

# the VOICE

ISSUE 11 | YOUTH IN CARE NEWSLETTER PROJECT | MAY 2011







*Last minute preparations backstage at Newsletter launch, May 2010.*



*James and Shakisha host the 2010 launch at Alderney Landing Theatre.*

*(inset) Nathan, Amanda, Shakisha and James at the launch*

# Welcome

## **Congratulations on the new edition of *The Voice*!**

***The Hon. Denise Peterson-Rafuse***  
***Minister of Community Services***

I'm pleased to extend best wishes from the Government of Nova Scotia to everyone who worked so hard on the 2011 edition of *The Voice*. With all the complications and distractions in a young person's life, it's wonderful to see the energy and effort put into creating the insightful writing in the Youth In Care Newsletter.

The Department of Community Services takes pride in supporting this unique program, which continues to provide a much-needed voice for our province's youth in care. Congratulations on another successful year.

## **Executive director message for the *Voice***

***Sandy MacDonald, Executive director***



Each September, excitement stokes for the new season of the Youth In Care Newsletter Project. Autumn brings new faces and new enthusiasm to the program.

This year, we've had one of the largest Newsletter groups in ages. Word continues to spread about the innovative project, bringing together youth in care and former youth in care from across HRM.

As the year got underway, we talked about effective writing techniques and creating eye-popping collages envisioning the future paths of the group.

As that group became closer, we looked at issues around anger and how to deal with the sometimes -overwhelming emotions of adolescent life. Hand in hand with anger issues, we looked at positive ways to communicate our emotions to better deal with difficult situations.

We discussed key messages for *The Voice*, and how to distill information into focused statements to help get the message across quickly and clearly.

Shauntay Grant, Halifax poet laureate (and board member for the Youth Voices of Nova Scotia Society) led a session about poetry at the Newsletter this year, bringing her positive and inspiring energy. Encouraging young people unsure about their ability to put words together, Shauntay had the group writing and boldly presenting their own poems by the end of the evening.

She returned later in the year and brought two young poets from the local group Poets 4 Change, and again electrified the Newsletter group with the potential for expression through spoken word. This year, we celebrated Martin Luther King Day and talked about his powerful work in non-violent conflict resolution.

Throughout the year, the participants worked hard at their writing, sometimes scratching words out feverishly in the session; other times carefully crafting their thoughts in their weekly journal assignments.

In the late winter, the group spent a couple of weeks in the computer lab of the Nova Scotia Community College, rewriting their stories while learning about new computer technology.

Thom Swift, a faithful friend of the Newsletter project, returned

again to lead a session on lyric writing. With his well-travelled National guitar, Thom and the group wrote a song collaboratively, using lyrics ideas from everyone in the group.

Award-winning author and journalist John Demont shared his insight about writing from a personal perspective, and the youth dug into some challenging writing assignments in the session.

Over the 30-week span of the Newsletter Project, the group once again accomplished some impressive work. This edition of *The Voice* pulls together much of the writing of the youth, allowing us into the creative minds of this impressive group.

The project was honored this year in receiving the 2011 Law Day community award from the Canadian Bar Association Nova Scotia branch for work in legal education with the youth. We also received a lovely award from the National Youth In Care Network for "excellence in promoting the voice of young people in and from care".

None of this fine work would have been possible without the dedicated help and commitment of several people closely connected with the Newsletter Project.

Clete Deschamps again brought his quiet but essential presence to the weekly sessions, driving youth from all over the HRM then being on deck to help out whenever asked. George Dean, himself a longtime youth in care, found time away from his busy studies to volunteer with the group.

Ammy Purcell, Lucas Kreft and Rebecca Moore have again served a leadership role as facilitators, helping mentor the group while bringing their valuable experience to the Newsletter.

Behind the scenes, this program relies on the unflinching support of the board and our funding supporters from the Department of Community Services, Department of Education, The Halifax Youth Foundation, The Halifax Region Children's Aid Foundation and the United Way of Halifax Region. Thanks once again to all for making this valuable program available to youth in care.



***Sandy and Ammy with the 2011 Law Day community award from the Canadian Bar Association Nova Scotia branch for work in legal education with the youth.***







# I came to the Newsletter

**By Amanda Jackson**



I came to the Newsletter for my fourth time because I enjoy meeting with my friends and the new people that like to join. I love how people are very understanding — they always know where I'm coming from. It's like the same things happened to them — it's crazy. I just love it.

The other reason I came is that I just love writing. It helps me get my feelings out on paper so people better understand me.

**By Stefan Illsley**



The reason I came to the Newsletter is because a few years ago my worker called my house asking if I wanted to get involved with the Newsletter, but I was busy with cadets and school.

The next year I didn't come because I was busy with work and other things. This year I came because I was interested in taking up writing and overcoming my issues about writing and different things.

**By Michaela Newton**



I came to the Newsletter because I like hearing about other people's experiences in care. I also like to meet new people. I also came because you get paid but that doesn't matter to me that much.

**By JayDee Riley**



The reason I came to the Newsletter is to meet new people, as well as share my skills living in care. Every year I enjoy coming and meeting new people and being around good vibes.

I like coming here and learning skills to help me better my life with my time in care. Also I like hearing about other people's experiences.

**By Victoria Dewolfe**



The reason why I decided to come to the Newsletter tonight was to meet new people, learn new stuff and have a good time. My friends were going and I heard it is really fun.

I also came to take my mind off a lot of stuff that has been going on. The first thing that comes to mind when I hear newsletter is a lot of talking and writing.

**By Ashton Glasgow**



The reason I came to the Newsletter is because my sister inspired me. I never thought she would go to a program like this and I think that was a big step for her.

I've been in *The Voice* since 2010 and I really enjoy it.

## Backyard Garden

**By Andrew Safer**



Looking through the early editions of *The Voice*, I'm reminded what a wonderfully resilient, gutsy, and creative group of youth roll up their sleeves each year to put together this latest issue (with Sandy and the staff's help, of course!), as I'm reminded how much I miss them now

that I'm living in Newfoundland! They're not afraid to speak their minds about what it's like growing up in care: both the frustrations, stigma and rocky times, and the kindnesses, helping hands, and support of people who have been there for them along the way.

