

bestie 

BOOK

2024



FCJ  
YOUTH  
Network

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*Looking back at a year  
in transition...*



*...creating new memories and  
passing on leadership*

# Message of Love

*Dear 7CJ Youth Network  
Members,*

*Can you believe it? We've just wrapped up an incredible year together, and what a journey 2024 has been! As we close this chapter, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to each of you. Your dedication, passion, and commitment have been the heart and soul of our collective growth and success this year.*

*Your participation has been nothing short of inspiring. Watching you grow—both individually and as a network—has been truly remarkable. Your creativity, resilience, and leadership have made a lasting impact on our community and inspired everyone around you.*

*Thank you for your energy, ideas, and unwavering support for one another. From meaningful discussions to shared laughter, your contributions have strengthened our bond and made the 7CJ Youth Network a vibrant, empowering space for all.*

*As we look ahead to 2025, let's carry this momentum forward and continue to build a future filled with possibility. Together, we can achieve amazing things. Here's to more adventures, more joy, and even more unforgettable moments together!*

*With heartfelt appreciation,*

*Natalia, Kelly, Tracy, Tenzin & Stefan*

# Our Space

On the third anniversary of the passing of our beloved Co-Director Francisco Rico-Martínez, we gathered to remember him and his extraordinary legacy. In his honour, we officially inaugurated the FCJ Refugee Centre's new room, named "Francisco's Dream Room." This special space, inspired by Francisco's words, "I am just a dreamer that, since that time of arrival, keep looking for soulmates to make it possible," has become the heart of the FCJ Youth Network.

Francisco's Dream Room is more than just a meeting place—it is where we come together every Wednesday to connect, share, and grow as a community. It is where we celebrate our resilience, confront challenges, and support each other.

*"I am just a dreamer that, since that time of arrival, keep looking for soulmates to make it possible,"*



The FCJ Youth Network works from a strong intersectional framework, welcoming all youth aged 14 to 25 (and allies), regardless of immigration status, gender identity, sexual identity, language ability, or background.

This room embodies everything our Youth Network stands for: inclusivity, courage, and the endless possibilities that arise when we work together. It's where our 2024 adventures came to life, and where so many memories and dreams for the future continue to be made.

# About Us

The FCJ Refugee Centre core value that establishes our work is that of Youth Engagement and reads as follows:

"Members of the FCJ Youth Network have defined youth engagement as “the meaningful and ongoing inclusion and participation of self-defined youth in the activities of the FCJ Refugee Centre – including program development, program implementation, planning, decision-making and even employment.” The FCJ Refugee Centre welcomes a space that is shaped by the youth, and as such should continually acknowledge and celebrate their talents, resiliency and contributions to society."



# Our programs

## UPROOTED YOUTH HOMEWORK CLUB

The club provides individualized tutoring to help youth understand challenging subjects or assignments, ensuring they receive the guidance they need to succeed academically. Tutors create a welcoming space where students can ask questions freely, explore difficult concepts, and gain confidence in their abilities. Beyond just improving academic performance, the club aims to equip students with the skills necessary to navigate academic challenges independently and foster a love for learning.

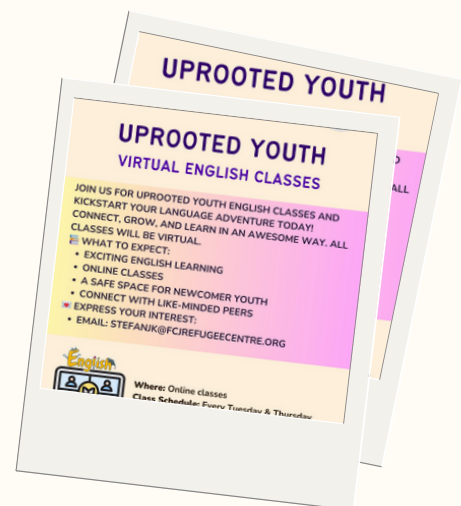


## UPROOTED JR ART CLASSES

Uprooted Jr Art Classes is an immersive summer program for newcomer children aged 6 to 12, designed to ignite creativity and self-expression through fun, hands-on activities. Led by talented volunteers from the Youth Network, the program encourages children to explore various art forms, such as painting, drawing, and sculpture, in a supportive and inclusive environment. By the end of the program, children will have developed their artistic skills, made new friends, and gained confidence in their creative abilities.

