



**Downtown Eastside  
Neighbourhood House**

# 2022 Annual General Meeting

September 14 2022 at 5:00pm PST  
573 E. Hastings St



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Neighbourhood House**



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## REPORT FROM THE ED AND CHAIR

As we reflect on the considerable challenges and successes of this past year, we'd like to begin by extending heartfelt thanks to all DTES Neighbourhood House friends and supporters. Over the 2021–2022 programming year, our staff, volunteers, board members, partner organizations, and other allies have worked with compassion and integrity to provide the exceptional services that our neighbours deserve. Through our inclusive programs, we continue to honour the diversity of the DTES community, while maintaining a special allegiance to its most vulnerable members. At the same time, we recognize that much more is needed. As long as many of our neighbours remain marginalized, struggling to meet their needs and fulfill their potential, we notice that such challenges inform the level of advocacy that is required to address the increasing magnitude of need.

Like everyone in our community, the Neighbourhood House has continued to feel the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The challenges have been formidable, yet the dedication and ingenuity of our team have not only gotten us through what we hope is the worst of the crisis but also allowed us to emerge as a stronger organization. Successful program development and fundraising efforts throughout the pandemic have led to significant expansion of our community and family programs.

In terms of more chronic challenges, our battle against food insecurity continues to demand a hefty portion of our resources. The problem has been compounded by an increasing number of neighbourhood changes that threaten our most vulnerable community members. It's thus with

tremendous pride and gratitude that we acknowledge the amazing success of our Urban Farm and the tireless work of its stewards— notably, Pat, Devorah, and the core team of neighbours and community partners who contribute to this grassroots initiative. Now wrapping up its third season, the farm provides a bounty of organic produce and a wealth of community-building opportunities to residents of the Downtown Eastside.

Looking ahead, all of us at the DTES NH are eagerly anticipating the start of our facility renovation. The support that the project has received thus far has been wonderfully uplifting. There's more hard work to be done, but we are on track to secure the funding that will give us the space and amenities we've been dreaming of for many years and that our community urgently needs.

As we look forward to good things in the future and take pride and pleasure in our recent achievements, we must also take this opportunity to acknowledge some very difficult losses. Over the past year, the DTES Neighbourhood House has said goodbye to some very dear friends. Our shared grief has been powerful, but so has our sense that the kindness and generosity of these special people lives on. We sense their presence still—in our hearts, and in our mission to improve the lives of our neighbours and work for a more compassionate and equitable society.

Sincere thanks again to all of you who share our passion for this mission.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Benita Ho, *Board Chair*  
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Carina Baldwin, *Secretary*  
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Thomas Kemple, *Director*  
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Kelsey Schwab, *Community Drop-In Facilitator*  
Simin Sun, *Chinese Seniors Outreach Worker*  
Rory Sutherland, *Executive Director*  
Devorah Tradburks, *Urban Farm Project Manager*  
Tintin Yang, *Leadership Development Coordinator*







## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

### Community Drop-In

We're very happy to report that our Community Drop-in (CDI), a cornerstone of Neighbourhood House programming, is once again running at full capacity, after the lifting of pandemic restrictions. Monday through Wednesday (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.), we serve a hot oatmeal breakfast and a hearty lunch to large groups of neighbours, many of whom have been attending for years. In keeping with NH nutritional goals and values, our oatmeal is a sugar-free superfood that guests can jazz up with cinnamon, vanilla, honey, or fresh fruit. Lunches are varied, but always nutrient-dense, with a high proportion of organic whole-food ingredients.

An account of CDI would not be complete without special mention of our Tuesday Night Prep Group. Every Tuesday evening, this skilled and creative team of volunteers, comprising DTES neighbours, practicum students, and others with an interest in food equality, gathers to transform boxes of donated food into rave-worthy meals for Wednesday's CDI lunch. TNPG volunteers keep us going at the busiest time of the week, and we're enormously grateful for their dedication and generosity!

In CDI-related news, we've recently launched a successful Community Fridge and Pantry program. Neighbours are welcome to stop by during NH opening hours and take what they need from the dedicated fridge and dry goods shelves. A bonus offering in the first weeks of this program has been fresh-picked organic produce from the DTESNH Urban Farm.

As we head into the fall season, we look forward to CDI sessions continuing to make a powerful contribution to the physical, emotional, and social wellbeing of our neighbours.



## Nutritional Outreach

Our two off-site initiatives, Banana Beat and the Mobile Smoothie Project, are once again operating at pre-pandemic capacity.

