

VOCYL ACHIEVEMENTS 2016-2017



What is VOCYL?

Victoria Opportunities For Community Youth Leadership (VOCYL) empowers youth from diverse backgrounds and with varying abilities to connect with one another in a meaningful way and develop leadership skills while sharing the message of inclusion.

VOCYL began in 2004 and is a vital part of Community Living Victoria (CLV). VOCYL's philosophy is that everyone has the right to belong—no matter their race, gender, size, age, religion, sexual orientation or ability. VOCYL members are passionate about sharing their knowledge and experiences as youth with and without disabilities in order to advocate for change in their local schools and communities.

Youth in this program meet bi-weekly to build leadership skills, deliver presentations to local schools, plan and participate in social and community events, make new friends and have tons of fun! VOCYL has 3 key objectives: Sharing the VOCYL Message; Building Leadership Skills; and Developing Youth and Community Connections. This report presents the accomplishments of VOCYL during the 2016 -17 academic year.

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Hope. Help. Home.

MESSAGE from the COORDINATOR



VOCYL has been making a difference in our community for over 13 years....how time flies when you are having fun! In that period, youth from all walks of life have been improving the inclusive atmosphere in local schools sharing their stories to encourage and inspire others.

This past year, VOCYL members used Youth Program Quality Initiative (YPQI) methodology to reflect on their own experiences within the program and how it can be improved so that members have more voice, choice and opportunities for full engagement. For this upcoming year, members chose to pursue more meaningful 'get to know you' activities and to improve group reflection and responsibility.

The impact VOCYL youth make in the lives of others will only increase with the improvements they are choosing to make this upcoming year. I look forward to seeing all they will accomplish.

Tracy Lemke

Community Living Victoria

A group of dedicated parents founded Community Living Victoria (CLV) in 1955. Today, as the largest not for profit community living service provider on Vancouver Island, CLV provides a range of support services to children, youth and adults with intellectual disabilities and their families.

CLV's work is guided by our values, experience and history and draws from strong roots in the community. CLV recognizes the rights of everyone to have a full range of life choices, including access to education, affordable and appropriate housing, leisure options, gainful employment and participation in the community. A healthy community encourages the involvement of everyone.

**For more information please visit:
communitylivingvictoria.ca**



Community Living
VICTORIA

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Spring Retreat

VOCYL and Power To Be Adventure Therapy collaborated to deliver a weekend of fun and leadership to VOCYL members at Camp Pringle in Shawnigan Lake. Power To Be led VOCYL youth through teambuilding exercises that encouraged trust, cooperation and fun! Card games, campfires, nature walks, movies and good food all contributed to making this a memorable weekend.



VOCYL's Super Duper Awesome Talent Show!

Slam poetry, hula hooping, mixed martial arts, dancing, rapping, magic tricks and singing were all a part of VOCYL's 2017 Talent Show. VOCYL members spent many hours perfecting their unique gifts and talents for our bi-annual talent show that raised over \$2500 for our program. "The Talent Show is an event all the youth look forward to," says coordinator Tracy Lemke. "It's not only a time for them to display their abilities, but an evening that brings about genuine connection and comradery amongst the youth. They love cheering one another on."



VOCYL's Organizational Goals

- Delivering inclusion awareness presentations to local schools
- Sharing personal stories
- Promoting Inclusion and belonging for everyone

SHARING THE MESSAGE OF INCLUSION AND BELONGING

- Hosting bi-weekly meetings
- Teambuilding
- Public speaking
- Project and event planning
- Fundraising

BUILDING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Collaborating with like-minded organizations
- Strengthening local partnerships
- Fostering meaningful connections amongst youth and with our community

