

Abbotsford is a city where every youth feels included, safe, valued, empowered and connected

2019 Annual Staff Report

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Abbotsford Youth Commission 



Table of Contents

Mission / Vision / Diversity / Background / Goals..... 1

Message from the Executive Director..... 2

2019 Annual Staff Report..... 4

 A. Drop-In Programs..... 4

 B. Leadership Programs..... 6

 C. Self-Esteem Programs..... 7

 D. Healthy Living Programs..... 7

 E. Life Skills Programs..... 9

 F. Other Programs..... 10

 G. Highlights of our Special Events..... 12

 H. Community Development 17

 I. Impact on Youth 2018..... 19

Thank you to our Volunteers and Donors..... 22

Board of Directors..... 22



Abbotsford Youth Commission

because youth matter

Vision Statement

Abbotsford is a city where every youth feels included, safe, valued, empowered and connected.

Mission Statement

The Abbotsford Youth Commission exists to identify, promote, improve, increase and provide services and programs for youth in Abbotsford.

Diversity Statement

Everyone Belongs

Background

In 1991, the Districts of Matsqui and Abbotsford established a Youth Commission to ensure that concerns and problems respecting youth in the community would be heard. The goal was to actively identify and promote avenues by which resources in the community could best address youth issues.

In 1996, the Abbotsford Youth Commission (AYC) became a non-profit society. The AYC receives core funding from the City of Abbotsford, collects fees for life skills courses and receives grants and donations to operate free programs and services.

Goals

A. To advocate on behalf of youth

1. To assist in the development of a positive profile for youth.
2. To provide opportunities for community involvement.
3. To encourage community investment in youth.

B. Implement programs for youth in the community

1. To continue and enhance preventative leisure/recreation options for youth.
2. To provide training, leadership, and volunteer experiences for youth.
3. To increase the quality of Youth Commission services provided to the community.

C. Be actively involved with the community in developing programs & services for youth.

1. To encourage healthy youth and families
2. To create avenues for youth involvement in social/political action
3. To focus on awareness and prevention of identified youth social issues.

D. Share youth information and resources with the community

1. To promote the Youth Commission as a resource for youth, parents, and the community.
2. To enhance and revise materials which promote services for Abbotsford youth.

Message from the Executive Director

For years now I have been telling people that at the Abbotsford Youth Commission (AYC) we offer 'Preventative Recreation'. For the first time ever, someone asked me what that was, "Are you preventing recreation?" To my chagrin, I realized that perhaps I had made up that phrase and likely needed to quickly explain what it meant to me. Preventive Recreation (definition by Bev Olfert): is recreation that serves as a primary prevention measure ensuring that participants are not are not negatively impacted by risk factors. As far as the participant is concerned, they are having fun (i.e. recreation), but from the staff perspective it is known that we are building healthy mentoring relationships, creating connection and belonging, and building social-emotional competence (i.e. prevention).

Shortly after the above conversation occurred, I overheard our Supervisor ask a team member, "if 'Joey' wasn't attending our programs, where would Joey be?" That simple question turned on a very bright light for everyone in the room that day. If we (the AYC) was not there after school and in the evening, for Joey, and for most of the youth that we serve, they would be wandering the streets, getting into trouble, not feeling connected, hungry, sad and lonely. By engaging youth who are at loose ends, we are able to increase protective factors and prevent issues. So, yes, at the AYC we provide recreation – but it is so much more than that – it's Preventative Recreation!



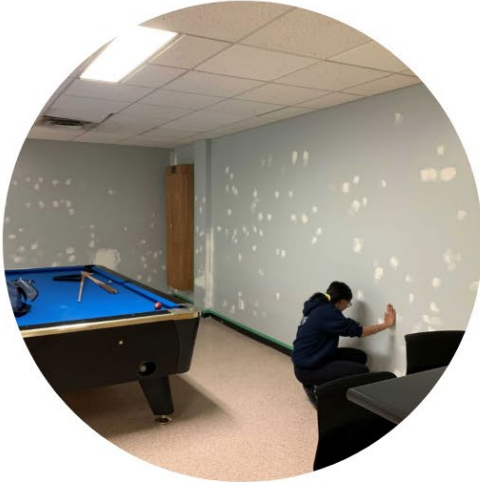
The Abbotsford Youth Commission's vision is that Abbotsford is a city where every youth feels included, safe, valued, empowered and connected. For more than 28 years now, the AYC has been working to accomplish this vision by providing safe, productive places for youth to go after school, in the evening, 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.

Perhaps the greatest highlight of 2019 is that we had 22,401 youth entrances in our programs. This represents an increase of 739 entrances which is 3.5 percent growth this year! 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.

Something new this year was our Healthy Mind / Healthy Body initiative which included a partnership with Archway Youth Resource Centre to offer a Mental Health Resiliency Group. Youth who participated in this group reported feeling better able to cope with stressors and feeling more connected. We have continued to work on increasing coping skills and improving mental health in our youth through daily and weekly activities that were offered in our youth centres. We are grateful to the Abbotsford Community Foundation for providing the funds to make this work possible

In 2019 we were able to increase our efforts to teach youth valuable life skills through the generous support of the Ted Rogers Community Grant and First West Foundation. Our very talented staff team was able to find ways to make learning life skills fun and the youth were excited to participate. This year youth worked on everything from learning the local transit system to financial literacy.

Youth Week 2019 was a huge success! This year we offered 17 events and logged 642 entrances. This was an increase of 10 events and 348 entrances. Shout out to the City of Abbotsford for their assistance with promotion. At the end of June we were excited to makeover our Youth Centre at MRC. Huge thanks to the City of Abbotsford for purchasing the supplies and to the Royal Bank of Canada for providing the funds and the volunteers to get it done! The youth and staff were so excited to see the new updated space when they returned in September.



