

JUSTICE FOR GIRLS

Newsletter

January 2022

Intergenerational, Social, Environmental and Indigenous Justice for Girls



Happy New Year from JFG!

Since this is our first newsletter, let's tell you a little bit about who we are & what we do:

Justice for Girls was formed in 1999, in response to local, national, and international calls for “girl only” programs and services that acknowledge and address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of girls, particularly in relation to homelessness, poverty, and violence. We locate our work within the overall project of women’s equality. We believe eliminating violence and poverty in young women’s lives is essential to achieving equality. Recognizing and addressing the intersecting/interlocking forms of oppression that young women face is fundamental to our work toward ending violence against girls and young women. Justice for Girls takes a human-rights based approach to all of their advocacy, both individual & systemic.

Our Mandate

Justice for Girls is a Canadian non-profit organization and registered charity that promotes equality, freedom from violence & colonialism, and the health & well being of teenage girls who live in poverty.

JFG has had Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2009. Justice for Girls is active in the international human rights community in order to hold Canada accountable for domestic human rights violations and to advance the rights of teenage girls worldwide. All of our advocacy positions local struggles for justice within the global community. Environmental justice for girls requires international cooperation and standards to solve the existential threat of climate change. JFG has also written and orally presented multiple submissions to the United Nations over the last twenty-two years.

A little bit about our organizational structure...

Since our inception, Justice for Girls has had young women co-leading the organization. We believe girls are the experts of their own experience and must define solutions to issues that affect their lives. Our organization's work is informed by the girls and young women whom JFG has advocated on behalf of; supported; had as interns, staff, directors and board members over the last 22 years. At JFG, it is essential to have a team that is representative of those we serve. We currently have 8 staff members, half are Indigenous women, 5 are young women under 30, and 2 out of 4 directors are young women under 25. Not only do we promote girls' leadership but we operate under the leadership of girls and young women.

Board:

- President, Laura Sparrow-Campbell
- Haana Edenshaw
- Margot Young
- Yeganeh Asadian
- Co-founder/board member, Annabel Webb

Staff:

Indigenous Rights & Environmental Justice

- Director, Zoe Craig-Sparrow

Legal Advocacy & Policy

- Director, Sue Brown
- Maggie Korolyk, Outreach Advocate
- Santana Palmer Thomas, Education Advocate

Communications & Engagement

- Director, Savannah Norman
- Communications & Development Worker, Brynn Mckenna

Finance & Development

- Director, Tiva Quinn

To learn more about our team, please visit our website: justiceforgirls.org/team

Young Women's Leadership

Over the past two decades, JFG interns have played a vital role in the development, vision, priorities and advocacy of Justice for Girls. Our interns have gone on to become leaders at JFG and in the larger community (local, national and international).

Through JFG internships, girls and young women are able to earn grade 12 credits and learn about social policy analysis, criminal justice monitoring, media analysis, public education and community development.

Introduction

In spite of the many challenges and constantly changing restrictions, we are happy to report that JFG had a very successful 2021.

In the summer, we moved into and renovated our new office - (and even painted our doors hot pink). We are still waiting to complete the finishing touches on our new space, and are eager to begin utilizing our new space, once the covid restrictions are eased.

Our organizational structure changed and expanded as we welcomed five new staff members and two board members to our dedicated team. Our junior staff members who were hired early in the year are all Indigenous women under 30, and have all been tremendous additions to the team.

Additionally, we would like to extend a special thank you to Tracey McIntosh, who transitioned out of her role at Justice for Girls in June 2021. Tracey put in an extraordinary effort to reboot Justice for Girls following the devastation of the Harper years and served the organization for over a decade. During her time at Justice for Girls, Tracey was a strong advocate for girls' rights to education and freedom from violence.

