

RIGHTS TALK

Youth and Civil
Liberties
Conference

18TH ANNUAL

March 1, 2023 SFU Harbour Centre, Vancouver, B.C.

The BCCLA's 18th annual Rights Talk: Youth and Civil Liberties Conference

**BUILDING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:
DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

The BCCLA's 18th annual Rights Talk: Youth and Civil Liberties Conference

brings together high school students to learn about emerging civil liberties and human rights issues. This year's theme is **Building Social Movements: Developing Skills for Social Change**, which explores current issues in society and provides attendees with the right tools to be effective social advocates.

Taking place at the SFU Harbour Centre, this year's conference will be in person to allow youth to connect with each other and engage in a dialogue with local advocates, lawyers, and community organizers.

Important Note on the Conference Format

This year's conference will be taking place in person. The conference will begin with a territorial acknowledgement, opening address, and panel discussion. Following a short break, we will then begin our workshops. Each workshop will run twice through the day to ensure students can choose more than one workshop to attend. Workshops are limited to 30 students each.

Accessibility Information

ASL interpretation can be made available by request for all sessions. Please let us know before February 7th if you require sign language interpretation to provide adequate time to book services.

Please also note if you have any accessibility or access needs that we can support.

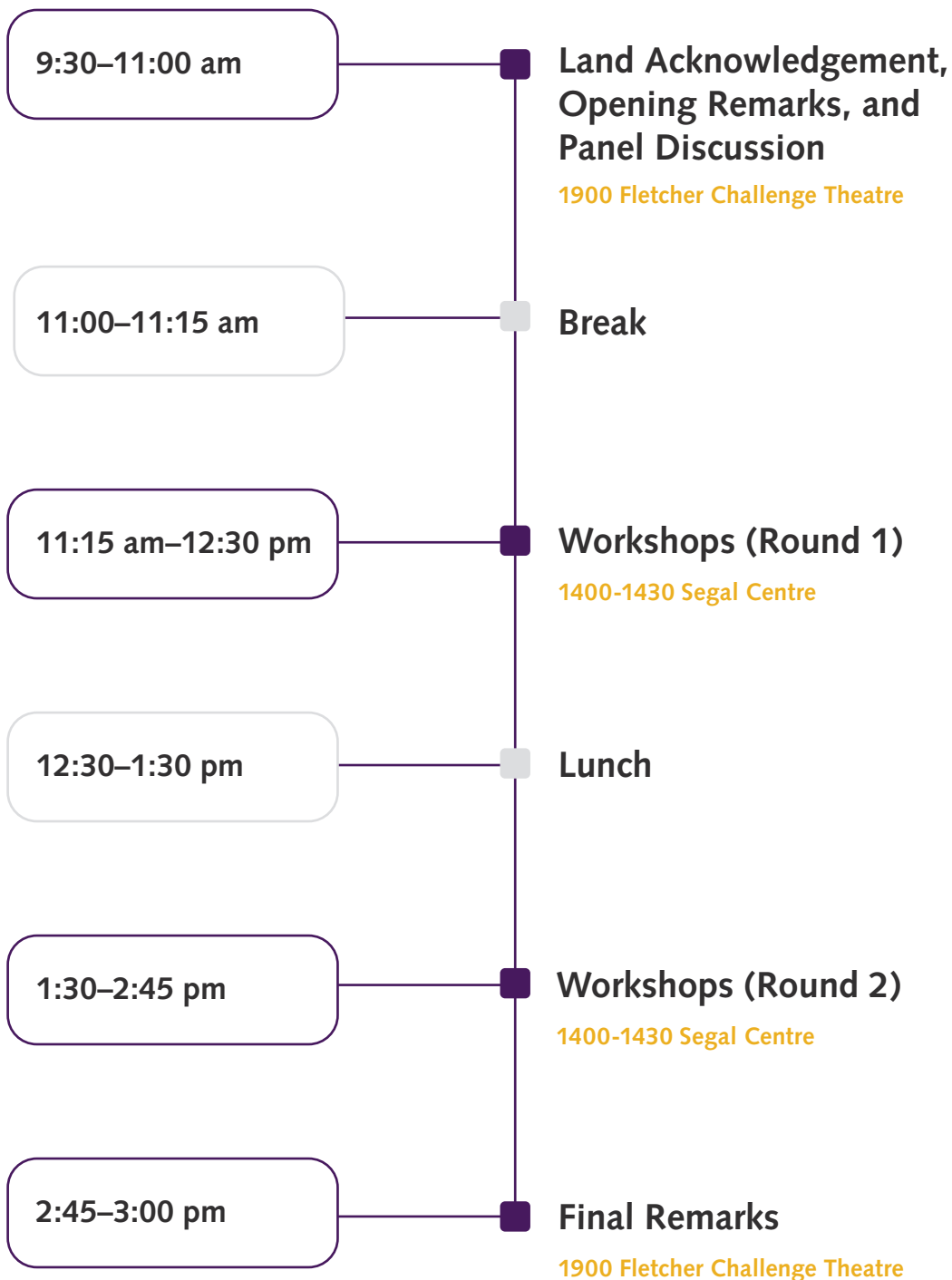
Covid Guidelines

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and other communicable diseases, the BCCLA encourages the use of personal protective equipment during the conference and asks attendees to follow guidelines set by their teachers or individual class. The BCCLA will have PPE including masks and sanitizer available at the venue. Additionally, we encourage people to practice as much physical distancing as must as the venue will allow.

