

CYC-Online

e-journal of the International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)



**Now You Have
Woken the Children**

**The Lost Spaces
in Child and Youth Care**

Bidding on Aprons

**A Journal for those who live or work
with Children and Young People**

Issue 229 / March 2018



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Conference Wave

James Freeman

The third Child and Youth Care World Conference has come and gone. For many it was like riding a wave – an appropriate metaphor as conference participants gathered on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. The days before the conference were full of anticipation and travel from all around the globe. Over several days people slowly arrived at the conference hotel.

During the pre-conference activities, over forty participated in two full-day workshops – one on engaging family members and the other on the keys to thriving. Thirty-six joined together for a whale watching trip to the nearby Channel Islands and were surrounded by the immensity of the sea and the vastness of a huge pod of dolphins that encircled the boat.

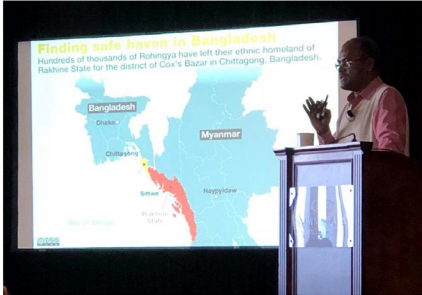
Through the day and night people continued to arrive by plane, car, train, and boat. There were the airport runs to pick up participants. Late night arrivals of hungry travelers just in time before In-N-Out (the local burger joint) closed for the night.

Overall, two hundred and forty participants showed up and represented every continent (except Antarctica). Canada, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, South Africa, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Australia, India, Egypt – just a few of the countries represented in the gathering. Attendees were touched by the sunrise, the sunset, and the sound of ocean waves. Many came from temperatures below zero and the gathering gave them time and space to thaw and catch their breath.



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Several times I was asked by hotel employees, "What are you, like some big family?" They were experiencing the comradery and family-like connections among the conference participants. They were in the presence of dedicated Child and Youth Care practitioners and were overwhelmed by the sense of connection and caring they experienced.

There were so many 'firsts' or unique experiences I heard during the conference. A first flight away from home. First steps into the ocean. Fulfilling a life dream to present at such a conference. First time ever picking an orange from a tree and eating it. Fresh avocados. The bachelorette party. Discussions lingering on the fireside patio. Visits to the CYC Archive. A packed van ride to an ocean overlook in Malibu. And so many more.

The conference itself was the peak of the wave. The opening session was a special moment. As I stood in front of the room to welcome everyone, I was in awe of seeing everyone together. Jaiya John, the opening plenary speaker, brought both his lived experience in care and his passion for living from the heart to those gathered. He spoke of love, of caring for ourselves and others, and of restoration. Jaiya has shared three resources for those who were there or wanted to be there and couldn't make it. You can download them at these links:

- Excerpts from the book *Your Caring Heart: Renewal for Helping Professionals and Systems*
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JjgUGIOEZ4GBMIiz3NkiG6-ml6AFujjE/view?usp=drivesdk>
- Audio excerpt from the book *Beautiful*
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18RIQn6CwpoEeiDrRKEILuahDOkZ6j8ul/view?usp=drivesdk>
- Reflections on the power of helping
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pkbDj9eZhxH7yjRPFjPRXDpf5daBm94e/view?usp=drivesdk>



The remaining five plenary sessions were diverse in age, gender, ethnicity, and experience. Over 40 individual workshops explored topics relevant to Child and Youth Care around the globe. Janelle Huhtala and Garth Goodwin both captured some of the spirit and content of the gathering in their blogs following the conference.

Janelle is a second-year Child and Youth Care student from MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She was a recipient of an undergraduate student research grant and created the blog as a way to record her experiences. It's a wonderful summary of the workshops she attended and the atmosphere of the gathering. Check out Janelle's blog at <https://californiajanelle.tumblr.com>

You may know Garth from past Canadian, International, and World CYC conferences or from his regular column in *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice* published by CYC-Net Press. Garth shares the whale watching trip, conference highlights, and some of his adventures while in southern California. Check out Garth's blog at http://www.garthgoodwin.info/Hope_2018.html

One highlight was the debut of a brief video which was a vision of faculty at Fleming College in Ontario, Canada. In just a few minutes it beautifully bridges the characteristics of relational child and youth care, the competency domains as articulated by the Child and Youth Care Certification Board, a commitment to authentic advocacy, and the international network we all enjoy through CYC-Net. You can download or share the video at this link:

<https://vimeo.com/230489227/fe53b55a55>

As soon as the wave of the conference peaked it seemed time for everyone to disperse and return home. Some extended their stay in the area and soaked up more sunshine before returning home. I drew it out as long as I could, savoring the connections and friendships. Just as a wave on the shore returns to its source to fill the sea, those who gathered returned to their homes, schools, neighborhoods, and villages to fill the void of caring for children and families around our shared planet.

Until next time.



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Now You Have Woken the Children

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Here in the United States, I think it would be fair to say that the socio-political situation has become increasingly fractious, contentious and to some degree dangerous in relation to the world of youth-adult relations. I suspect this may be true other places, but is demonstrably the case here. As is usual for me in this column, when the question of childhood, children, care and politics become intertwined, I begin to wonder about our leadership role as a field of care for children and our ethical imperative individually as child and care workers. I know that, for some of us, the work we do at the micro level with individual young people is deeply and profoundly centered in what we might call a politics of care. That is to say, that we do our very best to assure that the young people we encounter on a daily basis are cared for to the very best of our ability. To that end, we give of our time, our resource and our love day after day. We advocate for the young people in our care with agencies, courts, the police, welfare systems and sometimes hostile communities. We do this knowing that sometimes we will lose (painfully) but sometimes we actually prevail and young people's lives become ever so much more bearable. For this, we deserve acknowledgment and accolades. It is a hard fought, on the ground, hands on struggle. It is admirable.

That said, when things start to get really bad for young people at the macro level of our society, I wonder if we need to do more or perhaps do something different. When we as adults have let our social contract slip to such a degree that young people's lives are increasingly at risk, do we as a field of care have an obligation to respond at the level of politics writ large?



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The United States has never been a safe place for children identified as working class, black or brown, GLBTQ, indigenous, female, or neuro-diverse. Such children have been the subjects of brutal and almost unimaginable violence since the earliest days of colonization by Europeans and certainly since the founding of the republic. Much of this violence occurred and is occurring in institutions and communities where CYC practitioners live and work. Violence against our children has been perpetrated in schools, residential treatment centers, group homes, psychiatric facilities, the streets, community centers, church-based programs and other social/cultural/religious sites that focus on children. Children under our care have been shot, lynched, sexually assaulted, bullied, molested, marginalized, shamed, beaten, starved and so on. To our everlasting shame, some of this violence has gone on with the silent complicity of staff, administrators, politicians, community members and clergy.

Of course, there have also been heroes and brave whistleblowers. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the brave teachers and coaches who gave their lives in the latest incidence of mass shooting at the school in Florida. At the macro level, there have also been powerful advocates for justice who worked with children to improve their lives and mitigate the violence. Mother Jones and Jane Adams come to mind. Civil rights leaders like Malcom X, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks and the Black Panthers who stood up against lynching and shooting of young black men. Samir Jha and Grace Delano-Sandrino who have worked to make schools safe places for GLBTQ young people. Advocates for neuro-diversity like Jim Sinclair and Temple Grandin have fought for the right to think and perceive the world outside of neuro-normativity. And collectives like Black Lives Matter and Sisters Rising have advocated for the ability to live free of domination.