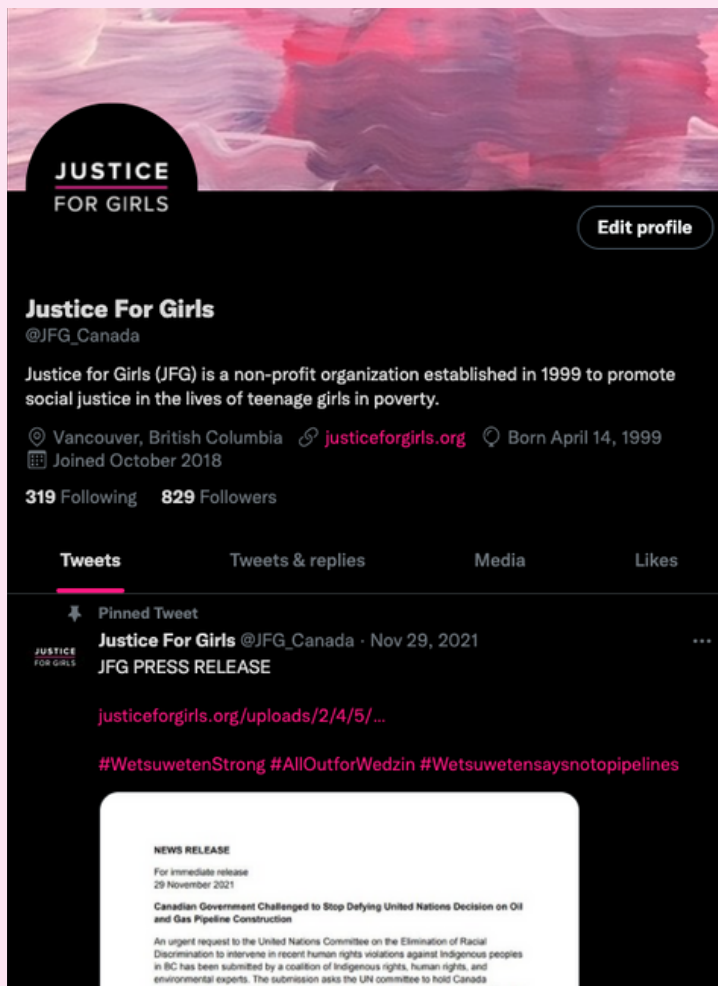
Advocacy and Policy

Our new director of Legal Advocacy & Policy, Sue Brown, began working as an advocate at JFG in 2008 and was on JFG's Board of Directors from 2016-2019. Sue has spent the last year enhancing our advocacy program, including relaunching individual advocacy for teenage girls, which has been a top priority of the organization. We are so fortunate to have Sue on our team and grateful to our funders at the Law Foundation for enabling us to expand our advocacy work. In September, we were able to go back into alternative schools to run girls' groups, and to do community outreach for our individual advocacy program. Girls' groups covered topics from consent, sexual assault and the law, college and post-secondary applications,, information about bursaries and scholarships, to structured discussions about sexism, resistance, rights in school, setting boundaries and red flags in relationships.

Communications and Engagement

Our Director of Communications and Engagement, with the support of two junior staff, led our first in-person Girls' Access to Healthcare workshop at the UBC Life Sciences Centre since COVID. For the past five years, JFG has partnered with UBC Health Sciences, delivering professional development workshops for healthcare students. Over the years, we have continuously improved and adapted our workshops with the leadership of our interns. In the spring, JFG interns and junior staff worked with UBC living library to produce and create an educational video to be used as a resource for students. Public education and professional development are an important way in which JFG creates change.

Over the fall months, we launched a girls' human rights social media campaign, providing girls education and information about their rights. We have a series of instagram posts (@justiceforgirls_canada) about different rights violations with examples, including: sexual harassment and discrimination, sexual assault, access to education and safety in school, and abusive sharing intimate images.



Follow us on twitter: @JFG_Canada
Like our page on facebook:
@JusticeforGirlsCanada

Indigenous Rights & Environmental Justice (IREJ)

Programme Overview

JFG has been fighting for the rights of Indigenous girls since 1999, and for climate/environmental justice for over a decade. We have advocated domestically and internationally, initiating and playing a key in an international human rights investigation into police abuses and failures to protect Indigenous girls in northern BC. More recently, we have advocated for the human rights of Indigenous land defenders against forced eviction, police violence and other human rights violations associated with fossil fuel development.

We have advocated internationally for the global recognition of children's right to a healthy environment and stable climate under international human rights law, and to stop the continued use and development of fossil fuels, especially tar sands and shale gas, which are a key source of global GHGs and a serious threat to the rights of children and future generations.

JFG's IREJ programme has been doing important and responsive advocacy over the past year, engaging international human rights monitoring bodies, sometimes on an urgent basis, including:

- UN Committee on Racial Discrimination
- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
- UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- UN Special Rapporteurs

Fellowship Update

JFG is currently collaborating with the David Suzuki Foundation (DSF), University of London, UBC Faculty of Law, and the Houssian Foundation to research Indigenous and environmental justice for girls. Last November, Annabel Webb (JFG co-founder) and Zoë Craig-Sparrow (Director of IREJ) began a fellowship with the DSF, and are partnering with JFG to document the specific and disproportionate human rights impacts of fossil fuel development on girls in BC.