Each month, on the Wednesday that Social Assistance cheques are distributed, Banana Beat volunteers head out, offering bananas to neighbours who've lined up at the Social Assistance office, often well before dawn, as well as to residents of local housing projects. This program has an obvious health impact—bananas are loaded with potassium and other nutrients. But an equally important aspect of our Banana Beat interactions is the reminder to all of us, volunteers and recipients alike, of the uniqueness and inherent deservedness of everyone in our community. In the coming year, we anticipate serving a whopping 1,800+ kg of bananas through this initiative!

The companion to Banana Beat is our Mobile Smoothie Project, which runs on the Tuesday before cheque day. Volunteers travel with our trusty blender to seven partner organizations each month. Over about 30 minutes at each stopping point, we offer nutrient-packed smoothies to neighbours who might never attend our more conventional meal programs and who may have run out of money and/or food in advance of their next assistance cheque.

Both Banana Beat and the Mobile Smoothie Project have grown into vital grassroots community builders. Our deepest thanks go out to the dedicated volunteers who bring these initiatives to life every month.

We're happy to share that in the last year we have been able to add to our Nutritional Outreach program with a weekly meal for CRAB Town tent city residents. Each Monday between 30-50 meals are made at the DTESNH by a staff member and volunteers, then the meals are delivered with care to CRAB Park.







## FAMILY PROGRAMS

### Family Drop-In

Our Family Drop-in (FDI) program, which is usually centered around the sharing of a nutritious early-evening meal, continued to face pandemic-related challenges over much of the past year but is now, thankfully, back to normal.

In many ways, pandemic modifications have served to highlight the richness of regular FDI programming. Prior to our full reopening this past spring, take-out meals were prepared by volunteers once a week. The FDI program also provided 25–30 grocery hampers per week, to help families cope with increasing food costs and food insecurity. Although very casual connections could be maintained through these “grab and go” initiatives, strong relationships built on trust and familiarity—the kind we witness and experience during regular programming—were limited.

During the Summer of 2021, FDI participants enjoyed a bit of respite from the “pandemic norm” by meeting outdoors, at the Urban Farm. Weekly sessions were held (at limited capacity), and the value of being able to socialize, connect, and, in this case, harvest food together was wonderfully apparent. In the Fall of 2021, however, an attempt to reopen the FDI program at full capacity was cut short, due to the emergence of a new and highly transmissible Covid variant.

Our March 2022 return to full in-person programming, outreach, and community-building was thus met with great relief and enthusiasm. Now that we can all sit down together again, sharing meals and conversations, it’s much easier for NH staff and volunteers to build strong relationships with participating families and learn how best to support them—particularly the many newcomers we have recently welcomed, both from our own neighbourhood and from much farther afield.

One of the things we’ve learned is that our grocery hamper program is a welcome support, even now that health restrictions have been lifted. Consequently, we’ll be continuing to distribute hampers in the coming year—approximately 600 of them, for about 60 different families.

This and other plans are generating a lot excitement as we look forward to a new year of supporting families in our community!

