

DECEMBER 2020

# ANNUAL REPORT

Free Your Mind  
Mental Health  
Society

Report by:  
Jenny LI  
Executive Director

Approved by:  
Board of Directors



## OUR STORY

Free Your Mind Mental Health Society, or Free Your Mind, is a Calgary-based and youth-led not-for-profit organization. It was founded with youth mental health in mind. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, one out of every five Canadians personally experiences a mental illness or a crisis in any given year. Suicide is a leading cause of death for Canadians from adolescence to middle age. Our founders recognized the severity of the misinformation and under-education surrounding the general topic of mental health. Stigma continues to prevent struggling youth from seeking help, and our founders are determined to change that. Free Your Mind believes in harnessing the power of genuine youth voice and amplifying it. We speak out about mental health through social media, blogging, and community events.

Three years ago, Jenny Li founded Free Your Mind. At the time, Jenny was only 17 years old. Free Your Mind was never intended to be a long-lasting program, much less an incorporated society. Jenny, who had suffered from mental health complications for over a decade, simply wanted to assemble a team and host an event dedicated to mental health education.

Jenny's struggle with poor mental health began at the age of 5. At that time, their family immigrated from China. As a visible minority, Jenny was often ridiculed for their conduct and appearance. They were ostracized and harassed by their peers for their broken English and the upward slant of their eyes. They continued to suffer through junior high, where they underwent two years of ceaseless and often very public sexual harassment. While they didn't know it at the time, Jenny suffered from depression and two anxiety disorders. Along the way, Jenny learned the value of resiliency and turned their negative experiences into the desire to do good. Now, Jenny works hard to overcome their struggles and to embrace who they are, including their non-binary gender identity.

In June of 2019, the founders of Free Your Mind planned, organized, and executed Project Mindfulness, the education event that Jenny yearned to see. As time progressed, Free Your Mind evolved from an ad hoc initiative to an ongoing project.





## OUR MISSION

Free Your Mind exists to promote awareness, understanding, and mindfulness.

Free Your Mind believes that the first step to good mental health is recognizing what mental health entails. We bring attention to local resources and challenge the myths and misinformation surrounding mental health struggles. Free Your Mind hosts periodic events, such as Project Mindfulness, that allow for professional education concerning psychological wellness.

Our goal is to spread a deeper understanding within the Calgary area. We believe in the power of sharing the personal journeys of those around us. We believe that stigma can only be broken when people take the time to listen to what mental health struggles, or mental wellness, truly entails. Our desire to create understanding drives our initiatives in getting loud.

Lastly, we want to leave our audience with the lasting benefits of mindfulness. We work to provide the Calgarian public with the strategies and knowledge necessary to check in with their mental health, support their loved ones, and seek help when they need it.

## OUR AUDIENCE

Free Your Mind is unique in that we are entirely administered by youth. Our programs, such as Speak Your Mind, directly represent local youth voices. Our executive directors, all of whom are under 25, compile our budgets, conduct program evaluations, oversee communications, and facilitate our many initiatives. Free Your Mind's target audience is youth, or individuals between 12 and 25 years of age. We are in a unique position to connect with this audience, since every member of our team belongs to this age group.

More specifically, the members of Free Your Mind recognize that youth voice is often minimized or ignored in traditional mental health discourse. We wish to present an alternative to the mainstream medicalized and professionalized discourse. We embrace the understanding that everyone has mental health, and that everyone is the expert on their own experiences. This absolutely holds true for young people, who were raised, or who are being raised, in a unique world. Free Your Mind is an organization that promotes and amplifies young voices on a grassroots level. Honest, empathetic, and impactful discourse is at the heart of our many programs.

# We Provide



## Youth Platform

Youth can release blogs and other creative content on our website and social media platforms.



## Group & Mentor Support

Collaborate in groups to propose and redesign ideas in a safe environment with like-minded peers.



