev Olfert, Executive Director
Abbotsford Youth Commission



Programs and Services

Drop-In Programs

Our **Youth Drop-in Centres** located at Abbotsford Recreation Centre (ARC) and Matsqui Recreation Centre (MRC) offer youth a safe, supervised, productive and fun place to spend their leisure time all year round. Programming is offered every day after school, on the weekends, and during school holidays. Youth are able to participate in activities such as: sports, pool, video games, foosball, crafts, educational games, special events and more. Staff members build relationships with each and every youth who come into the centre and connect them to the program in some way. Fun activities are planned every day and youth come in excited to see what we have ready for them. Healthy snacks are provided daily at no cost, as well as a dinner once a month at both of our youth centres through our **Nutrition Program**. The caliber of activities and the connection to adult role models makes our youth centres a popular place for youth ages 12 – 18. In 2016, more than 1500 different youth used the youth centres, amounting to just over 12,150 entrances to the programs.

The best thing about coming to the AYC is having a safe place to go instead of going home, being alone and doing nothing. I've been coming here since I was twelve and I have grown up a lot. The programs have helped me to see things happen and has given me a purpose. Being here has helped me make plans on how to handle things that happen to me and be more careful about what I say and do. – Youth age 18

Our **Drop-in Sports** programs including basketball, floor hockey and open gym offer youth the opportunity to engage in unstructured non-competitive sports activities three days each week. In 2016, these three programs had more than 1700 entrances and engaged close to 500 different youth.

Noon Hour Games is offered at three local middle schools once a week at lunch hour. Staff from the AYC provide games, activities and supervision during the lunch hour while developing supportive relationships with the youth at the schools.

Each year a variety of **Special Events and Awareness Days** are held at both of our youth centres. This year they included: ARC Community Luncheon, Pool Duel, Move for Health Day, Rotary 4 Way Test, Fraser Tours, Summer Kick off BBQ, AYC Wipe Out, Capture the Flag, Giant Messy Twister, Welcome Back Bash, and the Movember Stache Bash.



Leadership Programs

Youth Council is a leadership program for youth in grades 10-12 comprised of members representing each high school in Abbotsford. The Youth Council members come together to work on youth initiated projects each year; working together to make a difference in their community. This past year, Youth Council members were matched with the Mayor and City Councillors to attend events and learn from each other. A highlight of the year was the creation of a diversity art project with the AYC Board of Directors.



Youth Focus is a leadership program for the youth who attend our youth centres. Youth have the opportunity to offer feedback on programs, become a role model, and discuss pertinent issues facing youth. In 2016, this program had 371 entrances.

Leadership Exploration and Development, or **LEAD**, entered its second year in 2016. This program teaches youth leadership skills and acts as a stepping stone into Youth Council. This year the LEAD group helped to plan and deliver three events during Youth Week. In 2016, LEAD had 16 members.

Another highlight this year was the continuation of our **Character Project**. In 2016, our Character Project had two streams, CIA or Courage in Action and Different Shoes New Views: An Empathy Project. Both projects used creative and fun methods to engage youth in discussions about what courage and empathy really look like in their everyday lives. The project took complex issues and made them tangible for the 390 youth who participated.

Self Esteem Programs

Just for Girls is a program for grade seven girls which is facilitated within the school environment. The objective of the program is to prevent harmful emotional and behavioral issues such as low self-esteem,

eating disorders and abuse. The program was in 10 schools with 137 participants completing the program. In 2016, there were 1194 entrances to the program; 160 more entrances than last year.

In 2016, 99 boys completed **Guys Alive**, which is a program for grade seven boys offered at local schools during the lunch hour. The objective of the program is to educate boys on peer pressure, bullying, relationships, healthy living and teamwork. This past year the program was in 10 schools with 875 entrances to the program; 27 more entrances than last year.

Healthy Living Programs



Girls Night is a non-competitive social recreational program designed to encourage girls to try new activities in a fun and supportive environment while enjoying the activities at their own pace and ability. In 2016, 57 girls participated in fun and challenging physical activities through this program.

The **Guys Night** program gives boys an opportunity to try a new activity or sport while teaching them the values of teamwork and active living. In 2016, 55 youth participated in the program participating in activities such as: golf, rock climbing, bowling, judo and karate.

