
YOUNG PEOPLE
HAVE RIGHTS
WE SUPPORT THEM

Representative for Children and Youth
2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT



CONTACT



ᓄᓕᓐᓴᓴᓄᓐ ᓴᓄᓐᓴᓴᓄᓐ
ᓄᓕᓐᓴᓴᓄᓐ

NUTAQQANUT INULRAMIRNULLU
UQAOTIKHAANIK

REPRÉSENTANT DE
L'ENFANCE ET DE LA JEUNESSE

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Our business hours are Monday to Friday
8:30am to 5:00pm EST, excluding public holidays.

TOLL-FREE
1-855-449-8118

IN IQALUIT
867-975-5090

FAX
867-979-0444

STREET ADDRESS
Third Floor, Qamutiq Building,
Iqaluit, NU

MAILING ADDRESS
PO Box 488, Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0

EMAIL
contact@rcynu.ca

WEBSITE
www.rcynu.ca

This report is available online at
www.rcynu.ca.

Copyright Representative for Children
and Youth's Office.

ISBN 978-1-55325-303-7

Photography:

This annual report uses stock photos and photos by RCY staff and other professional and amateur photographers. Photos that are not stock are noted with photo credit.



ᓄᑕᓐᑕᓐᑎᓐᑎᓐ ᐱᓐᑎᓐᑎᓐ
ᐱᓐᑎᓐᑎᓐᑎᓐ

NUTAQQANUT INULRAMIRNULLU
UGAGTIKHAANIK

REPRÉSENTANT DE
L'ENFANCE ET DE LA JEUNESSE

REPRESENTATIVE FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

September 15, 2015

The Honourable George Qulaut
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
PO Box 1200
Iqaluit, NU, XOA OH0

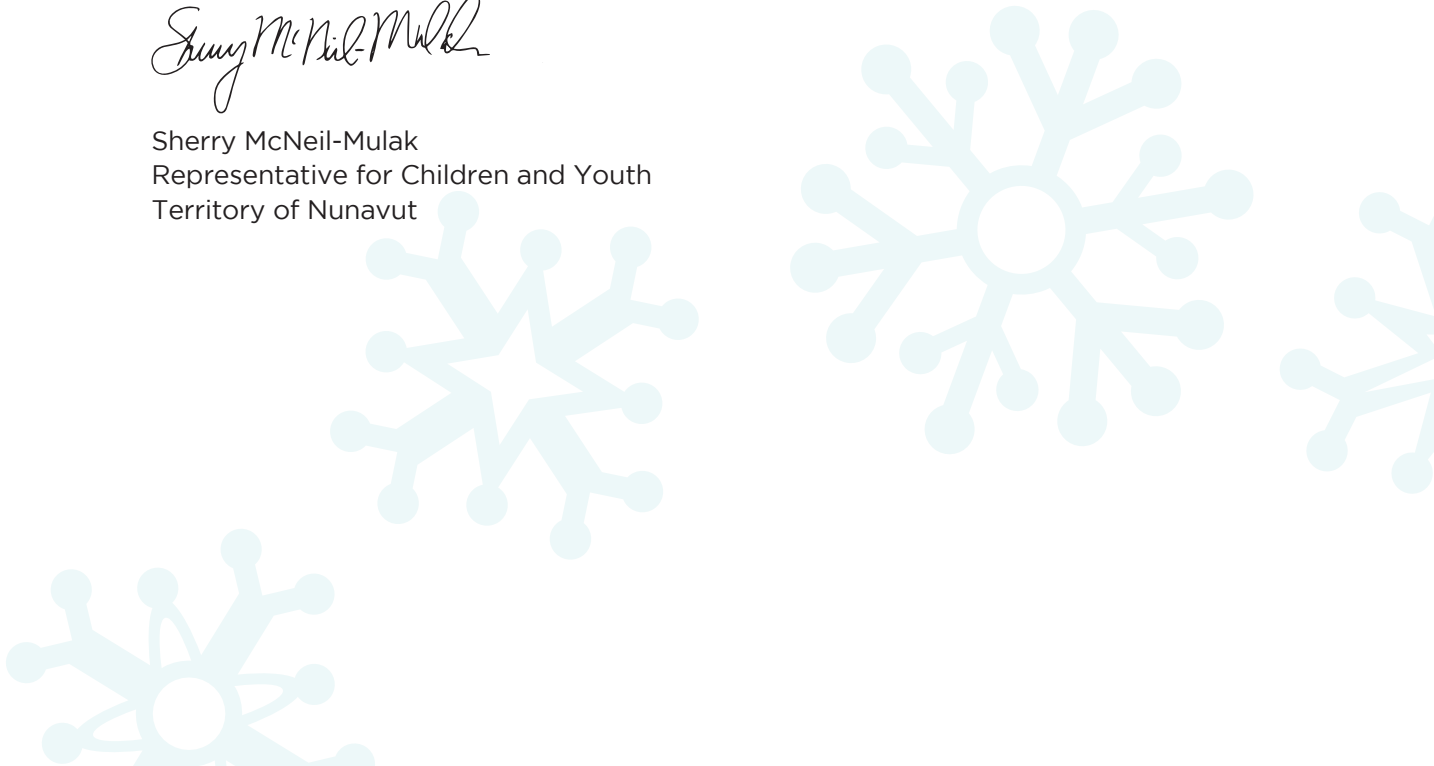
Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is my pleasure to present the *2014-2015 Annual Report of the Representative for Children and Youth* to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

This document reports on the nine-month period from June 16, 2014 to March 31, 2015. This report has been prepared in accordance with section 35(1) (h) to (j) of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

Respectfully,

Sherry McNeil-Mulak
Representative for Children and Youth
Territory of Nunavut



...a welcoming, safe and supportive
place that encourages young people to be active

participants

in matters that affect them. A place that is committed to
listening and working
with young people to raise issues that are
important to them to the attention of government...



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Representative	1
Acknowledging Our Office's History	3
About Our Office	4
Our Mandate	4
Our Mission and Vision	4
Our Objectives	5
Who We Are	5
What Guides Our Work	6
Our Core Services	8
Inuit Societal Values and Our Work	12
2014-2015: Establishing Our Office	15
Staffing	15
Investing in Our Team	16
Engaging Key Partners	17
Major Projects	20
Inquiries Related to Our Core Services	23
Looking Ahead to 2015-2016	25
Budget Report	26

To the children and youth of Nunavut,
I am often asked who I work for and my answer is simple.

