

Jean Paetkau is a smart, compassionate, journalist and human who balances the requisite reporter's cynicism with a driving need to lift up the people in our community. In story meetings, when we can get mired in discussions of issues or accountability, Jean reminds us of the people whose stories need telling - because they are struggling, or doing good work, or both.

In her 14 year career at the CBC, she has poured her heart and soul into amplifying those stories. While that can be seen in her everyday work producing stories for CBC Victoria's radio shows, it really shines in the special series and projects she spearheads for the station.

Her series [Beyond Beads and Bannock](#)¹ looked at Indigenous curriculum in B.C.'s K to 12 education, and centred the voices of Indigenous students and educators. She spoke to people in classrooms across the province, who are working to make sure all students are learning the truth of Indigenous histories and cultures, both before and after colonization. It won an RTDNA in 2019 and was nominated for a Webster.

This year, Jean fought to create CBC Victoria's series [A Crisis in Care](#)², which looked at the urgent need for more family doctors in greater Victoria. Not only did the series share the human face of this systemic problem, it prompted weeks of debate in the B.C. legislature (including a heated exchange in which the Premier was so frustrated that [he swore in the house](#)³.)

Jean has also produced thoughtful series about [medically assisted dying](#)⁴ and the use of [psychedelics in mental health treatment](#)⁵. Outside of her work at CBC, she has worked as a screenwriter (winning a [LEO Award in 2015](#)⁶ for a series on Indigenous youth and traditional sports), and has self-published two kids' books with her [children](#)⁷.

It is through, and with, her children that Jean makes a difference for the world outside of work. Her daughter, Haley, and son, Jacob, are Coast Salish through their father, who is a residential school survivor. Each year, Jean supports [Haley's Orange Shirt Day campaign](#)⁸, which in four years has raised more than \$20,000 for Indigenous schools in Penelakut Tribes and Snuneymuxw First Nation communities.

¹<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/beyond-beads-and-bannock-reconciliation-through-school-curriculum-and-conversations-with-kids-1.4959845>

² <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/a-crisis-in-care-series-1.6428285>

³<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-4-bc-today/clip/15908756-the-family-doctor-shortage-sparks-debate-b.c.-legislature>

⁴<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/diane-stringfellow-medical-assistance-in-dying-physician-assisted-death-good-bye-royston-1.4475252>

⁵<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-feb-25-2021-1.5927501/growing-interest-in-psychedelic-treatments-for-mental-illness-but-expert-warns-more-robust-research-needed-1.5929902>

⁶ https://www.leoawards.com/past_winners/pdf/2015.pdf

⁷<https://www.timescolonist.com/entertainment/greater-victoria-family-writes-kids-book-while-in-lockdown-4691630>

⁸<https://www.timescolonist.com/local-news/10-year-old-goes-all-out-for-orange-shirt-day-4675985>

She is also [a fierce advocate for children with allergies](#)⁹, after terrifying [first-hand experiences with Jacob](#)¹⁰. She works with schools, rec centres and summer camps to create safer protocols for anaphylactic children.

The [Snufflewort books](#)¹¹, which Jean began writing with her children in the early days of the pandemic, help to round out the picture of what makes Jean so deserving of this award. At a time when life was scary, and she was a single mother working from home with two children learning at home, she teamed up with those kids to get creative. The stories are fun, funny, and sparked a budding art career for her daughter - who now [sells her work at markets](#)¹² around the city.

-submitted by Kathryn Marlow, reporter at CBC Victoria
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⁹<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/facts-and-arguments/my-kids-allergies-have-turned-me-into-a-bag-lady/article17411116/>

¹⁰<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/jean-paetkau-allergies-anaphylaxis-epi-pen-allergies-victoria-1.5321935>

¹¹<https://www.amazon.ca/Rumpa-Snufflewort-Jean-Paetkau/dp/177773472X>

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/MossStMarket/photos/10166194206695082>