



YouthScape Guideposts

Our Compass

What is building resilient communities through youth engagement all about?

What are the 'ingredients' we need?

YouthScape National identified six 'guideposts' to facilitate decision-making and assess community pathways across the sites, including: systems change, accountability, learning community, diversity, youth leadership, and strengths-based approaches. The term guidepost was chosen because these elements help keep us on the path towards success, like a guidepost on an unfamiliar trail. Each guidepost is connected to the others like an interlocking puzzle piece. We believe that the stronger the interconnections between guideposts, the more resilient our communities will be, and the more actively involved young people will be in their communities.

summer 2008

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Second Annual
Learning
Symposium
January 2009
Calgary

YouthScape
community based. youth paced.

Headwaters 2008





YouthScape is convened by the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD). It is funded and supported by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, United Way of Calgary and Area, the National YouthScape Advisory and community partners in Halifax Regional Municipality, Rivière des Prairies, Thunder Bay, Saskatoon and Calgary.



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Guideposts in Action

The guideposts have served multiple purposes in helping keep the initiative on track this year. They provided a strengths-based assessment tool, created a structure for documenting progress and acted as a planning mechanism.

Emerging Definitions:

Local partners across the country are working with young people and their communities to help define the National YouthScape Guideposts:

Systems Change

YouthScape interventions have the potential to create long-term change in communities (issues, spaces, or institutions) and the potential to ripple out across the social ecology in a way that is sustained and systemic, ideally addressing 'root causes'.

Strengths-Based

All interventions related to YouthScape intentionally build on assets or strengths by identifying opportunities within individuals and communities to address identified issues by adopting an appreciative lens.

Youth Leadership

The intention of YouthScape is to put youth at the centre of interventions where they can influence and shape all stages of projects, from design to implementation and evaluation. Young people's evolving capacity is taken into consideration and meaningful youth-adult partnerships are there for support.

Accountability

YouthScape provides structures and forums that allow for meaningful decision-making and shared ownership by community stakeholders (for instance, youth and community involvement extending beyond the convenor).

Diversity

YouthScape intentionally involves young people with a variety of lived experiences, in particular those who have been systemically disenfranchised (by ethnicity, age, or other considerations). YouthScape is about being open-minded, and about welcoming innovation.

Learning Community

YouthScape recognizes the need to nurture relationships across the social ecology; create a safe space to share triumphs, tribulations and challenges; exchange ideas and lessons learned; and collectively 'grow'.

Guideposts can help to:

- Value youth leadership.
- Create greater community ownership.
- Reinforce the significance of small changes in bringing about larger system-wide change.



Working together to create a national movement to strengthen youth engagement and build resilient communities.

Embracing bold visions for change!

Get involved!
Visit our new website:
www.youthscape.ca

Participate in our online network:
<http://projects.takingitglobal.org/iicrd>





YOUTHSCAPE CALGARY

Rippling Out

At YouthScape Calgary, our goal is to build on young people's projects and ideas to change systems that have an impact on youth. Success will mean overcoming the common misconception that young people's ideas and projects cannot make a real difference.

YouthScape Calgary is working towards this on three different levels:

Our steering committee has established general criteria for youth projects to make sure they are in alignment with YouthScape goals, and that they have potential for impacts that reach beyond the few young people involved in creating the projects (ability to "ripple out").

One such project is the 'community bike hub' at a homeless youth agency. The first phase – setting up systems for people to sign out bikes from homeless youth agencies while they are at the agencies – fits within YouthScape goals. The second phase – helping young people to develop skills to rebuild and maintain bikes and earn their own bike – has the potential to relieve transportation challenges for large numbers of young people.

YouthScape Calgary uses our adult advisory group as champions for young people. They help to open doors for project ideas that youth develop. For example, some young people had an idea for an annual high school art competition to redesign the city's youth bus pass. They wanted to create a bus pass for youth by youth. This project has huge potential for raising awareness of youth issues in the community, and for building bridges between youth and the City of Calgary. With the help of an adult steering committee member, Calgary Transit will adopt the idea in January 2009 for its 100th anniversary. When informed of the idea, Calgary Transit staff said, "well isn't that a great idea, why didn't we think of that?"