This is care at the level of socio-political action. These movements are articulations of emancipation, liberation and even revolution. Each of them responded to violence against our young people with direct and public outcry and action. They took a public position that expanded the circle of care into the political, social and cultural arenas of our society. In many instances, their work fits



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the definition of what I have called radical child and youth care. That is, young people and adults working together for common political purpose.

Mother Jones marched with children who worked in the mills to the governor's mansion and to the home of the president of the United States. During the civil rights movement, it was young people who sat at segregated lunch counters, faced police with fire hoses and riot batons. Young people were lynched, shot and beaten by the Klu Klux Klan and other white supremacists. The Black Panthers worked with young people through offering them free breakfasts and access to free medical care. Their free breakfast program was decried by the head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover as the most dangerous political activity of the time. Neuro-diversity advocates and GLBTQ activists have often been high school students.

I want to bring attention to the role of these young people and adults working together for social change, because I think history tends to forget the role young people play in challenging violence and holding adults accountable for caring for our children.

The notion of radical child and youth care is on my mind as I watch the events surrounding the most recent school shooting in the United States. The fact that I have to write about *the most recent* school shooting is stunning in and of itself. The



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truth is that the U.S. has become a war zone for increasing numbers of young people. For some time, we have had an epidemic level of gun violence in cities like Chicago and Washington D.C. But, we have done little to nothing other than cite statistics of the number of young people who have died. I would argue that it is not a coincidence that these young people are predominantly African American. Americans have historically been willing to take very high casualties in those communities before moving to action on behalf of those children. Of course, it is also unarmed young black men who have been shot and killed at an alarming rate by police officers. But violence against our children also extends to an increasing rate of murder and assault of gay and transgendered young people. We know that young women face the threat of sexual assault and domestic violence at alarmingly high rates.

The sad truth is that the United States has always been a violent society. It has really never been a particularly safe place to grow up in, if you were not white and at least middle class. But there is reason to think that larger numbers of us have finally decided that enough is enough. Certainly, the children have “woke”. We see this in movements like Black Lives Matter, the Women’s March, each of which has been driven by the energy and commitment of young people working with adults to find a new way forward. And, now we see young survivors of the shootings in Florida taking to the media, marching in the streets, interrogating their governmental representatives and calling for mass walk outs. We also see the adults and parents from those communities taking action and supporting their children in calling for action to stop the violence.

I have said in this column previously, that our children are losing faith in our ability as adults to care for them or the world that they will inherit from us. As a field dedicated to their care I believe this should concern us. Certainly, on an individual basis we engage with young people who find us helpful and caring, even inspiring perhaps. I wonder though if Child and Youth Care could add something to the broader dialogue. Do we have something to bring to the table of politics writ large? Is there a role for us in supporting and working with young people, not just



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in changing their individual lives and circumstances, but joining with them in changing the systems in which we are all imbedded? Do we bound our work by the confines of our institutional day? Is our work defined by our role as teacher, CYC worker, case manager, residential care supervisor, street outreach worker and so on? Are our politics of care restrained and proscribed by our tasks in each of these roles? Does our relationship with the young people we encounter end because we are required by our agencies or by our training to keep clear boundaries between our personal and professional lives? What do these professional and disciplinary injunctions do to our ability to be allies to the young people we engage?

Certainly, one definition of an ally is someone who joins in struggle with another because they understand that there are risks and struggles in common. For us as CYC workers intimately involved in the lives of the young people we engage on a daily basis, are we good allies in the struggles of young people against the violence perpetrated against them. Do we understand that what happens to them is immensely influential in what is happening and will happen to us? Are we capable of seeing their struggles for peace and justice as profoundly legitimate or do we dismiss their political work as developmentally transitional? Is it just another rebellious behavior by teenagers against society?

I recently heard a radio program in which young people were being interviewed who were running for governor. No one expected them to do this. It had always been assumed that running for a major public office was adult business. But, these candidates, who ranged from 13-17 years old had found a loop hole in the law and decided to run for the highest office in state government. They were articulate and had coherent policy positions. However, while many of the adults who phoned in were very supportive, a few dismissed their candidacy on the basis of their lack of frontal development. They argued that young people did not have the requisite executive brain function to take on the task of governor. To their credit, the young people responded with example after example of the ways in which a seeming lack of executive brain function on the part of adult politicians had put them at risk. They also argued that it was a necessity for them to run for office, because it was



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obvious to them that adults were utterly incapable of managing the affairs of state in a way that would protect and advance the interests of future generations.

I wonder how many young people in our programs could be this kind of leader? How many could advocate powerfully from their unique position as a service recipient. It begs the question of whether or not we, as care workers, might be doing more to advance and mobilize young people in care to fight for and advance their own interests. The reason the Black Panther breakfast program was considered so politically dangerous was because in addition to breakfast there was a healthy helping of education about the realities of being black in America. The Panthers felt this information was essential for the survival of young people growing up in an often hostile and racist society.

Clearly the young people we serve are living in a society where they are under threat of multiple forms of violence. Are CYC programs and workers up to the task of educating them about the risks of growing up young in America (or elsewhere)? Do we have the courage to engage care as an act of social inoculation against pernicious and hateful ideologies that threaten the lives of young people in our care?

We are uniquely positioned for this work. I hope we have the sense of urgency to join with young people in producing a safer and saner society. I know we do that work at the micro level most of the time. My challenge is for us to take on the macro level as well. The time is now because the children are awakening. Will we wake up as well?



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What Are We Doing? And Why Is It Important To Be Skillful?

Jack Phelan

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I am going to beat a tired drum this month, talking about good practice and what we know about connecting, particularly connecting with people in pain. I unfortunately continue to be frustrated with people in our field who propose “common sense” approaches, which often describes very behavioral, externally controlling, responses to the seemingly illogical behaviors of the youth and families that we serve. I also know that I am preaching to the converted, since most of the readers of this e-journal are more advanced in their thinking, but maybe this can be posted or shared with colleagues who may not regularly visit this website.

I was reading an article/editorial written by a cherished colleague in South Africa, Merle Allsopp. I am quoting it here, because it is too clear and well written to paraphrase.

Can South Africa do without therapeutic child and youth care work?

By Merle Allsopp

Chatting with two veteran child and youth care workers recently a scenario involving a struggling child came up and made me think.

A boy in a child and youth care center refused to go home. This is not unusual in child and youth care centers. This child though, runs and hides under a bed and will not come out after he is told that he must go home to his mother for a visit. The child and youth care workers in his lifespaces are puzzled. He has been under the bed for a number of hours. They do not know what to do and at first try to



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coax him out, then offer him food if he will come out and finally shout at him. The shouting also does not bring him out.

“What,” I said to my colleagues, “would you do in such a situation?”

Both brightened up at the question, as if I were asking them a question both fascinating and important. “Fetch some pillows” said one. “And a blanket” said the other, as if they were already in synch on the matter. And they proceeded to sketch out a whole scenario of therapeutic child and youth care work in operation.