Annabel co-founded JFG in 1999 and has played a central role in the organization ever since. Annabel is pursuing a PhD in international human rights law at the University of London as a Louise Arbour Human Rights scholar and David Suzuki Fellow. Her current advocacy and legal research focuses on climate justice for girls.

Zoë is a member of the Musqueam Indian Band and has advocated for environmental justice and children's, women's and indigenous peoples' rights since she was a child. Zoë is pursuing a PhD in human rights and is a David Suzuki Fellow; her current research focuses on the relationship between genocide and ecocide in Canada, particularly in the context of resource extraction and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



Annabel and Zoe attending the virtual Pre-session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2020)

Advocacy Spotlight

JFG has been actively supporting the rights of Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and land defenders against RCMP invasion in both November 2019 and November 2021. In both events, RCMP invaded Wet'suwet'en territory and forcibly removed and arrested peaceful Wet'suwet'en people from their unceded, ancestral territory.

Back in 2019, Justice for Girls made an urgent submission on behalf of Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) under its Early Warning & Urgent Action Procedure. CERD subsequently released a decision, sending a stern directive to Canada to immediately remove police forces and halt the construction of the Coastal Gaslink (CGL) pipeline, Trans Mountain Pipeline and Site C dam due to violations of indigenous rights. Since then, federal and provincial governments have continued to breach international human rights law, and Indigenous rights and title. Despite CERD's decision, there was a third armed invasion in November 2021. RCMP were dressed in full military gear, armed with automatic assault rifles, and accompanied by snipers and dogs. Over the multi-day invasion, at least 29 individuals were arrested, including two accredited journalists.

In response, JFG led a coalition of Indigenous rights, human rights, and environmental experts in submitting an updated urgent submission to CERD in November 2021. JFG also played a lead role in a coalition letter sent to the Prime Minister calling on Canada to comply with international human rights obligations. The Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and land defenders remain resolute that they do not give consent for pipeline construction on their unceded* territory and continue to live under the threat of RCMP invasion and forcible removal.

In 1997, the Hereditary Chiefs brought their claim for their ancestral land to the *Canadian Supreme Court*. The court ruled that the Wet'suwet'en People had not relinquished their land rights and titles to 22,000 square kilometers of land in Northern British Columbia. The ruling also recognized the validity of hereditary governance.

Development and Finance

This past year, JFG also welcomed Tiva Quinn as our Director of Finance & Development. Tiva has years of experience and expertise in fundraising and development, working primarily with Indigenous-led and environmental organizations; including the David Suzuki Foundation. Tiva has been instrumental to our organizational growth, and has been remarkably successful in fundraising, securing grants, and developing our organizational capacity.

Tiva will continue to work to keep JFG growing and moving towards our goal of a Justice for Girls Centre. The Center will be an exciting hub for young women and teenage girls in Vancouver, offering the sanctuary and support services that girls in poverty need to thrive.

We plan for the Centre to offer:

- Girls' lounge
- Girls' kitchen
- Advocacy
- Learning centre
- Internships
- Sexual assault services (medical & legal)
- Specialized forensic interview room
- Medical clinic
- Health & wellness programs

Our 2021 Funders



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



Thank you!

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to our supporters, partners, funders and donors. We could not do this without you. We appreciate every donation, no matter the size, thank you to those companies and individuals who believe in the rights, safety and leadership of girls.

Connect with Us!

We have many exciting projects starting this year that we would love to share with you! If you do not want to receive these emails, just reply with a simple "opt-out" or "unsubscribe".

Hours:

Monday to Friday: 9:30 am - 4:30 pm

General inquiries:

Email: info@justiceforgirls.org

Phone: +1 (604) 785 7063

Media

Email: media@justiceforgirls.org

Legal Advocacy and Policy

Email: advocacy@justiceforgirls.org

Phone: 604-837-1069

Communications

Email: communications@justiceforgirls.org

Phone: 604-788-1717

Development and Finance

Email: development@justiceforgirls.org

Phone: 604-788-9951

Indigenous Rights & Environmental Justice

Email: IREJ@justiceforgirls.org

Phone: +1 (604) 785 2242

If you are a teenage girl in British Columbia who is looking for help or support in relation to violence, poverty, discrimination or human rights you can contact us at: 604-837-1069 or at advocacy@justiceforgirls.org.

Justice for Girls acknowledges the ancestral, unceded territories of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlílwətaʔt/Selilwítlh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations