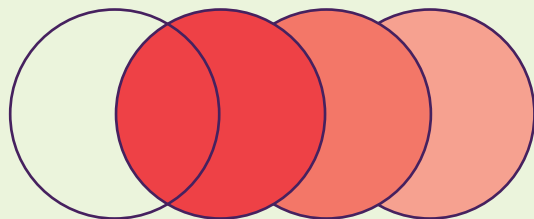
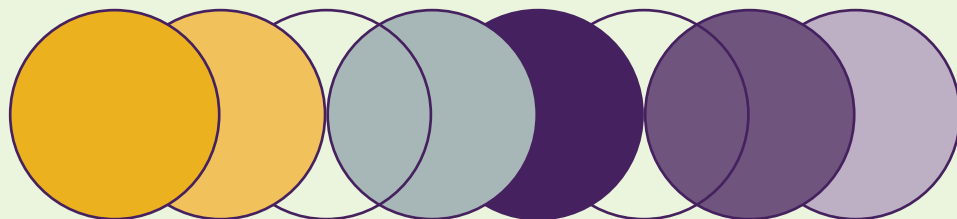
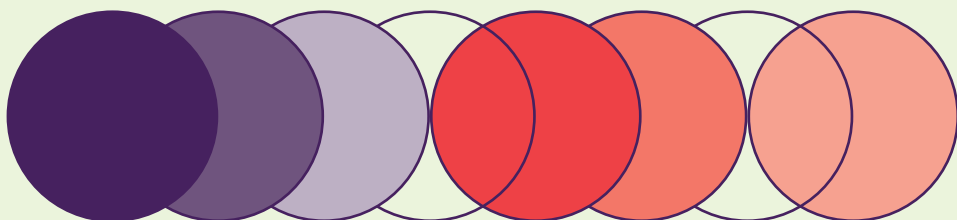


ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

YOUTH RIGHTS AND
RESISTANCE



Friday, February 28, 2025
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

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Vancouver Community
College (1155 E Broadway)

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Thank you to our workshop presenters, who we proudly work in solidarity with to protect civil liberties and human rights.

Teachers 4 Palestine



BCCLA gratefully acknowledges our partners for their financial assistance, without which we would not be able to host this event.



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About BCCLA

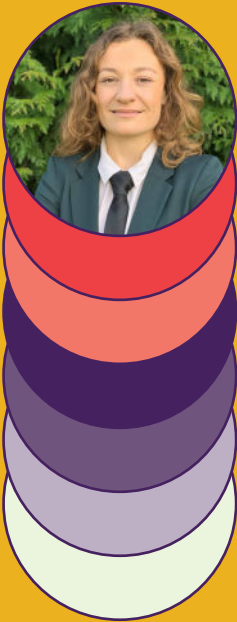
The BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) has been protecting civil liberties and human rights in Canada since 1962.

We do this by fighting for change at a systemic level.

Our work includes strategic litigation, policy-based law reform, and public legal education – like this Youth Conference today.

We tackle a wide range of issues that strike at the heart of civil liberties and human rights in Canada. This includes:

-  Criminal Law Reform
-  Fundamental Freedoms
-  Housing Rights
-  Indigenous Rights
-  National Security
-  Policing and Police Accountability
-  Prisoners' Rights
-  Privacy and Surveillance



A Message From BCCLA's Executive Director

A warm welcome to BCCLA's 20th Annual Youth Conference. It's an honour to have you all here with us as we gather to build important skills, knowledge, and tools needed to fight for and protect our essential rights and freedoms.

You have the power to shape the world around you. The erosion of civil liberties we're seeing today is a challenge that demands action. You are the generation poised to stand up, speak out, and safeguard these fundamental rights for years to come. BCCLA stands with you.

Today, I hope you can make new connections, challenge yourselves and each other, and feel confident to take what you learn into tomorrow to build the world you want to see.