**I work for you: the children
and youth of this territory.**

Our entire team works for you. We take our responsibility to you seriously and we have worked carefully over the past nine months to establish an office that will meet your needs, and allow us to advocate for your rights and protect your best interests.

You are the driving force behind the

p a s s i o n

we have for our work. You are the future of this great territory. You are who we are accountable to. It is an honour for us to represent your voice.

Sherry McNeil-Mulak



MESSAGE FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE



As I write this, we are nine months into our office's development and anticipate opening our doors to serve the children and youth of Nunavut on September 30, 2015. It is a true pleasure to have this opportunity to briefly pause and share with you the work we have accomplished so far, as well as provide some insight into the work ahead.

Since 1999, many people have contributed to establishing an independent child and youth advocacy office in Nunavut, however, work to physically open the office only began on June 16, 2014. On this day, the RCY's office consisted of one person, myself, and one piece of paper, the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, the foundation and guide for all the office's future work.

As this annual report for 2014-2015 attests to, the RCY team has accomplished much since June 16, 2014. Our team has now grown to five dedicated staff members and we have completed many of the essential tasks required to open our doors with confidence on September 30, 2015.

Our efforts and accomplishments in 2014-2015 will ground our office's work for years to come. As such, we have been mindful that the foundation we are building requires proper and accurate planning for the future structure to hold. During this period, only those parts of the *RCY Act* that support office development were in force. Holding back other sections of the *RCY Act* until the office opens has given our staff the time and focus required to build a solid foundation. It has also given us an opportunity to apply a creative and thoughtful approach to office development, while tailoring the office to the distinct needs of young Nunavummiut. I am grateful and acknowledge the hard work that each member of our staff has brought to their work, as well as the support of their families along the way.

As we turn our attention to our second fiscal year, our team is excited for the work ahead: to further develop our office and to begin directly supporting and working with young Nunavummiut when we open on September 30th, 2015. I do not underestimate some of the challenges before us. However, I am committed to use my term wisely to navigate these challenges and drive changes that will ensure the rights and interests of young Nunavummiut are upheld.

It is an honour for us to represent young Nunavummiut and we promise to apply passion and diligence each and every day to the work we do on their behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sherry McNeil-Mulak". The signature is written in a cursive style and is located below the word "Sincerely,".

Sherry McNeil-Mulak
Representative for Children and Youth

1999

Debbie Gray, a Cambridge Bay teacher, raises the need for a territorial child advocate and **Keith Peterson**, the mayor of Cambridge Bay at the time, **publicly calls for a territorial child advocate.**



2009

Premier Eva Aariak and her government identify the creation of an **independent representative** for children and youth as **a key project.**

OUR OFFICE HISTORY AT A GLANCE

2012

The first draft of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* **is completed.**



2013

September 17, 2013
The *Representative for Children and Youth Act* is **passed by the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.**



2014

June 2, 2014
Sherry McNeil-Mulak is appointed as **Nunavut's first Representative for Children and Youth.**

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR OFFICE'S HISTORY

Debbie Gray, a Cambridge Bay teacher, first made the case for a territorial child advocate in 1999, the same year that Nunavut became a territory. She felt an independent advocate could help the new government meet children's unique needs.

Keith Peterson, the mayor of Cambridge Bay at the time, soon raised the issue publicly. In response, the new Government of Nunavut began exploring the idea in 2000. It agreed children's needs required special attention and support. But it did not immediately commit to creating an independent child advocate's office.

Over the next nine years, subsequent governments continued work on the issue. The Children's First Secretariat was created. This government working group later expanded to include non-government organizations and became known as Nunavut's Promise to Children and Youth.

In 2009, the territorial government, under then-Premier Eva Aariak, released its Tamapta Mandate 2009-2013. This document identified the creation of an independent child and youth representative as a key project. This was a major step forward. The Government of Nunavut had now committed to establishing an independent representative for children and youth.

After this priority was identified, the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs led a steering committee of different government departments and other key stakeholders, including Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. Many meetings and consultations were held. These included work with Tuttarvit, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajit, youth coordinators, and other Canadian youth advocacy offices, UNICEF Canada, community health committees, various front-line workers and the public.

In 2012, the first draft of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* was completed. On September 17, 2013, the *RCY Act* was passed in Nunavut's legislature. On June 2, 2014, Nunavut's first Representative for Children and Youth, Sherry McNeil-Mulak, was appointed. The RCY's office will open its doors on September 30, 2015.

It's clear that between 1999 and 2015, many Nunavummiut – from government leaders and employees to members of the public – contributed their passion and gave their support to the creation of our office. Our entire team respects the responsibility we now hold to represent the voice of children and youth in Nunavut and to ensure the Government of Nunavut protects and advances their rights. We feel privileged to bring life to the hard work of those that came before us.



ABOUT OUR OFFICE

As a new organization, many Nunavummiut have questions about what our role is and the work that we will do when we open. How exactly can we help children and youth? How do we differ from the Government of Nunavut? How do we work with the Government of Nunavut? This section of our annual report provides an overview of our role, responsibilities and the core services we will provide when we open.

OUR MANDATE

The primary purpose of the Representative for Children and Youth's office is to advocate for the rights and interests of children and youth in relation to Government of Nunavut services. We work to ensure government is both accountable and responsive to the needs of our territory's young people.

Our mandate includes a number of specific duties outlined in section 3 of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*.

- ✳ Ensure children and youth's rights and interests (individually and collectively) are protected and advanced and that government departments and designated authorities¹ hear and consider the views of children and youth on matters that affect them.
- ✳ Ensure children and youth can access government services and that government considers their concerns about those services.

OUR MISSION

We are an independent child and youth advocacy office that ensures the Government of Nunavut supports and protects the rights and interests of young Nunavummiut.

OUR VISION

All children and youth in Nunavut know their potential, value their identity and feel supported and empowered to express their views in matters that affect them.

- ✳ Help children, youth and their families communicate with government service providers to improve understanding between them.
- ✳ Inform the public about the rights and interests of children and youth and the Representative's role.
- ✳ Give advice and recommendations to government on how to make its programs, services, laws and policies better for children and youth.

¹ A designated authority is an agency, board, commission, corporation, office or other body named or described in the *RCY Act*. For simplicity, only the words "government department" appear throughout this annual report to represent both terms.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1 Establish the RCY's office in a manner that supports the provision of quality advocacy services to children, youth and their families.

2 Build the office's capacity to provide exceptional advocacy services by investing in staff training and development.

3 Increase Nunavummiut's awareness and understanding of the RCY's office so that children, youth and their families feel comfortable seeking our support and services.