MAKING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

FRIENDSHIP ~ INCLUSION ~ BELONGING ~ ADVOCACY

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

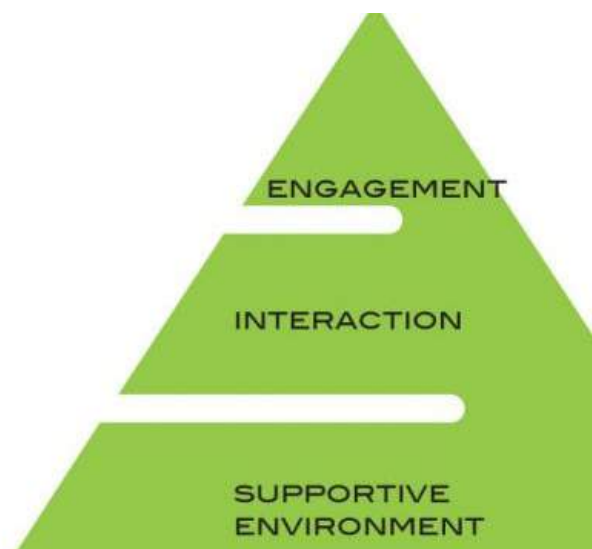
SAM MOYLAN



My name is Sam and I am 23 years old. I live in Victoria with my Mom. I love music. I play the piano and the harmonica and I am going to take guitar lessons in 2018. I work at Thrifty Foods one day a week as a courtesy clerk and I deliver the Victoria Newspaper and flyers for Costa Verde. I have lots of friends. My girlfriend Cassidy is also a VOCYL member and I love her a lot. I have been in VOCYL for 5 years. I started in VOCYL because someone told my Mom that it was a great program. I love it. We have fun and talk about interesting things - like how to be a good friend and to be proud of who I am. VOCYL helps me to learn how to be confident and teach others how to include everyone.

YPQI

Youth Program Quality Initiative is a comprehensive system for improving program quality. Community Living Victoria's youth programs have been partnering with YPQI for over 4 years in order to assess, plan and improve our services. Using YPQI principles and methodology, VOCYL developed an improvement plan focusing on youth voice, choice, leadership opportunities and group reflection.



TEAM BUILDING DAY

The VOCYL Team Building Day is an important event that provides opportunities for youth to work together as a team, develop leadership and communication skills and to get to know themselves and others in the group better. This year youth spent the day having fun and engaging in team building games.



VICTORIA/WEST SHORE UNITY AND DIVERSITY MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT

VOCYL implemented the third year of the Unity and Diversity Project at four middle schools: two in Greater Victoria; and two in the Westshore. Overall VOCYL youth facilitated almost 100 inclusion awareness presentations and they reached almost 800 grade six students with their message of inclusion and belonging.

School presentations focus on courage, kindness, reaching out, bullying, cliques, and challenging students to think about including people in their school who might have experienced a barrier to belonging. Many students don't think about the impact their actions have on others, both positive and negative. VOCYL members provide opportunities for youth to reflect on how they treat others and the legacy they are leaving behind.

VOCYL MAKES A DIFFERENCE

- 93%** of surveyed students said they understand better what it means to be inclusive and accepting of other people
- 77%** of surveyed students said that VOCYL helped them feel more comfortable around people with disabilities
- 97%** of surveyed students said they are committed to being kinder to others in school, even those that seem different than them
- 49%** of surveyed students said their peers seemed more accepting and kind to one another after the presentations

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

NINA NGUYEN



Hello I'm Nina Nguyen. I'm 18 years old and will be graduating from Oak Bay High in June 2018. This is my second year in Canada, as well as in VOCYL. Taking part in VOCYL not only brought me interesting experiences, but has been a great opportunity for me to get to know more people, make friends and practice my personal skills. It has been great getting to know youth with different abilities. I really admire their talents and strength to overcome many obstacles in life. When I first came to Canada from Vietnam, VOCYL helped me to overcome my worries, shyness and homesickness. In VOCYL everyone was so respectful and kind that I was able to step out of my comfort zone and open my heart to enjoy this new environment. It's my greatest pleasure to be a part of this amazing program. I am sad to say goodbye but I'll never forget the meaningful life lessons I have learned and the wonderful people I've known in VOCYL.

COMMENTS

"VOCYL taught me that you do not have to be a follower and that it's okay to stand alone."

**Dunsmuir
Middle School
Student**



"VOCYL is an impressive program! VOCYL makes a difference in how students see themselves and their peers. It is a people for people program."

Cedar Hill Middle School Teacher

"I loved how the youth with disabilities were brave to come and talk about their lives."

**Glanford Middle School
Student**

"VOCYL makes you feel better and more confident when you express your feelings and more comfortable to be there. I felt more confident after VOCYL and I stood up to a bully."

**Spencer Middle School
Student**

"VOCYL exceeded my expectations! Students are still talking about the experience. I am seeing more students reaching out to others."

Spencer Middle School Principal



Join the team!

Members of VOCYL have the opportunity to meet new people, participate in community initiatives, give presentations, plan social events and, of course, have fun!

**For more information,
please go to:
communitylivingvictoria.ca/vocyl**

We are looking for youth who...

- Are between 15–21 years of age
- Want to develop their leadership and presentation skills
- Believe everyone deserves to be accepted and included
- Like to meet new people
- Want to make a difference in their community
- Love to socialize and have fun

Thank you to our donors!



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Thank you to Telus for creating 2 videos that educate the community on VOCYL's impact and inspire others to live more inclusively.



Check out our videos at:

communitylivingvictoria.ca/vocyl-videos

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