YouthScape Calgary chose to work on projects on just one system – transportation – for our first year. Narrowing our focus this way allows us to keep tabs on what is happening in this area and facilitate project development. We selected transportation because the City of Calgary is currently revamping its transportation planning process, and we saw an opportunity to make youth involvement an essential part of that process. As changes occur, YouthScape will work to share young people's ideas about them with local politicians.

We are working to create change and soften resistance to youth involvement in decision-making, and to present young people not simply as 'token' voices, but as informed and articulate individuals able to provide valuable input on issues that matter to them.

BY KIM MORRISON

Check out: www.calgaryurbanvibe.ca/youthscape

Success means overcoming the common misconception that young people's ideas and projects cannot make a real difference.



YOUTHSCAPE SASKATOON

Engaging Youth on the Fringe

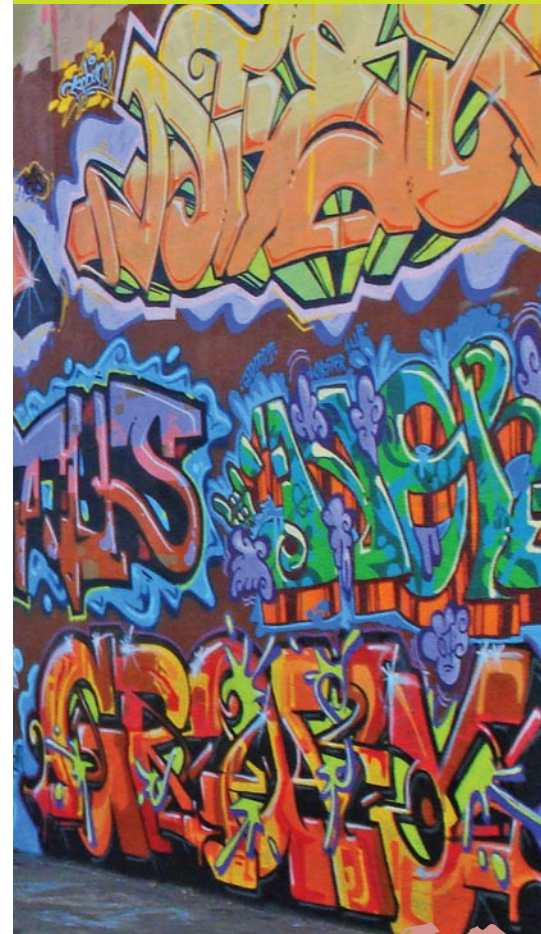
Communities for Children in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the convening agency for YouthScape Saskatoon, has been working to ensure that the voices of youth are heard in our city, and that their wisdom is shared with our citizens. We are engaging and empowering young people, especially those on the fringe, to provide valuable skills and learning opportunities. We also want to equip them with the ability to make healthy lifestyle choices while reducing other risky behaviours.

In Saskatoon, youth on the fringe, including youth in care, aboriginal youth, gang members and sexually exploited youth, are even less likely than mainstream youth to have opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Therefore, we are working extra hard to recognize and nurture their strengths, interests and abilities by involving them in decisions at individual and systemic levels.

Strategies for success

We are working to involve these young people in many ways to fulfill key goals. We want young people to:

1. Be invited to sit on local, municipal and provincial committees whenever changes are proposed that may affect them;
2. Be aware of and understand any changes that affect them, and feel their input is important;
3. Recognize and understand indirect racism and be able to deal with it;
4. Have healthy role models and mentors to look up to, and concrete, achievable goals to work towards;
5. Understand that healing and recovery are different for everyone, including the process of recovery from abuse or addictions;
6. Have well staffed follow-up programs to help them get off drugs and off the street, including after care programs for those who have finished rehabilitation programs, and homecoming celebrations;
7. Have instant access to safe places and strong support in the city, community and government;
8. Be surrounded by adults who acknowledge their importance;
9. Have strong connections and safe places to meet with Elders for conversation and advice;
10. Feel that helping professionals respect them, their culture, their ideas and their needs;
11. Be supported as they develop positive relationships with helping professionals, so they can voice their concerns and share their ideas.



Strategies for
success





YOUTHSCAPE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Creating Strong Adult Allies

Why be an Ally?

Working with young people on community projects offers an immensely rewarding opportunity for adults to nurture youth engagement, leadership, responsibility and values. Watching young people take part in something meaningful, and encountering their fresh perspectives and excitement can fill adult allies with hope and enthusiasm.

