



### FRIDAY, MAY 21

Good morning, Burnaby!

**Happy Friday!** It *is* Friday, right? Listen, this time travel business—it's finicky, and you don't always stick your landings. Anyway, I've [travelled here from the year 1990](#) to tell you this: I got my first dose yesterday—2 days ago in your ~\*future\*~ time—and I am officially a Pfizer boy, or as the kids call it, a fizzyboi. Yes, they definitely do call it that, and no, you can't look it up. Just trust me. I am cool; I know these things. I *am*. *I'm cool*. Whatever. Anyway, unlike some friends and family, I have been lucky enough to escape with only a slightly sore arm.

— Dustin Godfrey, reporter

**HAVE A STORY BURNABY NEEDS TO DIG IN TO?**  
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TODAY'S EDITION:	GEN Z VACCINATIONS		ANTI-MASKER ASSAULT
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Burnaby North Secondary student Haleluya Hailu, who's also 17, told Burnaby Beacon she is beyond excited to get her shot next week. Her friend group began receiving text messages to book their appointments Wednesday morning. Some of them have already received it.

"I'm just so hyped to be able to go out in public and have that extra [protection], as well as a mask. It's so amazing," Hailu said.

Hailu works as a day camp counsellor during the summer, and she's relieved she's got a chance to get vaccinated before heading to that job.

"[I was worried], 'what if I don't get vaccinated before I have to go back to work because I [work with] little kids. And it's an amazing job. I love working with kids ... but also the younger ones aren't getting vaccinated like this. And we all love kids, but they get sick so easily."

BC's back-to-school plan has focused somewhat on the theory that kids aren't affected as badly by COVID as adults. There hasn't been widespread consensus yet on the role played by children below 12 in COVID transmission, but a member of the Ontario Science Advisory Table said in November [older kids play a role "comparable" to adults](#). Putting aside the fact that Hailu is nearly an adult, she said her personal experience in getting COVID earlier this year actually taught her to be more cautious—in spite of the fact that she didn't have severe illness.

"I did notice firsthand—me and my brother had no symptoms, right? And it freaks me out in that sense. Imagine how many people are walking around everyday and not realizing that they're probably getting other people sick," she said.

It's been a challenging year for Hailu's class. They're graduating this year, and she hopes to go to college in Nelson before transferring to Berklee College of Music in Boston a year later.

Hailu said she had an easier course load, but others, who had pushed some



## Grassroots mentorship missing from discourse around youth and gangs

**A Burnaby RCMP community meeting emphasized more resources but one youth advocate says a "deep 1-on-1 engagement of mentorship" needs to be bolstered**

A Tuesday evening public meeting hosted by Burnaby RCMP regarding recent gang activity in the city had police addressing public questions around whether they need more support and resources to prevent and put a stop to the violence.

The session came after 2 fatal shootings in the city within the past month.

On May 8, 19-year-old Blerton Dalipi, also known as Toni, was killed near a vape shop on 6th Street. 20-year-old Ahmed Riyaz Tahir was arrested in connection with Dalipi's death and he was charged with 1st-degree murder. Authorities have confirmed that both Dalipi and the suspect had previous criminal affiliations.

On May 13, 23-year-old Jaskeert Kalkat [was shot and killed](#) in the parking lot at Market Crossing Burnaby. Kalkat was known to police. 2 others associated with Kalkat—a man and woman in their 20s—sustained serious injuries and were transported to hospital. The incident was confirmed to be gang-related and was reportedly in retaliation for another deadly shooting on May 9 at the Vancouver International Airport.

The general consensus from officers who spoke during Tuesday's meeting was that an increase of resources and funding were needed to add "more boots on the ground" to deal with the ongoing conflict

"I've been doing policing for almost 33 years, so I've been absolutely looking for a policing Santa Claus ...," stated Insp. Kathy Hartwig of Burnaby RCMP.

"I'm going to speak from my gut, I would say that if you ask police leaders and police officers, I believe we always believe we need more boots on the ground, as we call it."

The statement came after Burnaby city council recently approved a budget that called for [a 2.8% increase](#) in funding to its local RCMP detachment for this year and projected increases of 3.4%, 2.7%, 2.4%, and 2.2% up to 2025. In a previous interview with the Beacon, Mayor Mike Hurley said the funding was needed to deal with a growing population and issues like gang activity.

Hartwig also commented on the role of school liaison officers, after she was asked a question about the "doing away" of the program in the New Westminster and Vancouver school districts.

"I 100% believe that the school program is effective," she said. "I believe exposing the police that interact with elementary students and secondary students in our day-to-day life as operational police officers is good for the

youth and good for us."

While Burnaby RCMP reaffirmed its position to bolster its own supports, little has been mentioned in recent police press conferences and community sessions about the importance and the meaningful impact grassroots, community-based work, and mentorship have on at-risk youth.

During a May 14 press conference, Burnaby Beacon asked Burnaby RCMP Supt. Graham de la Gorgendiere what community-based programs—that were not police-oriented—were being bolstered in the wake of heightened violence and the younger ages of youth getting involved in gangs in the city. He did not provide specifics.

"I know it's important for us to work with community partners. For us, we work with the school district," he said.

"I think any program that's going to keep our youth focused on positive endeavours, whether that be youth sports, arts, anything that's going to be focused on sort of the outcome there and be a positive part of society is important. So I would say all those programs are important."

During Tuesday's community meeting, Sgt. Frank Jang with the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) said while efforts like the school liaison



"What I can tell you is that those youth [who have come into our programs]—they had deeply connected relationships with us," he said, adding that younger mentors allow for youth to bond with someone they can see themselves becoming.

"Those [mentors] are way stronger than I am. Because a child can look at someone who is 22 and say 'man, that's not that far removed from where I am and so I can do that too. I can walk a different path,'" he said.

"And it's not necessarily different because we've been schooling our community from 3 to 4-years-old. This is who you are. You are an amazing child and you have such an amazing path ahead of you. You have so many opportunities to do great things. And not once is gangs, drugs, or violence mentioned to them."

—By Simran Singh, with files from Dustin Godfrey

## BURNABY BULLETIN



**Cruise ships to bypass BC:** Both houses of Congress have passed a bill that, if signed by US President Joe Biden, will allow cruise ships between the Pacific Northwest and Alaska to skip BC ports while Canada's temporary ban on cruise ships is in place. The bill, which temporarily overrides a law requiring cruise ships to stop in BC ports between Alaska and Washington, is set to expire either next March or sooner, when Canada's federal government lifts its ban on cruise ships. That's currently set for February 2022. The move will not affect BC's cruise ship tourism industry for the time being, but BC Liberals have raised fears Congress will make the change permanent. Their concerns have been, to some degree, validated by Alaska Rep Don Young, who [posted a confrontational tweet](#) yesterday morning, appearing to imply the bill could be made permanent.



**Anti-masker allegedly assaults store employee:** Police are seeking a man accused of assaulting employees of a store on 1st Ave







