



Statement

June 5, 2017

For Immediate Release

Statement to Mark Child and Youth in Care Week – June 5 to 11, 2017

For the seventh consecutive year, British Columbia is marking Child and Youth in Care Week, a designation that honours the diversity and strengths of young people living in the care of the provincial government and acknowledges the challenges and obstacles that these children and youth face – and work to overcome – on a daily basis.

I am pleased to join in celebrating this week for the first time as B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth. The well-being of children and youth in care of the government is the major focus of our Office and of each and every member of our staff – so this week is of great significance to the RCY.

At any given time, there are about 7,000 children and youth in care in B.C. and several hundred more living away from their parents for reasons that are beyond their control. Our Office provides advocacy to many of these children, their families, caregivers, social workers and other various professionals who work with them.

As Representative, it is my job to watch out for children and youth in care – both on an individual case level through reports of injuries and critical incidents received from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and through the careful monitoring of the child welfare system as a whole. While RCY is often critical of the system, this is a week in which my Office also acknowledges all the excellent work done by those professionals every day for vulnerable children and youth in B.C.

There is still much work to be done, however. During the coming months, we will release a report that will make recommendations for how children and youth in care can be better served by the public education system. We will also continue to strongly advocate for stronger supports to youth who are aging out of care and we will continue to search for answers and advocate for changes so that B.C.'s Indigenous children and youth – vastly over-represented in the care system – and their families can be better served.

As Representative, I want every child and youth in care in B.C. to know that they have an ally in our Office – an ear willing to listen and hands outstretched to offer all the help that we can. Please call our Office at 1-800-476-3933 if you have a problem, a question or you require assistance.

Bernard Richard
Representative for Children and Youth

Contact:
Jeff Rud
Executive Director, Strategy and Communications
Representative for Children and Youth
250 216-4725
Jeff.Rud@rcybc.ca