

The John Howard Society of BC's Youth Advocacy program provides solution-based independent oversight, support and education for incarcerated youth at the Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre (BYCSC) on a weekly basis to help ensure their successful reintegration into the community upon release. In 2010, the Youth Advocate (YA) delivered the *Rights to Success* workshop three times, completed a "Your Rights in Custody" guide, and developed more efficient reporting techniques focused on broader themes, issues and outcomes in consultation with the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

### Admission Criteria

Youth incarcerated in Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre.

### Population Served

Male and female youths incarcerated inside the Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre.

### Community Needs Assessment

Learning advocacy skills help youth ensure a successful reintegration into the community upon their release. While incarcerated, youth can develop a sense of pride and self-worth while respectfully advocating for their needs to all levels of custody staff. The YA is present to assist in promoting independence and self-determination while supporting youth to ensure their voices are heard. Essentially, the Advocate provides solution-based independent oversight, support and education for incarcerated youth.

### Program Objectives

- To increase awareness of advocacy services available to youth while in custody and in the community.
- To increase self-advocacy skills for youth custody residents.
- To increase advocacy related activities on behalf of custody residents.

### Changes in Service

Many changes have been made to improve the Youth Advocate's ability to carry out duties. The YA has been provided with an office/workspace and a messaging system at BYCSC which allows the Advocate to spend more time at there to meet youth and staff, and complete paper work. The YA can also be reached by cell phone 24 hours per day, and to respond more rapidly.

## Review of Last Year's Goals

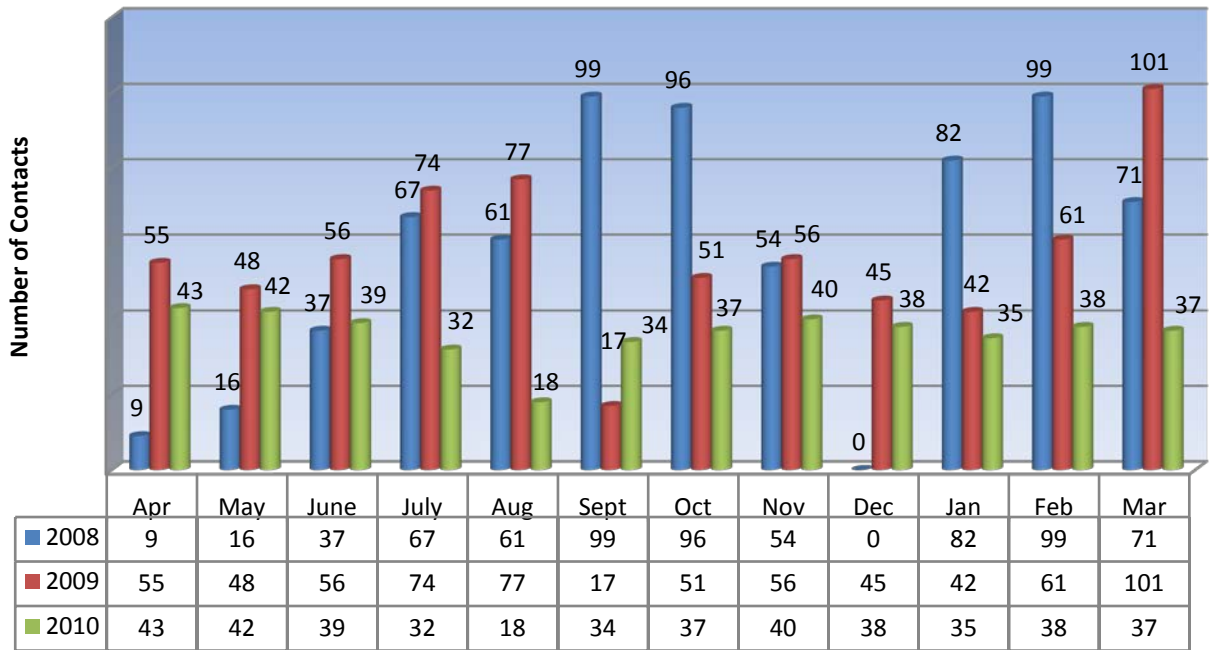
Action	Outcome
To ensure that the Rights to Success curriculum is delivered on a regular basis, to all youth who are in both secure and open custody.	The Rights to Success workshop has been presented to youth three times during this past fiscal year. The workshop was presented to both males and females, who are in secure and open custody.
Complete the Community Resource Guide for youth to be given when they are released from custody	The Community Resource Guide is still in progress. Due to time constraints the youth advocate was unable to have this guide completed this reporting year. The goal for the following year to have this guide completed by October 2011.
Complete a pamphlet to be given to youth upon their admission into custody about their rights and responsibilities while in custody.	A pamphlet has been completed to inform youth about their rights while they are in custody. The pamphlet also includes information about the role of the Advocate, what they can do for the youth, the role of the participant, and a brief outline of useful legislation.
Improve on the statistical information collected and the program's ability to report on outcomes	In October 2010, discussions about implementing changes in reporting took place at the meeting between B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development, Youth Advocates and the John Howard Society of BC. The outcome data reflects changes in reporting and recording that were implemented this year. The most significant shift was to report aggregate data that identifies themes and issues and outcomes.