My mother, Carol Safer, was first a journalist and then an artist. In 1950 in Paris, she met the great French artist Henri Matisse who actually wanted to paint her nude, but she declined out of shyness(!) Instead, she interviewed him for an article she wrote on spec for *The New York Times*, which was never published. During the interview, Matisse said to her:

*"Each of us has his own truth.  
Each sees the world in his own way.  
If you have something to say,  
And find a new way to say it,  
That is Art."*



*The artist's curiosity must never leave him.  
You must express yourself as you see fit.  
And work alone to encourage the development  
Of that individuality which only comes with  
The most sincere expression of your emotion."*



The young people in the Newsletter Project make these words come alive for me today. Each has his or her own truth and sees the world in a unique way. When they take pen to paper or finger to keyboard, what comes out—a drawing, a doodle, a poem, a journal entry, an article, a rant—brings a treasure into the world... "the most sincere expression of their emotion."

I've often tried to put my finger on the secret ingredient—the *je ne sais quoi*—that makes the Newsletter Project work, that makes the youth want to keep coming back, that revs them up and causes them to have such a positive impact on others. Each participant and staff has a bit of it, but it's when they all come together that the magic happens. Through no fault of their own, these young people are dealing with a lot more challenging circumstances than most, and they're rallying. They're connecting with the community. They're moving ahead with their lives and standing tall. They're inspiring others. They're like a backyard garden where everything's coming up all at once in a riot of colour, texture and beauty, for all to see.



# Friendship

## Friendship

*By Michaela Newton*

Friendship to me is a strong connection between people, who maybe have the same personality or can relate to each other.

I have a friend and we have our ups and downs, but in the end we are best friends forever. The most important thing about being a good friend is loyalty. Be loyal to your friend!

## What does friendship means to you

*By Alex Randolph*

Friendship means being nice and friendly and kind and not telling lies. It means not going behind anyone's back and doing something or saying something.

And it means being true to your friend. If your friend asks you whether she can sing, a true friend will say the truth.

## Friendship

*By Amya Jackson*



A friend is a person who is there to help you when you need it... to trust one another, and help in any situation.

I have many best friends, lots and lots of friends. I can't trust them all but I can trust most of them to share my life story.

My best friend Missy and I have been friends since grade 4. Sure, we've had our ups and downs.

I also have friends who are guys, who protect me in the dark outside at night. My friends have respect for me.

Friendship is definitely better than not being friends at all and better than being in a relationship.

## Friendship

*By JayDee Riley*

Friendship means having a connection, it means having a bond with a person or a group of people. Friendship is something you should be able to put your trust in.

A friendship can lead to a number of things — spilling your life problems into one person, and helping them deal with their problems.

With the person or group of people you call your friends, you should be able to look for advice. I look for my friends to be real; I look for them to be straightforward and honest just as much as they would expect from me.

## Friendship

*By Nathan Perry*



Friendship is when you and another person share and do stuff with each other. You are able to tell this person anything and they won't tell a soul.

A friend is a person who can make you happy and laugh. They are there for you in the hardest times and always take the time to understand.

## Friends

*By JayDee Riley*

Friends shouldn't gossip your news, until they get all the facts. Get it right, get it straight.

Don't share your things with friends, unless you can trust them with your things.

Remember the good moments, cherished with friends because you're not always promised them moments tomorrow.

## Friendship

*By Victoria Dewolfe*

Friendship is good relationships, people who care and listen to your feelings and thoughts. I have a friend who has been my friend for three years and we haven't fought once!

The most important part of friendship is TRUST. You should be able to trust your friends.



# Facilitators' messages

## Facilitator's message

By Lucas Kreft



This year the Newsletter Project had the opportunity to represent Nova Scotia at the 25th anniversary of the National Youth in Care Network, in Ottawa. The Newsletter director Sandy, along with the facilitators Ammy and Becky and myself had the opportunity to go!

Arriving at the Ottawa conference, there were more than 120 youth and alumni that shared a similar dream — there would be no foster care and that everyone could live in happy functional families. Maybe that's just a dream but there are goals to make the system better for the youth now.

As a provincial community, we should look toward the future generations. As a country, we can be doing a much better job.

I learned a lot from the conference. At the end of the weekend, myself and four others were elected by our peers to present the key issues in front of the media. One major thing is that every province is different in "aging out" its youth in care. I was very happy to announce that in Nova Scotia youth can stay in care until they're 24, as long as they're attending school.

Some youth were stating their province had no care extensions for post secondary education. Everyone at the conference believed education is the key to success, and depriving this from us is just destroying our future, and everything we work hard for.

Youth in care identified they have poor outcomes in education because of the lack of stability, support, and finances. I do understand a lot of youth in care don't have this opportunity of post secondary because their educational grades do not meet the post secondary standards. We need to influence the youth to want to achieve greater goals.

The youth also stated there should be a standardized curriculum and how it is delivered. So if a youth moves from school to school, they wouldn't be losing out on anything.

There should also be a national mentorship program two years before leaving care that help youth with independent living. Many of the youth at the conference were under pressure not knowing how to budget properly.

A lot of youth in care do not understand their legal rights, and how youth rights are protected. The delegates thought there should be a booklet across Canada outlining their rights. The Nova Scotia Office of the Ombudsman works a lot with youth regarding that issue, travelling to group homes and explaining to youth their rights. However, they do not go to the individual foster homes and explain rights.

The final message that was brought up was family connection. "Family is the foundation of success," said one young person. "This is an issue brought up, then swiftly brushed under the carpet. Youth should have some type of connection to history, and therefore ourselves". Family connection should be a right not a privilege. Youth should never have family connection, including supervised visits, revoked as a punishment.

Twenty-five years ago, The National Youth In Care Network started with a handful of people, and those original members told us how great it was seeing a handful of people growing into 120 delegates. I look at this now and wonder what the next 25 years will bring to the new 120 friends I gained from the conference!



## Year end reflection

By Ammy Purcell



I can't believe how fast this year has gone by. It seems like we just started last month and now we are already at the end of our year and we are getting ready for the launch of issue number 11. I guess that is proof that time really does fly when you're having fun, and we definitely did have a lot of fun this year.

No matter how many years I have been involved in this program no year has ever been the same as the last, and every year keeps getting bigger, better, and stronger although the group seems to be getting younger and younger. Or am I just getting older?

