

# **Calgary Foundation Youth Council Year-End Report 2021-2022**

## OUR MEMBERS



**Vipasna Nangal**  
(Co-lead)



**Treeva Hakim**  
(Co-lead)



**Bill Zheng**  
(Member)



**Muhammad Saim**  
(Member)



**Sam Hyunh**  
(Member)



**Wudasay Belayneh**  
(Member)



**Sama  
Muhammad  
Tariq**  
(Member)



**Suhani Gupta**  
(Member)



**Maria Posades  
Ugarte**  
(Member)

## COUNCIL OVERVIEW



Calgary Foundation's Youth Council is comprised of youth aged 13-20 (with flexibility). Each year, the council focuses on a self-selected topic affecting Calgarians and hosts public discussions with Calgary non-profits and independent community advocates to critically analyze the chosen community challenge, current approaches, obstacles, and potential avenues to support non-profit activity. The group meets 1-2 times per month for a school year, typically on weekday evenings.

# YEAR AT-A-GLANCE

**November 2021:** The Council's first co-leads, Treeva and Vipasna, are recruited. Our Introductory meeting takes place.

**February 2022:** We speak with Sebastian, Judy, and Jen from the Alex about their addiction support services, including their community health bus, housing programs, and their Youth Health Centre.

**April 2022:** We meet Harmeet Sandhu from Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) culturally-competent lens when addressing addiction among South Asian Calgarians.

**June 2022:** We have an in-person meeting with Chaz Smith from BeTheChangeYYC, who give us a behind-the-scenes tour of their facility, teach us how to use naloxone kits, and review ways they help prevent adverse outcomes of addictions



**December 2021:** We brainstorm topics of interest to explore this season. We decide to explore addiction, specifically among youth.



*left: Word cloud built during meeting with topics of interest*



**March 2022:** We meet Jodie and Karen from Sunrise Healing Lodge Society to learn about their 12-Step Fellowship program and how they support Calgarians using an Indigenous Framework



We also meet with Hull services to examine their youth recovery program (YRP), Recovery, Stabilization, and Detox (RSD) programs, and how they support PChAD.



**May 2022:** Our first copy of the CFYC Digest, our monthly newsletter, takes off!

## EXTERNAL EVENTS

### Youth Innovation Workshop:

Vipasna, Sam, and Treeva represented the council at the Youth Innovation Workshop in July, organized by the City of Calgary's Innovation Lab and the Bloomberg Centre for Public Innovation.



GENERATION *SDG*  
GÉNÉRATION *ODD*

### Generation SDG Focus Group:

Muhammad and Suhani represented the council at the SDG Focus Group to reflect on the needs of Calgarians and potential solutions. This event was hosted by the United Nations Association of Canada.

### Forest Lawn Community Association:

Vipasna, Sam, and Bill presented our findings to the Forest Lawn Community Association for feedback and advice about the proposed community project.



### Calgary's Mental Health + Addiction Strategy:

Council members connected with Lemlem and Tara, focusing on community initiatives in Marlborough and Forest Lawn. We discussed the proposed community project and other potential pathways for the youth council.



# GOALS FOR THIS 2022-2023

## Goals from the 2020-2021 Season

### #1 Organized & Methodical Approach

This approach is designed to increase member involvement and engagement

Implemented Goal	Modified Goal
a) allocate roles like scribe, facilitator, outreach member, etc., for meetings.	b) book all meetings at the beginning of the year. In reality, this was done to the best of our abilities, but meeting days were kept largely consistent.

### #2 Dual Approach

This approach is designed to make the youth council more accomodating for members while also making it more appealing to members who wish to work towards more definite end goals.

#### **Implemented Goals**

- a) Separate the youth council's work into learning and action.
- b) Create a balance between discussion and reflection by meeting immediately after each meeting with a non-profit representative to think critically about their approaches, goals, and barriers compared to other organizations.
- c) Use a hybrid meeting model to maximize participation.

# GOALS FOR THIS 2022-2023

## Goals from the 2020-2021

### **#3 Increased Involvement Approach:**

This approach is designed to increase and better assess the youth council's influence on Calgary Foundation's work.

#### **Modified Goals**

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- a. members are allotted the opportunity to make grants through a collective process at the end of the year. This was modified to focus on a year-end project, which was of interest to the council.
- b. collect reflection videos from each group session to help currate the year-end report. This was modified so additional notes were taken during these reflection sessions instead of videos.

## Additional Goals for the 2022 year included

**#4 Restructuring the Intake Process and Communication:** Members that join after the council's brainstorming session in September don't have the opportunity to express their interests, and co-leads know little about their interests and goals. Therefore, an application for prospective members, which is a 250-word essay about why they want to join the council, has been added. Their application is factored into meeting planning and is used to introduce new members to existing members.

The council also switched to Discord now? Discord, an instant, messaging social platform, has streamlined sending group-wide messages and given members to chat in a safe space.

# REFLECTIONS- ADDICTION SUPPORT FOR YOUTH

The following is a summary of the conversations that occurred as a result of meeting with non-profits. Through the Youth Council's meetings with various organizations, members were able to identify a series of overarching themes.

1

## Cultural Context is Important

Different cultural perceive addiction, its symptoms, and treatment differently. Therefore, addiction-related programs must factor in the worldviews of the communities they serve.

2

## Desire for Treatment

A desire and preparedness to undergo treatment is a strong indicator of long-term sobriety. As a result, supporting people with addictions calls for patience and work to secure stable living conditions for those impacted.

3

## Safe Use Saves Lives

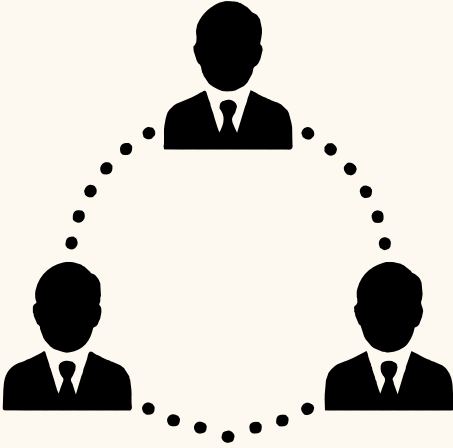
Safe use practices are essential when treatment is not possible. This includes Naloxone training for the public.

4

## Improve Program Accessibility

Wait times and distant treatment centres are common barriers to treatment. More support is needed to ease access to programs.

## #1 Organized Roles



The youth council may benefit from a two-tiered structure, where members can either join the council to learn, or take on official leadership positions. This structure would offer potential for consistent personal growth, help youth build their resumes, and offer clearer council structuring.

## #2 Team Building Events

In-person events were restricted by the pandemic, but increased in-person and group meetings would support team connectedness and long-term involvement.



## #3 Advertising the Youth Council

The youth council may benefit from greater outreach. Efforts could be made to advertise the youth council on university campuses, school forums, and classroom teachers. This would enable greater diversity amongst the youth council.



# Acknowledgements

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Thank you to our amazing guest speakers for sharing their work with the council; Calgary wouldn't be the same without their dedication.

Special thanks to Ingrid Wasylyshen, Jessica Zutz, Darbie Ouimet, Linda Ford and Emily Nachtigall for supporting the council behind the scenes.

Last but not least, thank you to our amazing council members for another amazing year for the youth council!

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If you or your organization would like to learn more about the council or our findings on addiction among youth, reach us at [youthcouncil@calgaryfoundation.org](mailto:youthcouncil@calgaryfoundation.org).

## **Contact:**

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