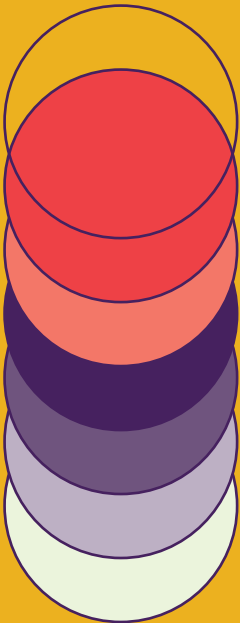
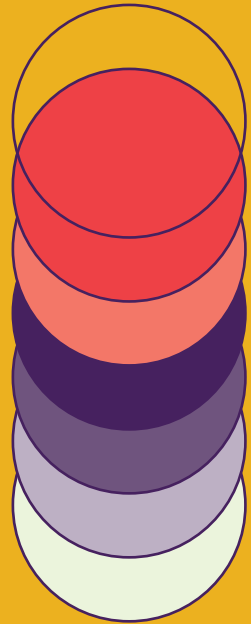
– Liza Hughes (she/they)

About the Youth Conference

BCCLA's Annual Youth Conference brings together high school students from across Vancouver and the Lower Mainland to engage with emerging civil liberties and human rights issues.

Civil liberties and human rights are under attack. BCCLA wants you to feel equipped with the skills and knowledge to defend and protect your rights now and into the future. Through this event, you'll learn about issues affecting your community, develop a deeper understanding of your rights, and gain valuable tools as you fight for social justice, civil liberties, and human rights.

BCCLA is hosting 8 workshops this year. You can choose 2 of these workshops to attend. Each workshop is limited to 30 students.



Behaviour Guidelines

We ask students to treat everyone with kindness, empathy, and respect, regardless of differences in opinions, backgrounds, or identities. BCCLA values an inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels welcome.

We also ask that students leave the venue spaces clean after use, taking any garbage and throwing it in venue bins.

Accessibility

Please contact info@bccla.org (or come to the Registration Desk on the day of the conference) with any accessibility needs that would enable you to attend and participate in this conference. American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation will be available by request for all sessions.

We hope to provide a space that allows everyone to feel comfortable and safe.

SCHEDULE

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Registration and Tabling

10:00 AM – 10:45 AM

Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, and Opening Session

..... 15-Minute Break

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Workshops I Round 1

..... 1-Hour Lunch Break

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Workshops I Round 2



The Biggest Threat to Your Civil Liberties

In Canada, we have rights and freedoms that are so important, it can be easy to take them for granted – like the right to speak your mind and express yourself, the right to a fair trial, or the right to be treated equally. Rights like these are there to prevent the police from randomly putting you in prison and keeping you there forever, or being discriminated against at school or work, or having your privacy violated.

But suddenly, in the past few years, these rights and freedoms are under a new kind of attack by those in power. Our provincial and federal governments are passing laws that they know take away our rights and freedoms, and they're using a sneaky bit of the Constitution to do it. They think they can get away with it, but you have the power to show them they can't.

In this workshop, you'll learn more about the rights and freedoms we have and are fighting for, what politicians are using to chip away at them, and what you can do to stop it.



Ga Grant (she/her)

Ga joined BCCLA as Staff Litigation Counsel in 2022. Ga brings four years' experience in legal practice serving First Nations with a focus on Indigenous rights, litigation, and specific claims. Previously, Ga clerked with the BC Supreme Court and assisted with legal aid work on Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en territories.

Ga was called to law to find creative and strategic use of the colonial legal system as a tool for justice, practiced alongside a lens of decolonial engagement. Ga is a settler of immigrant Lebanese and Jewish-American descent. Ga is also a musician and singer-songwriter; she can often be found writing new ditties and hanging out with her cat.

Workshop #2

Security Guards, Transit Police, and Police in Schools: Know Your Rights

Whether you're at school, riding the SkyTrain, or hanging out at the mall, you may encounter police or security guards. These situations may feel intimidating or scary, but with your constitutionally protected rights you have the power to set clear boundaries during these interactions.

This workshop will cover your rights when approached by municipal police, Transit Police, or security guards, including your right to not be subject to an unreasonable search and seizure, as well as your right against arbitrary detention. You'll also learn about different complaint mechanisms, if you think your rights have been violated.



