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INVINCIBLE: WE’RE STILL HERE!

Angel Houle

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INVINCIBLE: Our Voices from Care. A Storytelling Project by Indigenous Youth in Care

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**Keywords:** Indigenous children/youth in care, Indigenous healing, belonging, Indigenous youth resurgence, Indigenous programming, Indigenous arts-based research

**Acknowledgement:** We raise our hands in deepest respect and gratitude to the ancestors and families of the lək̓ʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ nations and to our own ancestors and Nations. We raise our hands to all Indigenous children and youth who have grown up in colonial systems, to those we have lost, and to those who survive, resist, and imagine justice and resurgence. INVINCIBLE is grateful for funding provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Insight grant 435-2020-1191) and the Canet Foundation.

**Angel Houle** (corresponding author) is an Indigenous youth in care and an INVINCIBLE youth storyteller/researcher who has been working with the Kinship Rising research project at the University of Victoria since 2023. Please contact the Kinship Rising project: kinshiprising@uvic.ca
Welcome to the INVINCIBLE Project

The name of our new project is INVINCIBLE: Our Voices From Care, a storytelling project by Indigenous youth in care. INVINCIBLE is a hands-on project created, written, and designed by us, Indigenous youth who are part of the Youth Council at Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services on lək̓ʷəŋən homelands. We created our stories and artwork from our personal lives as youth in care. Our goal is to share our voices with others, to create, teach, and learn together. Our stories are meant to inspire other Indigenous children and youth in care and let them know that they are not alone. We created stories such as graphic novels, poems, video stories, artwork about childhood memories, cultural stories, and first-hand journals of our experiences and the emotions we had in the foster care system.

Why Do Our Stories Matter?

Our stories have meaning, we are the next generation of teachers and leaders! We want to support other children and youth in care by showing that we are standing proud, we are grounding our lives in who we are, we carry the stories with pride. So we did this project because we love the opportunity to be creative; learn new skills; share, teach, and learn; and inspire others.
Figure 2. *Research Workshops at First Peoples House and on Gabriola Island*

![Image of research workshops at First Peoples House and on Gabriola Island]

Figure 3. *Creating Handprints for the Logo*

![Image of handprints creation for the logo]
There are so many benefits to the INVINCIBLE project, including showing our power and connections as youth in care. Another important benefit is that taking part in this kind of research is fun! I feel as if I learned a lot. It’s fun to be creative, work in the community, show everyone what we have to offer, and learn some cool new skills.
Figure 6. *INVINCIBLE Workshops and Presentations*

*Note.* Left to right: presentation at Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services; working in circle.

**Indigenous Youth in Care Need a Voice**

My personal experience is that youth in care don’t have a lot of opportunities to do things like this. These opportunities don’t come often, unless we’re lucky enough. So we want to share with other youth that you can do this, we have a lot to say! Even if you were not given the best hand in life and you didn’t have a good start, there are opportunities out there like this, and a lot of us are doing really great with our lives and we have success. We want other youth to know that we are creative, we are storytellers. We want them to feel empowered to be loud and let everyone know that we’re still here! And we’re awesome!!

Figure 7. *The INVINCIBLE Crew*
Meet the INVINCIBLE Team

Artwork by Dorothy Stirling
INVINCIBLE Youth Researchers/Storytellers

Angel Houle 🧡
Damien Kakewash 🧡
Dorothy Stirling 🧡
Ellen Hubert 🧡
tatūusinapšiil Emma 🧡
Jewel Lavan 🧡
Joan Hubert 🧡
Lillian Hubert 🧡
Mikayla Goodwin-Reid 🧡
Pine Ratcliffe 🧡
Rayne Kakewash 🧡
Youth Leadership Roles

Rayne Kakewach
Project name, survey design, website writing, photography

Angel Houle
Research and website writing, photography

Jewel Lavan and Dorothy Stirling
Website design, graphic and art design, photography, and logo design

Emma, Lillian, Ellen and Joan Hubert
Drumming, songs and language

Mikayla Goodwin-Reid
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Education

Pine Ratcliffe
Art organization

Damien Kakewash
Photography

Joan Hubert
Project visioning

Carmin Bear-Blomberg
Peer art mentor

Project Team

Yuxwelupton Qwal’qaxala, Bradley Diok
Cultural and artistic mentor

Elika Yamauchi
Graphic design, multi-media design and website design

Elika Yamauchi
Project manager

Angela Scott
Clinical counseling and research facilitation

Mavis Aubichon
Youth council facilitator

Jaime Fafard
Graphic recording
The Collective Consciousness

Sandrina Carere, PhD.
Academic lead for Kinship Rising/INVINCIBLE and professor, University of Victoria
The Youth Advisory Council at Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services is a collective of youth in or formerly in care who meet regularly to learn from one another and grow leadership skills. As a way to reclaim connections with our cultures, communities and identities, we come together to uphold one another in our modern life while practicing traditional ways.

Kinship Rising is a community-led research project based at the University of Victoria that is focused on restoring Indigenous practices of wellbeing. In response to the epidemic of colonial violence impacting Indigenous communities, our projects foster land- and arts-based research workshops with Indigenous youth, young adults, and community members on issues related to reclamation, healing, and resurgence - kinshiprising.uvic.ca

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The Canet Foundation supports education and creative arts projects as key to a healthy society.