“Lie down on the floor next to the bed and slowly start talking to the boy. Offer him a pillow, and slowly get under the bed with him. See if he will accept being covered with a blanket. Blankets are nurturing and safe. Just be under the bed with him, but do not intrude into this safe space of his, move in slowly as he is comfortable with you being there. Start to talk about feeling safe under the bed, and about being safe, and unsafe. Take your time. Do not rush. Say something and see how he responds. Talk about being unsafe, and how that feels. Give him the chance to talk about what makes him feel unsafe.

Most importantly, maintain a calm and neutral demeanor. Be sure you are not threatening him further, but *joining him* in his safe space at a rate that he allows. Do not intrude. Move into his space, physically and emotionally as he allows. I bet you he will be able to say how he feels and what scares him about going home. Then you can reassure him about not being forced to go *anywhere* where he does not feel safe. If he tells you awful stories about being scared or hurt, you can reassure him that what has happened to him was horrible and should not have happened. You can listen to his pain. You can *feel* his pain, and in doing so you can convey the sense that what he feels is actually what *anyone* would feel in such a situation. Then you can perhaps talk about what kind of plans would work for him to see his family, and how that could happen in a way that he would feel comfortable.

Once you have an understood, and found a way of managing what he is afraid of you can start to help him to transition out from under the bed – in a dignified manner. You can say you talked nicely under the bed, but now you are getting hungry or hot, or something, and suggest a move out. Be with him if he has been



vulnerable and help him to grow his emotional skin back over his vulnerability – just by being a safe person to be around and shielding him from others before he is ready to face the world again. Be sure to have colleagues distract other children so there are no taunts as he emerges, as he will have no option but to defend his vulnerable self with aggression – either verbally or physically. Food is a great comforter and drinking some tea together and eating something may just help to round up the interaction.

This may take ten minutes, or it may take an hour or two. That is why it is so important to have teamwork in child and youth care centers, and to know that if you are the person focusing on this kind of situation, that the rest of the team is getting on with managing the other children, and the daily routine.”

My take away from this conversation was simple yet profound.

Children (and most of us as adults) struggle to express our deep feelings in a coherent, packaged form. Our behaviours are often expressions of our feelings, and this is very much so for children who have not yet developed the capacity to express their feelings verbally. South Africa has terribly high rates of sexual abuse of children and violence in communities. All of our citizens, and especially our children, feel unpleasant emotions when they are involved in scary, difficult situations. We need people who are able to understand that trauma may lead to children behaving in ways that may appear strange – but that such behavior has an internal logic that must be understood. We need people who are able to empathise with children in a way that is both palatable and felt by children. We need people who can help to mobilise children suffering, yes, suffering, and help them to cope as well as they possible can with the demands of existence.

My take away was simple and profound. South Africa cannot do without child and youth care workers capable of therapeutic lifespace work.

I had two reactions after reading this; I wish I had written it, and I hope many, many people will read and appreciate it.

So, I leave you with this message and hope that you pass it on.



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The Lost Spaces in Child and Youth Care

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In this second column of transformative ideas, I want to explore, ever so briefly, the implications of tracing child and youth care practice through the experiences in spaces we have chronically ignored. I want to do this specifically because I have argued in the past that whatever our field has become, it has become so through the lenses of particular social locations, including a lens of whiteness. Current attempts to augment those lenses by finding space for a wide range of racial, gender and other identities has proven difficult. It turns out that having developed a strong and increasingly sophisticated framework for how we think about our field has created quite formidable barriers for different ways of being in the world to find a space in our communities. And I want to be clear that we do in fact have a community, or a few communities, that we built around our common project of child and youth care. These are visible communities, communities that gather together periodically, and communities that have adopted core ideas and principles in the further evolution of the field itself. I am, of course, a member of these communities, and entirely complicit in both their wondrous aspects and their exclusive elements. As I have argued before, it is clear that when our communities gather (in person or through their writings), they are not gatherings of everyone. For the most part, they are gatherings of the locations of power within our communities, buttressed by social locations of considerable privilege.

What would happen if we changed the way we are trying to reshape our communities as inclusive and open? Unless I am missing something substantial, our current attempts are based on quite rudimentary instruments and mechanisms. They basically involve members of our communities identifying individuals who may



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be able to add perspective from different social locations and identities as a way of rendering the community itself more pluralistic. In practice, this means that increasingly we see people join an event or a gathering who are not white (or who are not cis-gendered, although that is rare, as is visible disability). But the event or gathering continues to contemplate, sometimes celebrate, the same field of child and youth care we have already defined and bordered. An underlying theme across much of my experiences in community gatherings, in writings, and in organizing efforts through professional associations and others, is that while there is openness, some things are not negotiable; one of those things is the integrity of the borders through which we define ourselves, our practices, our communities and our sense of Self as a field.

Sometimes I think about settings and social context that are unfamiliar to me. These include very diverse contexts, such as the living and sleeping quarters of slaves in the 300 years of active slavery in North America; the fly-in indigenous communities of Northern Manitoba, refugee camps in Haiti, Zambia, Jordan and elsewhere. I think about the over-populated housing projects on the outskirts of Brussels, the periphery of Toronto and the edges of Teheran. My mind wanders to the slums of major cities, such as Nairobi, Mumbai, Rio and others. And it considers the everyday life of child-headed households in South Africa and elsewhere around the world. Most recently, I have pondered life in the context of walking from Syria to Europe as hundreds of thousands of families have done, and of living in the forests covering the border between Bangladesh and Burma, as more than half a million Rohingya Muslims are doing right now, awaiting the monsoons that will surely cause death and destruction in these makeshift communities.

I think about these contexts not to immerse myself in negativity or empathy, but instead to contemplate how our field has relevance to these life-spaces. How well equipped would I be, knowing what I know through my professional associations with the field of Child & Youth Care in North America, to do anything useful in these settings? Are the concepts and ideas I carry with me valid there?



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And perhaps most importantly, would I have participated as I have in the development of our field as it is today if my starting point had been any of these kinds of contexts? Would I be talking about relational practice, life-space intervention, engagement, caring, hanging out, daily life events, knowing Self, the inter-personal in-between, ethical praxis, developmental approaches, individualized treatment plans, and so on? Would I apply the knowledge, skills and practices that we designed collectively as a predominantly white, cis-gendered, able-bodied, relatively privileged and decidedly safe community?

I think we may well be missing ideas and concepts, ways of being and methods of doing, aspects of the imagination and elements of spirituality precisely because our starting point for the field as we know it has been a very particular starting point, upon which we have continuously built networks of truth, knowledge, and increasingly firm boundaries of what is and what is not child and youth care practice. We do, in our defense, encourage critical thinking; we do, in our defense, promote engagement with diverse experiences, multiple geographies, many different peoples. Sometimes, albeit it very slowly, we allow ourselves to learn from contexts that utilize quite different starting points for developing a child and youth care community, such as, for example, the Isibindi model from South Africa, which has now found meaningful ways of engaging beyond South Africa in Zambia, in Lebanon and elsewhere. But we have a filter through which we absorb difference; a filter that necessitates translation, reformulation, adaptation to our world of child and youth care practice. This is, I think, the reason why our field remains largely white; we have created invisible barriers for experiencing the vulnerability that comes with setting aside our urgent desire to be something we can define, regulate, professionalize and celebrate.