## UPROOTED YOUTH VIRTUAL ENGLISH CLASSES

Uprooted Youth Virtual English Classes offer a supportive and inclusive learning environment for newcomers aged 13 to 30, focusing on enhancing English language skills while embracing cultural diversity. The program uses interactive, engaging lessons tailored to different learning styles, helping students build confidence and a sense of belonging. Beyond language acquisition, it also provides cultural immersion, community engagement, and peer support, empowering participants to thrive in their new environments.







## UPROOTED JR BOOK CLUB

The Uprooted Jr Book Club is a summer program for children aged 6 to 12, designed to nurture a love for reading and improve English language skills in a fun, supportive environment. Led by enthusiastic volunteers from the Youth Network, the club offers interactive discussions, creative activities, and collaborative projects that enhance reading comprehension, vocabulary, and storytelling. The program fosters a sense of community and curiosity, where children not only develop their reading abilities but also build friendships and ignite their imaginations.



## UPROOTED WORKSHOPS

Uprooted Workshops is a transformative program designed to empower newcomers aged 18 and above with practical knowledge and career readiness skills. The workshops offer a dynamic mix of hands-on experiences, interactive sessions, and expert guidance. One notable series, Playing to Act, allowed newcomer youth to explore theater, build confidence, and improve communication skills in a fun and supportive environment. While the series was not completed in 2023, a full series is expected to run in 2024, with the program facilitated by experienced professional Lilibeth Rivas.







## UPROOTED U


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THE FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE YOUTH TEAM  
INVITE YOU TO JOIN



 **UPROOTED U** 

An immersive and interactive academic series emulating the Post-Secondary Education experience. With weekly online classes focusing on literature, social status, world events, and the evolving political climate.

AVAILABLE FOR AGES 18+  
CLASSES ARE DELIVERED IN ENGLISH



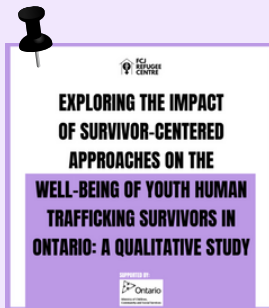
WEEKLY ON ZOOM  
LAUNCHING IN OCTOBER



# Youth Alliance Against Human Trafficking

The Youth Alliance Against Human Trafficking is a transformative initiative aimed at empowering young individuals at risk of or experiencing human trafficking. The project offers comprehensive services, including peer-to-peer connections with individuals who have lived through trafficking experiences. Through dynamic, youth-led prevention strategies, the initiative raises awareness on issues like youth rights, labor, and immigration, while providing essential tools to combat trafficking. Informative sessions cover topics such as recognizing grooming patterns, managing social media, and fostering healthy relationships. The program also works to enhance the capacity of service providers and frontline workers in supporting vulnerable youth.



## Superheroes Without Borders Podcast

"Superheroes Without Borders" is a podcast showcasing the resilience and transformative journeys of migrant youth overcoming challenges like cultural shock and displacement. Through their stories, the podcast highlights perseverance and growth while shedding light on broader social issues. The new season features six episodes celebrating the strength of young migrants and their impact on shaping a better future.

## Stay Awake Campaign

In 2024, the FCJ Youth Alliance continued its "Stay Awake" campaign, using social media to raise awareness about forced labor and exploitation in migrant communities. The campaign highlighted traffickers' deceptive tactics and shared survivor stories, prevention tips, and calls to action. Art created by youth members further enriched the campaign, fostering empathy and mobilizing action against human trafficking.



# *A Roadmap to Justice*

"A Roadmap to Justice" was launched in April 2023 by the FCJ Refugee Centre and the Centre for Refugee Children. Our goal is to improve the immigration system by addressing gaps and creating a more supportive environment for unaccompanied minors and youth. We are proud to announce that the Youth Leadership Committee is now established with seven members who have lived experience and will play a crucial role in leading and shaping the project. By providing invaluable insights, they will ensure that our efforts align with real needs and challenges. The committee will also monitor the relevance of information and proposed solutions to effectively address the identified gaps.

We are excited to start our second year on this journey with our committed Youth Leadership Committee. We eagerly anticipate their valuable contributions towards creating a long-term positive impact on the lives of unaccompanied minors and youth going through the immigration system. Keep an eye out for updates and progress reports as we work towards achieving justice and driving positive change together.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable society.





# Christmas Songs

1. "Feliz Navidad" - José Feliciano
2. "All I Want for Christmas Is You" - Mariah Carey
3. "Jingle Bell Rock" - Bobby Helms"
4. "Last Christmas" - Wham!
5. "White Christmas" - Bing Crosby



# Christmas Movies

1. "Home Alone" (1990)
2. "Elf" (2003)
3. "A Christmas Carol" (2009)
4. "Love Actually" (2003)
5. "The Polar Express" (2004)

# Suggested Feminist Activist



Vivir Quintana is a Mexican singer-songwriter and activist, renowned for her poignant and impactful songs addressing social justice and women's rights.

