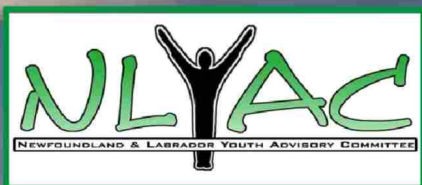


# **NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Annual Report  
2004-05**

# **THE PATH AHEAD**



## Provincial Youth Advisory Committee ANNUAL REPORT 2004-05



Honourable Harvey Hodder, M.H.A.  
Speaker  
House of Assembly

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to submit the Annual Report for the Provincial Youth Advisory Committee which details the Committee's activities from April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005.

The Provincial Youth Advisory Committee has been an invaluable asset in helping government develop programs and policies which address the issues facing the youth of our province.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Shelley". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Paul Shelley  
Minister  
Human Resources, Labour and Employment

The Youth Advisory Committee would sincerely like to thank the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment for the opportunity to represent youth on such a unique and worthwhile committee. Because of the Department's support, we have a voice in much of the positive changes for youth in our province. It is truly an honour to work with other youth who have such a passion and a sense of duty to fellow youth in our province.

2004-05 Youth Advisory Committee

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*This document was produced solely by the Youth Advisory Committee with support from the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment*

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## Highlights

- The Youth Advisory Committee identified three priority issues for 2004-05:
  - Rural Options
  - Healthy Choices
  - Social Decisions
  
- The Youth Advisory Committee participated in “Focusing on our Future: A Partnership in Rural Development,” hosted by Mariner Resource Opportunities Network Inc. (M-RON Inc.).
  
- The Youth Advisory Committee met with the Premier, the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment and the Social Policy Committee to discuss Government’s response to the recommendations presented in the Committee’s 2003-04 report.
  
- The Youth Advisory Committee discussed youth issues, separately, with the following Senior Government Officials:
  - Premier Danny Williams
  - Hon. Joan Burke, Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment
  - Mr. Ross Reid, Program Renewal Secretariat
  - Ms. Alison Earle, Rural Secretariat
  - Ms. Karen Alexander, Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment
  
- The Youth Advisory Committee held meetings in Labrador, Southern, and Eastern Newfoundland.
  
- The Youth Advisory Committee met with many agencies and organizations, some of which include: the Labrador West Youth Centre Board, Futures in Newfoundland and Labrador’s Youth! (FINALY!), and Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador Students’ Union (MUNSU).

## Introduction

As members of the Youth Advisory Committee, we are pleased and proud to present our third Annual Report to the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

*“Government must continue with the campaign regarding abuse of narcotics. Highly addictive and dangerous narcotics are prevalent and have intertwined themselves within our society. I feel that action should be continued as it is necessary in preventing youth from developing lethal habits.”*

Robyn Frampton, Carbonear

This has been another busy and exciting year for the Committee. We:

- continued to work within our ‘flat’ organizational structure in which all members are equal participants and treat each other with respect;
- used a strategic approach to identify and tackle the issues facing the youth of our province;
- undertook research and consultations on a wide range of issues;
- held regional meetings in Labrador City, Grand Bank, and St. John’s and visited with local groups to discuss topics of mutual interest; and
- maintained ongoing communications with the Minister, departmental officials and Government’s liaison committee.



**Alison Earle, ADM, Rural Secretariat and  
Committee member Susan Taylor**



## Achieving Our Mandate

The Provincial Government established the Youth Advisory Committee in June 2001 to provide a forum for the ‘open discussion of key issues affecting the young people of Newfoundland and Labrador’ and to advise the departments responsible for youth services and education on Government’s youth-related programs and policies.

The names of members of the Youth Advisory Committee were announced on September 7th, 2001 and the first organizational meeting was held that day.

In September of 2003, new members were added to the committee to replace those whose terms were completed (Appendix A). Six new members will be added in 2005 to fill the vacancies. This will be done by a public call for applications at which time the Minister will select the six new members.