BEFORE



DURING



AFTER

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.

A final highlight was being nominated for a Fraser Valley Cultural Diversity Award in the Innovative Initiative category. Although we did not win, it truly was an honour to be nominated.

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

Abbotsford Youth Commission – 2019 Annual Staff Report

A. Drop-In Programs

Drop-in programs at the AYC include our youth drop-in centres and our youth drop-in sport programs. We have two drop in Youth Centres open to youth 12-18 yrs. They are located at the Abbotsford Recreation Centre (ARC) and Matsqui Recreation Centre (MRC). Our Youth Centres offer youth a safe, supervised, and productive place to spend their time all year round. Youth are able to participate in activities such as: sports, pool, video games, ping pong, foosball, crafts, educational games, special events and more. Staff members work on building relationships with all youth who enter the centre in order to make them feel welcome and connected. Fun activities and healthy snacks are available each day at no cost. Family style, sit down dinners are provided at each Youth Centre over the course of the year. We pride ourselves in connecting with youth, providing positive adult role models, and being fun, engaging safe places for youth in Abbotsford.

Youth Centre at MRC

Our Youth Centre at MRC was open for a majority of the school year including one week over Spring Break and it was closed over winter and over the summer months. The hours were Monday-Thursday, 2:30pm-5:00pm and Fridays 2:30pm-10:00pm. 2019 was an amazing year with many “all-time highs” since our opening in 2009. These highs include: Highest number of different youth in a year; highest number of entrances in a year (345 higher than any other year); highest daily average in a year; and highest number of youth in attendance in one day. In September we had a whopping 100 youth in one day, then two days later we had 78 youth in one day. This is a true testament to the amazing staff we have working for us and their ability to connect with youth and promote the heck out of our programs. Our major highlight for the year was the makeover at MRC. With the help of the City of Abbotsford and the Royal Bank of Canada we were able to fix all the dents and holes in the walls and get her all painted up this summer. The youth were so excited to see the updated space with all the fun colors.

Total # of different youth participants: 423

Total # of entrances: 5217

Average daily attendance: 30

Total # of volunteers: 7

Youth Centre at ARC

The ARC Youth Centre was open year round, with the exception of Winter Break. The program hours for 2019 were Monday-Thursday 2:30pm to 5:00pm, Fridays 2:30pm to 10:00pm and Saturdays 7:00pm to 10:00pm. Our Open Gym times on Friday nights were from 7:00pm to 8:00pm and Saturday nights from 8:00pm to 10:00pm. This year, we had a daily average of 34 youth attend the ARC Youth Centre. This is the third year in a row where we had an average of 33+ youth attend the Youth Centre each day. Two of our highest daily entrances were 83 and 93 youth in attendance. On Wednesday, February 27th we had 93 youth attend the Youth Centre for our Pink Shirt Day event. Friday, June 14th we had 83 youth attend the Youth Centre for the Welcome to Summer BBQ. Throughout the year, the staff worked hard to build good connections with the youth while providing a fun atmosphere which ultimately lead to the great numbers we achieved this year.

Total # of different youth participants: 1385

Total # of entrances: 9274

Average daily attendance: 34

Total # of volunteers: 11

Spring Break

The Youth Centre at MRC was open for the first week of Spring Break, and the Youth Centre at ARC was open for the second week of Spring Break. The hours for both centres were Monday-Thursday from 12:00pm to 5:00pm, Friday from 12:00pm to 8:00pm and then Saturdays at ARC from 7:00pm to 10:00pm. At MRC, the youth participated in some great activities such as making Shamrock Punch, Henna Tattoos, Guitar Hero Tournament, Outdoor Scavenger Hunt and a Ping Pong Tournament. At ARC, the activities included a Digital Scavenger Hunt, Pool/Ping Pong Tournaments, Sports Day, Video Games Tournaments, Man Hunt and Open Gym.

Total # of entrances: 244

Average daily attendance: 20

Total # of volunteers: 4

Summer Youth Zone at ARC

Summer Youth Zone took place at the ARC Youth Centre for nine weeks over the summer break. The hours for the summer were Monday-Friday from 12:00pm to 5:00pm. We also had open gym times on Monday from 2:45pm to 3:45pm and Friday from 3:30pm to 5:00pm. Each week, during the summer, had a theme and youth had the opportunity to participate in fun activities each day around that theme. Our themes were Around the World, Art Attack, AYC Challenges, AYC Olympics, Fear Factor, Master Chef, Sports Fanatics, Water Wars and Welcome to Hogwarts. This summer we saw several new youth attend the drop-in program including new youth from the registered programs as well as youth who had just turned 12. The staff worked hard to get the new youth to continue to attend the centre by being fun, energetic and welcoming to all youth who came through the doors. One highlight that the staff thought was great this summer was when we had a 13 year old youth start attending the Youth Centre for the first time. She registered for many of our programs and attended the drop in as well. Throughout the summer we had a few out trips planned with one of our registered programs that she attended. After riding the bus in those programs and after our Transit Week of the LIFE program, she came in the following day explaining that her Dad was so happy that we were able to teach her this great skill. After that, her Dad allowed her to take the bus, across town, to the ARC drop-in by herself. This was an awesome moment for the staff as well as that youth who was now more confident after the AYC was able to teach her this skill!