She gained international attention with her feminist anthem, "Sin Miedo (Himno Feminista)", which was written in collaboration with women's collectives and has become a rallying cry in protests against gender violence and femicide across Latin America.



# RECIPES





# ThenThuk

By Tenzin Khentse

*Thenthuk*, which translates to "pulled noodles," is more than just a comforting soup for me—it's a reminder of home. Growing up in a close-knit Tibetan community, the process of pulling noodles was often a shared activity, filled with laughter and stories around the kitchen. This dish carries the warmth of those memories and embodies the heart of Tibetan cuisine: simple, nourishing, and deeply communal. Perfect for a chilly day, Thenthuk always feels like a warm hug in a bowl.

## INGREDIENTS:

### For the soup:

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1-inch ginger, minced
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1 carrot, julienned
- 1 cup spinach or bok choy, chopped
- 1 potato, diced
- ½ pound beef or lamb (optional), thinly sliced

- 6 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste
- A pinch of Tibetan chili powder or red chili flakes (optional)

### For the dough:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour (apologies to gluten free folks)
- ½ cup water (adjust as needed)
- A pinch of salt

# INSTRUCTIONS:

## 1. Make the Dough:

- In a bowl, combine flour, salt, and water. Knead into a smooth, elastic dough. Cover and let rest for 30 minutes.

## 2. Prepare the Soup:

- Heat oil in a pot over medium heat. Sauté onion, garlic, and ginger until fragrant.
- Add the tomato and cook until softened.
- Stir in the meat (if using) and cook until browned.
- Add carrots, potato, and broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cook until vegetables are tender.
- Season with soy sauce, salt, pepper, and chili powder (if desired).

## 3. Make the Noodles:

- Roll the dough into a thin sheet. Tear into small, uneven pieces (hand-pulled style) or cut into strips. (just like in the picture)
- Drop the noodle pieces directly into the simmering soup. Cook for 3–5 minutes until they float and are tender.

## 4. Finish and Serve:

- Add spinach or bok choy to the soup and cook for an additional minute.
- Serve hot in bowls and enjoy the warmth of this hearty Tibetan dish.

# Brazilian Flan

By Janaina Fernandez

Flan's roots can be traced all the way back to the Roman Empire, where it was served as a savory dish, and the egg and cream-based dish was served with meat and fish.



The addition of caramelized sugar is attributed to the Spanish, and then, this sweet custard became a classic dessert in many Latino households around the world.

And what makes Brazilian Flan different from other classic flans? A Brazilian Flan recipe calls for condensed milk. AND, traditionally, it bakes in a bundt pan, so Brazilian flan always has a hole in the middle of it.

## INGREDIENTS:

### For the Caramel:

- 1 cup (200g) granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup (120ml) water

### For the Flan:

- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 cups (480ml) whole milk
- 3 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

# INSTRUCTIONS:

## **Step 1: Make the Caramel**

1. In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar and water. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves.
2. Increase the heat and let the mixture cook without stirring until it turns into a golden amber caramel. Be careful not to burn it.
3. Immediately pour the caramel into a 9-inch (23 cm) round baking pan or a flan mold, tilting the pan to coat the bottom evenly. Set aside to cool and harden.

## **Step 2: Prepare the Flan Mixture**

1. In a blender, combine the sweetened condensed milk, whole milk, eggs, and vanilla extract (if using). Blend for 1-2 minutes until smooth.
2. Pour the mixture over the hardened caramel in the baking pan.

## **Step 3: Bake the Flan**

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Place the flan pan inside a larger baking dish. Fill the larger dish with hot water to create a water bath (bain-marie), ensuring the water reaches halfway up the sides of the flan pan.
3. Bake for 50-60 minutes or until the flan is set but slightly jiggly in the center.

## **Step 4: Cool and Unmold**

1. Remove the flan from the oven and let it cool to room temperature. Then refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.
2. To unmold, run a knife around the edges of the flan. Place a serving plate over the mold and quickly invert it to release the flan with the caramel sauce.



# Easy Enchiladas Suizas Recipe

By Natalia Mercado

Enchiladas Suizas originated in Mexico and were popularized by Sanborns in Mexico City in the mid-20th century. The name "Swiss" comes from the creamy cheese topping, inspired by Swiss dairy traditions. This dish blends Mexican staples like tortillas and salsa with European culinary influences. It's a delicious example of Mexico's rich fusion cuisine.