A *Terms of Reference* was adopted in 2003 which outlines our structure, the appointment of members, our responsibilities as members of the Youth Advisory Committee, the role of our mentors, and the conduct of our meetings, among other initiatives (Appendix B).



*Ross Reid, Deputy Minister responsible for Program Renewal*

Throughout this past year, we were successfully able to undertake our two primary roles; (1) to discuss youth-related issues, and (2) to advise the Minister on possible changes in provincial programs and policies affecting our generation.

In order to address the many issues we feel are outstanding, we focus on three main categories of issues per year. Last year, we focused on the three strategic categories of *Alternate Education, Supportive Services, and Healthy Lifestyles*.

*“I feel that sex education should begin at a young age as this is the best way to assist in prevention. Young people need to feel they can talk about sex with their teachers as this is important when they have nobody else to talk to.”*

Susan Taylor, St. John’s

This year, our three strategic categories are:

### **Rural Options**

Under this category, the Youth Advisory Committee focuses on issues relating to accessing programs and services in rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador. Particularly, the Committee discusses the availability of information with regard to making viable career decisions, the cost of attending post-secondary for those living in rural communities, accessing schools for community use, the introduction of the Rural Secretariat, and the importance of long-term plans for sustainability of rural communities.

### **Healthy Choices**

Under this category, the Youth Advisory Committee continues to explore opportunities for youth to lead healthy lifestyles and increase the availability of health programs and services. The Committee feels implementing recommendations contained in the Oxycontin Task Force Report, controlling the amount of available illegal narcotics and the accessibility of tobacco, providing Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) training, increasing the amount of healthy nutrition in schools, and increasing youth activity through reinvesting in recreation infrastructure as well as increasing the skill set of recreational professionals would assist in combating the problems facing our province as it relates to healthy choices.

### **Social Decisions**

Under this category, the Youth Advisory Committee discusses various options to assist youth in making informed social decisions. Specifically, the Committee discusses increasing the information available regarding the Student Financial Aid process, becoming more creative in using the Income Support Program, evaluating minimum wage on a continual basis, reducing barriers faced by single parents, working collaboratively to meet the needs of youth who are between the ages of 12 – 18 years, and the importance of the early identification of issues in an effort to become better prepared in our province.

*“Increasing the distribution of information to youth in the province will enable us to make informed decisions which will benefit the province as a whole.”*

Sarah Arnott, St. John’s



Over the course of this past year, we collected information and consulted widely on these themes. However, these are not the only topics we covered in our discussions. We expect to re-assess our priorities on an ongoing basis as other, more critical, issues are before us.

In the meantime, through our efforts, we were able to suggest realistic options for several key policy matters under active consideration by the Provincial Government throughout the past year. We will now turn to these and other matters in detail.

## Recommendations

The Youth Advisory Committee has developed the following series of recommendations based on our deliberations and activities over the past year:

1. The Youth Advisory Committee feels the following recommendations are realistic

**Rural Options:**

A. Government should consult industry leaders in developing a vehicle to provide information regarding the current and future state of the fishing industry for the purpose of allowing youth to make viable career decisions within the fishing industry.

B. The Youth Advisory Committee recommends that schools be available to community organizations to provide opportunities for community extracurricular activities outside of regular secondary school hours. It is important for the community that schools be available in all areas of the province, especially in rural communities.

C. An education travel grant should be available for every post-secondary student in the province to defer the cost of travel to and from a student's permanent residence and the institution. The allotment of the grant should be individually assessed and based on the permanent residence of the student and the cost of travel. This grant shall be allotted regardless of whether a student loan is rewarded. In the case that a student is issued a loan, this grant shall not interfere with the calculation of student loan money for which the student is eligible.