Total # of entrances: 1038

Average daily attendance: 24

Total # of volunteers: 3

Drop-In Sports

We have continued to partner with the Abbotsford Basketball Association for our drop in basketball program this year. At the end of 2018 we moved our drop in basketball program to Eugene Reimer Middle School as we felt we would be helping the youth at that end of town get engaged in extracurricular activities. Unfortunately there were issues with the rental space which caused us to have to cancel the drop in program for all of January and part of February 2019. In mid-February things were cleared up and we were able to use the school again.

In the end we took a chance that did not pan out, so we came back to run the program at Abbotsford Middle School in September and we ramped up promotion to get our attendance back on track.

April through June we offered drop in sports over the lunch hour at Abbotsford Traditional Middle School as well as Chief Dan George. The youth chose basketball as their sport of choice. This was an extremely popular activity at both schools. All in all we offered 20 lunch hour sessions with an average of 31 youth attending each day.

Total # of entrances: 981

Average attendance: 22

Total # of volunteers: 1

B. Leadership Programs

The Youth Leadership Team at the AYC includes participants in our Youth Council, LEAD – Lead, Explore and Develop and Youth Focus programs.



Youth Council

Our Youth Council members were able to do some exciting things this year. We had a consultation with the City of Abbotsford's City Studio representatives. Youth were able to provide their opinion on how best to approach this endeavor with other local youth. Our youth released their creative sides and painted some rocks for the URoc awards. They really liked this activity and were happy to know the rocks were going to such a good cause. In October we all attended our Annual Retreat; we had so many new youth in our group this year it was a good opportunity to get to know one another. This is always the highlight of the year for these youth. We continue to take part in the Shadow Project where each City Councillor and the Mayor is paired

up a youth for the school year. Youth accompany them to meetings and events for our future potential politicians to learn what it is all about.

Total # of youth participants: 27

LEAD – Lead, Explore and Develop

LEAD began planning for BC Youth Week events in February. There were a total of five scheduled meetings to plan for our Kindness Crew event. Youth were taught how to plan a special event from start to finish. Although the general idea was given to the group, youth went through all steps of planning from audience considerations, location, budget, timelines, activities, donation requests, promotion, delivery and more. Youth were required to attend five meetings, but as there was so much prep work to be done, many youth volunteered more time to have everything ready for the event. Also of note, the program was advertised as grade 9-11 in order to recruit youth for Youth Council, but we had a youth asking to join again although she was in grade 12, so we let her join and now include grade 12's moving forward.

Total # of youth participants: 12

Youth Focus

Youth Focus is a leadership program for the youth who attend our Youth Centres. Youth have the opportunity to talk about issues, build leadership skills, offer feedback on programs, plan and deliver small events, become a role model and gain confidence and self-esteem. This year the focus has been more on encouraging youth to talk about issues effecting them and to provide tools and skills to deal with these issues. Youth enjoy coming together and having a safe place to share and support each other.

Total # of youth entrances at MRC: 296

Total # of youth entrances at ARC: 173

C. Self Esteem Programs

Just for Girls

The objective of this program is to provide an opportunity for grade seven girls to learn and talk about issues that may influence them negatively and to develop positive, healthy strategies to cope positively with the issues they may face. Interactive games, activities and crafts are used as means to create discussion and engage the girls. Topics may include: Inclusion, Social Media Safety, Self-Esteem, Peer Pressure & Bullying, Role Models, Friendships, Hygiene and Healthy Lifestyle. The highest attended JFG programs this year were at Abbotsford Traditional, Eugene Reimer and Abbotsford Middle Schools.

Total # of participants: 1398

Total # of completed participants: 157

Total # of entrances: 424

Total # of sessions: 81

Guys Alive

The objective of this program is to provide an opportunity for boys in grade seven to learn and talk about issues that influence them and to encourage them to make positive choices. Physically active and interactive games are played to facilitate the discussion topics and encourage group involvement. Participant's experiences are listened to and validated. Discussion, role plays, and group brainstorming are used to work through issues and help each boy develop a positive sense of self. Our most successful Guys Alive programs this year were at Chief Dan George, W.A. Fraser, Abbotsford Middle and Abbotsford Traditional. Some of the groups were so popular we had to cap the attendance as there were too many boys showing up to be successful.

Total # of participants: 1460

Total # of completed participants: 157

Total # of entrances: 409

Total # of sessions: 82

D. Healthy Living Programs

Healthy Living Programs include our Girls Night, Guys Night and Youth Night programs. These programs are all non-competitive programs that give youth the opportunity to try new physical activities in a supportive, recreational setting where teamwork, active living and fun are all encouraged. These programs run once a week for 8 weeks, three times per year.



Guys Night

This year in Guys Night, the youth had a blast participating in the activities in all three sessions. Some of the highlighted activities for Guys Night was Parkour, Boxing and Castle Fun Park. The staff saw several past participants register again in the sessions and saw them take more of a leadership role within the groups. The staff focused on encouraging the boys to participate and getting them to encourage one another. This program has allowed the youth to build friendships and has gotten some youth excited in participating in these activities outside of the AYC.

Total # of youth participants: 52

Total # of entrances: 298

Total # of volunteers: 1

Girls Night Out

The Girls Night program has been great for the youth to try new activities in a judgement free environment. The girls built new friendships and also built good relationships with the staff in this program. We've seen several past participants register for the three

sessions which shows that they enjoy the program and are comfortable with the staff at the AYC. The highlighted activities were Ringette, Rope Works and Castle Fun Park.