## Funds for Initiatives

Propose any idea and we will provide funding and a team to help bring it to life.



# Which Gives



## Youth Changemakers

Youth ages 12-25 bring innovative ideas to advocate for mental health awareness.



## Mental Health Initiatives

Youth-led initiatives such as blogs, events, podcasts, webinars, mentorship programs, clubs, and more.



## Hours Volunteered

Our members' passion for mental health inspires them to commit endless hours to our team.



# Leads To



## ↓ Stigma

Individuals will be able to talk about their mental wellbeing without fear.



## ↑ Mental Health Education

Self-care knowledge and mental health terminology will be commonly known. Individuals will be able to care for their loved ones.



## ↑ Mental Wellbeing

Youth and their families will be happier and healthier.

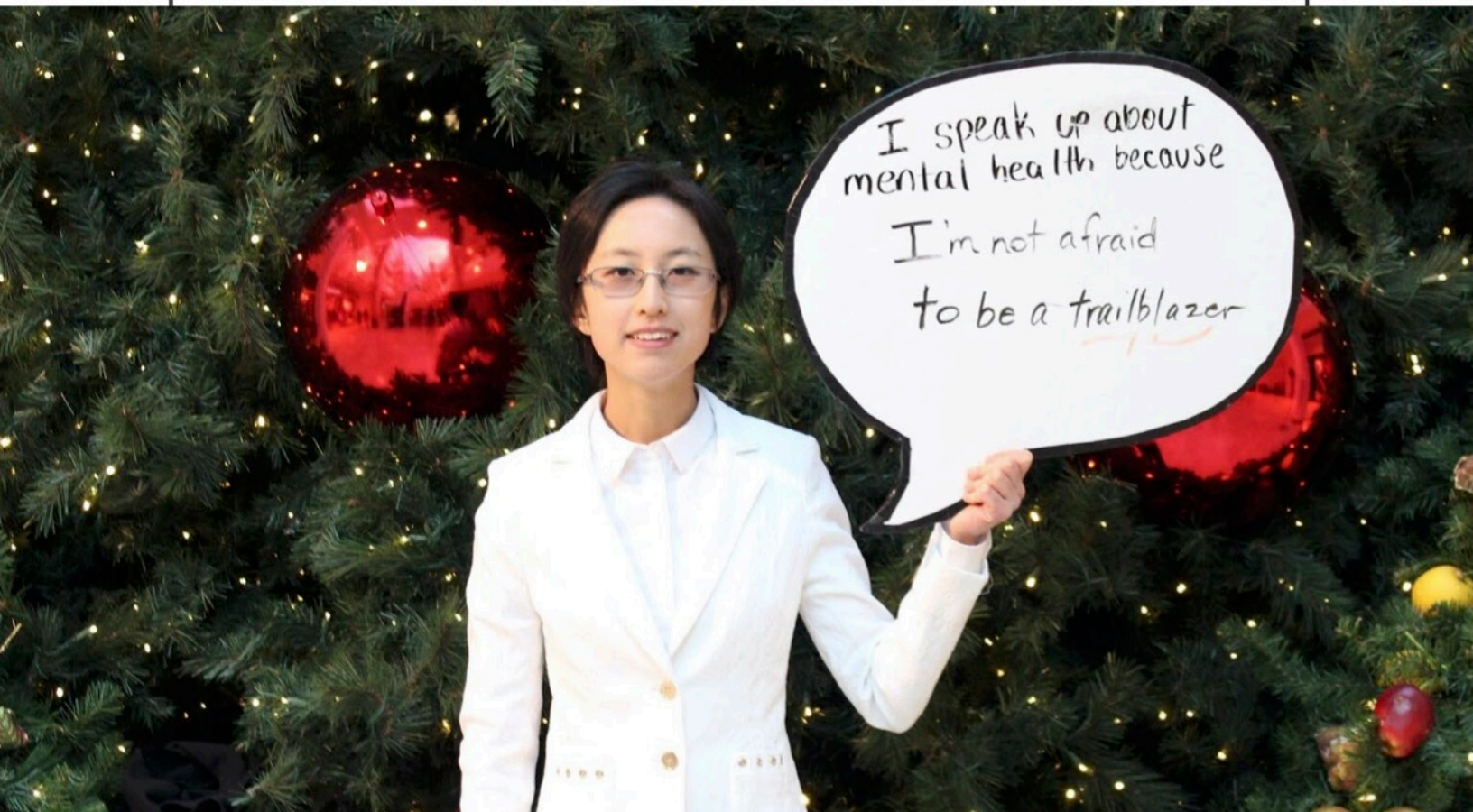
## OUR PROGRAMS



### THE SPEAK YOUR MIND PROGRAM

The Speak Your Mind Program is a social media and blogging campaign that highlights local advocacy efforts and people's lived experiences with mental health challenges. Speak Your Mind exists to provide youth with an accessible platform to share their thoughts on the general topic of mental health. We encourage individual initiative, creativity, and innovation in bringing distinct faces and voices to mental health. Speak Your Mind obtains our content from personal interviews and youth-directed research. During interviews, our dedicated youth volunteers photograph their interviewees as the interviewees hold signs demonstrating why mental health matters to them. They are asked a series of questions, such as what advice they would give to someone facing a mental health struggle. Our volunteers weave these commentaries into their own writing and produce a blog in their authentic voices. For creative and research pieces, our volunteers draw on their own experience or reliable sources to produce their work. The final product is disseminated through our website and social media accounts.

In short, Speak Your Mind is both a place where the public may find safe, positive, and honest commentaries stated from a youth perspective, but it is also a program where youth are empowered to share their thoughts and experiences through a creative medium. Our team considers ourselves successful if we personalize the often abstract concept of emotional wellness to other youth.



## OUR PROGRAMS

### PROJECT MINDFULNESS

Free Your Mind hosts annual events, named Project Mindfulness. The goals of Project Mindfulness are threefold. This event aims to encourage mental health literacy among the general public, normalize dialogue surrounding mental health, and encourage self-care activities that attendees may practice at any time.