We must consider alternatives to this constant evolution of our field in a singular direction. We must, I believe, disrupt this movement. And I don't think we can disrupt it by creating narrow openings for 'representation' at our gatherings or within our communities. Disruption cannot flow from a demand to conform to a particular way of being in the world, congruent with the decades of white



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constructionism (others might say colonialism) in our field. I believe that disruption to the limitations we have imposed on ourselves can only happen by going back and stepping sideways, both in time and in space. And disruption requires us not to build aesthetic distractions of otherness within the robust structure, culture and identity of our field, but to seek new starting points for being with children and youth borne out of social relations that developed in the kinds of contexts I listed above. Because each of these contexts has its own version of social relations, and therefore, its own version of child and youth care practice. I have no doubt that no matter what the starting point may be, ideas related to relationships, engagement, caring and other child and youth care concepts will emerge. But they may not be the same ideas. And they may not lead to the same place that we have landed at this stage of our history.

The twenty-first century has brought into much sharper focus the consequences of social injustices through history. We are living, and sometimes dying, the effects of multiple genocides through time, the consequences of the random creation of states following the collapse of empires, the limitations of our neo-liberal world order. We cannot stay inactive with respect to our own field and its complicity in these dynamics. Transformational thinking is needed now. But we must be careful not to coopt the transformation and shape it into irrelevant aesthetic artifacts. An African-heritage speaker at a conference does not transform our field. Racialized members on a board of directors of a professional association also does not transform our field, nor do land acknowledgements that change nothing with respect to the occupations of indigenous lands. Much like neo-liberalism was invented as a way of subduing non-market based disruptive ideologies and social movements, the empty promise of representation (an explicitly liberal concept to begin with) will co-opt diversity as a legitimization of white supremacy.

I suggest that in order to move forward, we step off the space we are protecting for ourselves. We must respect the tracing of child and youth care practice from before our own tracing of this practice, so that when we have



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articulations of child and youth care practice borne out of lived experiences beyond those embedded in our communities, writings and gatherings, they are not articulations to be absorbed within a singular dominant discourse and narrative, but they stand shoulder to shoulder with what we have now, and that work in partnership to develop the future based on much more than our need for recognition of what we have developed so far.

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Transitioning From Care to Independence in Provincial South Africa

Werner Van Der Westhuizen and Melanene Valentine

Editor's note

This interview by Werner Van Der Westhuizen and care leaver Melanene Valentine in South Africa provides insight into her experience growing up in care at the SOS Children's Village, including reflections on experiences, memories, important people in her life, and her transition to living on her own.

Please tell me about your experiences of growing up in a child care centre?

My experience, to be honest, it was firstly, awesome; I enjoyed my time at the SOS Children's Village. It wasn't, I didn't feel like I was not part of a family or I was just... because some kids at SOS feel like they're just individual kids; I didn't feel like that. I think that our housemothers, actually we did everything together, our housemothers made us cook, where some of the other housemothers didn't allow the kids to cook. And like, they never... they were always involved, our housemothers were always involved in helping me. So, I actually enjoyed living in the children's home. I think it was the best thing that could ever have happened to me in my whole entire life. If it wasn't for SOS I don't think I would have been where I am today.

What do you think might have happened?

If I had gone and lived with my mom, to be honest, I think she surely would have ended up prostituting me; or she would have sold me. Because when I went



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to visit there, it was a couple of years ago, and she went up to these guys and said, “This is my daughter, give me free stuff and she will go out with you”. So, I think that, way back then, that would have happened. But not right now, not with the situation she is in now, I think she has changed now, but back then I would have ended by being prostituted. I would not have finished my school, I would not have gone to university...

How old were you when you came to SOS?

I was 5.

And you stayed in one of the family houses?

Yes, I stayed in one family house.

Did you have the same housemother while you were there?

There were 4 housemothers in the time that I stayed there. And with the last housemother being there, that is also when I moved to the youth house. [Young people transition from a family house to the youth house in order to prepare for more independent living. In the youth house, young people take most of the responsibility for daily tasks of living, but with the support of a youth leader.]

What were they like, the housemothers?

There were very different. Like I discussed with a friend the other day, what people in the office didn't know, was that the first housemother was abusing us. She was hitting us. And then the next housemother came, and it was different again – she was always very stressed and shouting; and the next housemother came and everything went calm again – but she was strict to a certain extent. And when the last aunty came she was like – very chilled; very lenient. You could get away with certain things. So, I think they were all different and a way.



How did you experience the changes in housemothers over time?

At times it was a positive thing. When some of the housemothers came I felt like I could share more things with them. When aunt Bu came it was even better, because it felt like she was my friend, I could actually tell her anything, and she would understand, and she wouldn't judge and shout... Whereas aunt T would have...

So, there were positive and negatives?

Yes. Definitely.

What were some of the highlights during the time you stayed at SOS?

I can remember our AVCs... big events. And my matric farewell – that was a big event for me. And, my matric – doing matric at the youth house, that was a big event for me, passing my matric. I also remember the many outings that we went on as a family, like the “play land”, outings to the beach and going shopping together.

Tell me more about the passing matric and your experience of doing matric while at SOS.

I think, I had to be disciplined. Because when aunty B came in, like I said she was very lenient, she allowed us to – not come and go as we please, but she wasn't that strict. I had to discipline myself and tell myself “I'm going to study now! I need to do this now. I can't expect the Aunty to ask me: “Did you study? Did you do this?”” And the Aunty moved me from the girls' room into the Aunty's guest room and she said “This is your room from now on. It's quiet here, you can study here, you don't have to deal with the other girls.” And I think in matric – I honestly could have done better. I did study, but I think I could have done better.



What would have helped you do better?

Really... I think when I started matric I just got a boyfriend my focus was boyfriend [first] and matric [second]. And it was my first serious relationship. So I think if I spent less time with my boyfriend and more time with my books, I could have done much better. But I was happy with my marks, it wasn't like I was disappointed, I just think I could have done better.

Who were some of the most important people in your life at that time?

My sister... I think my sister was always there, supporting me, telling me "Melanene, you need to pass". Checking if I was studying, checking how I was doing at school, my marks. She is ten years older than me. She was staying in Pretoria at the time and phoned me every week.

The housemothers ... In matric, my school friends also. I never really had friends in the village, but my school friends were also very important to me, because we were always there, supporting one another, we studied together – even though some of us did different modules [at school], but we would always try to help each other... highlight things, make notes and share each other's notes.



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At what stage did you become aware of the need to plan for your future, beyond SOS?

I think, when I started high school. When I started high school I realised that I had to decide what I actually wanted to do with my life, going forward. Because in high school you obviously have to choose your subjects and you have to choose carefully, depending on what career you want to follow. I think it's when I started high school.

What support did you have, if any, in choosing your school subjects?

I can't remember... I remember there was... We went to the social worker, and she helped us with the subject choices. Yes, she was the one who helped us. And Uncle D (child and youth development coordinator). And Uncle W (village director). There were definitely people who helped with that.

What was it like for you to move to the youth house?

After high school, when I finished matric I moved up to the youth house. I was there for a few years – 6 years. Really... was it that long? It didn't feel that long! At the time I was studying towards a Beauty Therapy Diploma. I finished that and then started at Unisa, and then I also started working as a receptionist.

What was it like to move from the village to the youth house?

