

The following is distributed on behalf of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate/PEI

## PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, October 8, 2020

For Immediate Release

### Child and Youth Advocate To Oversee PEI Children and Youth Table

Youth Members of the PEI Children and Youth Table have rapidly made their voices heard over the past months. The eight youth members have:

- connected with the Prime Minister's Youth Council;
- consulted with Senators and staff of the Senate of Canada;
- raised issues to elected members of Government, Official Opposition and the Third Party;
- met with the Premier twice;
- met with Ministers, Deputy Ministers; and
- met with leaders of community organizations from across PEI.

Now that the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate has opened with the appointment of Marv Bernstein as the independent PEI Child and Youth Advocate, the PEI Children and Youth Table has transitioned to be a valued advisory body represented exclusively by children and youth, and reporting directly to the Child and Youth Advocate.

*"Having robust and perceptive voices come forward from the PEI Children and Youth Table will help to identify and advise our Office on the gaps and areas of concern related to children and youth, informing the work we do directly from young people themselves,"* shared Marv Bernstein, Child and Youth Advocate for PEI.

All topics the Youth Members discuss are examined in a non-partisan manner, using the rights-based perspective of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. By exercising child and youth participatory rights, child and youth members of the PEI Children and Youth Table will address a variety of matters that impact the rights, interests and well-being of PEI children and youth.

Youth Members are working hard to ensure they can hear from peers of all ages and from all parts of the Island. More engagement activities and consultations are being planned for the months ahead.

Youth Members of the PEI Children and Youth Table collectively shared, *"We're glad that through the Child and Youth Advocate Office, youth voices are now starting to be heard, not just adults making decisions for us or speaking for us. Young people are entirely capable of making critical decisions"*.

Anyone seeking further information about the PEI Children and Youth Table can connect by calling, 902-368-5630, e-mailing [voiceforchildren@ocyapei.ca](mailto:voiceforchildren@ocyapei.ca), on Instagram @peichildrenandyouthtable or by visiting [www.peichildrenandyouthtable.ca](http://www.peichildrenandyouthtable.ca).

### **Backgrounder**

The PEI Children and Youth Table was announced in May 2020 to promote inclusion of views of children and youth during COVID 19 and to serve as a non-partisan bridge until the appointment of an independent Child and Youth Advocate. During the spring and summer months, adult members of the PEI Children and Youth Table provided answers to questions posed by the child and youth members and facilitated conversations to assist in problem solving the youth identified questions and concerns. The contributions of adult members were appreciated by youth members during isolation

and fostered youth relationships with professionals. Moving forward, the former adult members of the PEI Children and Youth Table will be available, on an ad hoc basis, as valued resource partners to the exclusive child and youth membership of the PEI Children and Youth Table.



**Tag Line: From left to right, Shauna Bjornson, Shaylee Bjornson, June Horne, George Martin, Payge Kowalski, Jade Ward, Maggie Bain, Sarah Knockwood. Behind, Michael Zimmerman, Rona Smith and Wraychel Horne, staff of the Office of Child and Youth Advocate**  
[www.peichildrenandyouthtable.ca](http://www.peichildrenandyouthtable.ca).



#### MEDIA CONTACT

**Penny Woodgate**

Executive Administrative Assistant  
Office of the Child and Youth Advocate/PEI  
902-368-5630  
spwoodgate@ocyapei.ca