Either way, this year was awesome. We have a few new faces in the group who are some really great young minds. I can see them all doing very well in the future. Our "veterans" are clearly very dedicated to *the Voice* and will continue to do great work.

This year I had the great privilege to attend the Ask! Listen! Believe! 2010 National Youth In Care Network conference in Ottawa along with Sandy, Lucas, and Becky. It was really amazing to see what all the other provinces have available for their youth in care. I also got to meet a lot of really awesome inspirational people.

It was really great to be invited to such an awesome event and to know that although the Newsletter Project is not technically a "youth in care network" we are still recognized on a national level.

The conference was altogether a great opportunity and an eye opening experience. I just wish Nova Scotia had as much to offer our youth in care as some of the larger provinces do. All in all I believe we had a great year and I can't wait to see what next year brings.



## Facilitator message

By Rebecca Moore



We had several new participants here at the newsletter, and I really enjoyed getting to know the new youth. It was nice to have some new voices and opinions around the table.

One of my favourite sessions we do at the newsletter is poetry. I am always impressed with all of the youths' poems. We were very lucky to have Shauntay Grant come in and do another poetry workshop with us along with two other spoken word artists. I was very proud of all the youth who participated and read their poetry out loud to the group. It takes courage to read your personal writings in front of people, and some of their poems were very moving.

Another memorable session was when Thom Swift came through and the whole group of us wrote a song together. I have never worked on a song like that before, and it was interesting how the process went. We all got to contribute something.

Earlier in the year, Sandy, Lucas, Ammy and I had the privilege of attending a conference in Ottawa with the National Youth In Care Network. We participated in lots of round table discussions, talking about the many challenges and obstacles that youth in care face.

I found it particularly interesting to compare different provinces. For example I learned that P.E.I. has only 53 teenaged youth in care in the whole province, while B.C, Alberta, and Manitoba each have more than 10,000. There likely are social workers in those provinces who have more youth on their one caseload than P.E.I. has in their entire province.

It has been a great learning experience for me this year.



## Positive memory of care

### My positive memory of care

By Ashton Glasgow

My positive memory of living in care was I went to my ACT meeting with my youth worker and her role was about to change dramatically. When I was at my meeting, they told me my youth worker is going to be my foster mother... and in my head there were fireworks and celebration horns goin' off.

I was so excited. At that moment I thought I am gonna actually have another chance in a group home. Now I have this big task of no blow-ups. I am going to go to my new home very very soon.

### Positive memory of Care

By Taylor Decoff



My most positive memory of being in care was when my group home took the residents on a camping trip to Falls Lake. It was so much fun. We went fishing, swimming in the huge lake, kayaking, paddle boating and canoeing.

We stayed for three nights and made campfires every night. It was so fun and relaxing.







# Favourite trip

## My favourite trip

By Ashton Glasgow

My favourite trip was when I went to Guysborough when I was twelve and it was really fun. I got to go fishing and clam digging and we went to a fishing derby and that was my highlight.

My favourite part was getting to give my dog Buddy a bath that he really needed!

## My favourite trip

By Tyler Tanner

My favorite trip was when I went to Crystal Palace in Moncton. I went with my cadet corps for a fun time. My favourite ride was the roller coaster.

Crystal Palace is a theme park with fun rides. It was an amazing experience for me because I went there for the first time and I'm never gonna forget it.

# Judging youth

## What adults think of teenagers

By Sasha Sahabandu



I think adults judge teenagers based on their looks because I have had it happen to me—a lot.

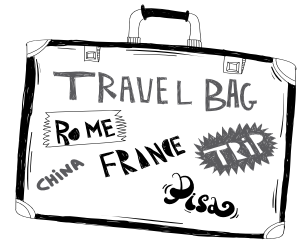
I went in a store and one of their employees was following me and it was really annoying. So I asked her why she was following me and she said “standard procedure”, when there was a lot of people in the store.

So I admit I got a little mad but I wasn't that mad. And the girl had a very frightened look on her face and she threw her hands up to her face and begged me not to beat her up. I think adults mistake teens by the way they dress and the way they act.

I know a lot of teenagers that act a lot worse than other people. But it is hard to be judged by people who don't even know you. In a way I think it's kind of like bullying because people say stuff about you and they are just judging what they see and not what they know. You might see a person with horrible ripped up clothes who could actually be a cool person inside. Or you can see a person with nice neat and stylish clothes and they are actually a total snob.

## Travelling

By Amya Jackson



If I could travel anywhere, I would most like to visit a very warm and calm place to relax and not worry about a thing.

## My camping trip

By Alex Randolph



I went on a trip with my group home to a cottage about an hour away. We went fishing and swimming and we watched movies. We also sat by the campfire and told stories, some scary and some happy. And we all lived happily ever after — some of us anyways.



## Judging youth

By Nathan Perry

The old folks of today always think that kids who wear baggy pants and hoodies are trouble and hoodrats.

Sometimes the older folks will accuse the kids of something they didn't do because of the way they are dressed. But the truth is that these so-called hoodrats could be the smartest guys you know — and these baggy pants and hoodies are really comfy.

## Judging youth

By Alex Randolph

Do adults judge young people based on their looks?

Adults see in young people that they can't be serious and are too young to do anything. And yes my mom judges me because I'm young.

## Do adults judge young people based on their looks?

By Brittany Roach



Adults sometimes judge young people. I have been judged and I was not allowed to hang out with my best friend. I was mad because her mom's dad thought I was a bad child 'cause the way I looked. I don't like being judged. I always say, only God can judge me.



# Changing the world

## Change

*By Brittany Roach*

One thing I want to change in the world is all the drama and fake people.

With all the drama, you get dragged into it and it causes fights and you lose friends over it. Soon you won't have any friends or close family members.



## Change

*By Jennifer-Joy Robichaud*



Change is something we all fear, whether it is a big fear or a little one, we all fear it. But this fear is natural and normal.

Truly I think it's part of our instincts — the fear is meant to protect us from the unknown. But change is necessary in our lives, from growing up to changing schools to changing classes mid year in high school.

Change was the key to our evolution, if you believe that sort of thing. According to some it made us who we are today — the evolution of our genetics made us better, smarter humans. So, though it may be scary, it is a good thing. It teaches us better than any professor ever could.

