

# LANDON PEARSON CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Sharing Updates, Reflections, and Upcoming Initiatives



**Celebrating  
20 Years of the  
Landon Pearson  
Centre for the  
Study of  
Childhood and  
Children's  
Rights.**

**The Landon Pearson Centre will celebrate its 20th anniversary on 1 June 2026 at Carleton University. The event will bring together leading voices in children's rights and advocacy.**

***Featured Speakers include:***

- **Susan Bissell**, Chief of Child Protection, Programme Division, UNICEF
- **Gerison Lansdown**, former Vice-Chair of UNICEF UK and current Chair of Child to Child
- **Cindy Blackstock**, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada

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# Recent Centre Engagements and Outreach

## 2026 CRAN Annual Meeting at Carleton University

Children's Right to Freedom of Expression and Identity

- Youth-friendly governance and development of a CRAN mentorship model
- Mapping CRAN's impact and influence
- Planning for future CRAN initiatives

## The 2026 CRAN Annual Meeting was held at Carleton University on April 24–25

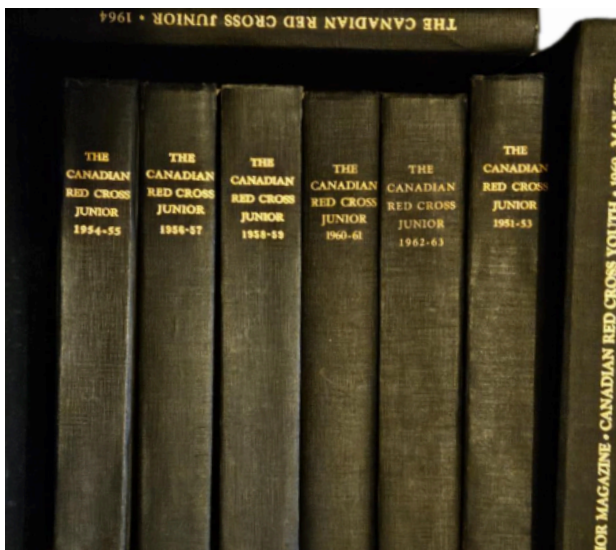
CRAN brought together participants from Shaking the Movers youth sites, universities, and partner organizations across Canada. The event featured presentations of the Dr. Joy Calkin Student Awards and the Francine and Gerison Lansdown Essay Prizes, as well as a World Café working dinner that explored freedom of expression and mental health, identity and environments, and ways to translate children's perspectives into action across research, policy, and practice.

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## 50 Years of Canadian Junior Red Cross Magazine at the Landon Pearson Centre:

*A treasure of documents about Canadian & transnational childhood histories*

By Dominique Marshall, Professor of History, Carleton University,  
<https://carleton.ca/history/people/dominique-marshall/>



A sample of the 45 volumes donated by the Canadian Red Cross. Photo: D. Marshall

At the peak of its popularity, in the late 1950s, the CJRC counted one out of four Canadians between 5 and 19 years old amongst its members. One of the first association of its kind, the youth branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society belonged to an international movement that reached dozens of countries (3). The historian of the movement, Sarah Glassford, writes that “the Junior Red Cross (JRC) program of the 1920s and 1930s aimed to teach school-aged children and youth habits of good health, good citizenship, and service to others.

## Recent Centre Engagements and Outreach

Inspired by a transnational ethic of humanitarianism, the program tried to build international ties of friendship between JRC members in Canada and those elsewhere, while shaping Canadian Juniors in a particular mould of national citizenship (4). “Teachers who chose to adopt the Junior Red Cross program usually devoted one or more Friday afternoon classes per month to its activities. Students elected officers and followed parliamentary procedure, directing their own work with light guidance from their teacher. A national Junior Red Cross magazine and health-related resources for teachers supported the program.” (5). Produced by adults in Ottawa, the magazines reported on children’s activities, including chapters of the Canadian Junior Red Cross (CJRC) in Indigenous schools.