Total # of youth participants: 42

Total # of entrances: 243

Total # of volunteers: 3

Youth Night

The Youth Night program has been a great opportunity for the youth to interact with their peers while also having the opportunity to meet new people. This program has allowed youth, who really enjoy the program, to double up by registering for Guys Night or Girls Night as well. Youth Night ran on Thursdays for the first two sessions of the year and then we switched to Monday for the final session of the year. After doing promotion and speaking with parents, we noticed that youth were more available on Monday so we decided to switch the days to give more youth the opportunity to register for the program. Two highlighted activities for this program were Tennis at Great West Fitness as well as Mini Golf and games at Castle Fun Park. We haven't done either of these activities for a while so the youth were excited to participate in these sessions.

Total # of youth participants: 42

Total # of entrances: 217

Total # of volunteers: 2



E. Life Skills Programs

AYC Life Skills Programs are designed to teach and increase basic life skills in youth. All programs are offered in a fun, engaging and safe atmosphere. Some of these programs are offered each month and others only a few times a year.

Below are the programs that ran in 2019:

Winter 2019		SSZ – The Great Outdoors	18	
Babysitter Training #1	15	SSZ –Water World	16	
Babysitter Training #2	11	SSZ – New Age Games	17	
Babysitter Training #3	20	SSZ – Ball Games	8	
Foodsafe	6	Cooking	15	
	Winter Total	52	Baking	16
Spring 2019		Games Room ½ day	6	
Babysitter Training #1	15	Games Room full day	5	
Babysitter Training #2	12	Summer Youth Zone	20	
Babysitter Training #3	18		Summer Total	203
Babysitter Training - ACS	25	Fall 2019		
Foodsafe #1	8	Babysitter Training #1	21	
Foodsafe #2	7	Babysitter Training #2	16	
	Spring Total	85	Babysitter Training #3	6
Summer 2019		Babysitter Training #4	12	
Babysitter Training #1	13	Foodsafe #1	8	
Babysitter Training #2	11	Foodsafe #2	5	
Babysitter Training #3	11	Level 1 Leadership	9	
Babysitter Training #4	7	Level 1 Leadership ATMS	24	
Babysitter Training #5	6	Level 1 Leadership ATMS #2	13	
Foodsafe	10	Level 2 Leadership	15	
Employment Readiness	8	Level 2 Leadership #2	14	
Leadership	16		Fall Total	143

Total # of programs: 38

Total # of youth participants: 345

Total # of registrations: 483

Total # of entrances: 1092

Total # of volunteers: 7

LIFE

Our LIFE program focused on teaching youth life skills in a fun and engaging way. We hosted several group activities in our youth centers and we also incorporated individual learning opportunities. In the first half of the year, our life skills challenges included answering the phone in the Youth Centre, making phone calls, tying a tie, making a bed, food prep, learning about finances and writing letters.

During the summer, as part of our LIFE project, we held a program called “AYC-Get a Clue.” This was a seven-week program was all based around a board game of a similar name and was held in the ARC Youth Centre. The seven topics that we covered in this program included Social Skills, Transit, Nutrition, Hygiene, Financial Literacy, First Aid, Substance Abuse and Addictions. Each week the youth participated in a group meeting where we

played some games and activities to teach youth about the topic. The youth also had three other activities to complete to earn their four game board spaces for the week. At the end of the seven-week program, there were prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place for the youth who attended at least five out of the seven group meetings and at least twenty-six out of the twenty-eight spaces on the game board. The prize for 3rd place was an eighty-dollar gift card to Seven Oaks Mall, 2nd place prize was Wireless Headphones/Earbuds and for 1st place the grand prize was a Nintendo Switch!

For the remainder of the year we continued the success of the summer LIFE Program, “Get a Clue,” through engaging youth in our Youth Centres in activities around study habits, physical and emotional health. When looking at the targets we set for the program we wondered what we were thinking - they were so high we thought we would not reach our goal, but with Mandy in charge she shattered our goal! We were in awe of how she managed to get youth to engage in these tough topics. With her help the youth have developed many life skills which will equip them through their lives. This project has been fun and engaging with everyone including the staff learning about each other and developing life skills. In the end we were able to achieve an impressive 1758 entrances into this program.

A huge thanks to Ted Rogers Community Grant and First West Foundation for supporting this project!

Total # of entrances: 1770

Total # of youth participants: 750

Total # of sessions: 109

Total # of volunteers: 9

F. Other Programs

Noon Hour Games

Noon Hour Games ran during the school year at Colleen and Gordie Howe, W. A. Fraser and Chief Dan George Middle every Monday over the lunch hour. AYC staff used this opportunity to build relationships with youth and promote AYC programs. This was done through playing sports, games, crafts and walking around the school to engage with the youth. This program is a good opportunity to meet new youth and encourage them to attend the ARC and MRC Youth Centres as well as our registered programs. This program is also a good opportunity to get the youth who are under 12 years old excited about attending the Youth Centres when they turn 12. We have built great connections with the school staff and youth workers at these schools which allows us to better understand and help the youth in our programs.

Total # of entrances: 1146

Total # of volunteers: 3

Healthy Mind / Healthy Body

Healthy Mind/ Healthy Body is an extension of our Nutrition Program. We have been offering youth healthy snacks after school and healthy family style dinners for many years now.

The Healthy Body (aka Nutrition Program) portion of the program provides free daily nutritious snacks for youth as well as family style sit down dinners. Youth take part in setting up for the dinners, preparing the food and cleaning up too! Youth at both of our Youth Centres have



come to rely on this as part of their daily food intake, they come in asking “What’s for snack?”, “Can I help?”, “When’s the next dinner night?” We have been creative with our dinners and desserts, trying out adventurous recipes such as: Avocado Chocolate Mousse and Mango Coconut Chai Pudding. In May we did Taco Tuesday during BC Youth week at MRC which saw 58 youth come in for free healthy Tacos. In June we did a Summer Kick off Barbeque at ARC with 53 youth in attendance. To finish off the year we hosted a Holiday Feast for our youth, the seniors from the MRC Senior Centre, the Mayor and some of our City Councillors. 66 holiday dinners were served. Food is a great way to bring people together and make connections between all ages.