## If I could Change the World

*By Amya Jackson*

If I could change the world for the better, the first thing I'd do is take all the women beaters off this earth and give everyone money to make them happy so they can enjoy themselves and go places. Make the world a better place for happiness.

## Change

*By Sasha Sahabandu*

I wanted my mom to change  
For her to be able to get better  
So I can come home  
To see my mom, brothers, cats  
My family  
My mom to change  
Her Feelings  
My mom to change so I could be with her  
I love you mom.

## Change of Heart

*By Nathan Perry*

As I walk down the hall, I see you. And I can tell that you have a change of heart for me. But it's okay because I stopped caring.

As I ran down the street, I can hear your heart stopping before me. I can see that I was never in your heart. But it's fine with me because you was never in my heart.

As I laid there in the grass, I can feel your head on my chest. But as I close my eyes with tears running down my face, the feeling was gone.

I should have seen this coming but I was blind like a fool. But it's okay, my heart is tired of breaking.

Now I'm dead, a boy with no more feeling for life. You got a change of heart for me, but I have no more heart for you.

## Change

*By Michaela Newton*

I think the world and the universe needs a change. It needs to be more calm, with less killings and robberies and less drama. We need the Earth to be a safe environment where people don't have to worry about getting shot or killed.

## Change

*By Amya Jackson*

What is change to me?

I want to change my bad habits and bad decisions. I really want the best changes for my life.

I wish that we could go back in the past and change what I messed up. Sometimes I can't believe what I did. I want to change my whole life from the bad to the good.



## Change

*By Stefan Illsley*

Change  
Change all the hate to kindness  
Change all the problems in the world  
Change hatred into love  
Change all the past into dust  
Change enemies into friends  
Change family issues into family tolerance  
Change sadness into pride  
Change fights into fitness  
Change

## Time

By Jennifer-Joy Robichaud



Time is a special thing,  
You don't know how special it is until  
it's gone.  
Just like with love,  
It's an underappreciated thing  
that ties us together.  
Just like with hope,  
It keeps us going long after common  
sense has abandoned us.  
Just like with song,  
Song feeds our hearts and cleanses  
our souls of pain.  
If only for a moment,  
a moment in time.



## The Girl Talks

By Angel Bruhm

Do not look at my face  
listen to my voice  
It's the same as yours  
Isn't it?

Do not look at my face  
listen to my dreams  
They are similar to yours  
Aren't they?

Look past my face,  
look beyond my eyes  
for it's just a mask  
only a disguise.



## A story for Thom Swift

By Ashton Glasgow

my heart is broke  
my mind is fried  
I'm sitting here snacking on a Big  
mac and fries.  
A big mac and fries?  
Tell me why would you eat a big  
mac and fries.  
Those fries were fried in last  
night's oil  
Thousands and thousands gallons  
of oil  
Ewwie, is that last night's oil?  
why yes, yes it is.

## Love Hurt

By Nathan Perry

You told me that you loved me.  
Why did you leave me to cry in the  
cold?  
You swore this time was different,  
Why does that line seem so old?

You told me I was the only one  
who could make you feel that way.  
You told me that you cared about  
me  
so why didn't you stay?

All the nights you laid with me,  
alone in the dark in my bed.  
Now I finally realize  
you were just messing with my  
head.

Love is such a powerful word  
a word people often misuse,  
something they take for granted,  
something they beat and abuse.

My wounds run deep inside me,  
there's blood all over the place.  
I think I've really lost it this time  
and now I'm ashamed to show my  
face to you.



## Silent screamer

By anonymous

Help me please,  
Take my life.  
All I want is just to die.  
I'm gonna commit suicide.  
They ask me why I always run.  
Take a look at where I'm com-  
ing from.  
I'm bruised and bleeding, no one  
cares  
And they won't, if I'm not there.  
For you're the reason I took my  
life.  
You're the reason for last night.  
You're the reason I hated life.  
It's not your fault. It's mine.  
And I don't hate you.  
I hate life.  
That's the reason you won't  
Ever get to read this note.  
Or even get to see me cry  
Because I'm the invincible silent  
screamer.  
In your eyes you'll never get to  
see me smile.  
'Cause I'm dead in a little while.  
Better yet, make them minutes  
a few.  
Good bye And I'll miss you.



## Poem

By Victoria Dewolfe

I MISS YOU  
I MISS YOUR SMILE  
I MISS YOUR LAUGH  
WE USED TO TALK FOR HOURS  
ON MSN, FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND  
TEXTS.  
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW YOU'RE  
THE BEST.

## So Peaceful

By Michaela Newton

So peaceful,  
So set,  
No hollering, no yelling  
Everything is in control.  
I am focused on what I am doing,  
Ready for an easy day and night,  
So good night,



## Have You Ever

By anonymous

Have you ever been told 'you don't look  
like no foster kid'  
Have you been told 'mommy isn't well  
so you can't be with her right now'  
Have you ever cried for days on end  
I Have  
Have you ever felt you were alone  
Have you ever felt betrayed by the  
only person you trusted  
I Have  
Have you ever felt you were abandoned,  
that no one cared about you  
I Have  
Have you ever thought about taking  
your life to get away  
I Have  
Have you ever seen your mother sprawled  
on the floor drunk and out cold  
I Have

Have you ever been bullied  
and got picked on by  
classmates, brothers, friends  
I Have



## Have You Ever

By Angel Bruhm

Have you ever lived my life?  
Spent one day in my shoes?  
Unless u have tell me why  
you judge me the way you do

Have you ever woken in the morning  
not knowing if this was your last day on  
earth?  
Have you ever left your house unsure if  
you'd return?

Have you ever seen your friend fine and  
happy one day  
then gone and missing in action the next?  
I have.

Have you ever sat up all night  
praying that someone would hear your  
cries? I have.

Have you ever considered suicide as the  
only way out?  
Have you ever hurt yourself just to feel  
again?

Have you ever lived my life?  
Spent one day in my shoes?  
Unless you have, tell me why  
you judge me the way you do.