4 Foster a collaborative working relationship with Government of Nunavut departments to improve programs and services for Nunavut's children and youth.

5 Establish the office's presence on the national child and youth advocacy stage to work on issues of mutual concern and access the support of other Canadian advocacy offices.

WHO WE ARE

Each and every one of our staff represent the spirit of our organization: welcoming, collaborative and supportive. This spirit guides how we work with each other and how we will work with children, youth and their families.



Photo Credit: Megan Blair

RCY staff with Elder Alice Joamie and translator Mali Curley.

Our team includes the Representative and the following eight positions:

- * a director of child and youth advocacy services
- * a manager of communications and public awareness
- * three child and youth advocacy specialists
- * an intake specialist
- * a senior systemic investigator/researcher
- * a critical injury and death investigator

With the exception of the Representative, staff are members of the public service as defined in the *Public Service Act*.

Figure 1 shows the office's original and updated organizational structure. The RCY's office was originally allocated a total of six positions (green boxes). However, after assessing our core service needs, the office requested and received three additional positions in March 2015 (outlined boxes).

As of March 31, 2015, the office had staffed five of the six original positions and we anticipate the office will have a full staff complement in place by the winter of 2015.

RCY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

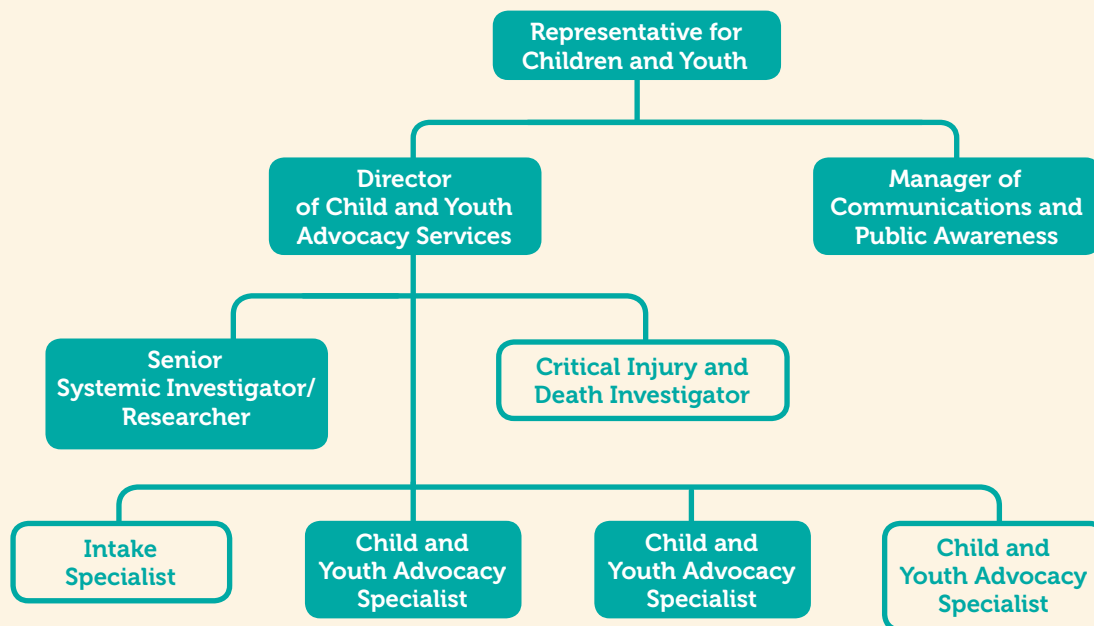


Figure 1: Organizational Chart

WHAT GUIDES OUR WORK

Key documents and concepts guide the work of the Representative for Children and Youth. These include: the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Inuit societal values and the voice of the child.

THE REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACT

Nunavut's *Representative for Children and Youth Act* describes key principles that guide the RCY's office in carrying out its work. The principles below apply to everything we do.

- ✳ The best interests of children and youth must be followed in decisions and actions that affect them.
- ✳ Culture and traditions strengthen young people and their families.
- ✳ The Representative must respect and support Inuit culture in decisions and actions involving Inuit children and youth.

- ✳ Families are the main source of care and guidance for children and youth.
- ✳ The Representative must respect family relationships and, wherever possible, help to make the relationships stronger.
- ✳ Wherever possible, the Representative must try to have a child or youth's family participate and agree with decisions or actions that affect the child or youth.
- ✳ The Representative must use cooperation and respect when resolving concerns that affect children and youth.

THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* also plays an important role in guiding our office's work. Our staff use the Convention as a constant resource. It directs our development work and will also guide our work once the office opens.

The Convention contains many articles that set out the rights of the child. Child rights are the essential things all children are entitled to because

they will help them live a life of dignity and thrive. Rights in the Convention include such things as the right to healthy food, the right to a safe environment, the right to participate in family, cultural and social life, and the right to education. The Convention also identifies the roles and responsibilities adults and governments have in supporting these rights.

INUIT SOCIETAL VALUES

The *RCY Act* clearly states the Representative must apply Inuit societal values when performing duties and in exercising powers. Our team respects and appreciates the emphasis Inuit societal values place on the importance of family, community and collaboration.

To ensure the RCY's office incorporates Inuit societal values in its work, the office uses the same eight guiding principles that the Government of Nunavut has adopted to guide its work.

Page 12 of this report provides more details on how we applied Inuit societal values to our development work in 2014-2015.

Because children and youth are more vulnerable than adults, they sometimes **need special support and protection**. So, in 1989, the United Nations adopted the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The document has been described as enshrining **"the rights of every child without exception to a life of dignity and self-fulfillment"** (Nelson Mandela, 2000).



Photo Credit: Carmen Barrieau

THE VOICE OF THE CHILD

The voice of the child essentially means that young people who have the capacity to form opinions have the right to express them. This right is repeated throughout the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The Convention also states that governments must consider a child's opinion, according to the child's capacity.

The voice of the child reflects a new appreciation for young people's role in decision making. The voice of the child means children are not just the subject of government decisions. Instead, they are encouraged to get involved in important matters that affect them. There is a growing awareness that young people's opinions can help build a better future for everyone.

So how does this concept guide our office? We like to say that all our work is driven by the voice of the child. When we advocate for individual children, the child or youth directs our work, according to his or her capacity. When we carry out reviews, we also seek input from children and youth. They are, after all, the people who are most affected by the legislation, policies, programs and services we review.

