



July, 2020

Welcome to this issue of the Youth Parliamentarian - your alumni newsletter for updates about the Youth Parliament of Manitoba. In this month's issue, you will find highlights from our recent **virtual cabinet retreat**, a monthly **alumni spotlight** featuring **Akosua Matthews**, and information about **how you can stay involved**.

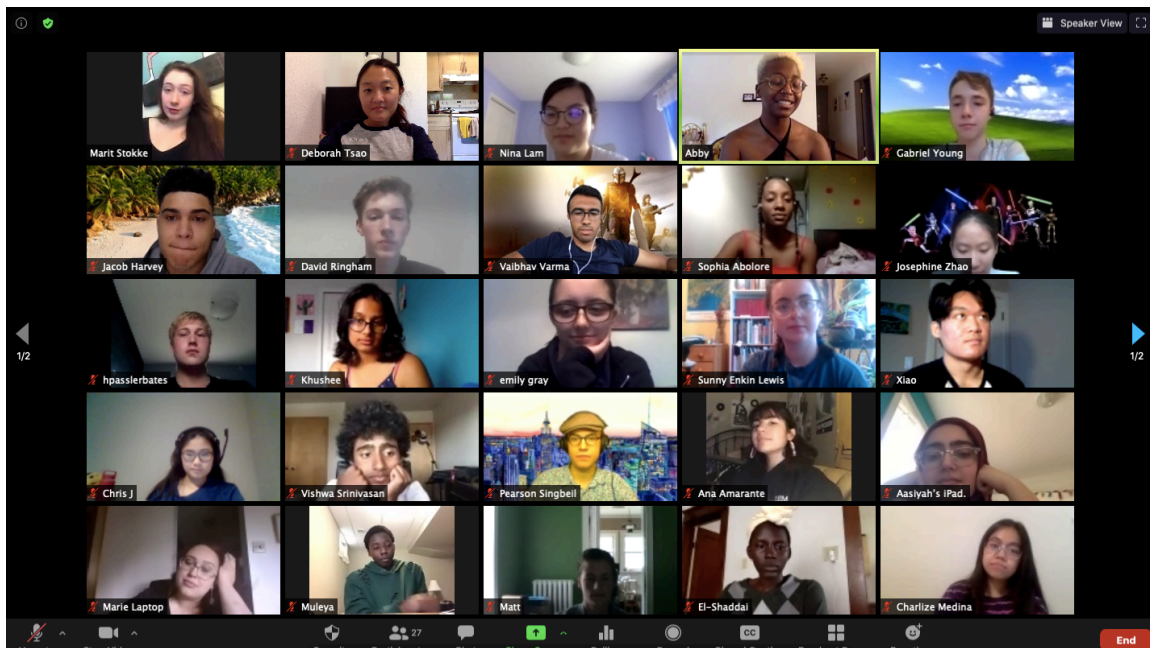


Image description: A Zoom screenshot showing Cabinet and Executive members participating in a virtual cabinet retreat

A sign of the times

YPM held our annual Cabinet Retreat last weekend, but the usual games of Mafia around the campfire were replaced with fun Zoom backgrounds and virtual team builders. Despite Manitoba's low COVID case burden, YPM still recognizes our social responsibility to *maintain* the low case count by reducing in-person gatherings. As such, we made the difficult decision to hold a virtual Cabinet retreat instead of our traditional weekend getaway.

Led by Premier **Abigaïl Theano-Pudwill**, the virtual retreat was still a wonderful success. Our newly-appointed Cabinet played icebreakers, got oriented to their roles and responsibilities, and helped Bill-Presenting Ministers brainstorm ideas for legislation. The weekend cumulated in an energetic and *highly competitive* game of Kahoot (based on YPM trivia). Ultimately, Team House Leader won the most overall points, while **Marit Stokke**, the Minister of Public Relations, was ranked top individual.

(Sample question: "True or False: YPM hosted the first-ever Western Canada Youth Parliament in 1981. *Answer: True*)



Left: On the Chair as Deputy Speaker in the 86th Session. Right: Akosua Matthews

Alumni Spotlight - Akosua Matthews (82nd-86th Session)

Akosua began in YPM in 2003 as a backbencher in the 82nd Session, before progressing through Cabinet and eventually serving two years on the Executive as the House Leader and the Deputy Speaker. In her time in YPM, she led the organization's first concerted Indigenous outreach efforts, culminating in two trips to the Skownan First Nation to recruit and mentor interested youth. In the 87th Session, she was inducted into the YPM Senate.

She is currently based in Toronto, where she works as a human rights lawyer serving Indigenous clients. Her current practice focuses on government litigation, child welfare, and policing in Indigenous and Northern communities - often combining both traditional court litigation and policy analysis. Prior to law school, Akosua was a 2008 Rhodes Scholar and completed her MPhil at the University of Oxford in Comparative Social Policy. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Greater Toronto Area YMCA.

Her advice to current members: "Absolutely go for it. If you take yourself out of the ring, no one is going to benefit from your experience and you won't get to benefit from the experience. Who knows when you'll have the opportunity to be around so many amazing young people again?"

Do you know Akosua? Email speaker@ypmanitoba.ca or reply to this email to get her contact information. Please reach out if you, or any other alumni you know, like to be featured in next month's Alumni Spotlight!

Support YPM



Image description: The Executive of the 85th Winter Session (2006). L-R: Akosua Matthews, Katie Szilagyi, Michael Urban, Amy Dhillon, Dana Gregoire. Photo provided by Akosua Matthews.

Stay involved!

We would love to keep you involved in the community! Here are three ways:

- Share your YPM experience.** This year's virtual Cabinet retreat may have been first for YPM, but through speaking with alumni, I've heard about many Cabinet retreats in the past - from those held at members's cabins, to those held at tents pitched in backyards, to those held at Rock Lake United Church Camp. Stories from the past (like these) help us contextualize our present, and plan for the future. If you have time, please take a moment to fill out our Google Form and help us learn from your experiences at YPM.
- Become a mentor.** Mentorship is one of the most valuable experiences a young person can receive.YPM is privileged to have such a diverse and illustrious alumni network, encompassing hundreds of different career paths and life experiences. If you are interested in being paired with a current YPM member to mentor, let us know what you're up to now and you may be connected!
- Stay connected.** Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). Like our page on [Facebook](#)! If you are receiving this email, you are on the Youth Parliamentarian email list. However, if you know someone who is an alum of YPM but *isn't* receiving these emails, please encourage them to join the mailing list!

Share your YPM Experience

Become a mentor

Join our mailing list

Cheers,

Deborah Tsao
Speaker, 99th Session of the Youth Parliament of Manitoba