To encourage mental health literacy, a professional from an external organization facilitates interactive education sessions where attendees actively obtain evidence-based mental health education. In general, such sessions cover the basics of what mental health is, what common mental health complications might look like, and how someone can be there for both themselves and their loved ones. The education sessions are always delivered by registered mental health charities, incorporate interactivity, and are accessible to the general population.

Free Your Mind believes that the key to breaking down stigma is to encourage positive dialogue. At Project Mindfulness, external mental health support from the Calgary area set up booths to showcase available resources. Project Mindfulness is a safe space where the booth representatives, youth volunteers, and organizers all speak about emotional wellness. We create an atmosphere where candor is encouraged, and where participants can acknowledge their struggles and meet a variety of supports.

Finally, Project Mindfulness encourages self-care by showcasing a variety of family-friendly activities. They generally include beginner-friendly yoga, an arts station, and a selection of board games. We encourage our attendees to take a step back from the hectic pace of our modern lifestyles, address their sources of support, and to unwind with their loved ones. If nothing else, Project Mindfulness is a place where folks of all backgrounds can take a well-deserved break.

Free Your Mind is hosting our next Project Mindfulness in mid-2021, or later if COVID-related risks persist.. Project Mindfulness targets youth, but it is open to everyone. Project Mindfulness has no commercial aspects. Admission and access to activities are entirely free.



## OUR PROGRAMS

### EVENTS TEAM

Free Your Mind proudly hosts a flexible Events Team, which currently consists of a dozen dedicated teen volunteers. Members of the Events Team take on projects that they invent, and about which they are passionate. The Events Team is organizing a series of podcasts and webinars, each episode of which will address a different aspect of youth mental health. For instance, our year-end episode will focus on the impact of 2020's events on youths' mental health. Our podcasts and webinars include a range of voices, engaging youth not otherwise affiliated with Free Your Mind, community leaders, and service administrators. Our podcasts further our goal of encouraging mental health literacy through honest local dialogue.