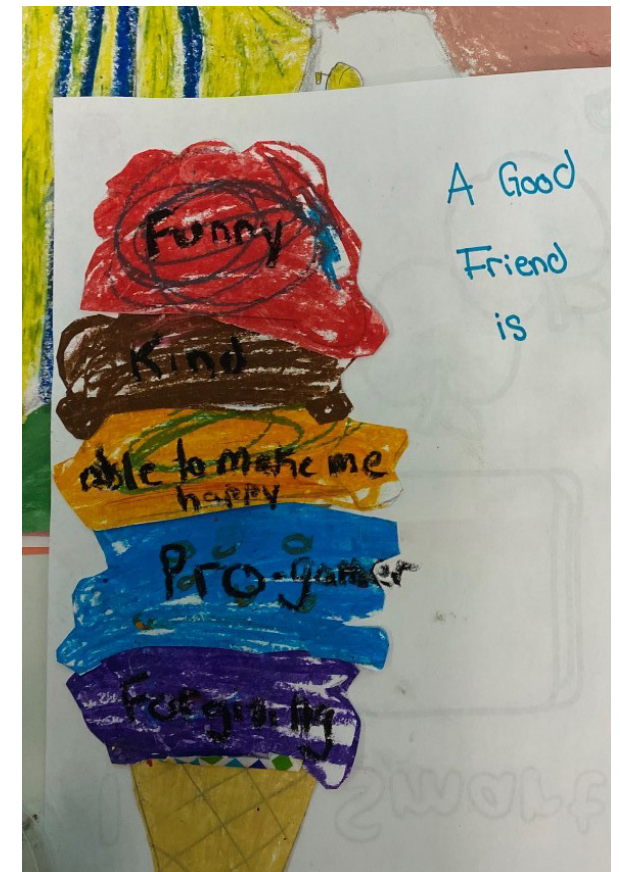
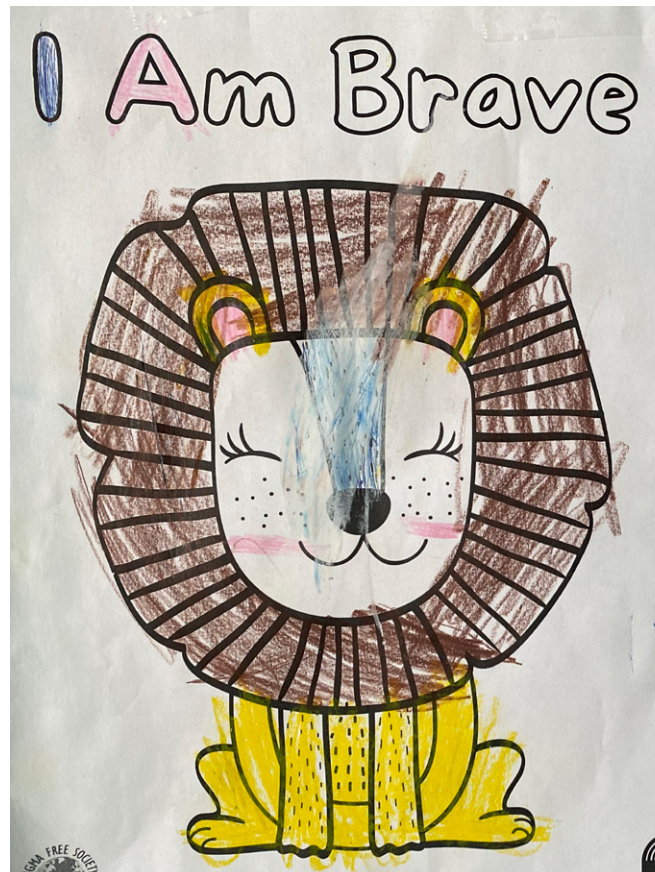
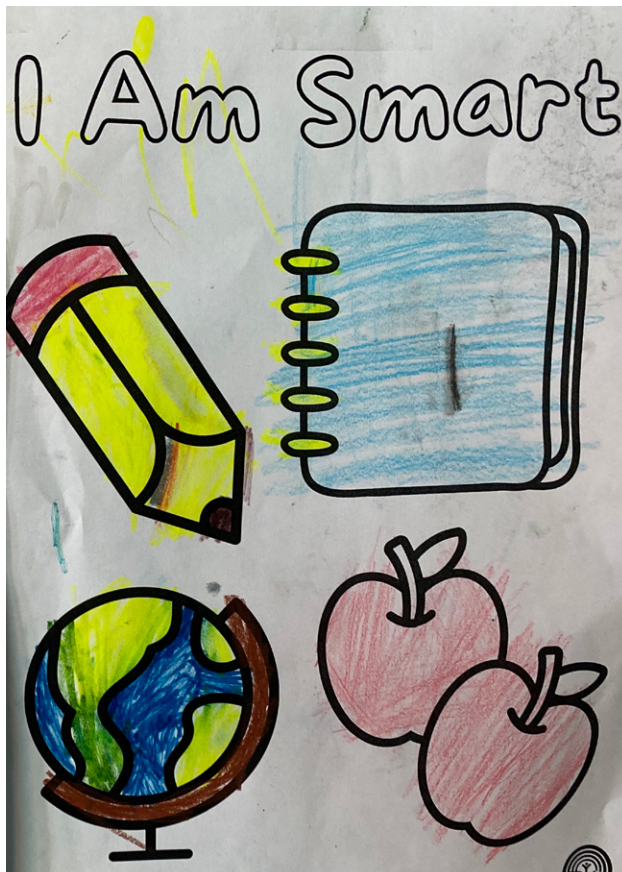


## Early Years Drop-In

Like FDI, the Early Years Drop-in (EYDI) program—which provides an opportunity for caregivers and their preschool-aged children to share breakfast, conversation, and playtime on Friday mornings—has experienced pandemic-related challenges.

Although EYDI was officially “on” for many months between our initial reopening in late 2020 and the most recent one in April 2022, only two families attended regularly. Many caregivers were uneasy about attending the program in person, while uncertainties related to changing health restrictions made outreach difficult.

Given the severity of Covid’s impact on EYDI, we’re thrilled to report that in the time since our April ’22 reopening, the program has flourished. Thanks to targeted outreach efforts and word-of-mouth recommendations, many new families are now attending regularly. There’s a wonderful buzz of energy in the NH on Friday mornings (it’s hard to be glum with so many toddlers in the room!), and we look forward to incorporating new activities and initiatives into the program.







## School's Out

Our three School's Out programs—Kids' Kitchen, Arts Umbrella, and After-school Tutoring—continued this year through support from the United Way BC. These programs provide enriching after-school activities for around 50 children over 180 program hours. Because our School's Out programs were able to continue in person (with health precautions in place) over a period when the Family Drop-in and Early Years Drop-in programs were forced to pause, School's Out played a crucial role in helping us maintain connections with families.