On the move, September 1971, p. 1  
Photo: D. Marshall



A sample of the 45 volGroup of unidentified children looking at a Junior Red Cross book, ca. 1950-1960. Library Archives Canada.

Glassford has also written about the tensions the conflicting ideals of peace and patriotism created amongst school communities and these publications have a lot to say about changing ideals and understandings of international relations amongst Canadian adults.

I handed out these copies of *On the Move* to the students of a third-year course I teach at Carleton University, on the history of humanitarianism. During this archival workshop, one group discovered the model for a paper doll of Princess Tsehai Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, complete with a small history of her achievements. One of the pioneers of Ethiopia’s modern nursing program in the 1940s, Tsehai was at the centre of one article I had written a few years before (7). The opportunities to study children’s representations, activities and expressions, are infinite.

**For a full list of references access the following link:**

<https://canva.link/dominique-marshall-blog2026>

### Developing the Children's Rights Media Database

By Marzie Khalilian, PhD Candidate, Carleton University

"As a Research Assistant at the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights, I have been working on the development of a media database that documents how children's rights are represented in news coverage. The database is currently live and begins with articles from The New York Times, with the aim of expanding over time to include media from Canada and the United Kingdom as well.

This work grows out of the Centre's commitment to children's rights research and public education. It also reflects the legacy of Landon Pearson, whose work emphasized that children and young people must be recognized not only as subjects of protection, but as rights-holders whose voices, experiences, and interests deserve serious attention. The database supports that commitment by preserving media coverage related to children's rights and making it easier to see how children and young people are discussed in public discourse.

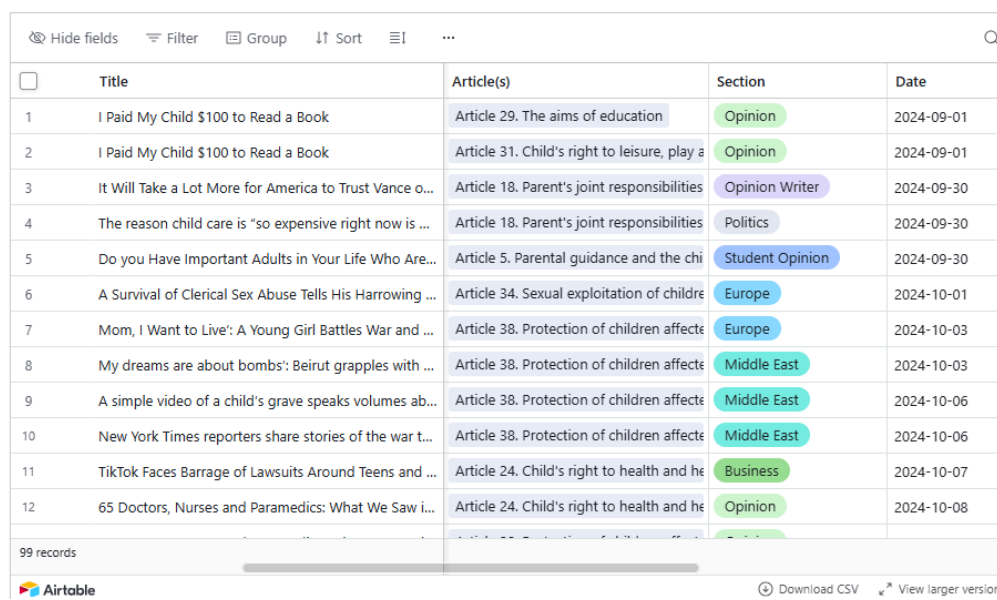
My role has involved collecting relevant articles, building the structure of the database, entering metadata, creating categories based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, coding articles, cleaning data, and organizing the material in Airtable. Each article has been reviewed, categorized, and connected to children's rights themes in a consistent way. The goal is not only to store articles, but to create a resource that allows patterns in media coverage to become visible.

The database is organized through the UNCRC framework, which provides a way to connect news coverage to internationally recognized children's rights principles. This makes it possible to examine which rights are emphasized, which issues receive less attention, and how children are positioned in media narratives. For example, the database can help users consider whether children are represented as active participants, as vulnerable individuals in need of protection, or as subjects being discussed mainly by adults, institutions, and policymakers.