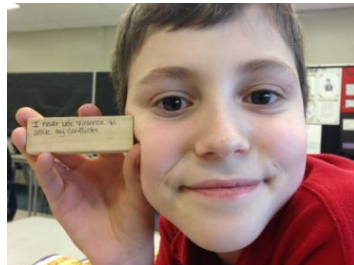
This year we added **Youth Night**, a Healthy Living Program for both boys and girls. In 2016, 39 youth participated in the program trying out activities such as bowling, self-defense, swing dancing and laser tag.

Life Skills Programs

Our **Life Skills Programs** offer youth an opportunity to have fun, learn new skills and try new activities. In 2016, the AYC offered 30 Life Skills Programs to 271 youth; with a total of 318 program registrations. Programs offered were all of an introductory nature and fell under the following categories: cooking, baking, leadership, babysitters training, FoodSafe, recreation, and sport.

Other Programs

Character, Connection and Confidence, or **C3**, was a new program designed specifically for Eugene Reimer Middle School which ran from Spring 2015 until June 2016. The program focused on building connection and belonging using the Character Abbotsford values. Students referred to the program were those that were in need of extra socio-emotional support and a few combinations of students who were not getting along. This made the program quite challenging but also rather rewarding.



The **Nutrition Program** includes healthy after school snacks each day and family style sit down dinners twice a month. In 2016, we served 582 dinners exceeding our goal by 132 youth served. The after school snack program continues to be extremely popular and we know that we could serve two to three times the amount of nutritious snacks if we had the resources to do so. Youth in our programs are eating at least one additional serving of fruit or vegetables each week day thanks to the Abbotsford Community Foundation.



(IN)volved is a youth volunteer program that we piloted in Fall 2015. This initiative connects youth who are interested in volunteer opportunities with organizations who are seeking youth volunteers. (IN)volved gives youth the chance to make a positive impact in their community and gain valuable experience that can be related to future employment and at the same time give organizations access to keen youth volunteers. Over the course of the school year we have spoken to more than 150 students at 6 different middle schools and high schools and we have had 61 youth and 11 organizations register for the program.

I found a 'second mom' at the AYC - a safe adult to talk to that really helped me
Youth age 16

If you don't have friends, the staff are there for you and make you feel at home
Youth age 17



The **LIFE Project** or Learning is for Everyone, ran for nine weeks over the school summer vacation and offered youth fun ways to improve their life skills. The program covered the topics of: employment, leadership, social media, physical health, emotional health, nutrition, financial literacy, service and friendship. The youth in our programs loved participating in the LIFE project because the staff were able to make learning life skills exciting and interesting.

Events

Our annual bullying awareness **Pink Shirt Day Rally** was a highlight again this year. We were fortunate to have Janaya Hirsch, a grade 11 student,

from Abbotsford Christian School come out to speak about her struggles with bullying. 62 people participated in this years event.

Youth Week 2016 was a great success with a major event held each day. We hosted a Youth Week Celebration, a 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament, Floor Hockey with the APD, a Random Acts of Kindness event, and finished up the week with Dodgeball Mania.

We also hosted our annual URoc Awards which recognize outstanding youth, youth friendly adults and youth friendly businesses in our community. The awards continue to be a great way to engage and encourage our community around all the work being done for and by youth. Alongside the awards we have our famous ice cream social, serving the best ice cream sundaes in town. In 2016, there were 96 people in attendance!

Another highlight of our 2016 events was Thank a Youth Worker Day. We created and delivered 25 packages of post it notes and banners that supervisors / principals could post in their workplace and encourage people to share why they thought their youth worker was great.



Community Development and Services



In addition to the many programs, events and presentations that we offer, we also spend countless hours working to be the voice of Abbotsford's youth and to advocate on their behalf. We chair, host and attend numerous committee meetings every month that work to improve the lives of Abbotsford's youth. These community collaborations help to ensure that youth in our city are not falling through the cracks.

Highlights from this year's community development include our work with Character Abbotsford to advance the attributes of respect, responsibility, integrity, empathy, courage and service in the lives of the youth with whom we work. Another highlight is our work with the Fraser Valley Community Action Team against the sexual exploitation of children and youth hosting an awareness raising rally. A final highlight would be our work with the BC Youth Week Committee raising the profile and growing the membership of this movement.

Partnerships

The AYC is a hub for youth programs and services providing a place for youth and parents to come in and seek advice. We provide referrals, support and a safe place for youth who find themselves in difficult situations. The AYC partners with other local organizations working to improve the lives of youth in our community.

