



downtown eastside neighbourhood house

The Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House (DTESNH) provides a dignified and welcoming space for all community members, which in turn fosters an improved quality of life.



History

The DTESNH was founded in 2005 and evolved into an independent non-profit society in 2009. We are a federally registered charity with the charitable number 85885 5653 RR0001. Since our founding, we have committed to improving the quality of life for residents of the Downtown Eastside through a variety of critical and innovative programs and events that are relevant to the needs, trends and demographic changes in our community.





I have some health issues, and everything is so much harder when I can't eat well. I live in a tiny place where I can't keep food or cooked meals. I go to the Neighbourhood House because there's always really good food and I can meet with my friends there. Sometimes we stay for the whole day trying all the different dishes that come out. They also do fun stuff like trips to the garden and healthy eating workshops. It's such a nice little place. There are all kinds of different people at the drop-in, but we all have in common that we love the healthy and delicious food.



About us

We embrace all ethnicities, genders, ages and backgrounds. Every year we welcome almost 9,000 residents in a community where 70 percent of our neighbours have low incomes, with a growing number of people falling into homelessness despite being housed. The DTES has a high proportion of residents with health and nutritional concerns. We have a right-to-food philosophy, which means we serve organic fresh fruit and vegetables and vegetarian meals and offer nutritional outreach and engagement. Our meals are a welcome nutritious break from the starchy, fatty and salty meals that are cheap and served in bulk.

9,000

residents per year
are welcomed

70%

of neighbours
are low income

Our Programs

We also embrace newcomers to our community with a welcoming space. Our myriad of programs include:

Community and Family Drop-Ins (including parents and tots)

The community drop-in is the most attended of our programs. This program offers our neighbours the opportunity to mingle with other residents where they can also enjoy freshly prepared meals.

Kids Community Kitchen

A 12-week kid-friendly program where children learn about nutrition, cooking and food-safe skills.

Nutritional Outreach Programs

On days when low income residents of the Downtown Eastside are least likely to have access to nutrition, the DTESNH delivers fruits and vegetables through the Banana Beat and Mobile Smoothie programs directly to DTES residents.

Fathers for Thought Program

A bi-weekly forum for fathers in the neighbourhood to share ideas around fathering.

Chinese Elders Community Kitchen

A key initiative that works to combat the isolation of Chinese elders in this community by providing a space for community building and the sharing of recipes.



Our Programs

(continued)

Let's Speak Up!

This program helps DTES residents take their rightful seat at the table to weigh in on planning discussions and the future of their communities through board governance.

Right-to-Food Zine

A quarterly publication whose mission it is to promote the human right to food that is healthy, nutritious, affordable and presented with dignity. The Zine articles include everything from research to interviews, recipes, poetry and kids' pages.

Chinese Seniors Program

An innovative outdoor program that provides seniors with access to inner city green space and to meet their interests in gardening and farming.

Employment and Skills Training for Local Residents

This program provides supported employment opportunities where new skills are learned and practiced in a safe setting.



We participate in many local events and collaborate with several local non-profits to deliver nutritional outreach.



2,150*

volunteer hours



523*

families visited the Family Drop-In program



17,720*

breakfasts served

*Numbers based on 2018 statistics

Our uniqueness

We are secular. We do not require members to fit into any criteria or subscribe to any one way of belief. We are welcoming to all and especially recognize and incorporate the participation of our neighbours, many of whom live in poverty and face various challenges such as precarious housing, health issues and food insecurity. Uncertain core funding remains a risk for the DTESNH. We are approaching the end-of-funding cycles for two important projects: leadership development and overdose prevention. These projects have allowed us to engage with our neighbours in a more deep and meaningful way, tremendously strengthening our capacity-building work and bolstering the response to the overdose crisis. We must continue these crucial initiatives and capitalize on the momentum moving forward.

We believe that all community members have something to contribute and encourage and enable them to be leaders. We focus on nutritious, real food for all, especially for many of our neighbours who have health and dental challenges. Our right-to-food philosophy offers food to all our participants in all our programs. Through nutrition, we enable expression, community development and creativity. We also meaningfully involve and provide educational opportunities to members to help them grow their own food in our community gardens. All our services are free and low-barrier to accommodate those most vulnerable in the community. The DTESNH is a “community living room” that nurtures acceptance, care, respect and meaningful involvement. Conversations between neighbours raise concerns and suggestions for solutions. Brainstorming and heartfelt conversations give rise to plans for community development and advocacy.





The Family Drop-In is one of the best programs in the Downtown Eastside because they make it feel so comfortable and welcoming. Kids have a chance to come and play with one another, while parents can relax and socialize with one another. Having such open access to the staff who work at the Neighbourhood House was incredibly helpful for me. Ultimately, this is a place that feels like home to me and my son, and that is irreplaceable.”



Our members' quotes on their wish list

“I want to see the Neighbourhood House be opened more hours and have more meals and activities like community kitchens.”

“We would like to see access to counselling for parents, families, and children; child-minding services; educational toys; more workshops on children's behaviour; and a community kitchen for parents and kids.”

Goals

Our long-term vision is to secure a larger, accessible space that can accommodate the increasing number of participants and the programs we offer them.

In the short-term, your donation will help us with the following needs:

- **Continuing to run our programs to allow more men, women, children and families access to nutrition, education and food in a community kitchen that offers good quality proteins and manageable food costs thereby empowering our members.**
- **Health/wellness activities, including yoga workshops.**
- **Cultural initiatives, including music and dance workshops.**
- **Space improvements, including workspace upgrade, improved ergonomics and storage.**
- **Communications improvements such as a new website, social media management and newsletter publication.**
- **IT improvements, including new computers for staff to do their work, IT support costs and training staff to improve their IT skills.**
- **Operational expenses such as staffing costs, janitorial expenses and educational activities.**