## Analysis

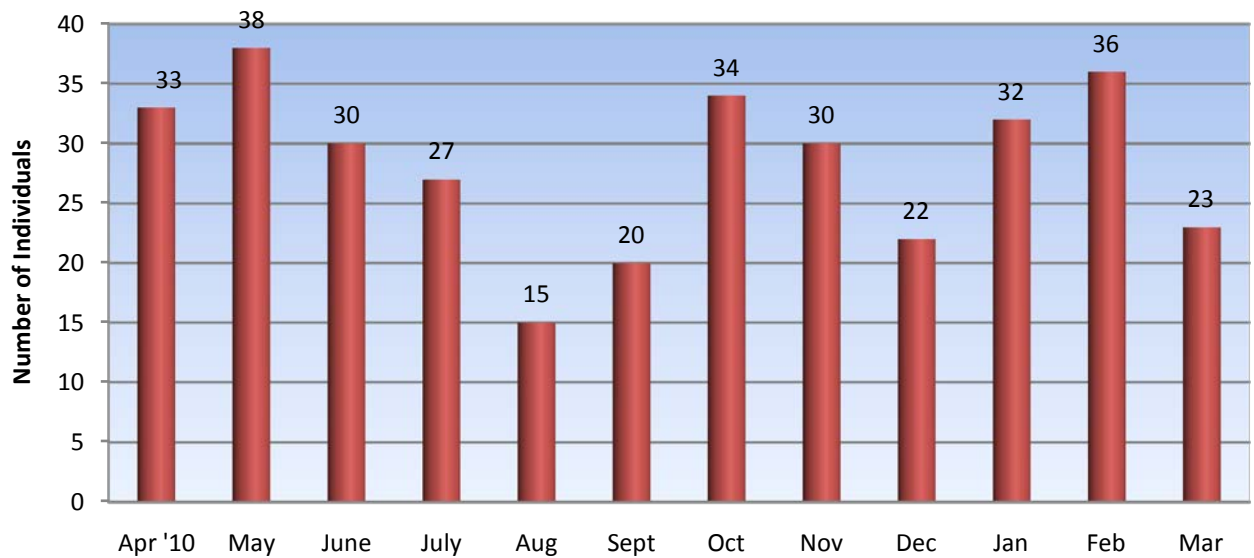
During the past year, the focus was on how to improve quality of the advocacy services, increase communication and develop a community of practice amongst the Advocates in the other custody centres and strengthen the quality of data we report. The outcome data reflects the changes in reporting and recording that was implemented this year after a meeting took place with between the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development, Youth Advocates and the John Howard Society of BC. These changes did have an impact on the reporting structure as it took time for the Advocates to develop consistency in defining the difference between number of contacts, individual contacts and direct advocacy. This data was not inputted consistently throughout the year. We anticipate that there will be significant shift in the reporting in the following year that will reflect markedly improved quality and accuracy.

The number of youth contacts is defined as the total amount of times an advocate interacted and supported an individual youth. The above graph shows that the youth advocate had a total 433 client contacts for 2010, compared to 683 the previous year in 2009. The decrease in client contacts can be attributed to a change in reporting this year. This year the youth advocacy program was able to define client contacts and individual contacts more clearly for the advocates. The previous year's data collection involved discrepancies in the way we defined and recorded data. Also, there was also a decline in the number of youth incarcerated at BYCSC this reporting year that reflects lower number of individuals and contacts.