D. The Youth Advisory Committee congratulates Government on the introduction and implementation of the Rural Secretariat. The Rural Secretariat should consult with the Youth Advisory Committee on a continuous basis to ensure youth voices are a part of the Rural Secretariat as they move forward with their goals, objectives, and initiatives.

E. The Youth Advisory Committee is concerned with the lack of a long-term plan aimed at sustaining rural communities ensuring rural communities have access to programs and services.

2. The Youth Advisory Committee feels the following recommendations will provide **Healthy Choices** for the youth of our province:

A. The Youth Advisory Committee applauds Government for completing the *Oxycontin Task Force Report* and feels it is a priority for the recommendations in this report to be actioned. Specifically, it is necessary to develop a centralized patient database, for use by doctors and pharmacists, to monitor the use and abuse of Oxycontin and similar drugs.

B. The Youth Advisory Committee recommends that the Department of Justice take action to strengthen laws, increase resources, and introduce an improved education process to address the availability of illegal narcotics in communities and their detrimental effects on youth in our province.

C. The Youth Advisory Committee applauds Government on the legislation preventing smoking in public facilities. However, it is essential to continue to develop legislation to prevent youth from developing an addiction to smoking. Currently, it is illegal for youth below the age of 19 years to purchase tobacco and tobacco products. The Youth Advisory Committee recommends that Government also make it illegal for youth below the age of 19 to use tobacco products.

D. The Youth Advisory Committee applauds Government on its contributions to the School Lunch Association. However, it is necessary for these programs to be available to youth in all schools in the province. Government should also consider developing a similar program available to youth in programs during the summer months.

E. The Youth Advisory Committee feels that Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) training is a necessity in all youth employment and would like to see mandatory OH&S training as part of any youth employment and be provided by the Government.

F. Government should reinvest in recreational infrastructure to combat the increasing problem of the age of recreational facilities, which in turn would combat the issues around youth inactivity.

G. The Youth Advisory Committee recommends that the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation as well as the Newfoundland and Labrador Parks and Recreation Association (NLPRA) work together to develop a series of professional development certifications for recreation professionals in the province. These certifications can be carried out through the public post-secondary institutions. It is believed that these certifications will increase the skill set of recreational professionals and increase their ability to offer quality programs to youth and the community at large.

H. The Youth Advisory Committee recommends that the Department of Tourism, Culture, and Recreation take a lead role in reviewing and implementing the strategies identified in the 2002 report entitled, *Regaining Our Health*.

3. The Youth Advisory Committee feels the following recommendations will prepare the youth of the province to make good **Social Decisions**:

A. Increased education is needed within the secondary and post-secondary systems concerning the Student Financial Aid process and the impact student loans have on graduates. Government must ensure that students are better informed and aware of the financial aid process (e.g. acquiring a loan, repayment process, appeals process, etc.) as well as other financial opportunities or grants.

B. The Youth Advisory Committee recommends that the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment be creative in using its Income Support Program, specifically targeted at youth, to enhance their educational and employment opportunities.

C. The Youth Advisory Committee recommends that Government continue to evaluate the minimum wage and strive to make it equal to the minimum wage in other provinces of Canada. It is also recommended that financial support to youth employment programs increase accordingly to reflect the increase in the minimum wage.

D. Government should continue to introduce and implement supports, such as those offered by the Single Parents Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, which are designed to support single parents who want to work but face social and economic barriers.

E. The Youth Advisory Committee is concerned with the availability and accessibility of programs and services targeted towards youth, ages 12 – 18 years. As youth are facing many social barriers towards accessing education and employment, it is necessary for government and community agencies to provide enhanced programs and services in partnership and consultation with the Department of Education, Department of Justice, Department of Health and Community Services, and the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment. It is also necessary that programs and services reflect the real social barriers faced by youth in our province.

F. Government should be more proactive in monitoring social issues in other provinces for the purpose of utilizing an increased preventative approach to dealing with potential issues in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Youth Advisory Committee feels that the early identification of issues, such as Oxycontin abuse, could lead to better preparedness throughout our province.