## Before And After

By JayDee Riley

Mixed feelings attached by another,  
So much confusion I need to talk to  
a brutha.  
So much pain in my mind,  
Somedays I wanna hide.  
Don't know why it all bothers me,  
But now I understand it's a part of me.  
Once hiding behind a wall  
But now I speak it all.  
Expressing how I feel  
When everything seems unreal.  
Reachin' out for the light,  
But there's no one in sight.  
The pain inside cuts me like a knife,  
A bullet to the brain  
Yah I been long dead.  
It's not like I'm missed  
Y'all been prayin' I would get hit.  
Aha, the funny thing is this is only a myth.  
Never do I bow, I stand my ground.  
Leave my haters at the door,  
Why focus on all that pain?



## Saint of Heart

By Nathan Perry

It feels so wrong,  
Yet feels so right.  
Soul of heart in battle,  
Yet something I cannot fight.  
My soul feels weak,  
My mind is screaming.  
My spirit collapses,  
My heart is bleeding.

Soul shall withdraw,  
A war I cannot win.  
A saint that I am,  
Yet committed a sin.

Time after time,  
Day after day.  
Unfairly defeated,  
Slain I must say.



Save me from dark,  
Lead me to dark.  
One true to my heart,  
O saint so bright.

Savior of hearts,  
Yet steals my own.  
O lonely my hero,  
His eyes turn to stone.

Alone, he is not,  
Our souls intertwine.  
His fate is sealed,  
And so is mine.

War over is not,  
When destinies collide.  
Together eternal,  
Fight side by side.

My saint of heart,  
That dwells in me.  
Blind from the world,  
Only him I can see.

He stares in my eyes,  
From stone turns to sky.  
Love I have fallen,  
Yet I do not know why.



# The Future

## In My future

*By Ashton Glasgow*

In my future I see a nice wife, two kids, nice cars and a good paying job. I will make that come true by staying in school and making good choices.

## My future

*By Alex Randolph*

My future is going to be big. They say if you're dreaming, you might as well dream big.

My future is going to have me being a famous singer, either solo or with a band and owning a business for cosmetics and having a big house in Italy and one in New York City!



## My Future

*By Jennifer-Joy Robichaud*

In my future, I "plan" and I say "plan" loosely because things change fast. Anyway, in my future I plan to finish high school and go to university or college.

I'm still not positive on what I want to do so I kinda have two plans. One is to become an anthropologist or archaeologist and plan two is to become a kindergarten teacher.

If I go with plan one then I go through the schooling part during normal fall to early summer while getting out for classroom experience during the summer months. Then I rent a small apartment in a city near an awesome museum after applying to that museum for work.

Plan two is quite different. I work as a primary teacher after going to school for the necessary education. For later in life the plan is the same — retire after a trip around to somewhere in the world. Then when I die I'd like to have an old style funeral pyre on a Nova Scotia beach, spreading my ashes with the wind.



## In My future

*By Michaela Newton*

In my future I will be a clinical social worker and it will be a big success. I will have two kids—a boy and a girl, Jason or Jaden, and Jayla or Jayne. I will have extra money so I will be with my kids and we will be covered, money-wise. I will also have friends and I won't leave them behind!

## My Future

*By JayDee Riley*

In my future I see a lot of good things in the path of what I wish my life could be.

I see happiness, joy, laughter, and love from the people around me. I see myself being happy within myself, because I've finally filled my life with the joy that it deserves. I see no pain or struggles, or blocks to where I want to be.

I can see good about myself because I came to the place that I once dreamed of, and now my destiny is fulfilled. I see me being happy with my career and loving every moment and aspect of it. I see myself enjoying the life that was placed before me.

## My future

*By Taylor Decoff*

House: I want to buy a big house so that I can have a big family.

Love: I want to be able to love and trust a person, and be able to share anything with that person.

Money: I want to have lots of money to help and support my family.

Cocoa butter: I want to have a lifetime supply of cocoa butter for my ashy legs and elbows.

## Creating My future

*By Victoria Dewolfe*

I want my future to be with someone who really cares and believes in what I want to be. I want to have a beautiful home and two kids.

I want to work as a daycare teacher, have a car and a bulldog puppy.

The way I'm going to get all this is if I stay in school. My future is really important to me so I am going to do what I have to do to get there.

## What will world be like in 50 years

By Chantel Arbuckle



I make a pot of coffee. I don't drink it though. A mistake like that would likely kill me. Coffee is no longer the dark brown I remember from school days. It no longer smells bitter. It is slate grey and reeks like paint thinner.

I only make it out of desperation for heat, as the sun shines only about six times a year.

I have to be careful when I'm in the sun, its rays have gotten stronger. I can't go out if it rains either, in case it is acid rain. That would be nasty. I suppose snow would be a bit dangerous, but sun is more frequent than anything else.

Seasons are nothing but a word of the past. It is always a bitterly cold night, or a day hot enough to melt plastic.

Everything has lost its beauty; colour has deserted this lifeless planet. It is all either concrete grey or dirt brown. The chemicals in the air have clouded the sky, and has caused the trees to stop producing their leaves. Plants have died along with wildlife. I survived on only cans of preserved whatever. I never bother to check the labels — it all tastes the same.

I move from flat to flat, shelter to shelter. I never stay in the same place for longer than a few weeks.

No one has been around to maintain buildings in fifty years. The windows, if there are any left, are filthy. Some of them have gone crashing to the ground, as a result of rusted and corroded bases. The sound is deafening — first a creak, gradually getting louder as it tears from the foundation.

Then the ear-splitting sound of glass breaking in the remaining windows. I try to picture what the Empire State building looks like now. So much supplies going to waste, what a shame.

In this abandoned planet, medical supplies are a luxury item. If I see anyone hurt or if I were hurt, I have to raid the closest ambulance or hospital — it's not like anyone else is going to use it. How long has it been since I've seen another human in this modern ghost town? Months? A year? This is it — year 2061. Welcome to hell.



## How writing helps

### How does writing help me

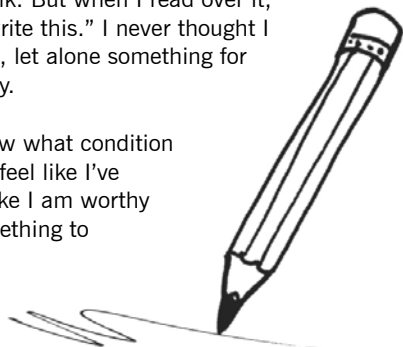
By Sasha Sahabandu

Writing has been there with me through a lot of things in my life. Not all bad but not all good either.