OUR CORE SERVICES

The RCY's office provides four core services to children, youth and their families. These are:

- ✿ individual advocacy
- ✿ systemic advocacy
- ✿ reviews of critical injuries and deaths
- ✿ communications and public awareness

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

Individual advocacy is when a child and youth advocacy specialist works directly with a child, youth or family to address the child or youth's needs.

Typically, the child or youth involved guides this work, according to his or her capacity. How we work with a young person and/or their family depends on the situation. Individual advocacy can include:

- ✿ helping a young person understand his or her rights
- ✿ providing information on government policies, services and programs
- ✿ coaching a child or youth in how to advocate for him or herself
- ✿ working with children, youth and their families to access government services
- ✿ expressing the interests of a young person to a service provider
- ✿ participating in meetings between a young person and government worker
- ✿ working with a young person to resolve a concern with a government department

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY: A SAMPLE CASE

What an Individual Advocacy Case Might Look Like When the Office Opens

A 14-year-old youth contacts the office to speak to a child and youth advocacy specialist. The youth wants help with her foster care placement. She tells the advocacy specialist that she is living in a foster care placement in her home community. She shares that she is happy with her current placement but would prefer to live with her extended family in her home community.

After more discussion, the advocacy specialist learns that, at the time the youth was first placed in foster care, no extended family lived in her home community. Since then, however, an aunt has moved back to the community. The aunt is willing to take care of her niece and assume the role of foster parent.

The youth tells the advocacy specialist that she has spoken to her social worker on several occasions about her preference to live with her aunt. However, she still remains in her original foster placement and does not understand why.

Together, the advocacy specialist and youth make an advocacy plan. They decide the advocacy specialist will contact the social worker to discuss the youth's concerns.

The advocacy specialist and the social worker meet to discuss the youth's concerns. The

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

advocacy specialist focuses on the importance of upholding the youth's rights. One right is to have the child's opinion heard and considered in decisions being made about her life, such as her foster care placement (Article 12 of the Convention). A second right is to maintain family relations as a part of the child's identity (Article 8 of the Convention).

Together, the social worker and advocacy specialist explore the feasibility of the option the youth presented. This may or may not result in a new placement for the youth, however, the youth is given the opportunity to have her views heard and to understand why that option may or may not be possible.

Helping individual children and youth with issues is very important, however, it is equally important to identify why these issues exist and to make recommendations that can lead to system-wide improvement. When we work on broad issues that affect many children we call this systemic advocacy.

Systemic issues often happen when government policies and practices interfere with the services and programs meant to support children and youth. After identifying a systemic issue and researching its causes, the RCY's office can then make recommendations to government on its services, programs, policies and legislation. These recommendations can then help bring about improved services for children, youth and their families.

Characteristics of a Systemic Issue

- * affects many children or youth
- * often happens when government policies and practices are not working
- * if left alone will probably happen again
- * may require an organization to change its policies, practices or even legislation

Systemic advocacy can be informal or formal. Informal systemic advocacy mainly uses discussion and collaboration to bring about change. Formal systemic work is more in-depth. Formal systemic reviews often result in a written report to the government department involved. Our office can then choose to issue these reviews as public reports.



SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY: A SAMPLE CASE

What a Systemic File Might Look Like When the Office Opens

RCY staff are reviewing individual case files and they notice a trend: 38 per cent of cases over the last six months involve health-care referrals. They examine the files more closely and discover the majority of these cases show children and youth weren't able to access a particular pediatric specialist in a timely fashion.

Staff had previously resolved the individual cases. But they decide they should now examine the cases together – to see if a bigger underlying problem needs the office's attention.

RCY staff develop a plan. The plan includes a detailed review of the individual case files in question and a meeting with the hospital's manager of clinical services. The meeting will help RCY staff better understand the referral process. It will also allow them to share and

address any concerns they have about the referral process and its impacts on the health of children and youth, namely with respect to a child's right to health and health services (Article 24 of the Convention) and the right to survival and development (Article 6 of the Convention).

Depending on the nature of the issue, it is possible that it may be resolved in a fairly prompt and informal manner with the manager of clinical services. If not, our office can consider proceeding with a formal systemic review.

REVIEWS OF CRITICAL INJURIES AND DEATHS

Our office also has the ability to review when a child or youth receiving government services dies or experiences a serious injury. These reviews provide meaningful opportunities to learn from mistakes. They are not about placing blame. Rather, they are opportunities to understand what went wrong and to initiate changes to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

We recognize these reviews are highly sensitive. They require the proper knowledge and capacity to conduct thoroughly. For these reasons, we are currently developing this area of our work with particular care. We anticipate this area of our work will not be legally in force when our office opens on September 30, 2015.

Key Reasons Why Reviews of Critical Injuries and Deaths Are Important

- ✱ These reviews can help identify systemic issues, significant risk factors and trends in child or youth injuries and deaths.
- ✱ These reviews can help identify and advocate for needed changes in legislation, policy and practices, and encourage more preventive health and safety efforts.
- ✱ These reviews can help raise the public's awareness of societal issues affecting the health and safety of children and youth and encourage the public to advocate for change.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

As a new office in Nunavut, we have a very clear duty to raise Nunavummiut's awareness of the office's existence, its role and its core services. We recognize educating and engaging our many stakeholders is key to building broad understanding and support for child rights and our office's work.

Our communications and public awareness work takes many forms:

- ✳ presentations to schools, communities and front-line service providers
- ✳ annual and other public reports on our work
- ✳ ongoing contact with community organizations
- ✳ developing and maintaining an up-to-date website
- ✳ reaching out and responding to media requests
- ✳ involving young people directly in our work
- ✳ working with government to develop understanding of how child rights can guide program and policy development



Photo Credit: Odile Nelson

INUIT SOCIETAL VALUES AND OUR WORK

The Government of Nunavut has adopted eight key principles to ensure Inuit societal values are respected in its work. We use these same eight principles to guide our own work. We began examining how to apply these values in practical and concrete ways in 2014-2015. Below are some practical examples of how we have incorporated Inuit societal values into the development of the office so far.

- * We are making a commitment to regularly train RCY staff in Inuit societal values and Inuit history.
- * We include Inuit societal values as a standing agenda item at our regular RCY team meetings. This helps us foster discussion on how we apply these values to our work.
- * We highlight these values throughout the office's operational policy and procedure manual in order to guide how staff approach their work.
- * We have approached the Department of Culture and Heritage to seek input from Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajit (IQK). The RCY's office is scheduled to meet with IQK during their fall 2015 meeting in Iqaluit.
- * We have begun preliminary work on the selection of Elder advisors who will support and assist our office in:
 - * dispute resolution
 - * Inuit culture and societal values in relation to office duties.
- * We are committing to working collaboratively with government departments to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and youth.