At first, it was kind of difficult, because we always had a house mother, and she always made sure that we had breakfast, lunch and supper, and everything you need. And when you move to the youth house, all that is gone. Now you have to do everything for yourself. If you don't get breakfast, you don't get breakfast. It's your prerogative... if you don't get lunch, or don't get supper. In the family houses the moms were strict and we had to clean and make sure everything was neat; at the youth house it's like, if the house is dirty, then OK. And even if we all try to work together... in the family house we all had to work together and clean the



house every week, like spring clean. But in the youth house some of the girls decided that they did not want to spring clean, then they wouldn't. I think that it was difficult at first, but then it got easier. Because then you get used to certain things. And when other people are like, "I don't care", then you don't care as well.

When you move to the youth house, there were already other girls there...

Yes, a couple of them were already there. I moved there together with another girl. I think in my time there, there were about 8 girls that came and left.

How were you prepared to move to the youth house?

The youth leader came to speak to us before we moved up to the youth house. She told us what the youth house was all about and the process of moving there. She talked to us about the differences between the family house and the youth house. In the house we would receive an allowance, whereas in the family house the Mom used to buy the toiletries and everything. We would have to budget, and ... learn to work with money.

Was this very different from how it worked in the family house?

Not really, because the housemothers already prepared us in a way. The housemothers used to give us money for transport and for toiletries, so if we overspent on toilets, that was our own problem. We had our transport money – if we wasted it then we had to walk to school. So, we had to learn how to budget and use our money sparingly and not waste it. But in the family house, food was still bought by the housemothers. When we moved to the youth house, we all pooled our money together to buy food.



How did that work?

We all got a chance... to go shopping and buy the food. And the evening before shopping we would all sit together and decide on what we need to buy. We would take turns. We always made sure that we went two at a time.

What was the youth leader's role in the process?

We had complete control over this, but we could always ask for support, for example, help with transport when we went to buy groceries. The youth leader did check up on us, made sure that we bought groceries, but at the end of the day it was up to us. In the youth house we also prepared our own food – we had a list so that everybody had a turn to cook.

What role did the youth house play in prepare you for independent living?

Firstly, with the money, with the budget – we always used to have to hand in slips (receipts for purchases to the finance administrator). And we had to explain what we bought with the money, and I think that helped a lot. The budget, because with living on your own, you actually need a budget. If you waste your money, then it's gone. And also... I think now with me living on my own, I can invite people over and have sleep overs; but there it was obviously, no-one was allowed to sleep over. They were allowed to visit, but not to sleep over. I think that also helped me, because now I don't allow anybody to just come and sleep over at my house, like, I don't actually enjoy sleep overs, but I don't mind visitors. And... the budget was a big part of it all.

Any other ways in which the youth house helped prepare you for independent life?

When we were living in the youth house, we didn't have a curfew, but we had to be home at a certain time... not that the youth leader came and checked. There were some rules, so I think now I still use those rules, for example not walking



around after a certain time. So even if I go out for a party, I still have that – “you have to be home at a certain time and do certain things”. So I still follow many of those rules.

What was your experience of leaving the youth house and living on your own?

I applied for a flat and was accepted, and I walked into my new flat. Those are partly subsidised flats. Some of the youth who lived in the youth house previously now stayed in a subsidised housing complex and they told me about it, so that is how I came to apply. At the time I was already working. Aunt M had a position open at her practice as her current receptionist was moving, and she asked whether I was interested in coming to work for her. I was also studying at Unisa at the time. I initially starting helping out at the practice and then eventually it become a full time position. At the beginning I was still getting a youth allowance.



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How were you prepared for leaving the youth house and coming to live on your own?

It's difficult to remember. But they said they would help with the transportation when I moved, and they gave me my bed [from the youth house]. And when I left the youth allowance stopped and I was responsible for myself financially.

During the last 4 months or so at the youth house I was living alone. The youth leader left the organisation and the other girls also moved out, so I remained alone in the house. That was a scary time. Because there was literally nobody there. Only N [a male youth from the village] moved into the granny flat of the house, but he was hardly ever there. It was me all alone and... it was scary. It was horrible... I think to be alone in that big house... with all the crime and everything. So when I moved into my new flat it was like "Yay!" Because at least people and security.

Did SOS still play a role in your life after you moved into your own flat?

Yes, they still supported me financially with my studies and classes to get my driver's licence.

How long did this support continue?

Until you left. [The interviewer was the village director at the time but left the organisation shortly after Melanene moved out]. Maybe a year or so. After you left someone else took over, and she called me in for that meeting, and then they still paid but eventually stopped. I think there was a difficult time with their own finances.

How was the decision made about when you were ready to leave the youth house?

The decision was made by SOS, because there was a meeting and the youth leader spoke to me and told me that the organisation was going to have some changes and they would not have a youth house anymore, so unfortunately all of us



have to move out and find our own place to live, but SOS would still support us financially with studies, car licences... but eventually we were all going to have to make that decision to move out. Because we knew this wasn't going to be forever, it was a process.

What else prepared you for the day that you moved out?

I just remember that we knew it wasn't permanent, the youth told us that it's [youth house] just to help us move into the community. Obviously we never had a time frame as to how long we would stay in the youth house – we knew eventually. The moving didn't happen suddenly, but we were aware that it was time limited.

What is it like now, living on your own?

I enjoy it. Much better than in the youth house. In the youth house I felt like, we were always in each other's space, and some of the girls weren't very neat. There was just too much drama and gossip and fighting and arguing. And now on my own I can cook when I want, I can eat, I can clean – so I prefer being on my own. Yes, sometimes I do get a bit lonely living on my own, I do miss the company of the other girls.

What was the biggest adjustment you had to make when you moved out?

The way I spent my money... When I was living in the youth house I wasn't paying for anything and I was getting a salary and an allowance, so I had some money. And as soon as I moved out, now I had to actually think... I had to spend money on rent, water, electricity, food, toiletries, accounts... I think that was the biggest adjustment for me, when it came to money. Otherwise, everything I was doing in the youth house, I am doing now.

What is the most challenging part of being independent?

Bills... There is nothing else.



When you think back, also considering the other youth, what do you think young people need in that process of preparing for independence?

I think SOS spoilt us in a way. With everything. I know that in the other children's homes, they did not get as much as we did. I think... some of the girls could have gone and worked and studied, because that prepared you... Once you are working and earning your own money... initially when I was I was still receiving an allowance, and if I wasn't receiving it I would have spent my money more wisely. We should have been required to pay something towards the upkeep of the house, because I remember the youth leader saying that the municipal bill is high... if we had to pay something towards that, we could have understood how much those things actually cost. Even though we were receiving an allowance, even just a small contribution, because that prepares you... it would have prepared me. We should have had more responsibilities.

What could SOS have done to prepare you, or others, better for independence?

I think that they did everything... I think they were spot-on with how they prepared us.

What advice would you give to any child care centre – what should they do to help prepare young people for transitioning to independence?

I think if there are more responsibilities. Also working and studying – that should definitely be required. For youth to go out and work, and experience that life outside the organisation, and learn to pay for things. Not just get everything like we did. We knew if something broke, it would have been replaced, and not from our allowances.

Do you think support should be provided after young people leave?

Definitely. Not for ever, but for some time.



What kind of support?

I think financial support; also, emotional support. I think, they should just, like, I know some of the youth want to go back to SOS and speak to the social workers there... because some of them do struggle. I think if the social workers were available... I don't know if that is allowed, where they can go and ask for help.

What are some of the things that other youth struggle with?

Finding a job, sometimes they struggle for a long time. Some of them feel that they can't go back [to ask for help].