Before I came into care, I wouldn't look at a book, let alone read it. I wouldn't touch a piece of paper or a pen, only for school. But when I came into care, all that changed. I relied on writing; I depended on books and the stories they carried. When I feel good or bad, I have to write about it. It's like a routine for me.

Writing doesn't make me feel better nor does it make me feel worse — I just feel blank. But when I read over it, I think, "wow, did I really write this." I never thought I could write something good, let alone something for somebody to feel inspired by.

Without writing, I don't know what condition I'd be in. With my writing I feel like I've accomplished something, like I am worthy of something and have something to live for!



### How does writing help me sort out problems

By Alex Randolph

Writing down my thoughts helps me not get mad at anything. I write all my problems down on paper and make a song with them. Writing songs is making me go far in life.

### How does writing help me sort through problem

By Angel Bruhm

Writing down my thoughts doesn't really help me. When I write them down, I'm always gonna want to reread it over again, and that makes it worse. So I don't write things down.

I'm also scared that anybody would read it. I don't like people knowing what I feel and what's going on in my life.

### How does writing help me?

By Amya Jackson

Writing down my thoughts helps me with the emotions and the stress. I can think through everything and then deal with the problems without freaking out and making everything a big deal.

Writing has helped with spelling words and also with dealing with stress, writing letters to people and in journals and my diary.

# Happiness



## Happiness

*By Nathan Perry*

Happiness comes to me by the sense of peace, like when I camp out in the real countryside. I found a little spot in the meadow where I had a view of the river and the field where the grass is greener than ever.

I laid in the meadow with a smile on my face and glorious thoughts on my mind. I still miss that time in my life, being happy.

## What makes me truly happy

*By Sasha Sahabandu*

Not a lot of things make me truly happy. But I do get really happy when I am writing poetry or stories. Because I sort of lose myself, I am totally gone when I am writing or reading.

When I am reading, my foster mom could be talking to me and I would not hear a single thing. I get totally engrossed in my book. So she would be yelling at me, saying “did you hear me?”, and I would of course say “yeah”. But I don’t hear a thing she says.

I have been through a lot of things when I was at home, so when I write, I write about my feelings. If there is something bothering me, I could write for hours and never get bored.

Those are the only things that make me really happy.

## What makes me truly happy

*By Alex Randolph*

I’m happy when I get my way and when me and my mom get along, when I make new friends and when people tell me I’m very pretty — that makes me smile. :)

## What makes me truly happy?

*By Jennifer-Joy Robichaud*

What makes me truly happy? Children do. Seeing them smiling and laughing just makes my heart and soul fly. It brings both a feeling of peace and serenity. They are free of burden and pain. They seem like feathers, light and fluttering.

Sunrises also make me truly happy. It’s something that happens every day but each time is unique. As the bright vivid colors fade away it feels as if all my troubles fade away with them. In my mind not much is better than sitting on a rooftop watching the sun come up to bring a new day or seeing a sunset closing one.

Flying makes me ecstatically joyful. Though I’ve only had my first flight recently I know heart and soul it is what I love. I’ve found nothing that excites my spirit, calms my soul and makes my heart swirl with emotion. It gives me a feeling like that is where I belong, far up above the shining white clouds and even farther above the traffic, chaos and mess of the world below.

## What Makes Me Truly Happy

*By Stefan Illsley*

What makes me truly happy is being around family and friends. But I also feel happy when I become successful at something. Like when I make it to a certain level on a video game or I’m having fun joking around with my friends.

It could be from beating a level on a video game or getting money from working or just getting money in general.

# My Social Worker

## My Social Worker

*By anonymous*

My social worker isn’t the best, although he claims he is. He makes me wait for my clothing cheque and other things. He’s slow and strict.

But what he is good at is education, safety and medical needs — he takes care of those things without a second thought.

One thing I want my social worker to realize about me living in care is that it is hard living in a group home. There’s lots of drama. And I should have the right to pick and choose my own options and make my own decisions.

## My Social Worker

*By anonymous*

I don’t really like my social worker... and I wouldn’t want to bore you with all the stories of our arguments and scream session but that is all that needs to be told.

## My Social Worker

*By Brittany Roach*

I like my social worker. I can’t dislike her when she gave me my \$272 clothing allowance. She does what I need done if she is able to do it.

Sometimes I go places with her and I don’t mind that. She can be rude sometimes but that’s only if I’m not following the rules.



# Emotions out of control



## Emotions out of control

*By anonymous*

I remember when I was sitting in the hospital after I had my baby. A worker came in two hours later and told me they were taking her away.

I didn't know what to do. I just wanted to knock her teeth down her throat, but instead I just sat there and asked her why.

She said she couldn't tell me as she handed me a blue piece of paper. I knew I couldn't do anything because that would prove to them that I was unsafe.

But honestly I don't know how they can tell someone's unsafe if they've never seen me around my daughter.

Don't worry baby girl. I know these strange people took you. I just want you to know mama's never gonna give up. You're my world; you're my everything. This will end with you in my arms.

## Emotions getting out of control?

*By anonymous*

The real question is when have I not felt uncontrollable?

The most powerful time I'd ever felt emotion was when I was younger. Me and my brother Jay were arguing and he hit me. My stepfather got so angry he grabbed Jay and slammed him into the house's side door.

I didn't care that my brother had hit me. It didn't matter with my stepfather holding my brother by his throat on the door. I was so scared—not scared for myself but for my brother. My mother who was there tried to be stone-faced but her emotions slipped through as my stepfather held him there, saying things to him in a quiet growling manner.

When he was let go my brother gave my stepfather a look so full of hatred it scared me and then stalked down stairs to his room. I ran to my room and cried, thinking somehow that it was my fault.

## When I was most upset

*By anonymous*

I was upset because someone stole my Ipod touch. I was in Reigh Allen Center at the time. When I got back I wanted to listen to my music but when I went to my room, it was gone.

I got very upset and angry and looked for it all day. I even asked staff but they said they did not see it. So I went outside and took two boulders and threw them at the window, which broke in pieces. After that the staff called the cops who came and arrested me and took me to the station for finger printing.