## Ingredients:

- 12 corn tortillas
- 2 cups cooked, shredded chicken (you can use rotisserie chicken)
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup green salsa (salsa verde)
- 1 cup shredded Swiss cheese (or Monterey Jack)
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh cilantro and sliced avocado for garnish (optional)



# INSTRUCTIONS:

- Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).

## **Prepare the sauce:**

- In a medium saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat.
- Add the chopped onion and garlic. Sauté until the onion becomes translucent.
- Add the green salsa and chicken broth. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 5 minutes.
- Stir in the sour cream and mix well. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat.

## **Prepare the tortillas:**

- In a small skillet, heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat.
- Lightly fry each tortilla for about 10 seconds on each side to make them pliable. Drain on paper towels.

## **Assemble the enchiladas:**

- Spread a thin layer of the sauce on the bottom of a 9x13 inch baking dish.

- Take a tortilla, fill it with about 2 tablespoons of shredded chicken, roll it up, and place it seam-side down in the baking dish. Repeat with the remaining tortillas and chicken.

## **Top the enchiladas:**

- Pour the remaining sauce evenly over the rolled tortillas.
- Sprinkle the shredded Swiss cheese on top.

## **Bake:**

- Place the baking dish in the preheated oven and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and bubbly.

## **Serve:**

- Garnish with fresh cilantro and sliced avocado if desired.

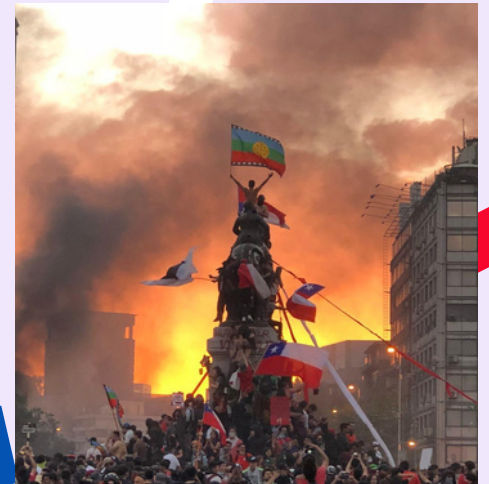
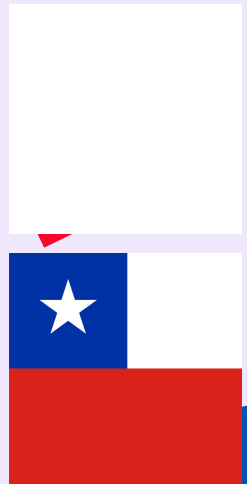
*Enjoy your enchiladas suizas!*



## Last Minute: Christmas Recipe

**Ingredients:** Graham crackers, Marshmallows & Chocolate squares

**Instructions:** Roast a marshmallow over a flame until golden brown. Sandwich it with a piece of chocolate between two graham crackers.



"I am from the Central region of **Chile**, near the city of Valparaíso. What I like most about my country is its diversity. From north to south, we have a variety of climates, which gives us contrasting landscapes, from the flowering desert in the north to the Torres del Paine in the south. One thing I can say that characterizes us as Chileans is our unity. We have experienced earthquakes, tsunamis, fires, and floods, and we always come together in those moments when we need each other the most. Beautiful people live within it, making it a welcoming place. Unfortunately, my country has been part of many positive and negative changes, like many others, and that's why it is our responsibility to make people aware of the situations that other countries, such as mine, are going through. A conscious person can make a difference.

-Marcos





# GRATITUDE

**I came to Canada blank, naive and timid. I was able to locate FCJ Refugee centre through a friend and trust me, all my worries were washed away... I was able to get into a shelter, apply for legal aid, Ontario works and get connections with various youths. Right now I am confident, and well integrated in the Canadian system, All thanks to FCJ.**

**- FCJYN superhero**



**I am grateful for the opportunities I have been given at the youth network and for the amazing people I have met. I was in a very dark place before discovering FCJ, and then, finally, some light was shed on my life—all thanks to the work they do. Without them, I would not have had the chance to move forward.**



**I am thankful to have fund FCJ I have gained a family wishing a merry Christmas and a happy new year.**

**-Khadija**

# Poems



"LIFE IS ONE BIG ROAD WITH LOTS OF SIGNS.  
SO WHEN YOU RIDING THROUGH THE RUTS,  
DON'T COMPLICATE YOUR MIND. FLEE FROM  
HATE, MISCHIEF AND JEALOUSY. DON'T BURY  
YOUR THOUGHTS, PUT YOUR VISION  
TO REALITY. WAKE UP AND LIVE!"