Total # of dinners served:

Total # of after school snacks served: approximately 11,500 (too many to count!)

This past year we were hearing from youth that their number one concern was mental health – so in fall 2019 we decided to expand our programming to include Healthy Mind. We started the program with a 6 week Mental Health Group that we offered in partnership with the Youth Resource Centre from Archway Community Services. This group was designed to address mental health resilience through group activities and learning opportunities designed to improve coping skills. This program ran once a week for an hour and half. Each week we looked at a different topic, the topics were; Self-Esteem, Self-Compassion, Confidence; Mental Health: Emotions, coping skills; Communication: Social Skills, Toxic People; Gang Information; Substance Use/abuse: Family and Friends using; Relationships: Healthy/Unhealthy, Boundaries. The six week program proved to be very successful at MRC. At the beginning of the program we set some group guidelines, these were around confidentiality, attitude listening, and honesty. The youth acknowledged that these guidelines helped them be more open and honest around the topics. The Youth engaged really well and enjoyed sharing experiences as well as listening and learning from others experiences. Youth provided feedback that having the opportunity to talk openly and honestly and not be judged is something they needed.

Total # of entrances: 93

Average attendance: 15

(IN)volved

This program is an initiative that 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 gives groups and organizations access to keen youth volunteers. We share opportunities with our growing database as they arise and are constantly looking for new opportunities within the community.

In 2019, we added six new organizations to our (IN)volved database. With these new organizations, we sent out new volunteer opportunities that were ongoing throughout the year as well as one-time event opportunities. We also had 16 new youth added to the (IN)volved database in 2019. The staff took the opportunity to promote this program in the ARC and MRC Youth Centres during drop-in as well as the Youth Focus program. The staff have also promoted the (IN)volved program in the leadership courses and during the Youth Council sessions.

Character

Throughout the year, in all AYC programs, we have made a conscious effort to speak with youth on an everyday basis about the value of respect and how that is brought into action through our diversity statement, “everyone belongs.” Over the year, staff engaged youth in several different games and activities that highlighted the importance of respect and inclusion. During the year youth were also engaged in acts of kindness were they painted rocks with kindness messages and placed them around the youth center. We took part in roof over your

head day. This is a day of appreciation for the things we have, starting with the roof over our heads. Youth looked at appreciating the things they have and the relationships they build at home, school and the AYC. The results of this project are on display at the MRC youth center.

Youth Empowerment Project (YEP)

Our YEP presenters are all trained Youth Council members. We were able to present YEP to all four grade eight classes at Eugene Reimer Middle school. Each presentation was 90 minutes long and offered great information to the student's about healthy relationships, communication and how to handle bullying situations. This was all done through fun games and activities. At the end of October all of our new Youth Council members were trained up on the Youth Empowerment Project and will be ready to deliver YEP to middle school students next year.

Total # of youth participants: 136

Total # of youth presenters: 11

G. Highlights of our Special Events

At the AYC we offer many special events. Some of them are large full scale community events, some are directed towards a group or a specific target of the population, some are open to anyone in the community, and others are offered weekly at our youth centres. Highlights of our special events are:

Autumn House Fundraiser

On January 21st, seven MRC youth center youth proudly presented the Autumn House with a cheque for \$366.35 – funds that they raised by selling hot chocolate and goodies over the Holiday Season.



Pink Shirt Day

On February 27th for Pink Shirt Day, we created a Chain Pledge Challenge and we were welcomed into four local schools Howe, Fraser, Chief and Reimer. Staff set up tables and had youth write notes about what they could do to prevent bullying. At the end of lunch all of the strips of paper were all stapled together into a giant paper chain and hung up around the schools. It was a very impressive display! In the end the number of youth we engaged with that day was overwhelming: Reimer = 143, Howe = 182, Chief = 358 and Fraser = 415 youth!!! That is a total of 1098 youth in one day. Most impressive!

Also on Pink Shirt day, the Youth Council group hosted an awareness raising rally at our Youth Centre at ARC. They hosted a Family Feud game, a march around the facility and provided some delicious pizza to finish off the event. There was an amazing turn out with 109 people in attendance.

MRC Tour

On March 7th we had 6 youth come in for a private tour of our MRC Youth Centre from the Adolescent Day Treatment Program. The youth were able to experience the Youth Centre on their own, play a few games and meet the staff. The idea was – that once they tried it they would hopefully be willing to come back on their own after school.

Fraser Valley Cultural Diversity Awards

AYC Staff and Youth Council Members were thrilled to attend the Fraser Valley Cultural Diversity Awards on March 14th. The AYC was nominated in the Innovative Initiative Category for our work around our Diversity Statement – Everyone Belongs. Although we did not win – it was an honour to be nominated alongside so many great initiatives!

2019 Fraser Valley Cultural Diversity Awards



www.diversityawards.ca

Youth Week at the AYC:

Youth Week is a provincial celebration of youth held annually during the first week of May. It is a week of fun, interaction and celebration intended to build a strong connection between young people and their communities and to profile the issues, accomplishments and diversity of youth across the province. Here at the AYC, Youth Week is a huge priority and we are proud to host events for all of Abbotsford's youth. In 2019 we offered 10 additional events had an increase of 348 entrances over 2018 for a total of 17 events and 642 entrances for Youth Week 2019!