Veronica Martisius (she/her)

Veronica joined BCCLA in 2019. She was born and raised in Brantford, ON. She comes from a strong line of Kanyen'keha:ka (Mohawk) women and is a member of the Six Nations of the Grand River. She is also of Lithuanian, German, and British ancestry. Prior to becoming a lawyer, she spent almost a decade working on the frontlines as a victims' rights advocate, court support worker, and courtroom clerk. Veronica is passionate about protecting human rights, advancing human responsibility, and approaching her work with a good mind. She is particularly interested in challenging colonial ideology as it pertains to law and justice and to create space for Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Workshop #3

Youth Labour Rights

Do you feel powerless at work? Do you have questions about what your boss can and cannot do? In this workshop, we'll go over basic employment rights under the Employment Standards Act.

We'll explore common workplace issues and the limitations of the system to protect your rights at work. And we'll discuss how collective action can make a difference and what it means to form a union at work.



Noah Dettling (he/him)

Noah Dettling has been a member of the British Columbia General Employees Union (BCGEU) for nine years, working as an employee at the BCLDB (British Columbia Liquor Distribution Branch) also known as the Government Liquor Stores as a clerk.

Through this employment Noah was quickly elected into the roles of Shop Steward and Occupational Health and Safety Rep. Working on multiple campaigns within the BCGEU and growing as an activist, he was most recently elected to be a member on the bargaining committee. Noah is a strong proponent of grassroots organizing to engage, mobilize, and educate workers to step up and fight for their rights.



Workshop #4

Housing Rights

Over 50% of Vancouver households are rentals, and in the midst of a housing crisis, tenants find themselves disempowered and pushed into expensive, cramped apartments at the whims of landlords and municipal, provincial, and federal regulations tailored to favour the landowning class. If neither the landlords or the state will uphold our right to safe, dignified housing, it leaves us to organize for power ourselves. Rights are won from below, not granted from above!

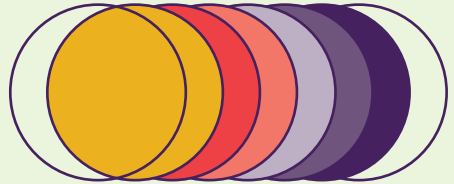
This workshop will be an introduction on how we can use our power as tenants to organize, improve our living conditions, and build community with our neighbours. We'll discuss what organizing can look like, show how it can make a difference, and then break into groups to practice what we learn.



Melanie Budisusilo (she/they)

Melanie is a migrant settler living on Unceded Coast Salish Territories. Spending most of her early life in Jakarta, Indonesia, she moved to so-called British Columbia as an international student, which put her face-to-face with predatory landlords looking to take advantage of the city's precarious housing situation.

Now, Melanie is working with the Joyce-Collingwood Chapter of the Vancouver Tenants Union to fight alongside her neighbours against creeping gentrification in her neighbourhood.



Evan Morien (they/he)

Evan is a tenant and worker who has lived on Unceded Coast Salish Territories since attending graduate school in 2007.

As a university student and immigrant, they experienced the precarity of housing in Vancouver first-hand, and struggle to this day with the pressure of an uncertain future created by landlordism. Until it is a guaranteed right, all housing is precarious!

Through their work in the Vancouver Tenants Union, they hope to build towards a future without landlords where everyone has safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Workshop #5

Journalism and Social Justice

Student journalists are real journalists. That's what BCCLA and the Canadian Association of Journalists believe. Journalism plays a crucial role 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, and how students can work around these barriers to produce meaningful, necessary journalism that impacts their community.



Jessica Kim (she/her)



Spencer Izen (he/him)

Spencer Izen and Jessica Kim are the Co-Directors of the Student Press Freedom Act Campaign and former Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor of *The Griffins' Nest*, the independent student newspaper based out of Vancouver's Eric Hamber Secondary School. Spencer and Jessica are calling on the government of British Columbia to adopt their legislation as Canada's first student press protection legislation. They were nominated for the Peter Bryce Prize for Whistleblowing and 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 third year and involved in their respective student newspapers, *The Western Gazette* and *The Ubyyssey*.

Workshop #6

Palestine, Protest, and Protecting Public Speech

This interactive workshop, run by Palestinian and Jewish teachers/activists Khaled Shawwash and Annie Ohana, will address the attack on intersectional advocacy for Palestinian human rights in Canada and in the education system, particularly the suppression of the right to protest and freedom of expression.