By organizing media articles in a structured and accessible way, the database creates opportunities for students, researchers, educators, policymakers, and advocates to examine these patterns more closely. It can also help identify gaps in public discourse, including areas where children's voices may be absent or where certain rights receive limited attention. This is important because media coverage shapes how children's rights are understood by the public.

By preserving and organizing media coverage through a children's rights framework, it supports the ongoing work of the Landon Pearson Centre and contributes to a deeper understanding of how children's rights are represented, debated, and sometimes overlooked in public life."

## Recent Centre Engagements and Outreach



	Title	Article(s)	Section	Date
1	I Paid My Child \$100 to Read a Book	Article 29. The aims of education	Opinion	2024-09-01
2	I Paid My Child \$100 to Read a Book	Article 31. Child's right to leisure, play a	Opinion	2024-09-01
3	It Will Take a Lot More for America to Trust Vance o...	Article 18. Parent's joint responsibilities	Opinion Writer	2024-09-30
4	The reason child care is "so expensive right now is ...	Article 18. Parent's joint responsibilities	Politics	2024-09-30
5	Do you Have Important Adults in Your Life Who Are...	Article 5. Parental guidance and the chi	Student Opinion	2024-09-30
6	A Survival of Clerical Sex Abuse Tells His Harrowing ...	Article 34. Sexual exploitation of childre	Europe	2024-10-01
7	Mom, I Want to Live': A Young Girl Battles War and ...	Article 38. Protection of children affecte	Europe	2024-10-03
8	My dreams are about bombs': Beirut grapples with ...	Article 38. Protection of children affecte	Middle East	2024-10-03
9	A simple video of a child's grave speaks volumes ab...	Article 38. Protection of children affecte	Middle East	2024-10-06
10	New York Times reporters share stories of the war t...	Article 38. Protection of children affecte	Middle East	2024-10-06
11	TikTok Faces Barrage of Lawsuits Around Teens and ...	Article 24. Child's right to health and he	Business	2024-10-07
12	65 Doctors, Nurses and Paramedics: What We Saw i...	Article 24. Child's right to health and he	Opinion	2024-10-08

Preview of the Children's Rights Media Database

## Weekly Coffee Hour at the Landon Pearson Centre

By Marzie Khalilian, PhD Candidate, Carleton University

"As part of my work with the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights, I hosted a weekly coffee hour at the Centre. The coffee hour was an informal, drop-in gathering where students could come together over coffee, connect with one another, and take part in conversations about children's rights in an open and accessible environment.

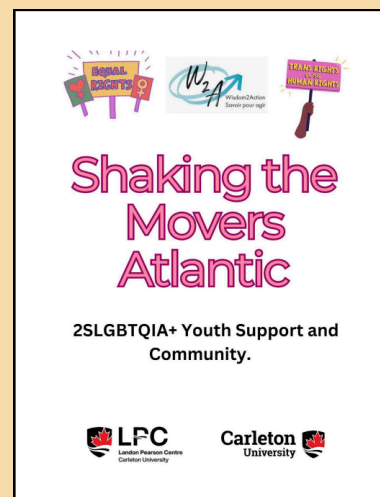
Each week, students gathered at the Centre to reflect on issues children and young people experience in education, media, and policy contexts, and the role of adults and institutions in protecting and promoting children's rights. At different times, the conversations were shaped by timely themes and occasions. For example, around the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the discussion focused on Indigenous children's rights. This enabled students to reflect on children's rights in relation to the histories, experiences, and ongoing realities of children in Canada. More broadly, the coffee hour created space to connect children's rights principles to current social, political, educational, and cultural issues.

Our conversations often touched on key articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the life and legacy of Landon Pearson, and the question of how children's rights can be implemented in practice. A recurring theme throughout the coffee hour sessions was the importance of children's and young people's lived experiences. We reflected on how children are often spoken about in public, political, educational, and media conversations, while their own perspectives are not always fully heard or taken seriously. These conversations emphasized that children's rights require more than protection. They also require listening, participation, and recognition of children and young people as rights-holders.