Young people receiving YouthScape grants have stepped forward because they care. As an adult ally, you have also demonstrated that you care. Already, you have that in common. Build on this connection and on the strengths, enthusiasm and ideas you both bring to the table. Remember that with your support, these young people can have a real and positive impact on their schools, neighbourhoods and communities.

Steps to Becoming an Effective Ally

Getting started.

- Listen to the young person's ideas and plans, and resist making judgments.
- Maintain a distance from the project to allow the young person to 'own' it.
- Help the young person find valid and constructive resources, and prompt them to look for new ways to tackle issues.
- After a young person identifies a project focus or idea they want to pursue, encourage them to get feedback and ideas from their community at the outset and all along the way.
- Have the young person identify other allies in their community. There may be other community members who could help support, sponsor or help out to ensure the young person's idea is a success.

Along the way.

- Make yourself available to the young person you're working with.
- Be supportive of their views and ideas and create a safe place for them to engage in brainstorming.
- Check in occasionally to chat about successes and challenges they may be facing – and remember to ask them to let you know how you can help.
- Be willing to ask for help from staff or other allies if you need it. We are all here to help young people succeed with their projects, so you never need to feel alone. Whether you need a chat now and then, would like a brainstorming session, or are looking for information about additional supports or expertise to help your group, just ask.

YouthScape Halifax Regional Municipality has developed some suggestions to help adult allies work with youth.



Wrapping it up.

Encourage participants to discuss their project after it is finished. Points of discussion could include strengths and challenges and how these issues can be resolved the next time they plan an activity.

Support future efforts by young people to continue the community work they have already started or to find a new issue to tackle in their school, neighborhood or community.

BY YOUTHSCAPE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY TEAM

YOUTHSCAPE THUNDER BAY

Green Space Warriors

When I arrived at Dennis Franklin Cromarty First Nations High School at the beginning of second semester, I thought that its courtyard was very plain and a wasted space. There was hardly any activity there at all.



When YouthScape came to the school and offered their services to make it a useful area, I knew it was something I wanted to be a part of. So I jumped at the idea and got involved. We met with the YouthScape team at least twice a week to get things going. It took a lot of motivation to get things started, but deep down inside I knew that it would turn out amazing.

I think the courtyard project is a great way to promote teamwork and dedication and a great way for youth to interact and share new ideas.

Most importantly, everyone has a say about what needs to be done and a chance to show their creativity. It brings everyone together and shows that even people with differences can come together and make something awesome. Now, we are planting trees and setting up a teepee.

I am happy that in the future when I see the area being used by the next generation and the next, I can tell myself I was a part of that awesome task. That's what I want to see in the future: kids enjoying the area, and using it as a chill spot.

I think the YouthScape team is filled with awesome individuals. They show strong leadership, which is an amazing quality to have. I can definitely say if it weren't for their enthusiasm, the project wouldn't have gone this far and the youth would have lost interest – plus free pizza is nice too!

BY SHANNON

Thunder Bay

In Thunder Bay students are planting trees, setting up a teepee and creating a new school courtyard space.



YOUTHSCAPE RIVIÈRE DES PRAIRIES

Béluga, Rivière des Prairies

All for one!

The *Béluga Rivière des Prairies* (RDP) project has progressed from the idea stage to being a real project with firm community support that is expanding its circle of followers and devising an exciting and attractive game plan for the RDP community. Little by little, Béluga has become a mosaic of projects and worksites through which youth and adults are joining forces to build a dynamic community.

Over the past six months, new key players have joined the consortium's ranks. Its members, both youth and adults, have elaborated upon the vision and principles of Béluga, with the result that all those involved are now contributing more and are more committed. Ten or so youth took the lessons learned from last summer's experiences to prepare a powerful presentation for the February 2008 Forum. This event saw more than a hundred community people come together to hear youth present their views of the community and the solutions they had to put forward.

The preparations for the Forum allowed the youth to take their rightful place within the consortium. Through their leadership of this event, the youth had the chance to demonstrate in a concrete way the significant contribution they could make to their community. The Forum discussions allowed youth and adults to bond and acquire greater mutual influence. As one partner mentioned, "They're not service recipients, they're partners!" Everyone involved pledged to take concrete action and transform their intentions into solid commitment.

New questions quickly arose: "Are we giving the youth enough room?" "Are they truly participating in decision making?" "As youth, have we really made our voices heard?"