You will learn about manifestations of anti-Palestinian racism; how to identify when rights related to protest and freedom of expression are being infringed upon; skills to protect your civil liberties, and; how to continue advocacy for Palestinian human rights in the face of adversity.



Khaled Shawwash (he/him)

Khaled is a Palestinian grade 4/5 teacher that lives on the stolen lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sḱwəxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

He is an activist, a representative for his union local, a member of both Anti-Oppression Educators Collective and Teachers 4 Palestine, and works alongside Independent Jewish Voices and Parents for Palestine to raise awareness about Palestine. He is also an avid cook – South Asian and Iranian cuisine are among his favourites!



Annie Ohana (she/her)

Annie Ohana is an internationally recognized (2023-2024 Top 10 Global Teacher Prize Finalist) anti-oppression curriculum specialist, public school educator, and community organizer.

As founder and director of Mustang Justice, a youth-led justice-oriented collective, Ohana focuses on community building and solidarity action through liberatory pedagogy, mentorship through identity, and experiential learning well beyond the walls of any institution to transform systems and better our world. Education is Liberation.

Workshop #7

Trans and Gender Diverse Youth and Migrant Rights

In this workshop, we will talk about the history of Rainbow Refugee, the different programs on offer, the challenges of this work, and the rising hate that queer and refugee people are facing in North America.

We'll play a few games during the presentation while discussing important events in Canadian queer history. The facilitator, Norma, will talk about her experience as a trans refugee, moving here from Lebanon, and the challenges she faced until becoming full-time staff at Rainbow Refugee.



Norma Lize Rhayem (she/her)

Norma is a transgender activist and advocate from the Middle East. Her activism began while studying journalism and communication arts, leading to her involvement with LGBTQIA+ organizations in the SWANA region and worldwide. Her lived experience, work in media and the non-profit sector helped her to amplify the voice of LGBTQIA+ issues around the world. Since relocating to Vancouver, she continues to fight for the rights of the trans community. She worked as a Sponsorship Coordinator at Rainbow Refugee, a Peer Facilitator at Mosaic, and a co-trainer at QMUNITY. Norma is currently the Communications Manager at Rainbow Refugee and is working on developing training materials to raise awareness in workplaces and communities.

Workshop #8

PowerPlay

PowerPlay encourages participants to think critically about the law, discrimination, and marginalization – through an interactive game, a legal case analysis, and group discussion.

The workshop offers an introduction to equality rights under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and compares two colonial legal understandings of equality. It also looks at the gap between what the law says and the reality we live in, and opens a discussion about strategies for challenging injustice.



Alana Prochuk (she/they)

Alana Prochuk is the Manager of Public Legal Education at West Coast LEAF, a non-profit that uses legal strategies to advance gender justice. Alana previously worked in anti-violence education with Salal Sexual Violence Support Centre and Seniors First BC.

Her personal interests include poetry and enormous dance moves. They live uninvited on x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), S^kwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) homelands.



Suyu He (they/them)

Suyu is a Han Chinese settler with roots in Guangdong and Guizhou provinces. They grew up on Treaty 7 and Treaty 8 territories, and currently reside on the stolen lands of x^wməθk^wəyəm, S^kwxwú7mesh, and səliłwətał Nations. Suyu holds a BA Honours in Human Geography from the University of British Columbia.

Their experience is rooted in urban justice, community organizing and anti-violence education. They enjoy spending time with friends and family, planning trips, and tactile art-making.