If you are not part of a participating school and would like to register for the conference, please contact us at info@bccla.org.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Wednesday, March 1st, 2023



WORKSHOPS

All workshops will take place in rooms 1400-1430 Segal Centre

Round 1 - 11:15 am–12:30 pm

Round 2 - 1:30–2:45pm

BCCLA Democratizing Legal Knowledge

Meghan McDermont (BCCLA)

The BCCLA believes that legal systems should support people advocating for their rights, not be a barrier to them. Too often, the bureaucracy of legal tools prevents people from being able to engage with the legal system. This workshop hopes to break down these barriers and teach students how to determine which avenues and tools are available to them in their right to their rights.

Youth Worker Rights

Jen Palmgren, Noah Dettling & Kari Michaels

Do you feel powerless at work? Do you have questions about what your boss can and cannot do? In this workshop we will go over basic employment rights under the Employment Standards Act. We will explore common workplace issues and the limitations of the system to protect your rights at work. We'll discuss how collective action can make a difference and what it means to form a union at work.

Drug Policy and Community Organizing

Kali Sedgemore

Advocating for better drug policy can sound complicated, especially when it comes to youth, stimulant users, and more - but it really doesn't need to be. We are in a public health emergency due to toxic drug poisonings, our loved ones are dying. Overdoses are not stopping. Community organizing is one of the many ways to make change when it comes to drug policy. Whether it be how to organize meeting groups, get updates about trends in drug supply, keep community members safe by sending out bad dope alerts, or organizing awareness actions - this workshop will teach you transferable skills on how to organize and keep your peers safe. Using my experiences and learnings gathered from long time advocates, I will share knowledge, skills, and teachings not only the importance of community organizing but also how to taking part in making change.

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Journalism and Social Justice

Spencer Izen & Jessica Kim

Student journalists are real journalists. That's what the B.C. Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Association of Journalists believe, among many others. Journalism is deeply involved in bringing about social change but requires independence and protection in order to do so. Student journalism is no different in this regard but faces unique, systemic hurdles that often obstruct the constitutionally-protected, public-interest craft from freely operating in a school environment. In this workshop, we will be discussing challenges to student journalism, framed as a civil liberties issue, and further how students can work around or past these barriers to produce meaningful, necessary journalism that impacts their community.

Colonial Legal Systems and Indigenous Law Workshop

Cheyenne Arnold-Cunningham and Ellen Campbell

Are you interested in learning about Indigenous laws? Through an examination of Canadian law and Cree law, this workshop will explore different sources of law, the legitimacy of Indigenous laws, and the ability for Indigenous laws to work alongside Canada's legal system. Participants will learn about the impactful historical dismissals of Indigenous laws and will feel empowered to question societal stereotypes and assumptions. Participants will also learn about ways to build more respectful relationships between different legal orders and systems.

MEET THE SPEAKERS AND FACILITATORS



Meghan McDermott

Facilitator - BCCLA Democratizing Legal Knowledge

Meghan McDermott joined the BCCLA as staff counsel in March of 2017. With a B.A. in philosophy from Concordia University, her compassion and curiosity drove her to study law at the University of Victoria so that she could collaborate with others to pursue law reform in the interest of enhancing social justice. She has an LL.M. from the University of Edinburgh where her studies focused on whether parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have a responsibility to share the benefits of their forestry-related activities with local and Indigenous communities. Prior to joining the BCCLA she worked for many years as an advisor with the government of British Columbia, developing environmental and health policy and legislation. She has also provided legal services for the government of Ontario and interned as a legal analyst with the Dullah Omar Institute for Constitutional Law, Governance and Human Rights in South Africa.

When she isn't working, Meghan can usually be found gardening or exploring the city with her dogs. She loves current affairs, arts and culture and volunteers as an executive with the board of Island Mountain Arts, a unique gallery and school of the arts in the Cariboo.



Jen Palmgren

Facilitator - Youth Worker Rights Workshop

I started working for the Interior Health Authority as a Health Unit Aide at Public Health in October 2020. As you can imagine, starting a new position in health care during a global pandemic was quite the experience.

