



**United Way**  
British Columbia

Working with communities in  
BC's North, Interior, Lower Mainland,  
Central & Northern Vancouver Island

NEWS RELEASE  
November 28, 2024

## **United Way BC's Youth Futures Education Fund Sees 18.5% Spike in Mature Students Seeking Support** *Fund to disburse \$600,000 to former youth in care in 2025*



*RavenSong is a grandmother of 10, Sixties Scoop survivor, and YFEF recipient.*

**Central Office, Burnaby, B.C.** - A record number of former youth in care are pursuing post-secondary education as mature students with support from United Way British Columbia (United Way BC)'s Youth Futures Education Fund.

Between 2023 and 2024, the number of students over the age of 25, who are former youth in care, pursuing post-secondary education on tuition waiver and seeking support for basic living expenses or emergencies, grew a record 18.5%.

In 2025, United Way BC Youth Futures Education Fund will disburse \$600,000 to 26 post-secondary institutions and the Native Education College to help support these dedicated students with basic living expenses.

Thanks to United Way BC's ongoing advocacy, in 2023 the Province of BC expanded the tuition waiver to all BC former youth in care as part of StrongerBC's Future Ready plan to make education and training

more accessible and affordable. Many individuals formerly in government care who did not have the opportunity to pursue education when they left school are now able to do so.

Along with attending a post-secondary institution, many mature students need to work or care for young families or grandchildren. They may also need to drive long distances to get to class and their job, all of which makes it hard to concentrate on schooling. The Youth Futures Education Fund helps by providing barrier-free funds for childcare, transportation expenses and more.

Grandmother of 10 and Sixties Scoop survivor, RavenSong Abraham received her Associate Arts degree from Kwantlen Polytechnic University in June 2024 after 23 years of hard work. Thanks to her perseverance and support from the Youth Futures Education Fund for food and gas, she completed her schooling with peace of mind.

"It's a big deal to me, a big deal. And I couldn't have done it without [Youth Futures Education Fund's] help," says RavenSong. "It was just amazing that that's even a possibility. I thought I'd be denied because of my age, right? There was no ageism."

"Having older adults in the classroom enriches the educational experience for everyone. Their diverse life experiences and perspectives contribute to more dynamic and inclusive discussions, which matters because it encourages intergenerational learning and highlights the value of lifelong education. With the Youth Futures Education Fund, United Way BC helps students take part in a learning environment by providing the stability they need."

RavenSong is currently the President of a non-profit society called the Sixty Scoop Indigenous Society of British Columbia and is sharing her experience nationally and internationally.

In 2023/24, 580 students of all ages received support from the Youth Futures Education Fund; 293 were over 25.

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> **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Youth Futures Education Fund - United Way British Columbia

> **POST-SECONDARY PARTNERS:**

BCIT  
Camosun College  
Capilano University  
Coast Mountain College  
College of New Caledonia: [finaid@cnc.bc.ca](mailto:finaid@cnc.bc.ca)  
College of the Rockies  
Douglas College  
Emily Carr University of Art & Design  
Justice Institute of BC  
Kwantlen Polytechnic University  
Langara College  
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology  
North Island College  
Northern Lights College  
Okanagan College  
Royal Roads University  
Selkirk College  
Simon Fraser University  
Thompson Rivers University  
University of Northern British Columbia  
University of British Columbia (Vancouver)  
University of British Columbia (Okanagan)  
University of the Fraser Valley

University of Victoria  
Vancouver Community College  
Vancouver Island University  
Native Education College

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**About United Way British Columbia – working with communities in BC’s North, Interior, Lower Mainland, and Central & Northern Vancouver Island**

United Way BC supports healthy, caring and inclusive communities by strengthening vital connections that support people in need. Representing the five regions of Central and Northern Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland, Southern Interior, Thompson Nicola Cariboo, and Northern BC, our organization serves a population of more than 4.5 million people, with a focus on urgent response, kids and youth, seniors, poverty, mental health and food security.

[www.uwbc.ca](http://www.uwbc.ca)

Interviews are available.

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