What kind of help do you think they should provide? Any organisation.

Financial help, to some extent. Sometimes they just want to go back and speak. Some of the youth feel like that can trust the people at SOS, whereas they cannot always even trust their own family. For example, when something is bothering them; that's what I think. Anything, not just with regards to finance. Some of them have better relationships with SOS staff than with their own family members. I don't think they would be able to get that support anywhere else. Like with me, I grew up in SOS most of my life and left when I was 20 something, so the only relationships I really had was with SOS staff members... the social workers, the housemothers, the youth coordinators. Those were the people that we knew.

Do any of them keep in touch with you?

Some of the youth, yes. On Facebook. The social worker. The village director. And those are all people who have left SOS, people that I have a relationship with.

Is there any way that SOS keeps in touch with you?

No.



Do you think they should?

I think they should. Just check if people are OK, because I think not one of them, apart from you (interviewer) and Aunt M (employer) has ever been to my flat... they don't know where I live; they don't know how it looks. They don't know what my current situation is. They don't know what most of the youth's current situation is – those in the community that used to live at SOS. Once you leave, there is financial support, but no other involvement.

What can organisations like SOS do to keep in touch with young people?

Well, with social media everyone is using Whatsapp and Facebook, so perhaps Whatsapp groups can help not only SOS but also everyone else to stay in touch. This is something that a social worker can organise and can help them see who needs support. One of previous staff members, Uncle D started a Facebook group and some of the people are on the group, but I see it often takes a long time for people to reply or comment. Whatsapp is more instant, but perhaps not everyone would like to have that kind of instant contact. One of the challenges is that staff leave the organisation over time, and then we (adult care leavers) lose contact with them and the organisation.



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How can this be overcome?

Well, they could try to keep in touch individually with those who have left, but as people move around their contact details also change, so that could be difficult. I think most of the young people who stay in touch, do so because of their personal relationships with the staff and when they (staff) leave (the organisation), they lose contact.

Would you want to stay in touch with the organisation, even when the people you knew have left?

Yes, I think many of the youth would want to. Maybe they can organise an event once a year where everyone can catch up and get to know the new staff. Not everyone would be interested, I think not everyone is very positive about keeping in touch. But many would be interested – I think most of them don't know the new staff (at SOS Children's Village Port Elizabeth). But if it is planned well in advance, it would give people time to respond on Facebook and get in touch with the others.

How would SOS get in touch with those who have moved around, and their contact details are dated?

There is a kind of (informal) network. Everyone knows someone who has left; some of the people who were friends staying in touch – they still stay in touch. So, if there is enough time, I think most people can be reached. Even those who are not on Facebook can be reached, because they probably are still in touch with some of us. But not everyone keeps in touch, our lives have also moved on. I think not everyone would want to stay in touch. It might be a good idea to have something easy for those who want to stay in touch, like a Whatsapp group; and maybe once a year an event or gathering for those who just want to be updated or get some information. I think it is important to stay in touch, at least initially. I recently ran into a younger boy who left after me, and he was really struggling to cope. I don't know if he has any support.



Are there many young people who struggle like that?

Some of the people I stayed in touch with, yes. I really feel bad about it and I wonder who they have to help them and support them. Most of the people I have contact with are okay, but once in a while I hear about someone who struggles.

Is there something you wish you knew about independent living before you left SOS? What is your message to young people across the world who are preparing to leave care?

Study hard! Get a qualification, because without education... I know a lot of young people may think education is not that important, but it is what you need to survive. Once you have a qualification, a diploma or a degree, no-one can take that away from you. To me that is the most important thing. It is important to use all the opportunities you get. Don't take anything for granted – if you receive an opportunity, especially for education, use it!



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Reflections on Activities in a Youth Club in Northern Ireland

Hamido A. Megahead

As a result of a comprehensive policy review, the Northern Ireland government and Minister with Responsibility for Education launched the Model for Effective Practice (Department of Education, 2000). This initiative has given youth workers in Northern Ireland the opportunity to demonstrate that informal education is open to all young people.

A Theoretical Model

The model is designed as a framework that can be adapted to meet the needs of children and young people whatever their personal circumstances may be. It provides an important vehicle for the delivery of youth work, promoting young people's involvement in programme planning and delivery so that what is being offered is relevant, and at all times seeks progression in what is being experienced and learnt. The model is based on a revision of over ten years of experience and was an important milestone in the development of Youth Services in Northern Ireland. It is also a curriculum and programme development tool which involves a cycle of actions and engagements with young people which ensured they had an active part in planning, shaping and delivery of their own programmes (Department of Education, 1997).

Three core principles are identified in the model as underpinning the personal and social development of young people:



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- Participation
- Testing Values and Beliefs
- Acceptance and Understanding of Others

Three core values are also identified:

- Equality
- Diversity
- Interdependence

This model provides guidance and leadership to youth workers and is best viewed as a framework to develop approaches best suited to the age range, contexts and issues in which young people are engaged (Youth Service Partnership, 2003).

Beginning Interests in Youth Work

My interests in youth work in Belfast emerged as a result of my participation in completing a survey about youth volunteering. The findings of this survey research were used by Young Citizens in Action to help the Belfast Voluntary Service Bureau promote voluntary participation among youth in Belfast, Northern Ireland. I also participated in focus group research carried out by Belfast Volunteer Development Agency to examine Youth Participation as the first core principle of the Model of Effective Practice. The Model of Practice (Youth Service Partnership, 2003) in Northern Ireland is built on this core value of youth involvement. This includes the belief that “youth work starts where young people are at, supports their right to make choices, to develop at their own pace and empowers them to voice their own ideas and attitudes” (p. 10).



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Making Program Changes at the Youth Club

In 2014 I began working as an Assistant Youth Worker at a youth club in Antrim, Northern Ireland where my duties were to supervise the children and youth during evening activities and guide them toward higher levels of independence and responsibility. The program was funded by the North Eastern Education and Library Board in Ballymena, Northern Ireland. The club was open from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm every evening except Sunday. On any given day there were fifty to seventy youth who participated.

In my role I worked to introduce new activities for youth and young people as the existing activities seemed quite limited. For example, there were three snooker/English pool tables but only one was in regular use. We also had a disco/dance time but at most only two or three of the youth were interested in the music.

I was thinking about keeping only one snooker table and make use of the other two by replacing them with other activities. I was also thinking about changing the current music playlist with content more youth were interested in. I wanted to create some groups and make competitions and prizes for them. The new activities that I intended to introduce were a football team, cooking, painting, and art.

Two main factors were a part of my activity planning. First was the time limitation, as the activities were time limited and rotated. This rota allocation included the following activities:

- Disco session
- Tuck shop/snack bar session to purchase sweets, juice drink, and some other things to eat and drink
- Games area session
- Gym session
- Ice pool skating session



It felt that children came to the youth club without any idea of what they were going to do. They were crowded and there was little to no organization.

The second factor was that the Model of Effective Practice was not necessarily being applied. One reason was that there has been inability to find any time to practice the real youth work as indicated in the model, because the three hours each night were only confined to rota allocation mentioned above. The application of the Model in terms of its central theme of personal and social development of young people, its core principles and values (as noted above) were difficult to implement.

