



photo courtesy of Morgan Whibley

Young Women Rise Up

Young Women's Voices is an innovative project run by Many Rivers Counselling and Support Services designed to give young women in Whitehorse an opportunity to find their voice through creative self-expression, as well as gain support and learn more about issues that are important to them. The project was coordinated by Jodi Proctor, with support from the Youth Outreach Counselling team.

The Young Women's Voices (YWV) project presented RISE: A Multimedia Performance Art Show on Monday, Dec.7th, at the Old Firehall. There were over 80 people in the audience. RISE featured the art work of 14 young women from the ages of 13-25. The majority of the young women were First Nations. These vibrant young women collaboratively created short films, a play, and a dance performance over the past few months with the mentorship of local artists including Celia McBride, Andrea-Simpson Fowler, Eleanor Rosenberg and Vancouver based film-makers REEL youth, Rae Theissen, Morgan Whibley, Ashley Camara, Lacey Scarff, Heather Callaghan, Patti Flather, Andrea Burgoyne, Krystal Loverin and George Maratos.

The YWV participant film RISE was shown at this event. The young women also staged a play called The Stakes on the importance of Safe Sex education in our schools. The play was written, produced and performed by the young women. One of the participants

wrote an original song called Mind of You. Performing the final show caused an enormous sense of accomplishment for the young women involved.; The audience was full and very appreciative.

These extraordinary young women did everything from set design, costumes, advertising and script writing. Each one beamed with a sense of accomplishment on stage at the end of the performance. The show generated a great deal of media attention including spots on CHON, CBC, an article in the Yukon News, an article in the Star, and coverage from APTN at the actual event. Five participants sang the Women's Warrior Song on CHON with Lacey Scarff.

As part of the Young Women's Voices project, the young women attended two retreats where they experienced a weekend of theatre, dance, traditional ceremony and set design art making. This brought the young women in the project closer together, creating an enhanced network of support and level of trust.

The group also produced a booklet of creative writing by the participants, and two short documentaries made in collaboration with REEL youth. The young women participated in a number of awareness raising opportunities within the project. Guest speakers covered a range of topics including Gender Equality/activism, Drugs and Alcohol, and Sex. Participants asked many questions, and had numerous discussions. For many of the participants, other opportunities have evolved from YWV, such as being part of a young women's break dancing crew at Leaping Feats Dance Studio, singing traditional songs in the Folklore show with Lacey Scarff, and doing workshop facilitation with Yukon Health Promotions.

The Young Women's Voices project was designed and implemented by young women, for young women. Each young woman chose the performance medium she would use in the final show. Each gained confidence and felt invested in their contributions to the event. They felt proud for speaking out. Northern News, a short film about climate change (and a winner at the Dawson City International Film Festival) and RISE, a short film on violence against women, can be viewed by clicking the link on our home page, viewing them on our Youth Outreach page, or by going to the website www.reelyouth.ca/gallery and clicking on the Many Rivers logo.

Thank you to our sponsors, the Crime Prevention and Victim Services Trust Fund, the Canadian Women's Foundation and Status of Women Canada.



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