### Shaking the Movers Atlantic

On 8 March 2026, a group of young people, three facilitators, and a lead organizer from the Atlantic region participated in a virtual workshop for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth aged 13 to 17 from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

This is the second time that Shaking the Movers has held a workshop specifically focused on the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. A link to the full report can be found here: [Shaking the Movers Atlantic](#)



### From the LPC Community: An Interview with Eleanor Demchenko on a New Role at OneChild



**Interviewer: Can you tell us a bit about your new job with OneChild and what your role will involve?**

Eleanor: “The Landon Pearson Centre connected me with OneChild, an organization focused on taking a youth-led approach to advocating against the sexual exploitation of children. With OneChild, we are building a national project that creates opportunities for intergenerational collaboration that meaningfully engages youth to shape the fight against online child sexual exploitation”.

**Interviewer: “What role does your position play at OneChild in advancing child-centred initiatives? How will OneChild help with your ability to advocate and further your passion to drive change?”**

Eleanor: “I’m able to be involved in every aspect of the planning and development and can position my background in children’s rights to ensure that this project is truly youth-led. A special feature of this project is a mini series of Shaking the Movers workshops which holds a special place in my heart. The Shaking the Movers model was developed by the Landon Pearson Centre, so being involved in this initiative is a way I can carry on Landon’s legacy.”

## Recent Centre Engagements and Outreach

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***Interviewer: “Why do you think organizations like OneChild are important in today’s political climate? Is there anything you hope readers of the newsletter should take away from your experience?”***

Eleanor: “I think online child sexual exploitation is a really important issue in today’s climate, particularly with the prevalence of online spaces in young people’s lives and the increased use of AI. This is an issue that affects all youth. I hope that this project can lead by example and demonstrate a standard for youth participation that isn’t tokenistic but engages youth at every step and sets accountability measurements. Wherever life takes me, I want to show that working alongside youth leads to better and more relevant change.”

**Eleanor Demchenko**  
**OneChild, Youth Engagement and Program Coordinator**

## Looking Forward: Upcoming Centre Initiatives

### Welcoming the Childhood and Youth Studies Program from King’s University College, Western University

CYS 3393: Special Topics in Childhood and Youth Studies (CYS) sees students from King’s University College at Western University in London, Ontario travel to Ottawa as a part of their course. The travel component of this course is made possible through a partnership between KUC’s CYS program and the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children’s Rights.

*The time students spend learning about and engaging with representatives from the centre is invaluable. It offers significant insights for the historical and present work of the centre to advance children’s rights while serving as a framework through which to analyze and engage prominent members of Ottawa-based institutions as to how they foster the rights of children and youth.*

The planning in the winter led to the creation of a course that focused on children’s rights specific to numerous areas including rights and activism, law and politics, as well as migration, youth services, and Indigeneity.

## **Looking Forward: Upcoming Centre Initiatives**

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For one week at King's University, the students read about, discuss, and work on projects related to children's rights and how various institutions act to uphold and advance the rights of children in these areas.

After an additional week of preparation beyond the in-course session, students will travel by train to Ottawa and will be based at Carleton University. Each day brings a new opportunity to learn from and share with experts in the field of children's rights.

The initial day will see students explore the Landon Pearson Centre and learn directly from Virginia Caputo, Tara Collins, Eleanor Demchenko and Taryn Soper about their experiences and work advancing the mandate of the centre. Their knowledge and expertise is a remarkable opportunity to deepen student understanding for children's rights and how they will engage with the various individuals on this topic throughout our time in Ottawa.

On day two, students will have the chance to walk through the Canadian Senate and meet with Senator Marilou McPhedran. Here, students will learn from Senator McPhedran's countless initiatives including encouraging and supporting young women's involvement in politics as well as the Senator's Vote 16 campaign to lower the voting age. Later in the day, students will attend question period on Parliament Hill and be provided a special tour courtesy of support from Sergeant at Arms Pat McDonell.