### Monthly Number of Contacts



### Number of Individuals by Month



In 2010, the Youth Advocate met with **146** different individual young people.

## SUMMARY

The following chart shows the ten different areas that requests were divided into and the 79 requests of direct advocacy made in these areas including their outcome.

Type of request	Number of youth making this request	Outcome summary
<b>Programming</b>		
Youth would like more time in the fitness room.	3	Youth Advocate spoke to program staff about more fitness for youth. Program staff would look at r-scheduling and possibly making it a level four incentive. More time was allotted in the fitness for youth who wanted to participate.
Youth wanted to make snow shoveling and salting a paid chore.	1	Youth Advocate spoke to appropriate staff, and the chore would be paid depending on the weather and the need for the chore to be done.
<b>Food and Clothing</b>		
Smaller clothing ordered/replenished	2	Issue was discussed with appropriate staff at the YAM's and outcome was that clothing was ordered and distributed to the appropriate youth. .
Youth requesting more food and snacks.	6	Youth have been informed that BYCSC must follow the appropriate Canada Food Guide nutrition guide, and that the youth already receive the appropriate amount of calories, carbohydrates, fiber etc.
Youth would like more protein in their snacks like protein powder and protein bars.	8	Youth were told that the Center has to follow the Canada Food Guide and that youth are only served the recommended amount of protein. The nutritionist at BYCSC had a specialized nutritionist come in and speak to youth about protein, and what too much unhealthy snacks can do to an individual's body.
Youth wanted different snacks.	3	YA spoke to nutritionist, who agreed to change snacks if given different ideas. YA worked with youth to compile a list for nutritionist, and changes were implemented.
The food in the fridge that was accessible for the youth in custody was being tossed out overnight.	4	Youth were told that due to health concerns, food must be thrown out overnight by staff, and youth was encouraged to eat the food they are given and not save it.
<b>Unit Transfers</b>		

Youth wanting to transfer to a different unit.	9	YA assisted youth in the process of requesting unit transfer, and also discussed with appropriate staff about youth wanting to be transferred to different units. Some youth were denied for various reasons such as: no contact order with other youth, victimization, and safety. The advocate was informed that the reason involves specific youth who were on the clinical units and that youth received extra assistance for mental health reasons etc.
<b>Phone Calls</b>		
Youth wanted friends on phone list.	1	Youth Advocate discussed this matter with case management staff, and youth are able to write letters to friends, but not allowed to contact friends on the phone.
Youth wanted to put his girlfriend's little sister on his calling list.	1	Since the individual did live at the girlfriends house, youth was not allowed to put her on his phone list as there is a strict no exception policy that prohibits boyfriends/girlfriends on youth's phone list.
<b>Legal Concerns</b>		
Youth spoke to Youth Advocate about not being able to make calls to lawyer on unit.	2	YA spoke to appropriate staff, and expressed youth's concerns. Due to privacy concerns, a booth was built where youth can go at anytime and make confidential legal calls.
Youth was unable to find out court date, and asked for Advocates assistance.	2	YA contacted youth's probation officer and custody staff in records to find out the youths court date.
Youth wanted to make a complaint about police using excessive force during his arrest.	1	YA gathered all the information and paperwork for the youth to make a formal complaint and offered to assist youth, but youth was being released in a few weeks, and said that he would submit the paperwork when released in the community. Youth Advocate suggested doing it immediately, however youth did not want to at that time. Outcome unknown.
<b>Meeting with Custody</b>		
Youth requested regular Youth Advisory Meetings (YAM) be scheduled and the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) attend these meetings, as well as consistency to the meetings.	2	The YAM's are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month, and are attended by ADO, program supervisor, Youth Advocate(s) and the CAB. Since this schedule has been put in place, the meetings have been consistent and held monthly.