With knowledge also comes a stronger critical sense and the courage to question yourself. "We're not a community that has learned but rather a learning community. We allow ourselves the right to make mistakes. We strive to acquire sound ways of doing things. There are no right answers so we are trying different approaches that will allow us to learn."

With every step forward, the path becomes clearer and appreciation grows for the progress accomplished to date. One thing is certain: Béluga is transforming the community!

BY JOSÉE LATENDRESSE



Béluga is a real revolution! Putting youth front and centre allows them to become a powerful driving force.

YOUTHSCAPE'S LEARNING COMMUNITY IN ACTION : HAMILTON

Youth Catalyst Funds

Youth Engagement and Action in Hamilton (YEAH) has been improving and guiding youth engagement since September 2007. Our focus is on creating youth space for connection and communication, increasing the representation of youth voice in the decision-making process and connecting youth work that has been operating in silos. We are connecting youth to real participatory opportunities by:

- Increasing the community's understanding of youth engagement through our youth engagement 101 resource and providing strategic information sessions to increase the capacity of organizations to engage young people
- Partnering with businesses like the *Hamilton Spectator*
- Launching our Youth Catalyst Funds Program

The Youth Catalyst Fund is a fund to support young people in carrying out projects that draw on a range of media and approaches that operate across sectors. For example:

On The Streets & In Control. Street Involved Youth Peer Mentors use photographs to visually demonstrate the concepts and power of applying harm reduction strategies in their daily lives.

Our Story. After discussions and research on poverty issues in the Hamilton area and examining how poverty is portrayed in films, young people create a quilt to share their story.

Beyond Words. Working with a young local Hamilton artist, youth create small sculptures to express their experience with poverty and explore the potential for a cooperative public art sculpture.

BY MIKE DES JARDINS

YOUTHSCAPE'S LEARNING COMMUNITY IN ACTION : VICTORIA

Redefining collaboration

In Victoria, YouthCore has been working actively to deepen the collaboration between agencies that support young people. Victoria is a very siloed community. YouthCore has started to break down barriers by bringing youth and service providers together in new ways. We have been overwhelmed with the success and feedback on our projects, especially the Transforming Communities Symposium, attended equally by adults and youth. It highlighted the need to improve relationships with business. Youth development teams, which involved 284 young people, were involved in mapping workshops.

Bottom line... "As much as I appreciate a youth-led process, our society does not work in a youth only world. Youth and adults need to both be engaged simultaneously. Otherwise, it is like driving a car without a wheel."

BY KATIE SHAW



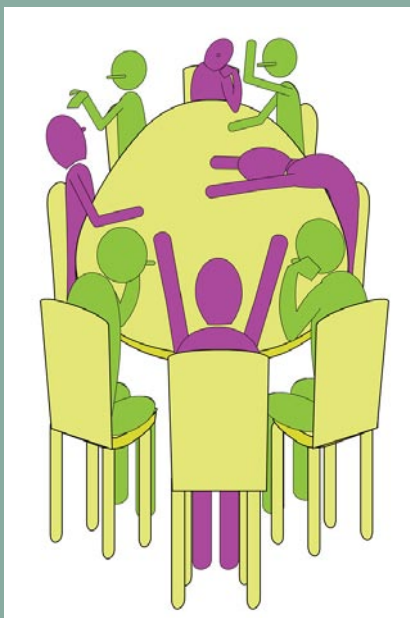
The Youth Catalyst Fund is a “stepping stone for breaking down the silos within youth work”.

Hamilton

Check out the Victoria Youthcore portal:

www.youthcore.ca

Victoria



“Why are we trying to make them fit – should we not be creative so young people can be full participants?”

ADULT

“It is very much us trying to fit in the adult world, maybe we can make it a blend?”

YOUTH

Steering Committees: Remedy or Headache for Youth-Adult Partnerships?

Steering committees are a place for youth and adults to work together to make decisions. When YouthScape began, we identified steering committees as the best way for youth and adults to work together. This was in line with a common view that steering committees are a democratic means to enable community participation.

Yet, the steering committee structure has not operated as we expected in all YouthScape sites. Steering committees have been dismantled or reconstructed and alternative arrangements put in place, causing us to reflect deeply about the steering committee structure and its impact.

While they are democratic, are steering committees youth-friendly?