After approximately a year of pandemic workload, I sought out my Union as I did not see any local representation in my area, and I was interested in becoming a steward. A couple of phone calls later, I went all in and was acclaimed as Local Chairperson.

Fast forward another year and the Union has helped me become a part of the Young Workers' Committees for the BCGEU, BCFed, and NUPGE. It has given me education opportunities, skills development, and invaluable connections with likeminded, incredible individuals. I know I am a part of something greater, and I would love to share my experience and my passion for workers' rights in the hopes that others will be inspired to engage in activism – especially Equity Workers, Young Workers, and workers, like me, who live in rural communities sorely in need of local representation.

MEET THE SPEAKERS AND FACILITATORS



Noah Dettling

Facilitator - Youth Worker Rights Workshop

My name is Noah Dettling, I'm 27 years old and I'm a member of the BCGEU. I work for the BCLDB (British Columbia Liquor Distribution Branch) also known as the Government Liquor stores, as a store clerk. I'm a Shop Steward, Recording Secretary for my local, and sit on the Component Executive. I've been an activist for around three and a half years now and worked on our Essential Pay campaign in 2021 and the most recent strike campaign for the Public Sector workers during 2022. One of the most important things in my opinion within my workplace is organizing co-workers to come together in strength when there are problems. When I'm not filing grievances I'm usually watching soccer, playing video games, or at a concert.



Kari Michaels

Facilitator - Youth Worker Rights Workshop

In June 2021, Kari Michaels was re-elected as Executive Vice President of the BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU) for her second term. Kari joined the BCGEU as a member when she and her fellow workers at the Kwantlen Student Association formed a union at their worksite. She quickly became active, first as shop steward and subsequently stepping up as a bargaining committee member. Kari is a passionate advocate for social justice and believes in building workers' capacity to take action to improve their working conditions through education and training.

MEET THE SPEAKERS AND FACILITATORS



Kali Sedgemore

Facilitator - Drug Policy and Community Organizing

Youth researcher & consultant at ARYS (At risk youth study). PHS Peer supervisor at MOPS (Molson OPS) & MOPU (Mobile OPS unit), youth peer support, VCH Peer harm reduction leader & outreach worker A Harm Reductionist with a focus on youth harm reduction & Stimulants. Through lived/ing experience with substance use, homelessness and government care they advocate, educate, consult & bring awareness to these issues. They takepart in many community learning & consult for projects that are wanting to start, relearn or learn about harm reduction practices and education Currently, they are sitting president of the Coalition of peers dismantling the drug war (CPDDW). Harm reduction, Youth drug policy and Llamas are my passion.



Spencer Izen & Jessica Kim

Facilitator - Journalism and Social Change

Spencer Izen (he/him) and Jessica Kim (she/her) are the Co-Directors of the Student Press Freedom Act Campaign. The former respective Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor of The Griffins' Nest, the independent student newspaper based out of Eric Hamber Secondary School in Vancouver, Spencer and Jessica are calling on the government of British Columbia to adopt their legislation as Canada's first student press protection legislation. They have been nominated for Peter Bryce Prize for Whistleblowing and were recently named Canada's Champions of Free Expression for 2023 by the Book and Periodical Council.

Jessica is studying business and political science at the University of Western Ontario. Spencer studies political science and information science at the University of British Columbia. They are both in their first year and involved in their respective student newspapers The Western Gazette and The Ubysssey.

MEET THE SPEAKERS AND FACILITATORS



Ellen Campbell

Facilitator - Colonial Legal Systems and Indigenous Law Workshop

Ellen is a settler, nonbinary, and neurodivergent lawyer and artist with Scottish, Norse, French and German ancestry. They work at the Indigenous Law Research Unit, where they have focused on projects related to Indigenous laws respecting water and child and caregiver nurturance. Ellen is passionate about art and law and collaborating with artists, lawyers, researchers, and community members on projects that help make law accessible. In addition to their work at ILRU, Ellen runs their own law and legal design firm centred on assisting nonprofits in their legal work and in the creation of public legal education materials that take the form of videography, animation, and graphic design and recording. Ellen spends much of their free time reading and drawing in the cozy company of their two four-legged friends, Bella and Kenzie.



Cheyenne Arnold-Cunningham

Facilitator - Colonial Legal Systems and Indigenous Law Workshop

Cheyenne Arnold-Cunningham is a Métis lawyer with both solicitor and litigation-based experience working with Canada's Aboriginal Law. However, her passion is focused on better understanding Indigenous laws and supporting Indigenous communities as they work to use and share their laws in different contexts. Cheyenne currently works as a researcher at the University of Victoria's Indigenous Law Research Unit where she has gained training and experience working with an effective methodology for researching and rebuilding Indigenous legal traditions.

Thank You To Our Sponsors



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Unceded Coast Salish Territories

The BCCLA office is located on the unceded and ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



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