May 1st

3 on 3 Basketball Tournament: This was the 7th annual 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament and we partnered with the Abbotsford Basketball Association this year for the first time. We had a great turn out with 118 people in attendance. Lots of great prizes were given out and the youth had a great time competing against one another.

Super Smash Bros Tournament: 12 youth participated in this super fun activity. They loved the prizes!



Crazy Loaded Pancake Day: Our MRC youth centre held a Crazy Loaded Pancake day, where staff served 33 youth pancakes with crazy candy and fruit toppings after school.

May 2nd

URoc Awards: Once again the URoc Awards were a highlight of Youth Week, we handed out awards to 2 deserving youth, 6 youth friendly adults and 4 youth friendly organizations.

Movie Trivia: Our staff went to Gordie Howe Middle School at lunch time and challenged 50 youth to some movie trivia questions for prizes! After school, 11 youth participated in additional movie trivia with a popcorn snack!

May 3rd:

Cookie Creations: We held a cookie competition with 11 youth participating. We had a couple youth that helped with judging each cookie. The youth and staff had a great time with the activity.

Dodgeball Mania: Normally we have drop-in basketball on Friday Nights, but we did Dodgeball Mania for Youth Week. It was a busy evening with 27 youth who participated. The youth had a great time dodging, dipping, ducking, diving and dodging!

The Grand Paint Off: Our MRC Youth Centre held a paint-off, where 9 youth attempted to recreate an original painting by our Team Lead Emily. The youth got to take home their own canvases and the winner got a gift package!

May 4th:

ARC Youth Centre Open House: We opened up the Youth Centre to allow caregivers the opportunity to meet the staff and check out what we have to offer at our AYC Youth Centres. The day started off a bit slow, but we noticed there was a flag football tournament outside with youth in our age group, so we brought out water bottles with What's Up attached to them and spoke to all the parents about our programs, it was a great opportunity to talk to so many captive parents.

Kindness Crew: This event was fully planned and delivered by our LEAD group. LEAD made so many creative giveaways for the event including spatulas with recipe cards, BBQ spices, Tic-Tac-Toe games, apples and water bottles with kindness and inspirational quotes attached. We had a spin wheel full of great free giveaways, including BC Youth Week and AYC swag, candies, and free summer courses. We even had a free cupcake decorating section. Over all we had 82 people pop by for free goodies and entertainment.

Basketball Open Gym: We had 20 youth participate in drop-in basketball. The youth shot around and played some games. This is always a popular activity at ARC.



May 5th:

MRC Open House: Following suit from the ARC Open House, we planned the same activities for MRC. We promoted to the 11 year olds that will be turning 12 soon as well as the 12 year olds. When we arrived to set up there was a family of four and the door waiting to come in. They had such a great time they stayed and played for the entire two hours. We had several families come in with their youth and were very happy to know they can send their youth this summer. Three of the youth who had never been before have been coming on a regular basis since.

Toonie Drop-in's: The MRC and ARC Recreation Centres offered toonie drop in skates and swims for all youth!

May 6th:

Centre vs. Centre Cake Challenge: The youth at both centres went head to head in a cake decorating challenge. The youth at MRC stacked their cake like lego blocks, with 12 youth participating in the activity. The ARC youth stacked two cakes together and used the colours of AYC. They did a great job decorating the cake and ended up winning the competition!

Youth Council / City Council Collaboration: this event was put on hold due to a scheduling issue and was held later in the month.



May 7th:

Taco Dinner: The MRC youth centre hosted a free Taco Tuesday event after school this day. We had youth volunteer to help serve, with the help of our staff. We successfully served 58 youth free tacos for this super fun fiesta!

Henna Art: We posted a volunteer opportunity for this event through our IN(volved) program as we were hoping to get some Henna Artists come out to help and we did get one youth come volunteer, we also had one of our LEAD students bring two professional artists to help out. They all did an amazing job! We are so thankful for to the generous, kind people in Abbotsford willing to invest their time with our youth.

ParticipACTION

On June 11th ParticipACTION attended our Drop-In Sports program at Abbotsford Traditional in support of their Community Better Challenge. We had 70 youth out on the field getting active through fun games together with AYC and school staff.

Fraser Valley Metis Association

On August 22nd we had a group of 23 people from the Fraser Valley Metis Association come introduce their youth to our Youth Centre and see what we have to offer. The youth from our Leadership Camp, along with our staff, planned a few games to engage the youth during their hour long visit. The youth were aged 10- 14. It was a great opportunity for the our youth to practice their leadership skills

Be You

On September 21st, Be You was held again at the Sevenoaks Mall and we were invited to host a booth. It is always great to see so many community members supporting the mental well-being and the health of youth in Abbotsford. Our staff set up a table and talked to youth about the AYC and what we do.

Canadian Student Leadership Conference

On September 28th we hosted a rock painting activity for the Canadian Student Leadership Conference. We had about fifty youth join us in painting rocks with positive messages to place around the community. The youth really loved this event.

Meet the Teacher Open Houses

As it was the start of the school year we thought we would capitalize on new parents and youth attending the meet the teacher nights. We sent staff members over the Howe and Fraser Middle schools to set up at table at the front door and talk to parents and youth about our AYC programs. We hosted an open house at both Youth Centres in hopes that parents would come over with their youth to meet our staff and see our spaces. Unfortunately this was not as popular as we had hoped, but we are proud of our staff for coming up with new ideas and continuing to make an effort.