Our office applies the following eight guiding principles to its work.

AAJIIQATIGIINNIQ

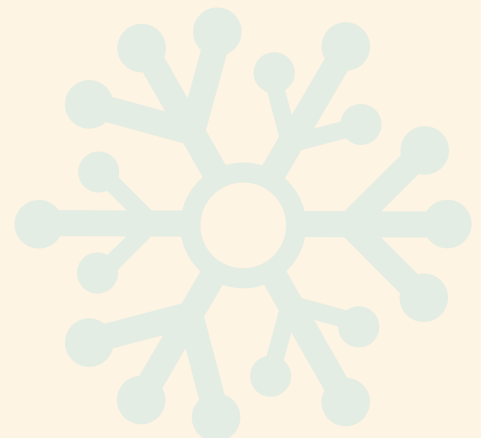
This value means decision making through discussion and consensus.

Children and youth help guide our decision making. Our office ensures young people are involved in our work. We encourage them to be partners in resolving issues with government. We always begin our work with government departments through respectful discussion.

PILIMMAKSARNIQ

Pilimmaksarniq is about learning and mastering new skills through observation, mentoring, practice and effort.

We are committed to look for opportunities to encourage children and youth to acquire new skills. One of our key areas of work, individual advocacy, includes coaching young people in how to advocate for themselves. We also provide opportunities to young people to act as youth advisors to our office.



TUNNGANARNIQ

Tunnganarniq emphasizes the role being open, welcoming and inclusive plays in fostering positive relationships.

We are dedicated to taking the time for people, making ourselves available and creating an environment where children and youth are comfortable seeking support. Our office also seeks to be inclusive through ongoing and open communication with stakeholders and the public.

PILIRIQATIGIINNIQ

This value emphasizes working together for a common cause.

Our office recognizes there are many organizations and people dedicated to the well-being of Nunavut's children and youth. We are committed to listening to alternative perspectives. We also recognize the value of communication with the public, our key partners and stakeholders to build a sense of common purpose.

INUUQATIGIITSIARNIQ

Inuuqatigiitsiarniq guides us to respect and care for other people and our relationships so that we can all live together in harmony.

We are committed to addressing issues facing young Nunavummiut in a way that respects all those we work with. We show respect and care for young people by encouraging them to express themselves, according to their age and maturity. We respect the role healthy families and communities play in raising children to become whole human beings.

AVATITTINNIK

Avatittinnik is about respect and care for the land, animals and the environment.

Inuit enjoy a long-standing relationship with the land. Our office recognizes the benefits of this relationship for children today. We are committed to supporting stakeholder efforts to nurture this. Our office is also committed to environment-friendly practices. We believe respecting the environment today demonstrates respect for future generations.

PIJITSIRNIQ

This value is about serving and providing for family and community. It's about leading through doing for other people. It's about serving others for the greater good.

We are here to serve young Nunavummiut with the hope of supporting Nunavummiut as a whole. We do this in a way that cultivates service excellence. We believe supporting the rights of young Nunavummiut benefits whole families and communities.

QANUQTUURNIQ

Inuit highly value *qanuqtuurniq*, or being innovative and resourceful.

We embrace *qanuqtuurniq* to ensure we consider all solutions to issues affecting individual young people. We are committed to practicing alternative problem solving and lateral thinking. Our systemic advocacy work also provides us with opportunities to make innovative recommendations. Such recommendations can improve the well-being of young people as a whole.

From the onset, we identified staffing a culturally and professionally

**diverse team
as a key priority.**



2014-2015: ESTABLISHING OUR OFFICE

Establishing a new office is a large and complex undertaking. In the case of the RCY's office, we have identified more than 200 medium to large-scale tasks that we need to complete for our opening. Some of these tasks are interrelated. Other tasks are independent of each other but must happen at the same time.

To organize these many tasks, the RCY team adopted a project management software tool. This tool allowed team members to effectively communicate the progress and status of assigned tasks on an ongoing basis. This, combined with regular staff meetings, has allowed the office to successfully manage these tasks. We are currently well-positioned to open the office on September 30, 2015.

Though we have much work ahead of us still, this section of our annual report highlights our key development work over the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

STAFFING

From the onset, we identified staffing a culturally and professionally diverse team as a key priority. We recognized that we needed such a team so that we could provide expert and thorough advocacy services to Nunavut's children, youth and their families.

We began this process by researching how other advocacy offices are staffed and organized. Our office was originally allocated five positions, plus that of the Representative. However, we carefully reviewed our staffing complement and determined that we would need additional positions to effectively fulfill our mandate. As a result, late in the fiscal year, we presented a case for three additional positions to support our intake process, individual advocacy work and reviews of critical injuries and deaths. We are happy to report that the office was granted these three new positions.

Many people expressed interest in the office's positions. There was a particularly high level of interest from residents outside of Nunavut. Table 1 shows the number of people who applied to each position, based on information provided by the Department of Finance.

Recognizing the importance of a culturally representative team led the office to cancel the competition for the second child and youth advocacy specialist position due to Article 23 considerations under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The office re-advertised this position after working closely with the Department of Finance's staffing division to re-draft the job advertisement and explore alternative ways to promote the job posting. The goal was to draw more interest from Nunavut Land Claims beneficiaries. The competition for this position closed prior to the end of the 2014-2015 fiscal



RCY staff meeting with the Saskatchewan Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth in January 2015.

Photo Courtesy Saskatchewan Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth

TABLE 1: STAFFING OF ORIGINAL OFFICE POSITIONS²

POSITION	NLCB (NUNAVUT LAND CLAIMS BENEFICIARY)	NU RESIDENT	NON- RESIDENT	TOTAL APPLICANTS	START DATE
Director of Child and Youth Advocacy Services	3	23	49	75	Nov. 24, 2014
Manager of Communications and Public Awareness	1	5	33	39	Jan. 23, 2015
Child and Youth Advocacy Specialists – two positions advertised (one re-advertised due to Article 23 considerations)	6	20	64	90	Mar. 9, 2015 (one hire)
Senior Systemic Investigator/Researcher	1	3	22	26	Apr. 7, 2015 (Staffing process complete March 19, 2015)
Child and Youth Advocacy Specialist (re-post due to Article 23 considerations)	10	23	103	136	Pending

year and resulted in greater interest. However, the competition process itself was still active as of March 31, 2015.