Young people, especially those targeted by YouthScape, are not familiar or comfortable with the formal meeting structures these committees often follow. For the disengaged young people we are trying to reach, steering committees can be seen as intimidating and inflexible.

Adults from Calgary and Rivières des Prairies asked:

“Why are we trying to make them fit, should we not be creative, so young people can be full participants?”

“Are we asking youth to fit in, or are we able to recreate and reorganize our approaches and ways of doing things to build on their talents?”

Questions that solicited these responses from the youth:

“It is very much us trying to fit in the adult world, maybe we can make it a blend?” (Youth from Calgary)

“We learned that the steering committee was not working because it was mostly adults talking and not doing productive things... too many decisions being made by the steering committee would take all the time and it was boring... Last steering committee, I was barely awake...” (Youth in Halifax Regional Municipality reflecting on the decision to get rid of the steering committee entirely)

Can steering committees be inclusive?

It is not easy to make their discussions relevant to both youth and adults. While YouthScape itself may be of shared interest, youth and adults come from different realms and speak from different perspectives. Adults participate as representatives of organizations, but youth contribute as individuals. How can we bring young people and adults together in a meaningful way? How can youth and adult voices both contribute to the direction of the initiative? In YouthScape, we have seen both adults and young people feel excluded as a result of efforts to target meetings to a particular group.

Making steering committees more effective.

While structurally challenging, steering committees have a role to play in bringing organizational representatives and young people together. To ensure that our steering committees are effective, we must pay attention to:

The selection process.

Experience suggests that the more young people are connected to an initiative, the more they will contribute.

Providing appropriate information.

Providing youth-friendly information before a meeting helps ensure that both young people and adults are aware of the agenda items and prepared to participate.

Flexibility in format.

There are lots of opportunities for flexibility – we should look for and take advantage of these to bring some fun and liveliness to committees.

Relationship-building.

Relationship-building activities that help young people and adults get to know each other on a more personal level can help ensure that young people are more comfortable voicing their opinions.

Clarity of roles and responsibilities.

For both youth and adults, knowing who is responsible for what, helps build trust and accountability.

Key lessons emerging from YouthScape point to the need for diverse forms and spaces of decision-making in order to engage a variety of youth and broaden community ownership of the initiative.

For example, in Halifax, Rivière des Prairies and Saskatoon, youth have been working together as action teams. These young people are now taking leadership in adult forums.

Forums that are led by youth can help everyone see young people not as beneficiaries but as contributors. In Halifax Regional Municipality, the concept of a 'Market Place' has been adopted, where young people facilitate conversations around topics of interest to the community. High attendance and positive feedback by the community point to the importance of giving young people the opportunity to lead.



Halifax Regional Municipality uses a 'Market Place' concept to facilitate conversations around topics of interest to the community.

BY NATASHA BLANCHET-COHEN, IICRD

SWIT'CHING MY STORIES

A painting of a bald eagle in flight over a lake, with mountains in the background. The eagle is brown and white, flying towards the left. The lake is dark blue, and the mountains are blue and white. The sky is dark blue.

Here I've spent a lot of my time switching...
From the coffee I need serving
To the office I'm cleaning
And when I advance and feel like achieving...
I try to focus by successfully cheating...
... Myself

Then I feel like I'm fancy
And have spent some time realizing
Between screens, and the office, and whatever key
Seems to be opening my little mysteries

My mystery is my worthy word
Maybe my piece of life and some of the cry
And of course my laugh at the same time...
Would help me understand this switching
Can you help me? You know how much I'm worth?