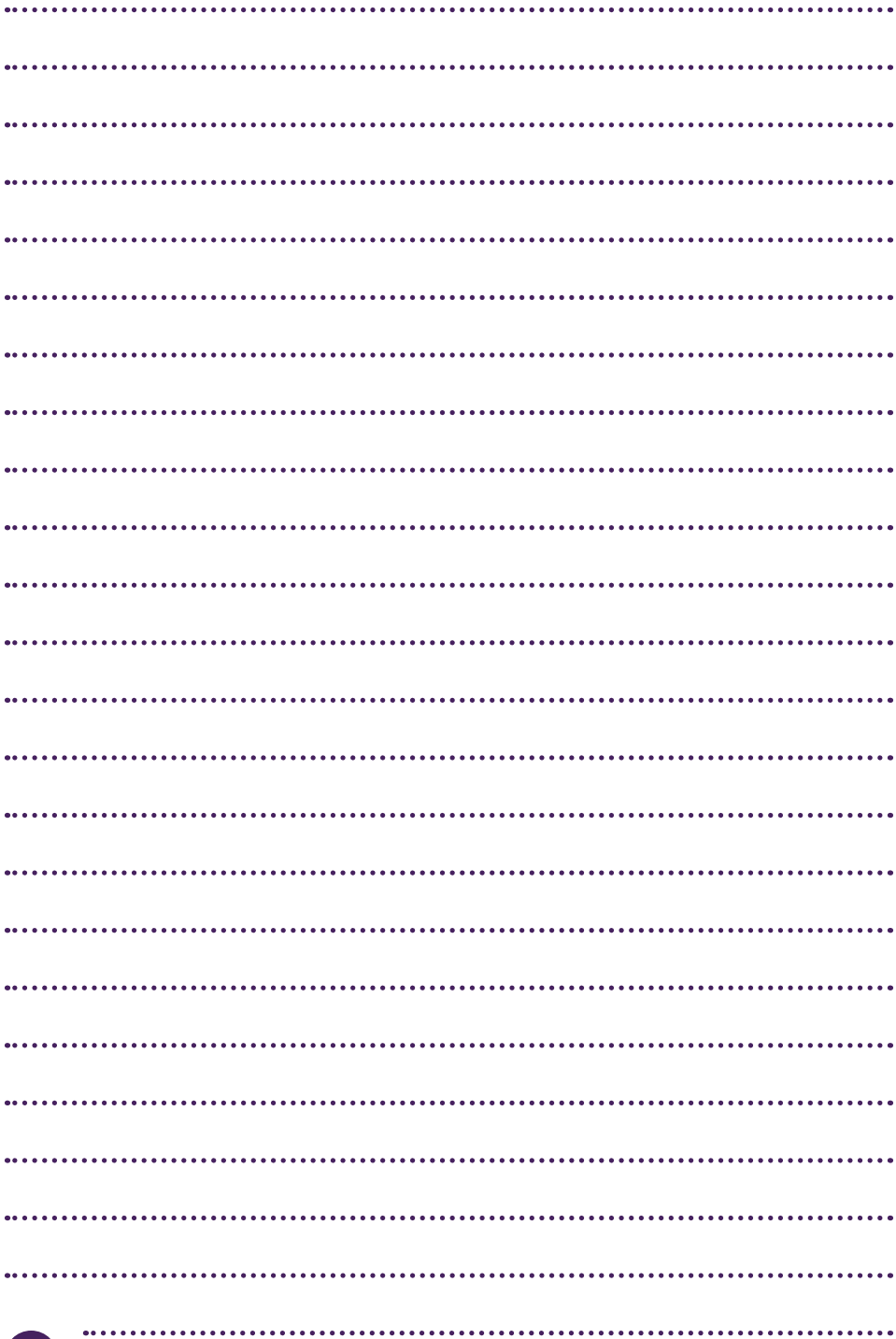
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Know Your Rights

Arrest Handbook

Understand your rights when interacting with the police with BCCLA's Arrest Handbook. It covers topics like Street Checks, Filming the Police, Resisting a Search, Seizure of Personal Property and has information on your specific rights as a young person.

The Handbook is available in English, French, Punjabi, Spanish, Traditional and Simplified Chinese.



Police in Schools Pocketbook

BCCLA believes that police don't belong in schools. Police can cause significant harm and rights violations for both students and staff.

This pocketbook includes a quick breakdown of your rights when interacting with the police at school, including information related to searches, the arrest process, and safety tips.



Sign up to hear more!

Keep up to date with everything BCCLA is working on by signing up for our newsletter.

We send weekly emails with updates on where we're in court, what we're fighting for, information on your rights, and what you can do to protect them.



@_bccla



@bccla.bsky.social



@bccla



306 – 268 Keefer Street
Vancouver, BC V6A 1X5
Unceded Coast Salish Territories

Tel: 604.687.2919
Email: info@bccla.org

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The BCCLA's main office is located on the unceded and ancestral territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), S^kwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

BN: 888466844RR0001