We believe two factors contributed to meeting our staffing goals in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. The first was our office’s readiness to assume responsibility for some human resource tasks involved in the staffing process, such as writing job advertisements and translations. This was done with the support of the Department of Finance and in recognition of the high volume of competition files assigned to staffing consultants. The second factor was the support we received from the Government of Nunavut’s Department of Finance and the Nunavut Housing Corporation. For example, we worked with one staffing consultant on all our office’s competition files. This collaboration led to an in-depth understanding of our office’s needs and timelines and contributed to the RCY’s office filling its positions in a timely manner. Our office appreciates the support received from both of these organizations.

INVESTING IN OUR TEAM

The Representative for Children and Youth’s office is the only organization in Nunavut that will specialize in advocating government for children’s rights and interests. This is a great responsibility. As such, in 2014-2015 we began planning a wide array of staff training initiatives to build our staff’s capacity and knowledge.

We believe that by investing in our staff and supporting them in their new roles, the office will be well-positioned to provide expert advice and assistance to young Nunavummiut and their families.

The RCY’s office identified the following priority areas for its initial staff training: the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, cultural awareness and Inuit societal values, child rights education and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). Training for the *RCY Act* took place in 2014-2015. We have scheduled all other training initiatives

² Table 1 provides information related to the original positions allocated to the RCY’s office. We will initiate competitions for the additional three positions acquired in March 2015 in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

STAFF TRAINING AGENDA FOR 2015-2016

APRIL 2015

- * Inuit Societal Values

MAY 2015

- * Compassion Fatigue
- * Joint Investigation of Child Sexual Abuse

JUNE 2015

- * Inuit History
- * Client Service
- * Child Rights Impact Assessment

JULY 2015

- * RCY Policy and Procedure Manual

AUGUST 2015

- * Case Management System
- * Additional *RCY Act* Training

SEPTEMBER 2015

- * Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

NOVEMBER 2015

- * Child and Human Rights Extension Certificate
- * Media Training

a tremendous amount of insight and knowledge from both of these visits and are applying what was learned to the ongoing development of our office. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Ontario and Saskatchewan advocacy offices for so generously giving their time and sharing their expertise with us.

ENGAGING KEY PARTNERS

CHILDREN & YOUTH

A fundamental child right is the right for children and youth to voice their opinions on matters that affect them. Recognizing this, our office is committed to involving children and youth in its development and work. We want to ensure that children and youth – our main and most important stakeholders – have ongoing opportunities to guide our work. Throughout 2014-2015, we both created and participated in opportunities to engage with young people.



Winner Katie May Anawak-Dunford

In September 2014, the RCY's office launched a child and youth art contest to design our office's logo. In an effort to reach children and youth across the territory, we placed ads in northern

papers and on television. We also distributed information about the contest to schools and hamlet offices. A contest website was also created and an advertisement played at the Iqaluit-based movie theatre. By the contest's end, the office had received approximately 70 entries. A selection panel made up of representatives from the RCY's office, the Arctic Children and Youth Foundation and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association (QIA) then selected the winners, which were announced on National Child Day, November 20, 2014.

Figure 2: Staff Training 2015-2016

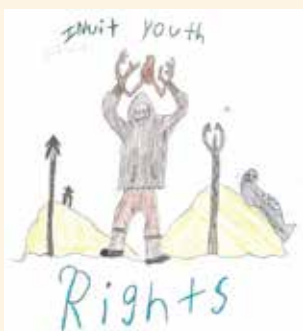
for 2015-2016, the majority before office opening. Figure 2 presents a snapshot of training we have planned for 2015-2016.

Additionally, in January 2015, staff participated in two site visits with other advocacy offices. The first was a three-day visit with the Ontario Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. The second visit was with the Saskatchewan Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth. Staff gained

Katie May Anawak-Dunford (age 12, Iqaluit) won the art contest's grand prize. Finalists included: Becky Makittuq (age 14, Gjoa Haven), Gina Timar (age 12, Iqaluit) and Dennis Taqqaoguk Jr. (age 12, Igloodik). All children and youth received a letter of thanks acknowledging their participation.



From left to right: Finalists Becky Makittuq, Gina Timar and Dennis Taqqaoguk Jr.



Over the reporting period, the RCY's office also made a priority of attending events involving children and youth. Again, we focused on attending events with youth during our development phase because we recognize their voice should guide our work. Three events to highlight include the 2014 Youth Parliament, the Wisdom to Action outreach event sponsored by the Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts Institute, and the Arctic Youth Ambassador Forum. Participating in these events provided us with early opportunities to hear directly from youth. We learned about the issues that matter to them. We also met with key stakeholders that work directly with children and youth.

GOVERNMENT OF NUNAVUT

One of the key reasons the RCY's office exists is to ensure the Government of Nunavut meets the needs of our territory's children and youth. Clearly, our success in this area will depend on developing strong relationships with the Government of Nunavut. It is critical to our work that all Government of Nunavut employees understand the role of the RCY's office and their legal responsibilities under the *RCY Act*.

We began building our relationship with the Government of Nunavut soon after the Representative took office. In September 2014, the office sent letters to all government departments and agencies. The letters introduced our office and requested assistance in developing our office's inventory of Government of Nunavut child and youth programs and services. The inventory will serve as an important reference for our staff when providing advocacy services.

In addition, during the 2014-2015 fiscal year our office began organizing meetings with deputy heads and staff of GN departments. These meetings will be opportunities to introduce the RCY's office, discuss the *RCY Act's* legal requirements, and respond to questions or concerns. We will also use these meetings as an opportunity to advise departments that our

WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOUTH:

Issues that matter most

- * availability of cultural programming and opportunities
- * access to recreational facilities and programs
- * addressing the high rate of suicide
- * the importance of education
- * environmental protection
- * the impact of poverty and the high cost of living on Nunavut families

office will begin an information campaign directed at government service providers in the summer of 2015.

Finally, the office also attended the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts hearings on September 16 and 17, 2014. These hearings involved the committee's review of the Auditor General of Canada's *2014 Follow-Up Report on Child and Family Services in Nunavut*. This gave our office the opportunity to increase our insight into issues raised in the report. It also allowed us to learn about the Department of Family Services' (DFS) plan to address the many outstanding recommendations from the 2011 and 2014 Auditor General of Canada's reports. The RCY's *2015-2018 Business Plan* has identified monitoring of the DFS's progress on these reports as a priority.



