

ANNUAL REPORT

2022



firstcall

Child and Youth Advocacy Society

ABOUT US

First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society is a registered charity in British Columbia.

Our Vision

The rights of BC's children and youth are respected, and they have the opportunities and resources required to grow and thrive.

Our Mission

To uphold the rights of BC's children and youth through research, public education, community mobilization and public policy advocacy.

How we work

We conduct research and analysis on child and youth rights and well-being, offer education and training events, and make policy recommendations to promote, strengthen and defend the rights of children and youth in BC.

First Call holds monthly meetings featuring presentations on emerging child rights issues. Together, we share information, provide our members with tools and resources and advocate collectively for BC's children and youth.

First Call is committed to:

- raising the public profile of child and youth issues through public education and the dissemination of research
- advocating on public policy issues in order to have resources allocated for the benefit of children and youth
- recognizing the value of involving children and youth in decision-making processes
- mobilizing local and provincial support for children and youth, and
- believing that to promote the health and well-being of children and youth, they and their families need the following 4 Keys to Success:
 - a strong commitment to early childhood development
 - support in transitions from childhood to youth and adulthood
 - increased economic equality
 - safe and caring communities

MESSAGE FROM ADRIENNE MONTANI

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



First Call has been advocating for children, youth, and their families for over 30 years!

That's over three decades of convening, making submissions to government, raising public awareness, publishing annual BC Child Poverty Report Cards, and gathering support for policies that improve the lives of children and their families. And we did it all as an unincorporated organization.

When the time came to establish our own registered society in 2021, I became First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society's founding executive director working alongside founding board members.

In 2022, the second year of COVID19 continued to have a profound effect on children and their families and called on us to engage deeply with our affiliated organizations about how government initiatives can help families weather the uncertainties.

From our work with our national partner, Campaign 2000, to BC's Employment Standards Coalition, to the BC Coalition to End Youth Homelessness and all the tables where First Call staff participate, we endeavor to put children and youth first on the public policy agenda.

First Call affiliates inform, strengthen, and amplify our collective voice to raise public awareness, mobilize communities and advocate for public policies that support the rights of children, youth, and their families in BC.

In solidarity for children and youth,

Adrienne



MESSAGE FROM JIM STATON CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The process of establishing an independent, not-for-profit organization with a new board of directors has been an exciting journey. The transition allowed us to refocus on our core activities and build on our thirty-year history of raising public awareness, mobilizing communities, and advocating for public policies that support the rights of children, youth, and their families.

As we plan for the future at First Call, we know our collective advocacy is more important than ever. Growing income inequality, increased pressure on families to make ends meet and gaps in government services tell us the work of standing up for children and their families must continue.

On behalf of my colleagues on the board of First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society, I would like to thank funders and donors for your continued support. We can't do this work without you.

Sincerely,

Jim



First Call Board Members, Gyda Chud and Cheryl Mixon, with Adrienne Montani as she receives the 2022 Rosemary Brown Award for Women

YEAR IN REVIEW

First Call participated in many consultations and made submissions to government on a variety of topics including:

- improved employment standards for children and youth;
- proposed family connections centres for children and youth with support needs;
- enhanced supports for youth in and from government care;
- the implementation of a public, 10aDay Child Care Plan;
- support for the Canada Disability Act;
- reforms to the Employment Insurance system;
- implementation of recommended reforms to Youth Justice Services policies and procedures;
- provincial support for Infant Development and Supported Child Develop Programs;
- support for Young Parent Programs in BC; and
- annual federal and provincial budget submissions.

Our multi-year Making Ends Meet research project continued to organize and gather the experiences of low-wage workers who are raising children and living in Vancouver. This participatory action research (PAR) involves the co-production of knowledge where participants and researchers collectively design, implement, analyze, and disseminate research. The project will wrap-up with a final report in Spring 2023.

Our Children's Right to Housing Research Project, aimed at documenting discrimination families with children and youth face in the rental housing market moved into its final phase with the development of law reform recommendations. This project will conclude with a final report and advocacy initiatives in 2023.

In 2022, First Call convened ten network meetings that engaged hundreds of affiliates on a variety of topics affecting children and youth. We also held five Early Childhood Development Roundtable meetings to advance knowledge and advocacy on issues affecting infants, young children, and their families.

