



Meeting Summary CASA Youth Council March 16th, 2017

This meeting focused on a variety of different topics and projects. The main points of discussion from the meeting have been detailed below.

Discussion with strategic consultant. CASA has hired an independent contractor, to help the Senior Leadership Council to develop the 2017 Strategic and Operational Plan, as well as a three year plan (2017-2020). The hired consultant joined the council at this meeting to learn about the CYC, and to ask the members about changes they think could improve CASA or the mental health system.

Update from Rachel. Rachel updated the CYC members about a meeting she had with the vice principal of Hillcrest school. During the meeting, Rachel shared a copy of *Unseen* with the school. The school shared how much they enjoyed the magazine, and expressed interest in getting more copies. Hillcrest's VP also informed Rachel about a Kinsmen Club grant that CYC could apply to for additional funding. Rachel brought a copy of the grant application to share with CYC. Rachel will complete the application form on behalf of the council. The VP at Hillcrest also mentioned a government mental health initiative that CYC may wish to be a part of. Rachel will connect with the contact person provided so that the facilitators can get more information on this initiative.

Making *Unseen* available for order. Several schools have expressed interest in getting more copies of *Unseen*. These schools have shared that they would be willing to pay for additional copies. Facilitators will connect with the printers used for the magazine to explore different price points. Options will be explored to determine how the magazine could be made available for schools and community organizations to order.

Update from James and Thomas. James and Thomas presented the work their family has done in advocating for the legalization of PTSD service dogs for children and youth in Alberta. James and Thomas explained how service dogs can detect changes in a person's adrenaline and epinephrine and help calm an individual to reduce panic and dissociation due to trauma flashbacks. James and Thomas informed the council that currently in Alberta, an individual can receive a government-funded service dog for concerns like blindness or deafness. However, if an individual wants a PTSD dog, they have to pay between \$40,000 and \$80,000 out of pocket for the dog and its training expenses. The council discussed ways in which the CYC could

support this project. Ideas shared included:

- Spreading the word about the benefits of PTSD service dogs more widely in the community through writing an article for the next issue of *Unseen* and sharing the information provided by James and Thomas.
- Signing a petition to the provincial government.
- Fundraise to get a PTSD dog trained to be an example for Alberta, a “proof of concept”.
- Create an animal therapy room at CASA.
- Facilitators will connect with researchers at the University of Alberta to learn if anyone is interested in pursuing this project as research.

Update from Victoria. Victoria spoke about her work on the National Access Open Minds Youth Council in Montreal in February 2017. The Access Council focuses on ways to improve youth access to mental health services. Victoria shared that she is the youngest member of the Access Youth Council. All of the Access sites gave updates at the meeting and there were some presenters speaking about mental health in Indigenous communities. Victoria shared information about the CASA Youth Council with the Access Council and brought some copies of *Unseen*. The Access Council expressed how impressed they were with CYC and wanted to know how CYC created the magazine, and was able to recruit members from such a wide range of ages and perspectives. Victoria also shared that staff from Victoria School of the Arts are interested in having CYC participate in Mental Health Week at the school in May 2017. Victoria will put school staff in touch with the facilitators to get more information about this event.

Unseen: Issue #2. Facilitators shared that they have begun an *Unseen* mailout blitz to various schools in Edmonton and area. Facilitators drafted a letter that will accompany the magazine in the mailout. The letter provides schools with information on the CYC, the magazine, and on how to get in touch. Council members signed twenty copies of the letter for inclusion in the mailout. Along with the magazine and the letter, an infographic about the CYC will also be sent out.

CYC members received five more copies of *Unseen* to distribute. The council signed three more copies of *Unseen* for members who do not yet have a signed copy, as well as one for the Prime Minister. Facilitators shared that they have learned that they need to apply to the CASA Board for permission before they can mail a copy of *Unseen* to the Prime Minister’s office. Jen is going to set up a meeting with City Councilor Scott McKeen to give him a copy of *Unseen*. Jillian will provide CYC facilitator support for this meeting.

Facilitators proposed another workshop day in order to work on issue number two of *Unseen*. Members agreed they would like to do a workshop. Facilitators will send out a survey to determine possible dates for the workshop (to be held later in the spring).

The council aims to have the second issue of *Unseen* ready for publication for July 2017. The deadline for content was originally set as May 1st, 2017. After discussion with the council, this deadline has now been pushed back to June 1st, 2017.

School presentations. Council members have long expressed interest in doing school presentations. The aim is to officially begin doing school presentations in the 2017-2018 school year. The current plan is to perhaps do a few presentations this year at schools that the CYC is already connected to (Paul Kane, Victoria School for the Arts), and then more widely launch the public speaking program in September 2017. Steps to begin moving this project forward were discussed. Facilitators will organize a mini-workshop on public speaking in May. Jillian has met with a former colleague who has agreed to speak at this workshop to share her expertise and experiences on sharing one's mental health story publicly. Facilitators expressed the importance of thorough preparation for this project, including having CYC members officially trained in Mental Health First Aid. Facilitators also have some knowledge about potential funding opportunities for the school presentations project, and will begin to look into some of these options.

Mental Health First Aid training. As discussed at the January meeting, council members are highly interested in receiving Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training and certification. This idea was approved by CASA's CEO. Facilitators sent out a survey to all current CYC members in order to determine the interest in, format of, and dates for potential MHFA training. Using the results of the survey, the training for Mental Health First Aid will take place over the course of two full-days and has been set for the weekend of June 17th and 18th. Training will be completed at CASA Centre, and lunch will be provided. There will be no cost to the CYC members. More details will follow in the coming weeks.

CASA Foundation film project. Last month, staff from CASA Foundation approached the CYC to propose working on a film project to be used at the CASA Carnival, taking place in May. Various members of the CYC expressed their interest in being a part of this project. The first day of filming will take place on March 20th from 6pm to 9pm at CASA Centre. Jillian will be onsite to support the process. If there are CYC members who cannot make the filming on March 20th, and would still like to participate, Anna is able to meet with them another night the week of March 20th to do the filming.