In 2016 we had partnerships with:

Abbotsford Addictions Centre	City of Abbotsford
Abbotsford Community Services	Cyrus Centre
Abbotsford Parks, Recreation & Culture	Fraser Valley Regional Library
Abbotsford Police Department	Fraser Valley Youth Society
Abbotsford Restorative Justice	IMPACT
Abbotsford School District	United Way of the Fraser Valley
ARC Senior Centre	West Abbotsford Community School
BC Assoc of Aboriginal Friendship	Xyolhemeylh
Big Brothers Big Sisters Fraser Valley	YMCA
Central Abbotsford Community School	Youth Resource Centre
Child and Youth Mental Health	Youth Unlimited
Chilliwack Society for Community Living	



Resources

One of the goals of the Abbotsford Youth Commission is to share youth information and resources with the community. We accomplished this through our newsletter the Whatz-Up, our resource library, referrals over the phone and in person, as well as through our Youth Workers Resource Guide which is available on our website. We also continued to host the [Youth Table](#), a service that the AYC has been providing to the community for more than 20 years. The AYC maintains a network of youth serving agencies that shares information and meets monthly to discuss issues pertinent to the community. Monthly themes included: resources for youth in Abbotsford and sexual exploitation with guest speakers from Youth Keep Working, Abbotsford Hospice, Vibrant Abbotsford, and the adolescent mental health crisis team – START. In 2016, we have an average of 14 people attend each meeting.

Financial Overview

Abbotsford Youth Commission January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016

Receipts	2016	2015
City of Abbotsford	\$ 195,000	\$ 195,000
Gaming	\$ 86,300	\$ 86,300
Donations and Grants	\$ 62,140	\$ 57,978
Program Registrations and Events	\$ 25,068	\$ 25,377
Interest	\$ 22	\$ 62
Total Receipts	\$ 368,530	\$ 364,717
Disbursements	2016	2015
Wages and Related Costs	\$ 299,851	\$ 290,957
Office Operations and Equipment	\$ 30,123	\$ 30,594
Program Costs	\$ 52,476	\$ 52,281
Total Disbursements	\$382,450	\$373,832
Net Surplus / Deficit from operations	\$(13,920)	\$(9,115)



Abbotsford Youth Commission – Board of Directors 2016

Les Stagg	President
Cheryl Unger	Secretary
Karl Olfert	Treasurer
Stan Petersen	Vice President / School Board Representative
Carol Powell	Director/APD Representative
Patricia Ross	Director/City Council Representative
Scott Hill	Director/City of Abbotsford Representative
April Iguidez	Director
Sanjeev Lal	Director
Balbir S. Gill	Director
Jasica Grewal	Director
Jessica Yarwood	Director
Raman Dhillon	Director
Teresa Pippus	Director
Marianne Kim	Director/Youth Council Representative
Kenton Palmer	Director/Youth Council Representative

Thank You to Our Volunteers and Donors

Thank you to all of the individuals and organizations that assist us in providing programs and services for youth in Abbotsford. A special thank you to our Board of Directors and to our volunteers; without their help our programs and events would not be possible. Thank you so very much!

In 2016 we received financial support from:

City of Abbotsford
Province of British Columbia
Service Canada
Abbotsford Community Foundation
Envision
Abbotsford Rotary Club
Abbotsford School District
Abbotsford Social Activity Association
Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
Canadian Tire Jumpstart Program
Hamber Foundation
Individual Donors
Kiwanis Club of Clearbrook
Participaction
Soroptomist International of Abbotsford Mission
WorkSafeBC

In 2016 the AYC received in-kind support from:

City of Abbotsford
Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
Abbotsford Community Services
Abbotsford News
Abbotsford Parks Recreation and Culture
Abbotsford Police Department
Abbotsford School District
HSBC Bank Canada
United Way of the Fraser Valley
University of the Fraser Valley

How to find us:

Social Media:

Website: www.abbyouth.com

Twitter: @abbyouth

Instagram: @abbyouth

Like us on Facebook

Our offices:

32315 South Fraser Way

Abbotsford, BC V2T 1W7

604-854-8785

Our youth centres:

Abbotsford Recreation Centre (ARC)

2499 McMillan Road

and

Matsqui Recreation Centre (MRC)

3106 Clearbrook Road