Reflections and Plans Moving Forward

Moving forward, I plan to enlist a qualified and specialized person in each activity to help the youth in their suggested activities. We want to elicit their response in terms of their goals and objectives of the specific activity, the achieving and implementing it and how they are going to evaluate their detailed programme. We will be applying the three values of the model during the three stages: (1) Identifying their goals and objectives of a specific activity, (2) Achieving and implementing the process, and (3) the evaluation process. In relation to equity, we will seek to include all the youth in the activities who want to participate. Regarding diversity, we will appreciate the differences between youth and make use of it to enrich the activities. Concerning interdependence, we will make connections between the different activities and create association between them as their success will be mutually dependent on each other and achieving a shared agenda or a vision and making fruitful social and community progress.

From the first day of my working in this youth club, I have always carried with me a notebook and pencil. I have always gone to each group of youth and asked their interests and their hobbies. I have recorded the youth names and their real interests and hobbies. I ask them: What are their goals and objectives of the specific activity? How they are going to achieve and implement it and how they are



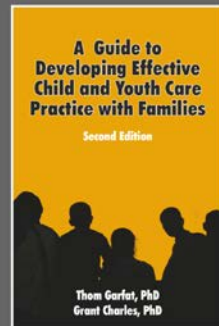
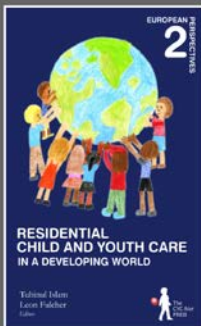
going to evaluate their detailed programme. My role is to be a guide who facilitates the process.

I now realize more developmental appropriate activities are needed and provided in a way that promotes independence and responsibility, rather than leaving the structure open to random influences. The Model of Effective Practice can help us in developing age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate activities for those participating in the youth club.

Supporting youth effectively means, in part, engaging them in life-long learning and activities that support their development. Quality youth work also engages young people and seeks their input in the design of services that support them. These are factors that need to be included in the ongoing development of programmes and youth clubs as we work to support young people.

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Bidding on Aprons

Jenny McGrath and Thom Garfat

During the recent 3rd Child & Youth Care World conference in Ventura, California we were hanging about (as CYC people are wont to do) looking at the variety of amazing items on bid for the CYC-Net silent auction. One of the items up for bid was an apron from Newfoundland and Labrador and this led to a conversation about aprons! Alas, only one of us won the



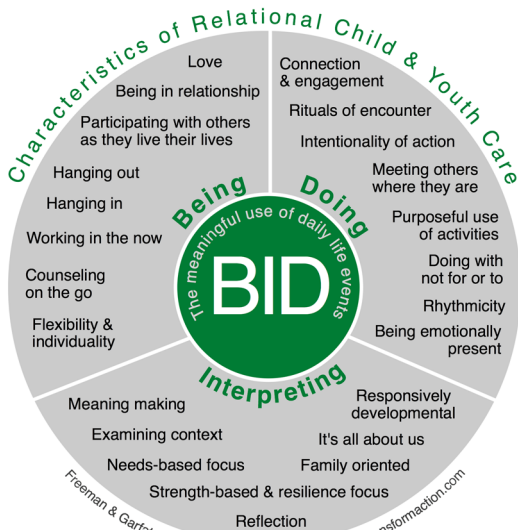
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apron but we both left with a new appreciation for the valuable versatility of them in our work.

So, why are we writing about aprons? Well, the more we talked, the more we realized that aprons are a nice addition to some aspects of child and youth care practice. And, we also realized, an apron is a potentially great tool for Child & Youth Care Workers. Hang on, we will get to the explanation!

The more we thought about aprons, their function, usefulness and potential meanings, the more we realized how they fit well with the Child & Youth Care approach to intervention: Being, Interpreting and Doing (BID). James Freeman (from Casa Pacifica in California) organized the characteristics of a Child & Youth Care approach under these 3 points of the process of intervention and, so, we use that as a framework for what follows. The diagram below represents this organization for those of you less familiar with it. (Freeman & Garfat, 2014).



So back to the multi-useful apron! The thing about aprons ... is that they can hold stories, stains, memories and history. And they can be such a resource for Child & Youth Care practitioners.

When we consider *Being* – being in relationship, in love, being flexible, participating with others when and where they live their lives, and working in the now, while hanging out or hanging in – we can find space for, and see the potential usefulness of, an apron. And the apron can find space for us.

An apron is not simply a fabric used to cover clothing, so it doesn't get stained (although that is certainly an important function) – an apron can be a way to demonstrate care. It can be a part of creating nourishment while planting seeds in a garden (seeds tucked in the pocket in front) or preparing a gourmet meal (that pocket will hold our spoons). It can be used to wipe tears from the eyes of a youth who is following her late mother's recipe for baking bread (and, if we have a blank apron, we can even write that recipe on the apron, personalizing the experience). It can send a message to a small child that it is okay to freely experiment with paint or glue or clay. It can *be there* 'with us; as a part of the experience, joining us together in the experience, especially if we each have our own aprons.

When we consider *Interpreting* – context, meaning making, needs and reflection – the apron can again be our friend. As we create moments for children and youth to take risks and try something new, we can observe their reactions, participation and questions. We can respond. If a recipe fails and the cake doesn't rise, an apron can be used to comfort or wipe a tear as we try to understand what this 'cake failure' means to the child and, indeed, to ourselves. Or when the cake is being decorated, it can be used to wipe the fingers covered in vibrant shades of icing as we celebrate this strength! As we wipe our hands on the apron, we can pause and reflect on the experience.

When we consider *Doing* – with intention and emotional presence - through activity, rhythmicity, rituals and engagement – we can trust that an apron will be a connector – between ourselves and the young person or between the young person and their history. Some grandmothers, for example, may have worn an



apron all day every day, ever present and ready for any task that may come. Some have several to match occasions or holidays – while others only have one – because it comfortable, durable and reliable. It is part of them and their story. We can learn much from these grandmothers! And if the young person had such a grandmother, we can use the apron as a vehicle through which to connect the young person to that memory.

We can use aprons to take risks (protecting us when working with oils and extreme heat), to establish routines (signifying that we are serious about the task at hand) and to encourage creativity (readying us for many projects). Even putting on the aprons can develop into a significant ritual. Aprons are often a medium of connection while cooking in the kitchen, preparing a birthday cake for a sibling, painting a memory box, working in the garden, fixing a bike, or molding clay into a vessel. Aprons also have practical uses that can help when planning activities. Pockets can hold important items such as tissues, pens, paintbrushes, and recipes. Or the bottom of the apron can be used to hold building blocks, eggs or flowers from the garden – and even a special treat for the young person. The possibilities are endless. Heck, they can even allow us to cover our heads, when the weather demands it.

Imagine gifting an apron when a child moves into a new foster or group home.