4. The Youth Advisory Committee also offers some additional recommendations:

A. The Youth Advisory Committee recommends continued consultation with Government throughout the Program Renewal process.

B. Government should implement a process for evaluating its partnership with not-for-profit organizations to ensure elimination of duplication of services and that gaps in services are addressed. The Youth Advisory Committee feels it is necessary for Government to increase partnerships with not-for-profits in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

C. The Youth Advisory Committee encourages Government to revisit the recommendations contained in the Royal Commission Report entitled, *Strengthening Our Place in Canada*, particularly in reference to our cultural heritage.

D. The Youth Advisory Committee endorses the recommendations from the *White Paper on Public Post-Secondary Education in Newfoundland and Labrador* and encourages Government to expedite the development of those recommendations. The Committee feels that affordable and accessible post-secondary education as well as enhanced employment prospects for graduates is extremely important issues facing our youth today. The implementation of these recommendations will help combat these issues.

## Conclusion

The Youth Advisory Committee has gained the reputation of a key organizational structure by offering meaningful advice to the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment as well as other government agencies on youth programs and policies. The solid recommendations outlined in this report are the result of tireless efforts given by the Youth Advisory Committee members. The dedicated commitment as volunteers has exemplified our sense of obligation to the province's youth and the policies and programs by which they are governed.

We are very appreciative of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment as well as Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for valuing our input, seeking further discussions, and most importantly, providing much needed support. We have been very successful in the past in identifying as well as discussing issues related to youth. Given the opportunity and resources, we very much anticipate another productive year in assisting the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment and the Government of Newfoundland in designing and modifying policies and programs.

We thank the Minister and Provincial Government for providing us with an avenue to discuss issues affecting the lives and well being of our peers.

*"A youth's education is a powerful thing, having the ability to either hinder or develop a future. Everyone deserves a fair and equal chance at this opportunity in life, and where we choose to live should not influence that opportunity. Whether urban or rural, communities deserve the right to fair and equal education."*

Jacenta Smith, Raleigh



## **Appendix A: Terms of Reference**

### **NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

#### **SPONSORING DEPARTMENT:**

Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment

#### **STRUCTURE:**

- fifteen (15) youth members and four (4) adult mentors;
- youth members are between the ages of 15 – 29 years;
- adult mentors are 29 years and above;
- no less than two third (2/3) youth members and at least one (1) adult mentor will constitute a quorum for a Committee meeting

#### **DURATION OF APPOINTMENT:**

The term of youth members will consist of two (2) or three (3) year terms. Ten (10) members of the Committee will serve for three (3) years and five (5) members will serve for two (2) years.

The term of adult mentors will consist of two (2) mentors serving for three (3) years and two (2) mentors serving for two (2) years.

#### **APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS:**

All youth members and adult mentors are appointed by the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment in consultation with staff responsible for the operations of the Committee.

The selection of replacement members will be cognizant of many issues including: gender, regional location, ethnic representation, and other.

#### **REQUIREMENT OF MEMBERS:**

All youth members and adult mentors must make an effort to attend all Youth Advisory Committee meetings and do the necessary preparation for each meeting.

#### **REMOVAL OF MEMBERS:**

If a member misses three (3) consecutive meetings without notifying the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment staff representative regarding their inability to attend, the member may be replaced.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUTH MEMBERS:**

1. attend all meetings (where possible);
2. prepare for issues to be discussed;
3. serve as a member of a sub-committee;
4. participate as an equal member;
5. a member leaving the province for more than six (6) months per year must resign their position;
6. a one-time leave of absence may be granted for up to six (6) months by the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY OF MENTORS:**

1. attend all meetings (where possible);
2. prepare for issues to be discussed;
3. serve as a member of a sub-committee;

4. advise and direct the discussions and recommendations of the Committee as a member.