Philanthropy Day Luncheon

On November 7th Bev and Christy attended the Abbotsford Community Foundation Philanthropy Day Luncheon with our very special guest Riley Werk. Riley is one of our fantastic volunteers and we had nominated him for volunteer of the year. Although he did not win - he was honoured to be nominated. We were also able to cheer on our very own Sam Makkar as he won the youth award!

Christmas Dinner with the Senior (and Mayor and Council)

On December 11th our staff and youth participants from MRC treated the seniors from MRC to a full English Christmas Dinner. 66 people enjoyed the delicious dinner including youth, seniors, our Mayor and Council. It was a great opportunity for everyone to interact, get to know each other a bit better and break down barriers.

Hometown Hockey

On December 15th the AYC received a cheque for \$10,000 from the Ted Rogers Community Grant at the Hometown Hockey Event. Two of our Youth Council members, Sam and Emmy were pretty excited to be able to go up on stage and receive that cheque for us!



H. Community Development

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 at-risk youth in our city are not falling through the cracks. Highlights from this year's community involvement include:

Community Development and Committee Work

Eight years ago the AYC became a champion of the Character Abbotsford movement, and over the years, we have been working to engage youth with the attributes of: Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Empathy, Courage and Service. Our involvement with Character Abbotsford has been a significant commitment of time and energy that we feel is an asset to our youth and a valuable contribution to our city. A highlight again this year was the continuation of our Character Project. In 2019 our character work has once again been centred around our Everyone Belongs initiative which focuses on respect while engaging youth in work around inclusion and diversity.

The Youth Table, a service that the AYC has been providing to the community for more than 25 years, continued to thrive in 2019. This past year the committee visited, toured and met at the APD Community Policing Offices, New Beginnings, Foundry, MCFD, and the AYC Youth Centre at MRC. Highlights of the year included a Suicide Risk Assessment Training, a presentation from the Domestic Violence Unit and the Thank a Youth Worker Day activity. In 2019 we had 132 entrances and an average of 15 people attend each meeting.



The AYC partnered with the Abbotsford Community Action Team again this year to host a rally to acknowledge Sexual Exploitation Awareness in our community, offer presentations at professional development days, and speak at several established groups.

The AYC was awarded the contract to provide coordination / consultant services for BC Youth Week again this year. The work is in a large part completed by our Administrative Assistant with the assistance of our Supervisor of Recreation.

The Executive Director and Supervisor of Recreation sit on many committees in Abbotsford to provide a youth perspective, raise awareness of youth issues, assist in the development of a positive profile for youth, and to act as a resource for youth, parents and the community.

The committees that we participated in this past year are:

Abbotsford Child and Youth Committee
Abbotsford Community Action Team
BC Youth Week Committee
Character Abbotsford (Treasurer)

Fraser Valley Human Dignity Coalition
Middle Years Table
Non-Profit Leaders Connect
Youth Table (Chair/hosted by AYC)

All of these committees consider their AYC representative to be an invaluable asset to the committee. More community groups and committees approach the AYC for support each year; however, this is the extent of our ability to provide service at this time.

Partnerships

The AYC is a hub for youth programs and services that provides a place for youth and parents to come in and seek advice. We provide a safe place, as well as referrals and support for youth who find themselves in difficult circumstances such as having no place to sleep, needing drug or alcohol treatment, or police and ministry referrals for youth who have been abused.

The AYC partners with numerous other organizations working to improve the lives of youth in our community:

Abbotsford Addictions Centre	Cyrus Centre
Abbotsford Basketball Association	Foundry
Archway Community Services	Fraser Valley Metis Association
Abbotsford Parks, Recreation & Culture	Fraser Valley Youth Society
Abbotsford Police Department	IMPACT
Abbotsford Restorative Justice	MCFD
Abbotsford School District	MRC Senior Centre
Adolescent Day Treatment Program	STAR Club
Big Brothers Big Sisters Fraser Valley	United Way of the Fraser Valley
Abby Community School Society	Xyolhemeylh
Child and Youth Mental Health	YMCA
Chilliwack Society for Community Living	Youth Resource Centre
City of Abbotsford	Youth Unlimited

Resources

One of the goals of the Abbotsford Youth Commission is to share youth information and resources with the community. We do this through:

- Youth Workers Resource Guide at www.abbyyouth.com/resources/referral-guide.html
- Our newsletter, the Whatz-Up
- Referrals over the phone and in person
- Youth Table email distribution list
- Social Media
- Our website www.abbyyouth.com

To let people know about the resources, programs and services available at the Abbotsford Youth Commission, we promote the AYC throughout the year. This year we presented at or hosted a table at:

- Meet the Teacher Nights at WA Fraser Middle School and Colleen and Gordie Howe Middle School
- Be You Trade Show at Seven Oaks Mall
- DPAC - Not my Kid Presentation – October 2
- Middle Years Fair
- Physicians Fair
- Keeping Children Safe from Gangs Event
- ParticipACTION Event
- Parks Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee
- Abby Leadership Class
- Abbotsford School Board

I. Impact on Youth 2019

Drop-in Programs	Participants	Entrances	Average
MRC Drop-in	423	5217	30
ARC Drop-in	1385	9274	34
Drop-in Sports		981	22
Noon Hour Games		1146	20
Total 16618			
Leadership Programs	Participants	Entrances	Sessions
Youth Council	27	204	16
LEAD	12	32	4
Youth Focus		469	47
Character		234	12
Youth Empowerment Project		136	5
Total 1075			
Self Esteem Programs	Participants	Entrances	Sessions
Just For Girls	424	1398	81
Guys Alive	409	1460	82
Total 2858			
Healthy Living Programs	Participants	Entrances	Sessions
Girls Night	42	243	24
Guys Night	52	298	24
Youth Night	42	217	24
Total 758			
Life Skills Programs	Participants	Entrances	Programs
Winter	52	52	4
Spring	85	156	6
Summer	203	743	17
Fall	143	141	11
Total 1092			
Other	Entrances		
LIFE	1770		
Pink Shirt Day	1130		
Youth Week	642		
Presentations	1339		