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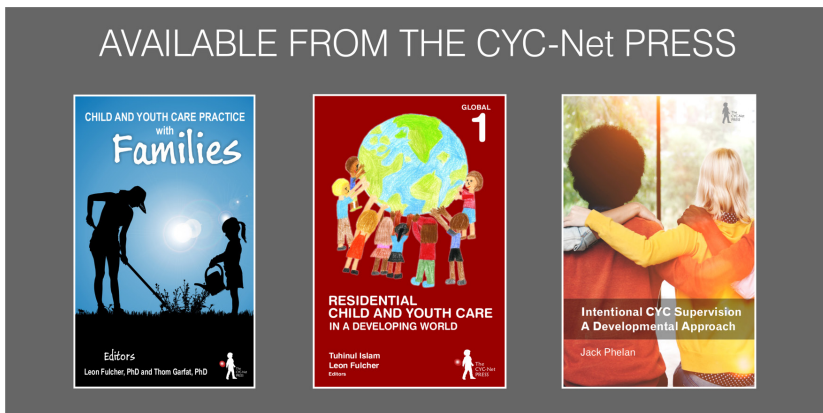
The apron can be the same pattern as the one worn by others or it can be a blank slate waiting to be designed. Or, together, the Child & Youth Care worker and young person can go and find an apron which reflects the child's personal expression of self. It can be used when teaching new things such as cracking an egg, measuring liquids or following a complicated recipe. But it can also be used to acknowledge the challenges of failing and the reward of experiencing success after trying again. Aprons help you to embrace the mess and continue on.

An apron can be used throughout the child's stay (coupled with a memory book of favourite recipes, activities and photos). It will hold memories and act as a transitional object when and if she moves on. Hopefully it will be part of many transitions and significant moments to come because the youth will see it as part of her story.

So please gift children and families aprons – as a means of connection – to ease a transition – to hold stories and become a vessel of memories (stains and all)!

Such a fine Child & Youth Care addition. We were thinking that maybe Child & Youth Care graduates should receive an apron, along with their certificate or degree!

Aprons are amazing!



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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

From Antarctica

Kia Ora Colleagues!
Have you ever come across old photographs and suddenly the timing of such a find, the photographic contents and associated memories are compelling? I have! Maybe a good novel or short story will build on from a chance finding of 6 old photographs!

I met this photographer, Ken Woolfe, in December 1986 when my wife Jane and I started as the Wardens, or Heads of Hall, for Weir House, Victoria University's oldest residential college. Ken was a Deputy Warden at the time and stayed on through our first 'teething' year of residential youth care with 265 18-year olds from throughout New Zealand and the Pacific.



This Photographer made 19 Visits to Antarctica where it is almost always cold



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Ken was a geology student at the time of our first meeting and over the years, he became part of the family and a fishing buddy. As happens, he shared experiences of growing up in rural NZ as the youngest in a family of four children emigrating from England, his father dying when Ken was young. Although dyslexic, Ken still achieved 1st Class Honours in Geology. His PhD research was based on fieldwork carried out in the Antarctic interior!

As a PhD candidate, Ken was invited to take on the role of Scoutmaster for one of the oldest Scout groups in the world – the First Kelburn 1909 Scout Group – as it moved into co-ed Scouting. Such a policy shift made scouting a well-supported family activity in New Zealand.



An essential feature of world climate but Antarctica wasn't always ice-covered.



Isolation is a daily feature of life for those living and working in the Antarctic



Learning to make do in challenging circumstances became a mantra for young men and women who were keen participants in Ken's activity-based learning approach to scouting. He shared his expertise with the outdoors, fishing, tramping, camping, trekking – always careful to manage risk-taking with our children! None forget how to make a 'mega-bivvy' shelter!

As with Antarctica, what lies beneath the surface is not always readily apparent. Ken was a role model as a successful young scientist contributing to world class research about earth-ocean-atmosphere-ice systems that contribute to global warming and climatic change!

The end of Ken's life was a shock and tragedy as he took his own life. These memories come crashing back in on me as I re-read words spoken at Ken's ceremony of re-remembrance just after New Year 2000, What can possibly be



Where Antarctic scientists live and work whilst carrying out research in the field



What stories lay beneath the surface of Antarctica's ice and snow?



said when someone close to us goes into the Australian bush alone and shoots himself? I still give Ken credit for adopt-ing a very pro-active method of ending his life, leaving his family and friends dazed and confused. In committing suicide the way he did, Ken's death by suicide left no uncertainty about his decision to move beyond what his present pain, panic or self-doubt!



Scouts Mark & Brett inspired to seek a Guinness Record for truffle-making!

Ken still accompanies me every time I go fishing, whether using the harling technique he taught or in selecting and tying on the flies! Like a pebble in a pool causes ripples into the wider sphere, Ken's life encouraged many young people to achieve beyond expectations!

I remember a Scouting activity that involved building a giant chocolate truffle that could be entered for a Guinness World Record. Mark and Brett didn't achieve the Guinness Record, just a photograph in the local newspaper. Fast forward in time, Mark is now a New Zealand Sports Medicine Consultant who sits on the FIFA International Medical Committee whilst Brett is a Grammy Award-winning musician and actor with *Flight of the Conchords*, and the winner of an Oscar in 2012 for Best Musical Score! Ken inspired dreaming outside the box!

Who did you talk to after learning about the death of a close friend by suicide and what suicide prevention skills have you learned or used in your work with young people?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken".



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Information

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John Digney – Tusla, Ireland

Maxwell Smart – Lothian Villa, Scotland

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In general:

- Submissions should be no longer than 2500 words
- The style of a paper is up to the author
- We prefer APA formatting for referencing
- We are willing to work with first-time authors to help them get published
- We accept previously published papers as long as copyright permission is assured
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Articles can be submitted to the email address below for consideration.

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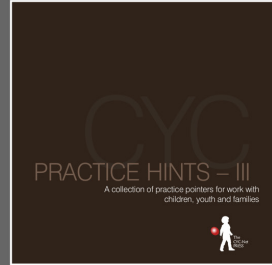
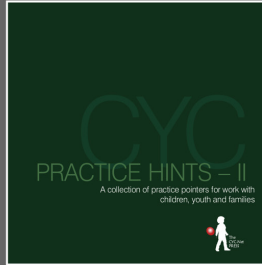
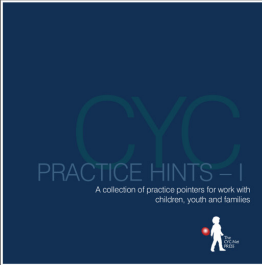
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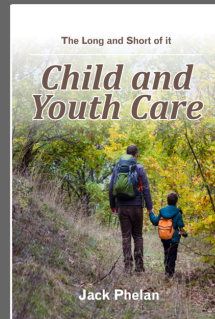
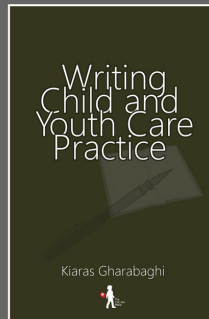
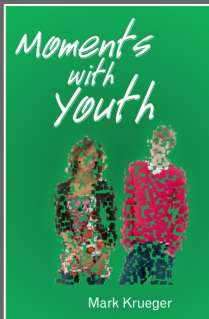
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A collection of pointers written by Brian Gannon
for work with children, youth and families



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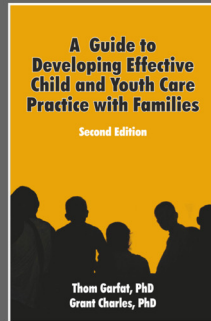
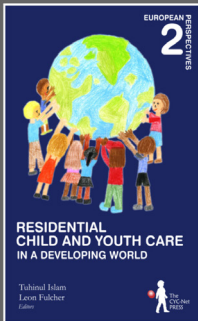


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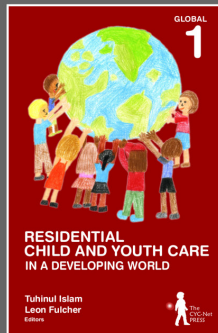
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