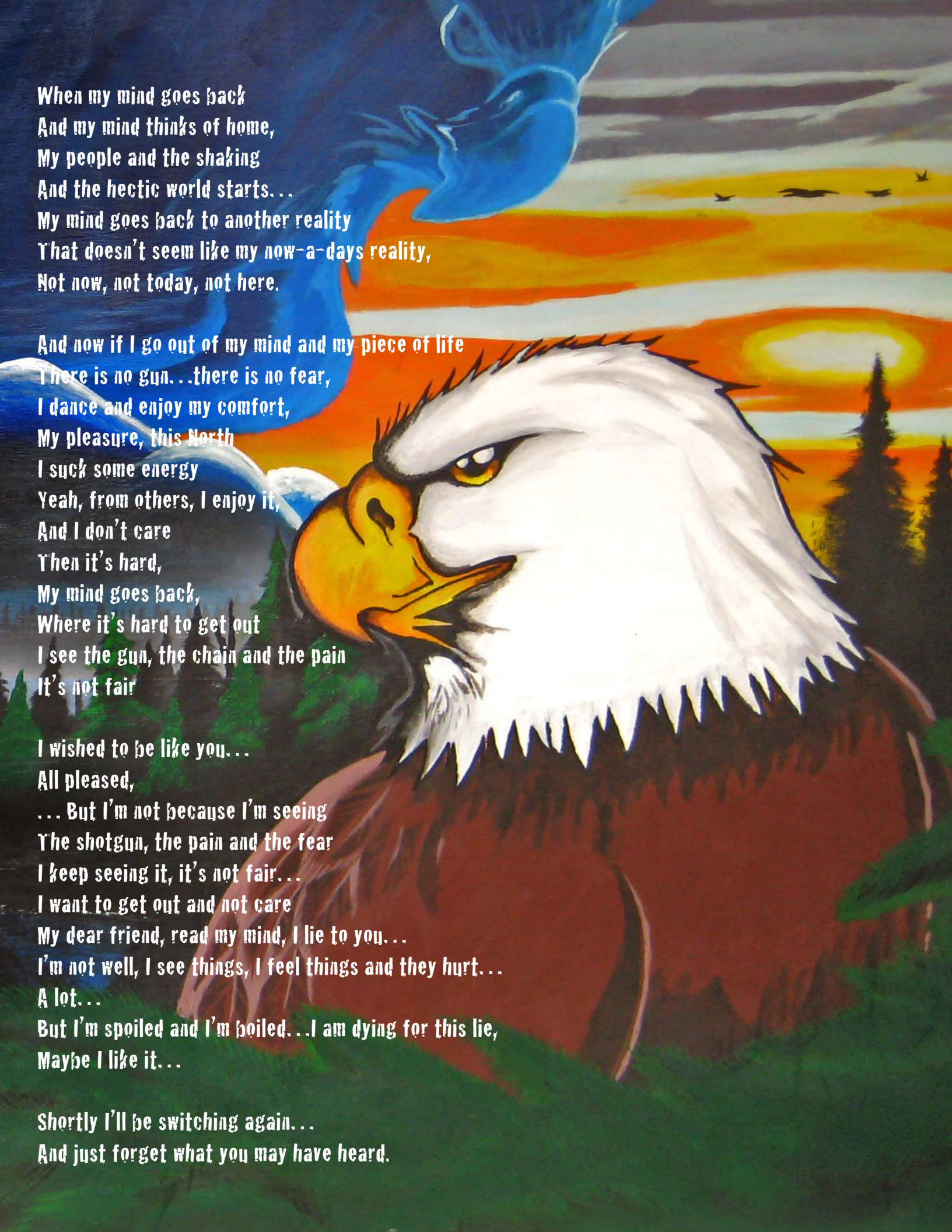
I know!
But the question, the question is;
What else is there? What? I need experience?

Let me switch again,
I'll go to my experience,
I would rather not t-talk about it
But if you insist, I'll submit
But you need to realize
I don't know many good deeds
I don't have safe titles
They're all about power
And I forget

Poem by
Jorge E. Salazar

Painting by student,
Dennis Franklin Cromarty, Thunder Bay

But!
I know other people too
And it's hard...



When my mind goes back
And my mind thinks of home,
My people and the shaking
And the hectic world starts...
My mind goes back to another reality
That doesn't seem like my now-a-days reality,
Not now, not today, not here.

And now if I go out of my mind and my piece of life
There is no gun...there is no fear,
I dance and enjoy my comfort,
My pleasure, this North
I suck some energy
Yeah, from others, I enjoy it,
And I don't care
Then it's hard,
My mind goes back,
Where it's hard to get out
I see the gun, the chain and the pain
It's not fair

I wished to be like you...
All pleased,
... But I'm not because I'm seeing
The shotgun, the pain and the fear
I keep seeing it, it's not fair...
I want to get out and not care
My dear friend, read my mind, I lie to you...
I'm not well, I see things, I feel things and they hurt...
A lot...
But I'm spoiled and I'm boiled...I am dying for this lie,
Maybe I like it...

Shortly I'll be switching again...
And just forget what you may have heard.