On day three, students will have the opportunity to meet with Marisa Moher, Executive Director of Youturn Youth Support Services. Marisa will share her work experiences and inform the students on best practices to uphold the rights of youth experiencing a wide range of challenges.

On the final day, students will travel to the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society. They will be meet Jessica Raby. As the education and public engagement coordinator, Jessica will share and facilitate student learning on the role of the organization in advocating for Indigenous children's rights in Canada.

Overall, the intention of this intersessional course is for students to develop experiences advancing their theoretical and practical knowledge for children's rights in Canada and around the world. We are truly grateful for the support of Virginia Caputo and the Landon Pearson Centre to host, inform, and support the KUC CYS students in such meaningful experiential education.

**Dr. Dustin Ciuffo, King's University College, Western University  
Department of Childhood and Youth Studies**

## Donors and Contributions to the Centre

### Ron Ensom

Though the Centre's core mission is the advancement of child rights, its positive impact is both personal and societal. When child rights are respected by parents, educators, health and service providers -- and governments -- children and youth are better protected from harm, experience greater physical and emotional health, and gain the skills and confidence to engage productively in their communities.

My wife and I have made financial donations to the Landon Pearson Centre for years. And as I move into retirement, I hope my donations of professional materials to the Centre will benefit those who look to the Centre for support for their own work and aspirations.

At a very personal level, my ongoing support of the Centre is another way of recognizing Landon for her tireless passion in raising the voices of children and youth around the world. And for her kind and generous mentoring of those of us so fortunate to have become her colleagues and friends.

In memory and fond respect,  
Ron Ensom

I am delighted to contribute resources to the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights. My research and writing in the field of international children's rights began when I attended the First World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Stockholm in 1996, where I had the privilege of meeting then-Senator Landon Pearson for the first time. We later attended the Second World Congress in Yokohama and the Third World Congress in Rio together.

During this period, I assembled an extensive collection of materials on the subject, which ultimately informed my doctoral research and the publication of *Profit over Protection: Big Business, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and the Law* (Lexis Nexis, 2025).

### Mark Hecht

## Donors and Contributions to the Centre

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Rather than have these books, articles, speeches, and related materials remain in storage, I am very pleased to donate them to the Landon Pearson Centre for the benefit of current and future students pursuing study in this important field.

We are truly fortunate to have such a vital and influential hub for children's rights scholarship within our community.

## Awards and Student Recognition



### Dr. Joy Calkin Award

#### 2025-26

Graduate awards: Fatemeh Mahdizadeh Karizaki (Dalhousie); Shayla Raine (UBC)

Undergraduate: Megan Liu (Mount St. Vincent)

#### 2023-24

Graduate award: Ana Karen Espinosa Becerra (University of Ottawa); Undergraduate: Lama Assaad (Carleton)

#### 2023-24

Graduate awards: Shanna Peltier (OISE, University of Toronto); J. Erynne Sjoblom (University of Alberta).

Undergraduate awards: Tanzy Janvier (University of Saskatchewan); Keirsten Taylor (MacEwan University)

#### 2022-23

Graduate awards: Laurel Donison (Brock University); Marie-Pierre Jolicouer (University of Laval)

#### 2021-22

Graduate awards: Carmen West (Carleton University); Ashlee Williams (Toronto Metropolitan University); Steven Gibson (Toronto Metropolitan University)



### Francine and Gerison Lansdown Student Essay Award

#### 2025-26

Graduate: Rita Arnold (Toronto Metropolitan University); Undergraduate: Caoilfionn Gardiner (MacEwan University)

#### 2024-25

Graduate: Kajal deb Nath (University of Calgary); Undergraduate: Gianna Cucumo (Toronto Metropolitan University)

#### 2023-24

Graduate: Kristen Letkeman (University of Manitoba); Undergraduate: Noshin Chowdhury (Toronto Metropolitan University)

#### 2022-23

Undergraduate : Tori Vail (MacEwan University)

#### 2021-22

Undergraduate: Sierra Sumner (Trent University)



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