<b>Custody Staff</b>		
Youth told Youth Advocate that there were no complaint forms on the unit.	3	YA checked and there were no forms available on the two units that youth expressed concern. YA checked other units, and also found they did not have complaint forms. YA emailed ADO's, and complaint forms were replenished and available in a timely manner.
Youth complained that a staff person refused to give youth a complaint form and would not allow the youth to contact the Ombudsman.	1	YA notified appropriate staff, and was informed that the staff person in question was a new employee. YA contacted the staff person who trains new staff and left a message to return her call. YA also notified JHSLM Director of Programs, who told the YA to report back to him if the matter was not resolved. At this time, the YA has not heard from the staff person and will contact them again immediately.
Staff locking kids up five minutes early.	3	YA spoke to ADO, and it was explained that there is a five minute warning where youth gather things and prepare to lock up. This allows the staff adequate time to lock youth up. YA explained this procedure to the youth.
<b>Building Maintenance</b>		
Youth complained that the building was cold for a period of time in the winter.	7	YA spoke to appropriate staff and was informed that boiler was broken, and that it was being fixed the following day as they were waiting for a specific part. YA spoke with staff to ensure that the youth would be provided additional clothing, blankets, etc..
Youth complained that they had to share water bottles in the fitness room. The youth requested that each youth should have their own individual bottle.	6	YA spoke to appropriate staff the youth's complaint regarding sharing water bottles. At the end of fiscal year, the issue was being resolved and management was making plans to discuss each youth receiving their own water bottles.
The refrigerators were removed from the boys secure units.	5	YA spoke to staff about the removal of the refrigerators and was told that they were removed to deter victimization. YA also worked with youth to compile a list of solutions so that the fridges can be returned to the unit. This matter was also discussed at the YAM's, unfortunately, the refrigerators were not returned to the units.
Youth told YA that the shower curtain needed to be replaced.	1	YA spoke to appropriate staff and curtain was replaced.

<b>Release and Transfers</b>		
Youth wanted assistance with changing community social worker upon release.	2	YA spoke with the social worker at the custody center and was given explanation of how to request a change in social worker. YA relayed information to youth that if the conflict with his social worker is not resolved, then the youth has the right to speak to a supervisor of that worker. If the matter is still not resolved then the youth can contact the Ombudsman and file a complaint.
Youth being transferred to a new location wanted to know what his options were if he did not like it there, and wanted to transfer back.	1	YA provided the youth with the contact information of the advocate at the custody center he was being transferred to if he required any assistance. YA also provided youth with the advocates contact information if he were to return to Vancouver.
Youth made a request to obtain information about the rights and responsibilities of provincial correctional facilities.	1	YA researched the information the youth requested about Provincial Custody Centers. The youth was given the information that was requested.
<b>Other</b>		
Youth need assistance with making an appointment to see mental health worker at the custody center.	1	YA contacted the staff at the custody center and requested the appropriate forms needed to make this request. YA assisted the youth in completing the forms, and submitted the request on his behalf. YA followed up with the youth at a later date and the youth told advocate that he did not see a mental health worker.
Youth made a complaint about the amount of time it takes for health care to process requests.	3	YA made a meeting with health care staff to go over the process of making a request and if the youth can do anything to speed up the process, or any information passed on to youth. The information that was given to the YA was passed on to the youth. This concern was also brought to the attention of staff at the YAM, and staff mentioned they would also speak to health care staff to follow up..

## Effectiveness and Efficiency

Incarcerated youth are given a description of the roles of the Youth Advocate, the Representative of Children and Youth, and the Ombudsman, and a package with contact information, rights, and any information that a youth may request.

The youth can informally meet the YA each week or call them directly, and a formal request form is available at the BYCSC. The YA also receives both informal and formal requests from custody staff. The YA advocates for youths in a timely matter, although some requests take longer, depending on their complexity (some may involve policies that may need to be reviewed by the custody staff team before an issue may be resolved).

Overall, strong working relationships have been developed between Youth Advocate, the youth, and correctional staff have ensured effective services to youth in custody.

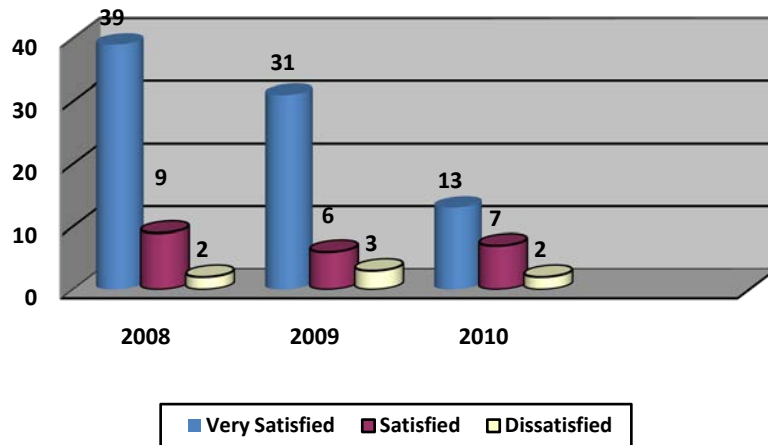
The Youth Advocate works cooperatively with staff at all levels to promote a case management/ team approach to facilitate workshops, Community Resource fairs, and other events at BYCSC. The YA also participates in co-facilitating Youth Advisory meetings and Birthday Club events.

