

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD PRESIDENT

As we look back over the past year, it is obvious to everyone that 2020 brought about unprecedented challenges. It was the first year in our program's 45-year history that we've cancelled our summer camps. While we had made big plans for our summer program and for the school year ahead, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that **we needed to focus first on the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, participants, and the many communities that we support through our programs.**

When it became obvious that summer camps would not be allowed to continue, our Executive Director and Program Director pivoted quickly, knowing that the larger YES youth community was suffering in the midst of a scary and isolating time. Quickly engaging staff and volunteers, The YES launched a number of new initiatives in Spring 2020 including the Care Package Podcast which was focused on bringing stories of care and connection across distance to the many YES participants across BC. Other programs included virtual reflections circles that invited youth to connect over the course of six weeks to share stories, feelings and a few laughs; and the Gratitude Project, that through snail mail encouraged youth to share stories and messages of gratitude with each other, their loved ones and communities.

As the summer grew closer we were able to hire six program staff to help build and facilitate more virtual programs, and connect with youth across the province. Over the course of July and August we ran programs like The Challenge, that saw teams of participants engage in fun and silly challenges, racking up points over a 3-week time period.

The YES was also able to work with local school groups and the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society to hold socially distanced programs during Fall 2020, and we refocused our energy on alumni engagement with the launch of the Alumni Project.

The YES was very fortunate to receive **a huge outpouring of support** from our grantees and sponsors, and qualified for many of the COVID-19 supports available through the government. Because of this we were able to maintain our staff levels, and continue to offer job opportunities, volunteer training, and program development during this difficult time.

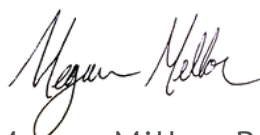
Over the course of 2020 our staff and board also focused on building a strategic plan. We held a board retreat where we identified our strategic goals, and got to work building a 3-year plan to help guide our work. Part of this plan involved working towards establishing a permanent location for The YES. We were successful in applying for funding through the Investment Readiness Program to conduct a feasibility study, and build a strong business and fundraising plan.

All in all, with huge thanks to our many generous donors and supporters, 2020 was a challenging year, but one in which **The YES was able to continue offering services to BC's youth focusing on building connection, self-worth, resiliency and leadership.**

With care and respect,



Chelsea Lake, Executive Director



Megan Millar, Board Chair

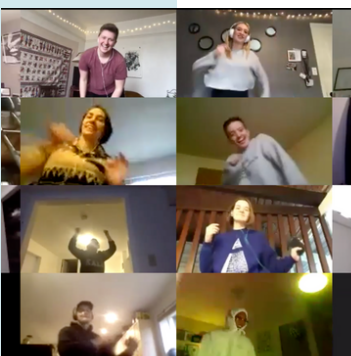
MISSION & VISION



Throughout this year, The YES maintained alignment with our mission and vision by providing opportunities for connection and belonging, even across distance.

Vision: All teens belong to communities of care and respect that nurture their capacity for excellence.

Mission: Through the development of co-operative leadership and self-worth, The YES builds inclusive communities where all youth thrive.



“Care Package: The Podcast has me crying because I love this community so much.”

- McKenna, YES participant from Fort Nelson

OUR YEAR

The YES is proud to have offered over 40 virtual programs for hundreds of youth throughout 2020, engaging youth in community building, skill development, and social justice initiatives.

As an organization, we focused on capacity-building, prioritizing our long-term strategy and sustainability. This provided opportunities to develop an extended Strategic Plan, run a staff retreat and strategic planning retreat, and reflect on our growth.





FINANCIAL SUPPORT

WE ARE IMMENSELY GRATEFUL FOR THE ONGOING CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR SUPPORTERS

“Thank you so much YES Camp for doing this!! It was so needed during this time. Hearing all of your voices just warms my heart and makes me feel so safe again.”

- Clae, YES participant from East Vancouver



Our work this year would not have been possible without the generous support of co-operatives and credit unions around the province. Thank you for your commitment to our work and leadership.

- Coastal Community Credit Union
- The Co-operators
- DeCosmos Village Housing Co-operative
- Greater Vancouver Community Credit Union
- Kootenay Savings
- Nelson and District Credit Union
- Northern Savings Credit Union
- Otter Farm and Home Co-op
- Peninsula Co-op
- Salmon Arm Savings Credit Union
- Vancity



WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

- Join our board of directors
- Make a donation
- Sponsor participants to attend The YES
- Invite The YES to your community