WHAT THE CCCYA DOES

The CCCYA is an alliance of children's advocates who have mandates to support the rights of children and youth and to promote their voice. Through the Council, the advocates identify areas of mutual concern, and work to develop ways to address issues at a national level, in the absence of a national children's commissioner.

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATES (CCCYA)

Any new organization can benefit from the support and knowledge of similar bodies – organizations that are already firmly involved in the work at hand and have years of experience and knowledge to share. Recognizing this, the RCY's office reached out to the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA) in 2014-2015. The Council is an alliance of provincial and territorial advocates that have legal mandates to support child rights. The RCY's office officially obtained a membership seat on the Council in September 2014.

So far our membership on the Council has proven invaluable – particularly in our early months of office development. During this time, our Canadian counterparts have willingly shared resources and advice and have answered our staff's questions on countless occasions.

Of particular interest is the memorandum of understanding (MOU) that we signed with other members of the CCCYA in March 2015. The MOU helps ensure children and families will receive seamless and timely advocacy services when they move between provinces and territories. The smooth and uninterrupted provision of advocacy services is particularly important to the children and youth of Nunavut who are often sent out-of-territory for specialized care. We are pleased

jurisdictions across Canada wish to support children and youth across geographical borders.

We are also excited to have begun work with the Council on issues of mutual concern that require national attention. In 2014-2015, we began working with the Council on the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in care. In August and November of 2014, the CCCYA urged the federal, provincial and territorial governments to immediately take actions to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care across Canada.



The CCCYA called for:

- ✱ a national initiative to measure and report on child welfare, education and health outcomes for Aboriginal children and youth
- ✱ the creation of a national Aboriginal children and youth participation initiative, with training on child and youth rights, leadership, voice, and civic participation
- ✱ the creation of a special conference of federal/provincial/territorial first ministers, with Aboriginal leaders and child and youth delegates
- ✱ the creation of an independent national children's commissioner with particular emphasis on Aboriginal children and youth

The RCY's office wishes to express our sincere appreciation to the Council's members and their offices. Their mentorship significantly contributed to our office's growth and development in 2014-2015. Their ongoing advice and insight is helping our team move confidently toward our office opening on September 30, 2015. Our office looks forward to working with the Council in the years ahead.

MAJOR PROJECTS

The RCY's office began several major projects in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Each of these projects is integral to our office delivering effective core services.

OPERATIONAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

A policy and procedure manual is vital to any well-functioning and effective organization. Such a manual allows an organization to connect its mission and vision with its day-to-day operations. As a new office, it has been a priority to produce such a manual. We are well aware of its value in establishing clear and consistent processes for delivering our core services. We also know that such a manual will be an important tool in setting expectations for when we open.

In 2014-2015, our staff carried out considerable research for the office's operational policy and procedure manual. We reviewed the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* and surveyed policy and procedure manuals provided by other advocacy offices across Canada.

However, while our manual pulls from the work of other advocacy offices, the manual we are developing is unique to our needs and environment. One of the manual's most unique features is how it regularly references Inuit societal values. The manual consistently links specific procedures to pertinent Inuit societal values. It then explains how those actions align with and support the value. For example, the manual's section on the office's intake process states that a person's first contact with

our office is an opportunity for staff to practice *tunnganarniq*: fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive. Guidelines around how to greet people, respond in a timely way, and follow-up with people then support this value.

Another feature of the manual is how it connects office processes and policies directly to the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*. The manual helps staff take the powers and duties set out in the Act and turn them into actions that will support children and youth. The manual consistently reminds staff of the *RCY Act* and relevant sections of the legislation.

...a person's first contact with our office is an opportunity for staff to practice ***tunnganarniq*: fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive.**

The goal of the manual is to support staff in their work without creating any barriers for clients who are in contact with our office. The manual also helps staff understand the different but complementary roles of the various staff positions. This ensures all staff understand the part they play in the overall functioning of the office and the fulfillment of the Representative's mandate.

Our office completed a first draft of the manual by March 31, 2015. In recognition of our commitment to continuous quality improvement, we acknowledge that the office's policy and procedure manual will evolve as the office itself continues to evolve over time.

CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In 2014-2015, the RCY's office began researching electronic case management systems to support various office functions. We believe there are several benefits to such a system.

- ✳ It promotes our consistent delivery of services.
- ✳ It supports our ability to report on the office's work.
- ✳ It supports staff in meeting their clients' needs in a way that adheres to office standards.
- ✳ It supports staff in managing their workload.

We began our work on securing a case management system by canvassing all Canadian child and youth advocacy offices. In December 2014, we held meetings to further discuss the systems used by the Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Manitoba offices. Based on what we learned, we then researched existing social services-based case management systems to learn what suitable products were available. We issued a request for proposals with a closing date of February 18, 2015. Information technology (IT) staff from the Office of Legislative Assembly and procurement staff from the Department of Community and Government Services helped select a successful proponent. A contract to purchase the office's case management software and related training and support was in place by March 31, 2015.



Photo Credit: Christian Kimber - Nunavut Tourism

WEBSITE

Developing a website is a key priority of our office's initial communications and public awareness work. We recognize the value of a well-designed and well-maintained website as an effective communications tool that will provide Nunavummiut timely and thorough information on the RCY's office. That said, we also recognize that many Nunavummiut have limited or slow access to the Internet and we are developing the website as part of a complete communications and public awareness plan that will ensure we reach all Nunavummiut.

The RCY's office began work on this project soon after the Representative was appointed. First steps included reviewing the websites of similar advocacy offices across Canada and internationally, as well as other youth-focused websites. A primary consideration became developing a website that would prove useful to the office's three primary

audiences: children and youth, parents and families, and the general public. As a result, the website is divided into two sections or streams: one for families and the public, the other specifically for children and youth. By the end of March 2015, the RCY's office had a first draft of the website design in place and content had expanded to reflect the office's ongoing development work. The office anticipates the website will launch in the fall of 2015.

CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAM AND SERVICE INVENTORY

As noted in the section on engaging key partners, the RCY's office circulated a letter of introduction to GN departments in September 2014. Importantly, this letter also requested the GN's assistance in developing our office's inventory of government child and youth programs, services and facilities. This inventory will be a vital reference for our advocacy staff. It will allow them to quickly provide information on government services and programs to children and youth who contact our office. It will also be a resource for staff themselves when they work with children and youth.