### Satisfaction Survey

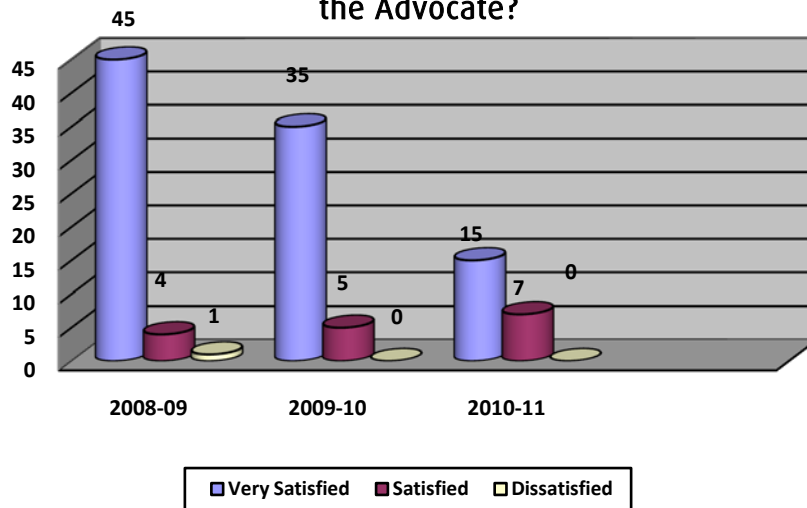
Survey return rates dropped over three years from 50 in 2008 to 22 in 2010. The satisfaction rate dropped from a 78% to 59% in that same period. Overall, the surveys indicated that the youth are satisfied with the YA's ability respond to their requests.

To determine client satisfaction with the Youth Advocacy Program, the youth were asked the following questions:

**Are you satisfied with the Advocate's ability to address your concerns?**



### Are you satisfied with your level of trust with the Advocate?



In 2009 and 2010, 100% were very satisfied or satisfied with the level of trust in the YA compared to 98% in 2008.

Over the past year Improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of services were made as follows:

Action	Outcome
Monthly Youth Advisory meetings for the youth.	The Youth Advisory Meetings (YAM) are now held every fourth Wednesday at BYCSC. Every month, youth are able to bring forward concerns at a meeting attended by an ADO/ program supervisor and other custody staff, where issues are discussed. Also in attendance are the YA, and the Citizen Advisory Board. The ability to provide the youth with a consistent schedule allows the youth, custody staff and advocate more time to prepare for the meeting. This also allows the advocate and others to schedule their days in the custody center to align with the Youth Advisory Meetings.
Meetings and conference calls for youth advocates in BC for information sharing and support.	A Youth Advocate Meeting was held on October 8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2010 with Youth Advocates, Director of Advocacy for MCFD, Director of Programs from the Burnaby Custody Services Centre and representatives from the John Howard Society of Lower Mainland and BC. The focus of the meeting was to look at ways to build community practice amongst the Advocates. Some practical solutions included: developing an email distribution list for general sharing of information, questions and support, establishing quarterly conference calls to provide forum updates and discussion. Our first teleconference will take place in April 2011, and the goal for the next year is to have a teleconference every quarter.

## **SUMMARY**

The youth advocates appear to have fulfilled their role by:

- Ensuring that each youth is aware of their rights.
- Providing information regarding what is occurring to them and about their future.
- Being inclusive and considering all points of view and ensuring the voice of the youth we serve is heard and considered valuable.

The YA has supported and encouraged youth to have their own voice through self-advocacy and to promote healthy relationships.

### **Next Year's Program Goals**

- Increase the number of satisfaction surveys returned by 50%.
- Quarterly teleconference with advocates in BC.
- Improve on the way we collect and record data, enter data into an Access program.
- Youth Advocate will facilitate a minimum of three Rights 2 Success workshops.

*- Pam Flegel*