

INVINCIBLE: WE'RE STILL HERE!

Angel Houle



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 *ləkʷəŋən* 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

Figure 1. *Working On the INVINCIBLE Project*



Note. Left to right: Angel sketching ideas; Rayne creating a research survey; Emma writing a story.

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 *ləkʷəŋən* 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*



Figure 3. *Creating Handprints for the Logo*



Figure 4. *Land-Based Workshops*



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 5. *Land-Based Workshops and Medicines*



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*





hišukniš ćawaak
(hishooknish tsawalk)
"we are all one"



Artwork by Dorothy Stirling

INVINCIBLE Youth Researchers/Storytellers

Angel Houle 🖐️

Damien Kakewash 🖐️

Dorothy Stirling 🖐️

Ellen Hubert 🖐️

ṭātuusinapšiiṭ Emma 🖐️

Jewel Lavan 🖐️

Joan Hubert

Lillian Hubert 🖐️

Mikayla Goodwin-Reid 🖐️

Pine Ratcliffe 🖐️

Rayne Kakewash 🖐️

Youth Leadership Roles

Rayne Kakewash

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

Yuxwəlupton Qwal'qaxala, Bradley Dick

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

INVINCIBLE is grateful for funding provided by:



SSHRC Insight grant. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) is the federal research funding agency that promotes and supports research and training in the humanities and social sciences.



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