Collecting this information proved challenging for the RCY's office, which served as an early indicator to our staff of the importance of working with GN departments prior to the office opening. Consequently, the office was very mindful of identifying the GN as a key audience for our pre-opening communications work. We believe that early up-front investment with GN stakeholders will help minimize challenges when the office opens on September 30, 2015.

In addition to the submissions received from the GN, the office undertook extensive follow-up work to supplement and complete the inventory. This work included ensuring it reflected details for out-of-territory service providers.



CORE SERVICE INQUIRIES 2014-2015

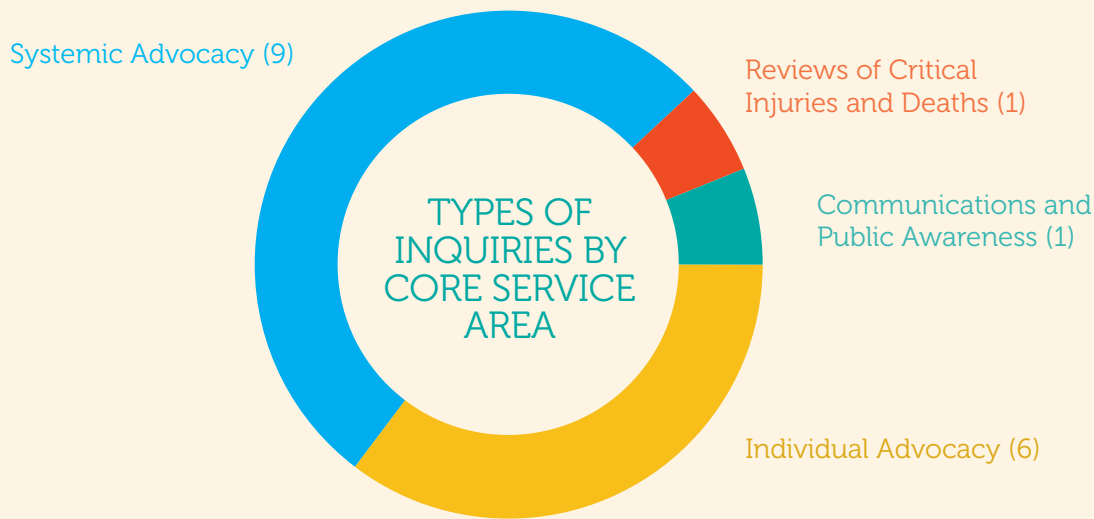


Figure 3: Core Service Inquiries

INQUIRIES RELATED TO OUR CORE SERVICES

Between June 16, 2014 and March 31, 2015, the RCY's office did not have the legal authority to provide services to children, youth and their families. However, over this time, we received 26 inquiries from individuals and organizations. We responded to each of these inquiries and offered assistance where we could.

Of the 26 inquiries, 17⁴ were directly related to one of our four core service areas: individual advocacy (6), systemic advocacy (9), reviews of critical injuries and deaths (1), and communications and public awareness (1) (Figure 3). The other nine inquiries we received consisted of research requests and requests for the office's participation on external committees.

The inquiries pertaining to the office's core services have offered our team a glimpse of the work ahead. We have noted that of the six requests for individual advocacy services we received in 2014-2015, the majority were related to child protection issues. We have also noted that the nine systemic advocacy inquiries all involved one of four Government of Nunavut departments: Family Services, Justice, Health and Education. This information has confirmed our assumption that most of the office's future workload will involve these four departments as they offer the majority of programs and services to children, youth and their families. As we move into our second fiscal year, we are placing particular emphasis on raising awareness of our mandate and the *RCY Act's* legal obligations with these four departments.

⁴ Each of the 17 core service inquiries we received in 2014-2015 pertained to a separate issue. However, we recognize it may become common to receive multiple contacts related to the same issue. As a result, we may change our way of reporting core service inquiries once the office opens and we implement a more refined case management and reporting system.



We recognize the challenges

that many young Nunavummiut face, however, we have

**full confidence
in the future**

of this great territory and the young
people that will assume responsibility for it.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2015-2016

The next fiscal year will be marked by a significant milestone: the opening of the Representative for Children and Youth's office on September 30, 2015. It is a day that many people, including the RCY team, are working tirelessly to prepare for. Opening our doors to serve young Nunavummiut and their families will represent a new chapter in our office's history. This is what all the work described in this report has been about: the creation of a welcoming, safe and supportive place that encourages young people to be active participants in matters that affect them. A place that is committed to listening and working with young people to raise issues in matters that affect them. A place that is committed to listening and working with youth to raise issues that are important to them to the attention of government and to advocate for the type of change necessary to protect and advance their best interests and their rights.

Every child deserves a champion.

An adult who will **never give up on them**, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the **best they can possibly be**.

Rita Pierson

In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, our office will build on the foundation established over the past nine months and apply a strategic approach to achieving our mandate in the years ahead. Our first year of operation will focus largely on individual advocacy and public awareness, which, over time, will help shape our systemic work. In addition, the office's development work will continue. Development is not something that is simply finished on a certain date or time. The office's

ongoing evolution will be marked by a strong commitment to continuous improvement to ensure the best advocacy supports are in place and readily available to young Nunavummiut.

The RCY's office begins the fiscal year ahead with much anticipation and hope. We recognize the challenges that many young Nunavummiut face, however, we have full confidence in the future of this great territory and the youth that will assume responsibility for it.

That said, it is important to remember that we all have a part to play in supporting youth and protecting their best interests and rights. It is an important responsibility. It is a shared responsibility. Perhaps educator Rita Pierson said it best when she stated, "Every child deserves a champion. An adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be." Along with our office, we ask that you carry this message forward and apply it daily to those young people in your lives, in your community, in your territory. Young Nunavummiut deserve nothing less.



Photo Credit: Odile Nelson

BUDGET REPORT

Representative for Children and Youth's Office
Summary Statement of Budget and Expenditures
Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2015

BUDGET	\$1,570,000.00	100.00%
EXPENDITURES 2014-2015		
Salaries	278,820.00	17.76
Casual Wages	0	0
Travel	14,650.00	0.93
Materials & Supplies	41,218.00	2.63
Purchased Services	3,976.00	0.25
Utilities	0	0
Contract Services	353,421.00	22.51
Fees & Payments	5,600.00	0.36
Other Expenses	0	0
Tangible Assets	18,000.00	1.15
Computer Hardware & Software	33,459.00	2.13
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	749,144.00	47.72
SURPLUS	820,856.00	52.28