This spring, Free Your Mind's Events Team launched Free Your Mind's first art contest. We teamed up with another youth-led organization and encouraged young people from across the Calgary area to submit their original work. We accepted a range of mediums, including paintings, photographs, and poetry. Members of our team selected a number of works to feature on social media, and their creators obtained the opportunity to showcase their art, describe their passions, and connect with like-minded folks.

Free Your Mind's Events Team is constantly adding to our repertoire of initiatives. We recently launched a mentorship program, where young adults actively engage with younger youth and provide peer support for any challenges they may face. Our brand-new Q&A forum, Questions and Suggestions, is just getting off the ground. Questions and Suggestions is an anonymous portal where our audience may submit questions about mental health, which we will then ask a professional psychologist to answer. No matter what form they take, our community events are always created by members of the Calgary community to serve the greater public. We directly engage youth volunteers, mainly high school and university students, as event planners and communicators. The planning process is an opportunity for youth to develop their time management, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. Young volunteers have consistent say in how community events may look, and they are encouraged to suggest ideas for new initiatives. Free Your Mind serves to empower both the general public, provide a platform for critical mental health support, and offer innovative opportunities for the younger generation.



## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Free Your Mind employs ongoing methods to assess the effectiveness and the impact of our various programs. We strongly value the feedback of our community and our volunteers alike. Our community's mental health needs are fluid and ever-evolving. We therefore demonstrate flexibility in providing and developing our initiatives.

Three times a year, Free Your Mind's Executive Directors personally reach out to our volunteers and encourage them to complete an online feedback form. This form aims to gauge the teamwork dynamics, atmosphere, and efficiency of Free Your Mind. The form concludes with an open-ended question, where the volunteer may describe their personal growth, their perceived strengths of Free Your Mind, and deliver constructive feedback in their own words. The volunteer always has the choice to stay anonymous and to skip any questions they feel would give away their identity or otherwise render them uncomfortable. Our Executive Directors also offer to conduct individual, face-to-face check-ins with all of our volunteers.

Free Your Mind manages an ongoing Community Assessment Form, accessible through the internet. It is open to the general public with a focus on residents of the Calgary area. This form gauges the public's self-care behaviours, awareness of community resources, general mental health literacy, and their perceived effectiveness of programs we offer. These forms may be completed at any time and under complete anonymity. After a major event, such as Project Mindfulness, we make use of our social media and we invite our attendees and our booth representatives to provide us with similar information. We analyze responses for patterns and common feedback, which directly informs future programs.

Since much of Free Your Mind's activities are conducted over, or in conjunction with, social media, we take care to review the analytics of our various pages. We determine the sources of advertising and the types of content that is most consumed and best understood by our target audience. Our analysis helps us to streamline our posts, our communication, and our resources for maximum impact. We continue to develop our analytical methods to make the most of our resources.



## OUR IMPACT

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As we welcome the new year, Free Your Mind plans to:

- Adopt and implement a new marketing strategy.
- Continue growing our team.
- Establish new initiatives, like Questions and Suggestions.
- Establish the second cohort for our mentorship program.
- Continue making the most of social media platforms.
- Initiate and maintain new community partnerships.
- Meet or exceed our blog output, and our quality of writing, compared to 2020.

Since the start of 2020, Free Your Mind doubled its number of volunteers. Our team of 27 young volunteers carried forth our mission in their unique ways. Together, our team:

- Provided 20+ youth with professional mental health education, with the support of external organizations.
- Wrote 40+ original blogs and articles.
- Completed 3+ social media education campaigns.
- Grew our online following and maintained 100+ clicks per blog post.
- Completed 6+ webinars and podcasts.
- Empowered 20+ youth as a part of the mentorship program.
- Established community partnerships and facilitated three joint events.
- Participated in a youth leadership conference.
- Contributed 400+ total volunteer hours.