**MEETING RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Youth Advisory Committee's philosophy is that participation should be a learning experience whereby every member is given an equal opportunity in:

**Chairing of all meetings** will be the responsibility of members, both youth and adults, in the host region for the meeting. The chair structure should be decided during the completion of the previous meeting.

**Recording of discussions** is the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment staff representative at the meeting.

**Preparation of the agenda** is the responsibility of the member(s) from the next host region with support from the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment staff representative.

**Summary of each meeting** will be compiled and distributed by the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment no longer than one (1) month after a meeting.

Information pertaining to the next meeting will be distributed through the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment two (2) weeks prior to the next meeting date.

Travel arrangements and accommodations will be coordinated through the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

**YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT:**

- the annual report will follow the standard structure for an annual report;
- the completion of the report will be a reflection of the minutes from the Youth Advisory Committee, along with direct recommendations and general discussions;
- the format for the presentation of the annual report and the exact content of the report will be designed by a Sub-Committee of the Committee in conjunction with the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment staff.

## Appendix B: Member/Mentor Biographies

### **Sarah Arnott, St. John's**

Sarah graduated from Memorial University in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science. A former player with the Memorial University of Newfoundland women's soccer team, she is currently a member of the coaching staff. She currently works for Memorial University as a programmer analyst.

### **Jamie Clements, Grand Bank**

Jamie is originally from Grand Bank on the Burin Peninsula of the province and now makes his home in St. John's. Jamie graduated from Memorial University with a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Geography. Jamie was a member of Memorial University's Students' Union for several years and held the position of Vice President Academic.

### **Robyn Frampton, Carbonear**

Robyn graduated from the University of Ottawa with a Bachelor of Arts, Communications (Honours) in April 2002 and has since been employed with the Regional Economic Development Board (REDB), Mariner Resource Opportunities Network Inc. (M-RON Inc.) as a Youth Career Coach. Robyn is an active volunteer and has been a member of the Youth Advisory Committee since June 2003.

### **Chris Hatcher, Grand Bank**

Chris is from Grand Bank and has been involved with many youth organizations and programs over the past number of years. He volunteers on boards and committees, participates in open discussions and forums, and actively debates youth-related issues. Having successfully completed a Community Development program, he is currently finishing a three-year Programmer Analyst diploma at the College of the North Atlantic. When Chris is not participating in youth-related events, he is very busy running his own small IT consulting business, successfully putting his skills to work creating his own job opportunity in our province.

### **Dan Hill, Sheshatshiu**

Dan currently works as the Co-Director for Education for the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation in Sheshatshiu, Labrador. "My new job gives me more ways to help my own people to better their lives, by helping them further education after high school," he explains. The 28-year-old has a diploma in Microcomputer Service and Network Support from Academy Canada and he has also studied at Memorial University from 1994-1996.

### **Joe McGrath, Bishop's Falls**

Joe attended Acadia University studying Physical Education and majoring in Sport Management. He currently works for the Town of Bishop's Falls as the Recreation/Youth Coordinator and has been involved with the Youth Advisory Committee since June 2003.

**Bronwyn Rideout, Kippens**

Bronwyn Rideout, of Stephenville, is in her final year of studies at MUN where she is completing her BA (Hons.) in Greek and Roman Studies. On campus she is an active member of Burke House and Vice-President of the MUN Classics Society and off campus she has taken the healthy lifestyles approach to heart and has competed in many road races, including the 2005 Tely 10 Road Race.

**Jacenta Smith, Raleigh**

Jacenta is a third year nursing student at the Centre for Nursing Studies. Leading an active volunteer life in a rural community, she has been involved in many organizations including the RCMP Youth Advisory Committee and the 774 St. Anthony Air Cadet Squadron. Once finished her degree, Jacenta hopes to continue her volunteering and spend time in similar worthwhile organizations.