After that, they took my picture and I was charged with property damage. Now that I think about it I shouldn't have broke the window because my friend had my ipod.

## Emotions out of control

*By Brittany Roach*

My emotions get out of control when people yell at me. I start crying and get angry and upset. Then I get all freaking out and scream and cry.

I fight with my mom all the time at her house and then I start to scream and cry.

It happened in my mom's house and my brothers were there and so were my friends and my dad. They all walked out and told me not to scream at my mom like that.

I can deal with it better by not yelling at my mom — I need to calm down and breathe. I need to feel like I can handle stuff.



## Emotions out of control

*By Angel Bruhm*



I don't really have a time when my emotions got out of hand because I try to keep them bottled inside. I don't like talking about my emotions and I don't like people knowing about me or how my life is.

I'm a person that likes to keep everything to myself.

## When my feelings got out of hand

*By anonymous*

It was one of the worst days of my life. November 27, 2009. It was the day that I came into care. It was not a good day at all and on top of all that, it was raining.

At first I didn't know why my intake worker was at my house. Because she would every so often come to see how my mom was doing. Then she sat me down and said that my mom was very sick and it wasn't safe to be with my mom.

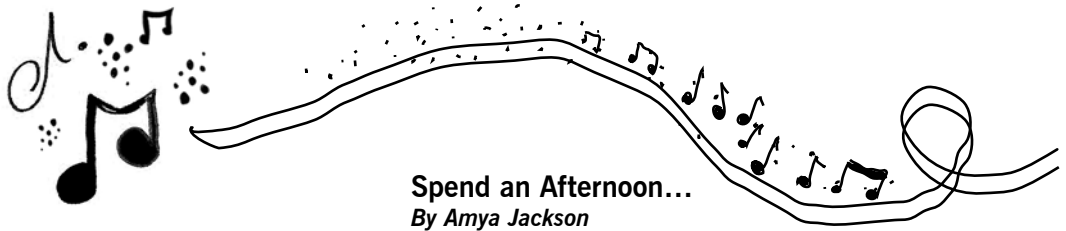
Then when I refused to leave my mom, they gave me two choices: go to England with my dad or go into foster care. I immediately said "I'll go into foster care" because I had already stayed with my dad and I was not going there again in my life.

I got my stuff together with tears in my eyes. Then a wave of something hit me: hurt, agony, despair, loss—everything you could think of all was drowning me. I couldn't get a hold of myself. I was a wreck.

I stopped packing and went to my mom's bed and cried my eyes out. My friends came over and helped get a hold of myself and we all cried together. It was the last time I was home, and then I left my home forever.

My intake worker was telling me we had to go soon but I didn't listen. I was clinging to my mom as if she were vanishing. It was the hardest thing I had to do in my entire life. But I couldn't have dealt with it any better because I was heart broken.

# Music



## Why is music important

*By Alex Randolph*

I am into music because I like to sing. I've been singing since I was able to talk at about a year and a half old. I am inspired by a lot of famous singers.

I like music because I get to put my heart and life into my songs.

## What is music?

*By JayDee Riley*

Beat: I like the flow of a beat. When a good song comes on, I up and jam. I love to dance, and show off.

Expression: Music is a good way to show expression, and to share your thoughts and ideas with the word. It allows you to say what you want, and how you want.

Rhythm: A good song has a rhythm as well as a beat. The rhythm is what gives flow to a song.

## Spend an Afternoon...

*By Amya Jackson*

If I could spend a quiet afternoon with someone famous it would be Akon or Taylor Swift.

## Why is music important to me?

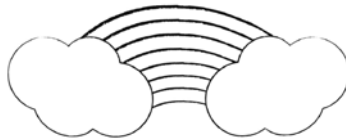
*By Amya Jackson*

Music is important in my life because I listen to the lyrics and know what they're singing about. I love songs that have a solo kind of music, like Stay by Miley Cyrus or Jesus Take The Wheel by Carrie Underwood or songs by Taylor Swift.

When I listen to a sad song, I cry sometimes. I can't watch the video for Concrete Angel. It's really sad and I've been through hard times in my past—that's why it's so memorable for me.

I like to have songs to remember people, so we can share "our song". The song True Friends by Hannah Montana is for Melissa and me.

# I believe...



## I believe

*By Alex Randolph*

I believe I can make it as a famous singer and own my own business and live wealthy with a little family. I believe I can make it big in life.

My mom always told me I have to look at the Reality but I'm already in it and living it. I can make my life whatever I put my mind to. It's all about the pursuit of happiness.

## I believe

*By Sasha Sahabandu*

I believe that there is a God. But I also believe there is a Satan — I believe in good and evil. I believe in sadness and pain. I believe in angels and spirits, but also ghosts and poltergeists. I believe in a lot of things but I also look at both sides.

## I believe

*By Ashton Glasgow*

I believe there will be a day.  
A day without the hurt,  
A day without the pain  
A day without all the crying  
And people going insane.

## I believe

*By Amya Jackson*

I believe in God! I believe he is my hero. I know he will save us all from this place. I believe if you mess up, God is always there to talk to if and when you need him! He will never let you down; he is always there to help but in different ways — not ways that a person can help but as much as he can.

We learn from our mistakes and we have to learn the hard way sometimes. Life ain't always easy and never will be. Sometimes I wonder if God is really there, but my heart tells me he is there, and will be there even if he's mad at me for stupid things I need to fix up.

He will never judge you for who you are and where you come from.

## I believe

*By Jennifer-Joy Robichaud*

I believe life is a road, long and winding but a road nonetheless. Many parts go to different places and some even end abruptly but they all are important. Some have more different paths and some are straight and true. But all paths are unique and important to the web of roads.

I believe fantasy is necessary to reality. Without the relief fantasy gives our minds, we would go insane. Our hearts and minds would become so overwhelmed with the depression that is reality, it would consume our hopes and dreams. Like a black hole consumes the light; like the cold wind steals the heat from our bodies. Constant reality would steal everything that makes us admirable.

# Heroes



## My hero

*By Alex Randolph*

My mom is my hero because she is always there for me. When I'm sad she makes me laugh. I want to be like my mom when I grow up because she is my hero.