# OUR CONTENT ANALYTICS

Content [See What's New](#)

Ads and Posts ▾

**MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL MEDIA**  
June 6 at 3:00 PM MDT

Join us, along with guest speakers, for our second webinar, where we will discuss the effects of social media on people's mental health.

**FREE YOUR MIND**

3.3K

**MENTOR APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN!**

1.5K

**NOW RECRUITING**

1.2K

**JOIN US FOR OUR UPCOMING WEBINAR**

820

**DIRECTOR OF EVENTS**

791

**Culture and Mental Health**

686

**MENTAL HEALTH ART CONTEST**

627

**MENTAL HEALTH ART CONTEST**

584

**MENTAL HEALTH ART CONTEST**

580

**MENTAL HEALTH ART CONTEST**

568

Recent Content ↕	Content Type	↓ Reach	↕ Likes and Reactions	↕ Comments
We're excited to announce... Fri May 29, 2:11pm		3.3K	194	0
MENTOR APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN! Sun Sep 6, 6:50pm		1.5K	14	1
We're recruiting! The Sp... Fri Feb 14, 12:30pm		1.2K	13	0
Join us for our upcoming... Tue Apr 21, 10:04am		820	73	0
Free Your Mind is a you... Mon Mar 2, 4:16pm		791	10	0

Content [Posts](#)

12/24/20 1:59 PM

12/23/20 4:57 PM

12/22/20 12:06 PM

12/21/20 4:00 PM

12/21/20 4:00 PM

Recent Content ↕	Content Type	↕ Reach	↕ Likes and Reactions	↕ Comments
Welcome to the final day... Thu Dec 24, 1:59pm		292	32	0
Welcome to the 11th da... Wed Dec 23, 4:57pm		298	31	2
Hi everyone! Welcome t... Tue Dec 22, 12:06pm		262	29	1
We invite you to join in o... Mon Dec 21, 4:00pm		230	28	0
We invite you to join in o... Mon Dec 21, 4:00pm		14	4	0

Our promoted posts have reached over 1000 users on our primary social media platforms, which includes both Instagram and Facebook.

By late 2020, Free Your Mind's reach on social media has been consistently between 200 to 300 users on Instagram and approximately 15 users on Facebook.

# OUR ANALYTICS

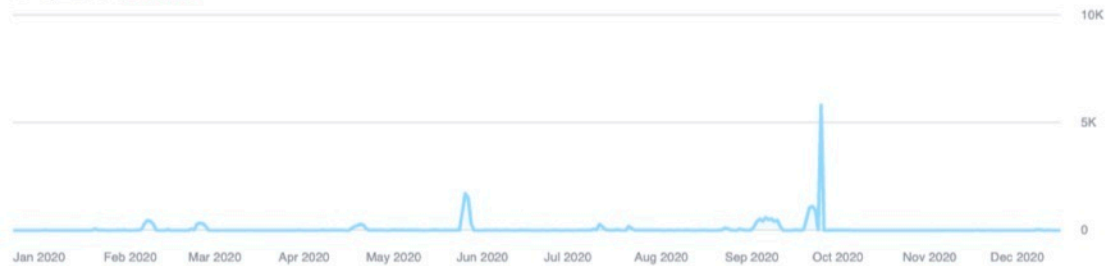
In terms of page reach trends on both Facebook and Instagram, we saw a peak in the number of individual users reached during our recruitment period in October 2020. There was also a peak in June 2020 when Free Your Mind's Events Team began their webinar and podcast initiative.