-Bob Marley

Imagine all the people

Living life in peace

You

You may say I'm a dreamer

But I'm not the only one

I hope someday you'll join us

And the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions

I wonder if you can

No need for greed or hunger

A brotherhood of man

Imagine all the people

Sharing all the world

-John Lennon

## BETRAYAL!

I saw the storm and forgot to carry the umbrella.

I saw the tornado and step in .....

I was so stupid to think Me! I could be loved by You!

You should have done it in phrases maybe there I could bare .

You should have written a note and passed it under my doormat for I to prepare.

You should have atleast given me time to wear a lifejacket before sailing.

You ripped my heart into pieces and scattered each on different planet.

You sunk me deep while you were singing my favorite lullaby.

You a perfect liar I must say Because I saw none of this coming.

I taught you how to hurt me most which you did perfectly.

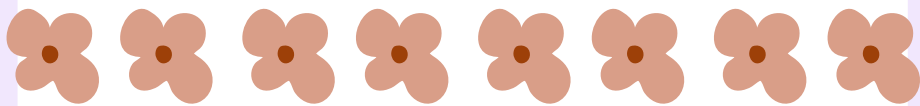
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## LOVE

Glass is transparent but hard to break a tooth  
Diamond brights the shys but hard to  
penetrate  
What is this called LOVE!  
Sharp at all it's edges  
Penetrates without permission  
into this unbounded space I call heart .  
Once it settles  
You are as stubborn as donkey,  
As crazy as a red-lipped batfish,  
As a dreamy boy who grew up absorbed in  
poetry.  
But only to be silenced by the only person  
Your Heart echoes.

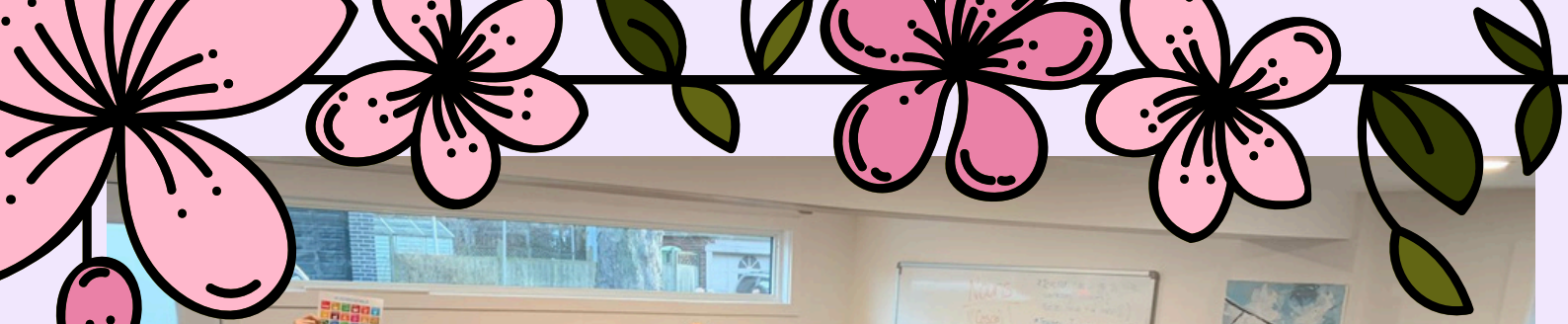
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MEMORIES



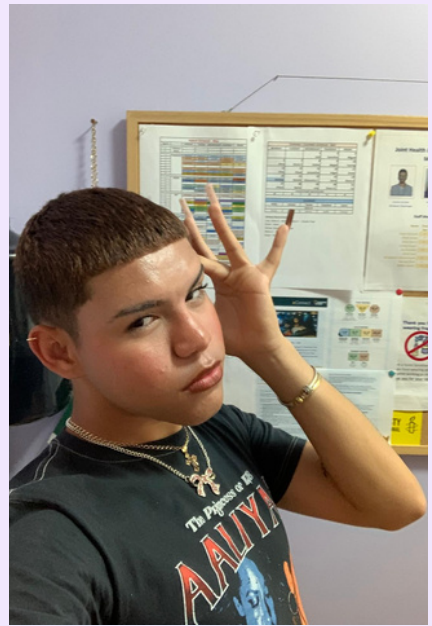








# FAMILY DINNERS



# SANCTUARY NORTH 2024







# Our 2024!

Thank you for so many amazing memories!





**FCJ**  
**YOUTH**  
Network

**THANK YOU!**



437-833-2427



@fcjyouthnetwork



home is here