**Susan Taylor, St. John's**

Susan is a graduate of the Labour College of Canada making her the first woman from the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Union in Newfoundland and Labrador to graduate. She is presently employed at the Delta Hotel and Conference Centre and holds a Unit Chair position in her Local with the UFCW. An active member with her union, she is also a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour's Youth Committee. In the past couple of years, Susan has participated in various internships as a union representative and is well educated in areas dealing with labour standards and human rights. She has worked extensively with the Workers Compensation Board and has been involved in advising on the recent legislation for return to work programs. Susan believes that youth need a voice and is a very enthusiastic member of this Committee.

**Beverley Kirby, Stephenville (Mentor)**

Beverley is the Director of the Community Education Network, a community-based partnership of agencies which provides an umbrella framework for learning projects and programs in Southwestern Newfoundland. Youth initiatives have been a primary focus for the Network. Beverley has a background in education and community development and holds Masters Degrees in Linguistics and Adult Education.

## Appendix C: Newfoundland & Labrador Fact Sheet

The outlined statistics have been compiled from Federal and Provincial Government agencies.

Provincial Youth Population (15-29 years)	104,662
% of Total Population	20.1%
Out Migration:	
15 – 19 years	-532
20 – 24 years	-895
Paid Workforce (15 years and above)	241,500
Youth Workforce (15-24 years)	35,595 (14.7%)
Provincial Employment %	45.1%
Youth Employment %	32.6%
Provincial Unemployment %	21.8%
Youth Unemployment %	33.1%
% of Provincial Income Support Clients (15-29 years)	27.5%
% of Youth in School (15-19 years)	62.3%
High School Drop-out Rate (15-19 years)	11.5%
Average Tuition (per year)	\$2,606.00
Average Student Debt	\$20,400.00
Post Secondary Completion:	
Memorial University of Newfoundland	80%
College of the North Atlantic	
1-2 Year Programs	65%
3 Year Programs	50%
Youth Without a High School Diploma Not Currently Enrolled in an Educational Program	12,497
% of Total Youth Population	12.4%
Youth Crime per 1000 youth (15-24 years)	36.4
Teen Pregnancy per 1000 women (15-19 years)	32.7
Induced Abortions per 1000 women (15-19 years):	
Total	7.5
Hospital	2.9
Clinic	4.6
Attempted Youth Suicides per 1000 youth (15-19 years)	31
% of Youth Dealing with a Mental Health issue (12-24 years)	20%

## Appendix D: List of Persons/Agencies Consulted

Person/Agency Consulted	Topic(s) Covered
Premier Danny Williams	Presentation of the 2003 – 2004 Annual Report
Minister Joan Burke (Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment)	Presentation of the 2003 – 2004 Annual Report
Ms. Alison Earle (Rural Secretariat)	Mandate, goals, and objectives of the newly established Rural Secretariat
Mr. Ross Reid (Program Renewal)	Overview of the Program Renewal process and future prospects
Mr. Geoff Chaulk (Canadian Mental Health Association)	Overview of mandate, goals and initiatives, and a discussion of mental health issues facing many youth in our province
Social Policy Committee	Presentation of the 2003 – 2004 Annual Report
Ms. Karen Alexander (Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment)	Overview of the Income Support Program
Dr. Wayne Ludlow (Department of Education)	Issues and concerns to be included in the <i>White Paper on Public Post-Secondary Education in Newfoundland and Labrador</i>
“Focusing on our Future: A Partnership in Rural Development” (Mariner Resource Opportunities Network Inc. - M-RON Inc.)	Panel presentation regarding youth issues in rural Newfoundland and Labrador
Labrador West Youth Centre Board	Issues facing youth in Labrador
Futures in Newfoundland and Labrador’s Youth! (FINALLY!)	Mandate, goals, objectives, initiatives, and issues facing youth in Newfoundland and Labrador
Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador Students’ Union (MUNSU)	Issues facing post-secondary students in Newfoundland and Labrador