## Heroes

*By Jennifer-Joy Robichaud*

A hero. What is a hero? Many of us know only one type of hero. A hero is someone who helps you with things beyond your control. They are non-judgmental, trustworthy and never too busy for your problems. In my opinion there are two types of heroes; the 'well-known' hero and the 'at home' hero.

The well-known hero is someone like Martin Luther King Jr., someone who brought freedom, safety or hope into society. I think the second type is much more important. The 'at home' hero could be that friend who always listens or gives good advice or could be the relative who tells you that they'll always be there.

My grandmother is my hero.

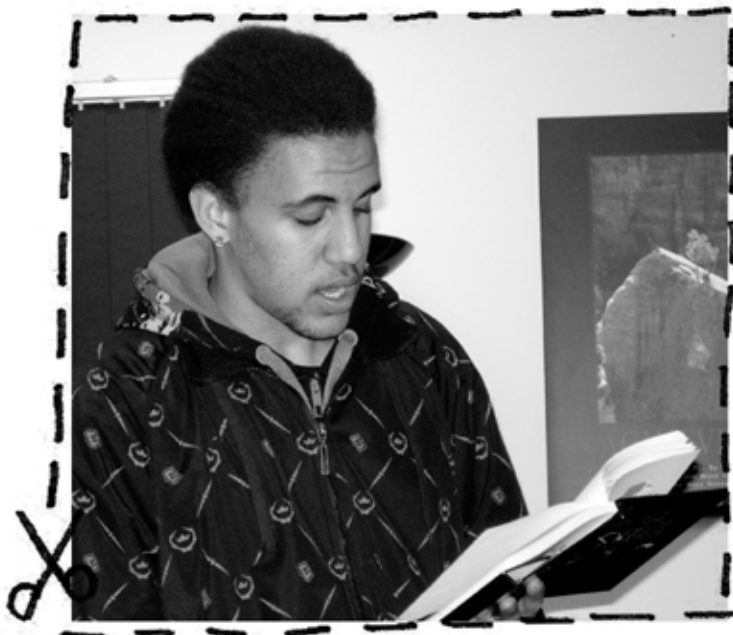
## Heroes

*By Nathan Perry*

A hero is a person who is smart, supportive and always understanding. A hero is a person you look upon and know they will love you and always care for you.

A hero is a person who is full of energy and has the knowledge to tell you right from wrong. A hero is a person who will always be there for you.

A hero is my dad and Daddy I love you.



## Heroes

*By Ashton Glasgow*

A hero is somebody who loves solving and helping with people's problems. A hero just wants to let you know that he or she is there for you.

## My most inspiring person in my life.

*By Stefan Illsley*

The most inspiring person in my life is my current social worker. She was in my sort of situation when she was roughly my age. She's been giving me good advice about decisions I can make about what I do with my life — to go to school, or flip burgers for the rest of my life, or I could go to a program and get my life back on track and try to get back into school.

Her advice will help me succeed in my life by getting a degree in something I like to do.

## The most inspiring people

*By Sasha Sahabandu*

The most inspiring people I ever met were my brother Praveen, Shauntay Grant, my foster mom, and my friends. All these people went through different things than I went through.

My brother has been the person I looked up to since I was very little. He has been my idol since I can remember and I love him so much.

My foster mom is inspiring since I came on her doorstep when I was 12 years old. And when I came I was a little girl who didn't know where to fit in and where to belong. She is inspiring because she let me in when so many other people didn't and she puts up with me — not that I'm annoying. But inside I know she cares about me and wants me to have the best I should deserve.

Shauntay, where do I start? She is an awesome person. Great personality but not only that she has encouraged me to keep on writing and not to give up on my work. It's she who got me encouraged to make my poetry happen.

My friends are awesome as well — they were with me for the good times and the bad times. I want you guys to know I love you all and I want you to know how much you inspire me.

## Most inspiring person

*By Amya Jackson*

The person that is the most inspiring for me is my nanny. She makes me think when she says she can't stop worrying about all of us. I tell her it's not good to worry, I'll be fine and in the end I'll be safe.

She has changed my mind about things like going outside in the late night cuz of nasty old men. But she tells me it's good to do my best and I tell her not to worry all the time!



A huge  
**THANK  
 YOU**  
 to our funders.  
 You make all the  
 difference in the world!



**HALIFAX YOUTH  
 FOUNDATION**

**Our thanks to the following individuals and organizations for their support of our project this year...**

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**Catherine Young** – board member

## ORGANIZATIONS:

**Alderney Landing Theatre** – Newsletter  
 launch venue  
**Atlantic News** – magazines for collages  
**Fusion Print** – Newsletter printing  
**Halifax Region Children's Aid Foundation** –  
 funding support  
**Halifax Youth Foundation** – funding support  
**Nova Scotia Community College** – computer  
 lab  
**Nova Scotia Council of the Family** – funding  
 support  
**Nova Scotia Department of Community  
 Services** – primary funding support  
**Nova Scotia Department of Education** –  
 funding support  
**Nova Trophy** – award plaques  
**Office of the Ombudsman** – Newsletter  
 distribution and funding support  
**Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre**  
 – meeting venue  
**Poets 4 Change** – guest performers  
**United Way of Halifax Region** – funding  
 support  
**Youth Secretariat** – Newsletter distribution

**The electronic version of this Newsletter, and more, are available on our web site: [www.youthnewsletter.net](http://www.youthnewsletter.net)**

# Guests



*The Newsletter welcomed some dynamic guests to our sessions this year to share their knowledge and passion for writing, music and poetry. Thom Swift (top left) worked with the group to write their original song Believe In Something. Author and spoken word artist Shauntay Grant (above) brought along Sophie Kaufman and Desiree Adams from Poets 4 Change for a great session of writing and sharing poetry. Award-winning journalist and author John Demont (left) shared some insight about the challenges of writing about first-person experiences.*







**ALEX RANDOLPH**



**AMANDA JACKSON**



**AMMY PURCELL**



**AMYA JACKSON**



**ANGEL BRUHM**



**ASHTON GLASGOW**



**BRITTANY ROACH**



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**SASHA SAHABANDU**



**STEFAN ILLSLEY**



**VICKY DEWOLF**

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