Over the course of the year, First Call's research and advocacy appeared in over forty-five news articles and staff made more than twenty presentations in the community on child rights, child labour, alleviating child poverty, the need for living wages, advocacy for accessible, affordable child care, and improved supports for youth transitions from care.

First Call is a registered lobbyist organization at both the provincial and federal levels. Staff engaged in proactive lobbying activities throughout the year by convening meetings with policy-makers and submitting recommendations to government.

In 2022, after fourteen years, First Call wound down our operation of the Living Wage for Families BC employer certification program and transferred the program to Vancity Community Foundation.

First Call co-founded this program to tackle family poverty. Our research tells us that many children grow up in households where parents are working full time but can't make ends meet. First Call is proud to have operated the Living Wage for Families BC program and to have championed the discussion in BC about the important role living wages play in reducing child and family poverty.

Today, the global living wage movement is gaining momentum and the concept has become a familiar one to many people. We're proud of our contribution to that discussion and laying the ground work for progress on raising the wages of working parents in BC.

Founded by Vancouver Foundation, First Call began operating the Fostering Change program in 2017. Fostering Change engages youth with experience in government care in learning about and leading policy advocacy to improve the outcomes for youth aging out of care. Through the passionate work of program participants, Fostering Change has had many achievements, including helping to secure enhancements to Ministry Agreements with Young Adults and a moratorium on youth aging out of care during the pandemic.

In the fall of 2022, in consultation with community, the decision was made to find a new home for this important advocacy project. We anticipate embarking on a community-informed process in 2023 that will lead to the reestablishment of Fostering Change at another agency.

2022 VIRTUAL GALA



In April, we hosted a virtual gala during which we honoured Catherine Ludgate (posthumously) with our Champion of Child and Youth Rights Award for her decades long commitment to championing living wages for families.

In addition to her role as a senior manager of community investment at Vancity Credit Union, Catherine chaired the Minister's BC Poverty Advisory Committee; served on the City of Vancouver's Poverty Advisory Action Group; the national Living Wage community of practice; the Living Wage for Families BC Advisory Committee; the federal Advisory Committee on Poverty Reduction; and the BC Poverty Advisory Forum.

Catherine was an invaluable partner to First Call's Living Wage for Families BC Program, and, more broadly, to the project of ending child and family poverty.



We were also honoured to have award-winning Indigenous author, speaker and educator Monique Gray Smith share her wisdom with us and read from her new book *I Hope*.

AWARDS

In addition to receiving the Rosemary Brown Award for Women, First Call's Executive Director, Adrienne Montani, received the 2022 Janusz Korczak Medal for child advocacy. The award was presented in partnership between the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada and the British Columbia Representative for Children and Youth.

FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

We gratefully acknowledge financial support from

- BC General Employees' Union
- BC Teachers' Federation
- Health Employees' Union
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia
- OspreyTree Foundation
- The Law Foundation of BC
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Vancouver Foundation
- our affiliate organizations and
- donations from individual supporters



DONATE TO OUR WORK

First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society is a registered charity in British Columbia.

Our purpose is to create greater understanding of and advocacy for legislation, policy, and practice so that all children and youth have the rights, opportunities and resources required to thrive.

We invite you to collaborate with us by financially supporting our work. Help us amplify the call for better policy for children, youth, and their families by becoming a monthly donor to our fund. Your donations and bequests will help us to put children and youth first in BC.

To donate, visit our website www.firstcallbc.org or call us at 604-288-8102.

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Don't miss the latest child and youth news! Subscribe to our newsletter, The Child and Youth Advocate, on our website and sign up to receive meeting notifications www.firstcallbc.org

JOIN US

If you are a British Columbian organization who believes in putting children and youth first, we invite you to join our network. Contact us at info@firstcallbc.org

Executive Director

Adrienne Montani

Board Members

Gyda Chud, Secretary
Emily Gawlick, Treasurer
Cheryl Mixon, Vice Chair
Jim Staton, Chair

Contact information

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Land Acknowledgement

We work on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō (Stolo) and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) nations.