Summary of 2019 Impact on Youth Statistics

In 2019 we exceeded 2018 in the following categories:

- MRC Drop-In Entrances
- ARC Drop-In Entrances
- Guys Alive Entrances
- Life Skills Program Entrances
- Youth Week Entrances
- LIFE Entrances
- Pink Shirt Day Entrances

MRC Drop-In:

Highest # of youth who came in one day: 100

Lowest # of youth who came in one day: 8

Average number of youth who came in per day throughout the year: 30

Number of different youth: 358

Total number of entrances throughout the whole year: 5217

Comparison to 2018: Number of entrances increased by 9%, number of different youth increased by 1%

ARC Drop-In:

Highest # of youth who came in one day: 75

Lowest # of youth who came in one day: 9

Average number of youth who came in per day throughout the year: 34

Number of different youth: 1385

Total number of entrances throughout the whole year: 9274

Comparison to 2018: Number of entrances increased by 0.7%, number of different youth increased by 10%

Spring Break at ARC and MRC:

Total number of entrances: 244

Average number of youth who came in per day: 20

Comparison to 2018: Number of entrances increased by 15%, daily average decreased by 3%

Summer Youth Zone at ARC:

Highest # of youth who came in one day: 40

Lowest # of youth who came in one day: 9

Total number of entrances throughout the whole summer: 1038

Average number of youth who came in per day throughout the summer: 24

Comparison to 2018: Number of entrances decreased by 0.3%, daily average remained the same

Basketball: 24 sessions in 2019

Highest # of youth: 34 regular day / 87 tournament

Lowest # of youth: 2

Average number of youth who participated throughout the year: 15

Number of different youth: 211

Total number of entrances throughout the whole year: 358

Comparison to 2018: Number of entrances decreased by 16%, number of different youth increased by 73%, daily average stayed the same

Girls Night:

Highest # of youth in one program: 24

Lowest # of youth in one program: 9

Average number of youth who participated in the program throughout the year: 14

Number of different youth: 33

Total number of registrations for the year: 42

Total number of entrances throughout the whole year: 293

Comparison to 2018: Number of registrations decreased by 4.5%, number of entrances increased by 21%

Guys Night:

Highest # of youth in one program: 28

Lowest # of youth in one program: 12

Average number of youth who participated in the program throughout the year: 17

Number of different youth: 34

Total number of registrations for the year: 52

Total number of entrances throughout the whole year: 298

Comparison to 2018: Number of entrances increased by 10%, number of registrations increased by 10%

Youth Night:

Highest # of youth in one program: 18

Lowest # of youth in one program: 8

Average number of youth who participated in the program throughout the year: 14

Number of different youth: 24

Total number of registrations for the year: 42

Total number of entrances throughout the whole year: 217

Comparison to 2018: Number of registrations decreased by 16%, number of entrances decreased by 25%

Life Skills:

296 youth participated in 1 Life Skill Program

31 youth participated in 2 Life Skills Programs

10 youth participated in 3 Life Skills Programs

4 youth participated in 4 Life Skills Programs

3 youth participated in 5 Life Skills Programs

1 youth participated in 6 Life Skills Programs

1 youth participated in 9 Life Skills Programs

Highest # of youth in one program: 25

Lowest # of youth in one program: 5

Total number of participants throughout the whole year: 345

Total number of registrations throughout the whole year: 483



Thank You to Our Volunteers and Donors

Our Volunteers

Finally, we would like to thank 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 2019 we once again had an amazing group of volunteers, some of them have been with us for years, and some started just this year. Special Recognition goes out to:

- Kevin Ahuja started volunteering in October 2016 in our drop In Basketball program and has kindly given his time whenever he was able. He works full time and feels it is important to give back to the community in which he lives. He has volunteered more than 65 hours.
- Riley Werk has been with us since October 2017. He has been very dedicated to the AYC and we keep trying to get him to work for us, but volunteering is more important to him. He has volunteered over 320 hours with us!
- Derek Santema started volunteering in July 2019. Derek attended our Youth Centre at ARC when he was a youth. We are thrilled to have him back as a volunteer. In his short time with us he has dedicated over 100 hours to our youth!

Our Donors and Supporters

In 2019 the AYC received financial assistance from:

City of Abbotsford
Province of British Columbia
Abbotsford Community Foundation
Aboriginal Friendship Centre
Canadian Tire Jumpstart Program
First West Foundation
Individual Donors
Kiwanis Club of Clearbrook
Lighthouse Pictures
ParticipACTION
RBC Royal Bank
Service Canada
Soroptimist International of Abbotsford Mission
Ted Rogers Community Grant
Worksafe

In 2019 the AYC received in kind support from:

City of Abbotsford
Costco
Abbotsford Basketball Association
Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
Archway Community Services
Abbotsford News
Abbotsford Parks Recreation and Culture
Abbotsford Police Department
Abbotsford School District
Fraser Valley Now
HSBC Bank Canada
Sutton Group West Coast Realty
United Way of the Fraser Valley
University of the Fraser Valley
What's On Abbotsford

Abbotsford Youth Commission – Board of Directors 2019

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Rob Senft	Vice President	Emmy Curtis	Director
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