Overall, Free Your Mind reached 14,286 individual users on Facebook and 13,778 users on Instagram. This was however, a 65.2% and a 20.1% drop from 2019, on Facebook and Instagram respectively. This disparity is due to the popularity of posts that were advertised and promoted for Project Mindfulness in June 2019.

### Trends

#### Facebook Page Reach ⓘ

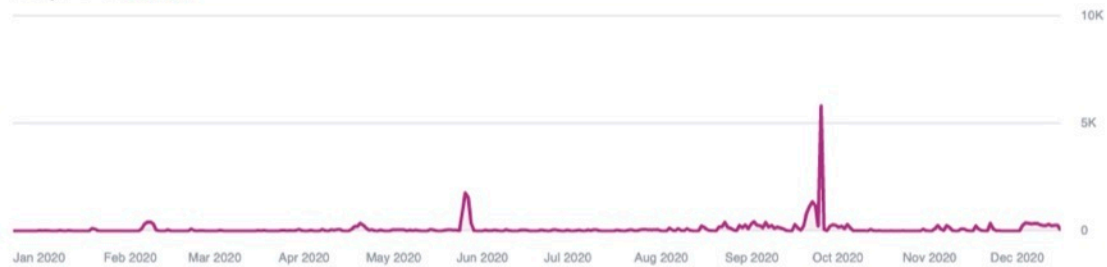
14,286 ↓ 65.3%



92 ■ Posts Published

#### Instagram Reach ⓘ

13,778 ↓ 20.2%



95 ■ Posts Published

## OUR FINANCES

**Free Your Mind Mental Health Society  
Statement of Activities  
Year Ended December 31, 2020**

<b>Revenue</b>	
Grants	\$ 750.00
Individual Donations	189.00
Public Fundraising	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<u>939.00</u>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Insurance	-
Venue	189.00
Marketing	70.46
Other G&A	48.38
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u>307.84</u>
<b>Net Income</b>	<u>\$ 631.16</u>

**Free Your Mind Mental Health Society  
Statement of Financial Position  
December 31, 2020**

<b>Assets</b>	
Cash	\$ 743.13
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>\$ 743.13</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Accounts Payable	\$ -
Deferred Contributions	-
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>-</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Restricted Net Assets - Prior Period	-
Restricted Net Assets - Current Period	679.54
Unrestricted Net Assets - Prior Period	41.83
Unrestricted Net Assets - Current Period	21.76
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u>743.13</u>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<u>\$ 743.13</u>

## TESTIMONIALS

Aside from our impacts on the general Calgarian community, Free Your Mind is proud of the empowerment we provide our volunteers.. Here's what they told us:

"The past few months as a participant in the Free Your Mind Mental Health Initiative have really opened my mind up to the world around me. I stumbled across it by chance through social media, and am really glad I did. Now I am able to spread awareness about the program and mental health in general through their online platform. Being both a blogger and an event planner for them has allowed me to grow tremendously as a person in an environment where I am surrounded by creative and caring individuals, who push me to be the best I can be. I would definitely recommend that people join the initiative so that they are able to share their ideas with the world as well"

- An Events Team Member

"The best part of Free Your Mind is The dedication and commitment of everyone on the team. The passion about mental health awareness really shows and is reflected in the work that we do,"

- An Events Team Member

"The most unique aspect of FYM is definitely being able to work with mental health, which I didn't have too much experience with before and now I feel like I still have a lot to learn but FYM will help me do that. It was also a great experience working with the team, everyone is super supportive and its great to have people to learn from.."

- A Director

## CONTACT US

This report is the work of Free Your Mind's Executive Team. For general inquiries, please email [info@freeyourmindinitiative.com](mailto:info@freeyourmindinitiative.com).

For urgent messages, please contact our Executive Director at [jenny.li@freeyourmindinitiative.com](mailto:jenny.li@freeyourmindinitiative.com).

For more information about Free Your Mind, please visit our website at [www.freeyourmindinitiative.com](http://www.freeyourmindinitiative.com).