The After-school Tutoring program continued to run in partnership with CUBS (Children With Undergraduate Buddies Society), a UBC student-run tutoring organization. This program provides one-on-one educational support to children in a wide range of subject areas. Over the past year, our young participants had the opportunity to develop their computer skills, as the tutoring took place over Zoom, supervised by NH staff.

Another wonderful component of our children's programming is our partnership with Arts Umbrella, who facilitate weekly art sessions for kids at the Neighbourhood House. The children have had a wonderful time this year, exploring new artistic mediums.

Kids' Kitchen, a staple program at the NH, continues to provide fun weekly cooking sessions for 8-10 children, ages 6-12, every Sunday. At these sessions, participants learn about nutrition, meal planning, food preparation, cooking methods, and safety. This year, the children were finally able to return to eating at the NH, instead of taking their culinary creations home. Finally, our School's Out programs could not have run this year without the support of the 38 dedicated volunteers who offered their time and skills—as tutors, cooking instructors, and playmates. We're extremely grateful to all of you, and we look forward to continuing our School's Out programming with you in the coming year!



## URBAN FARM PROGRAMS

To borrow an analogy from one community programming guide\*, the establishing of the Neighbourhood House Urban Farm in the spring of 2020 has had an effect similar to that of a cannonball splash, radiating ripples of positive impact on the physical, emotional, and social wellbeing of our community.

Our “farm ripples” come not only from the food itself but also from the beauty and vitality of the space and the many activities that take place here throughout the week. Spend some time on site, and you’ll soon appreciate how harvesting and enjoying a hamper of organic, nutrient-dense produce from this former abandoned lot might contribute to a new friendship, a successful interview, or a great day at school. Multiply such experiences a thousandfold, and you’ll get a hint of the potential impact of the NH Farm in the Downtown Eastside.

Over the 2022 season, a bounty of farm-grown tomatoes, squash, broccoli, leafy greens, carrots, herbs, and more has made its way into delicious meals at the Neighbourhood House and other community kitchens. Farm produce has helped supply our Community Fridge and has filled the many hampers that our neighbours take home from the Friday Family Program. Altogether, we’re happy to report, more than 1,500 kg of organic produce have nourished, strengthened, and inspired our community this year.

The farm space is currently shared by several dedicated DTES organizations, who each steward their own garden beds. We’re deeply grateful for our collaborations with all of these partners, as well as for the contributions of farm founder Patrick Moore, who continues to share with us his passion, vision, and extraordinary depth of knowledge about growing good food.

Looking ahead, as the NH Urban Farm becomes increasingly integrated into the DTES community, we anticipate with pleasure the day when it will become a fully community-owned treasure, with ripples reaching further and deeper than they do today.



*\*Splash and Ripple: Using Outcomes to Design and Guide Community Work. Created for the Department of Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism Program; produced and written by Plan:Net Limited, Calgary, and Strathcona Research Group, Vancouver.*



## COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PROGRAMS

### Let's Speak Up!

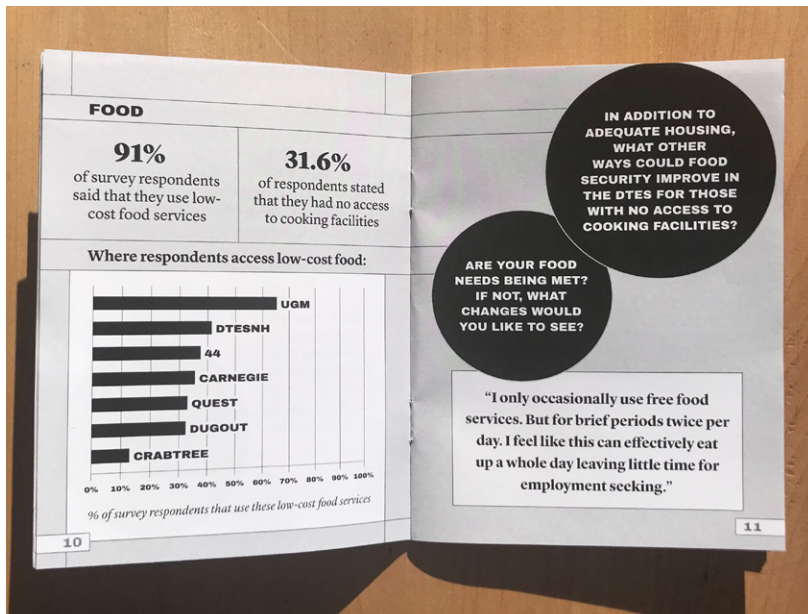
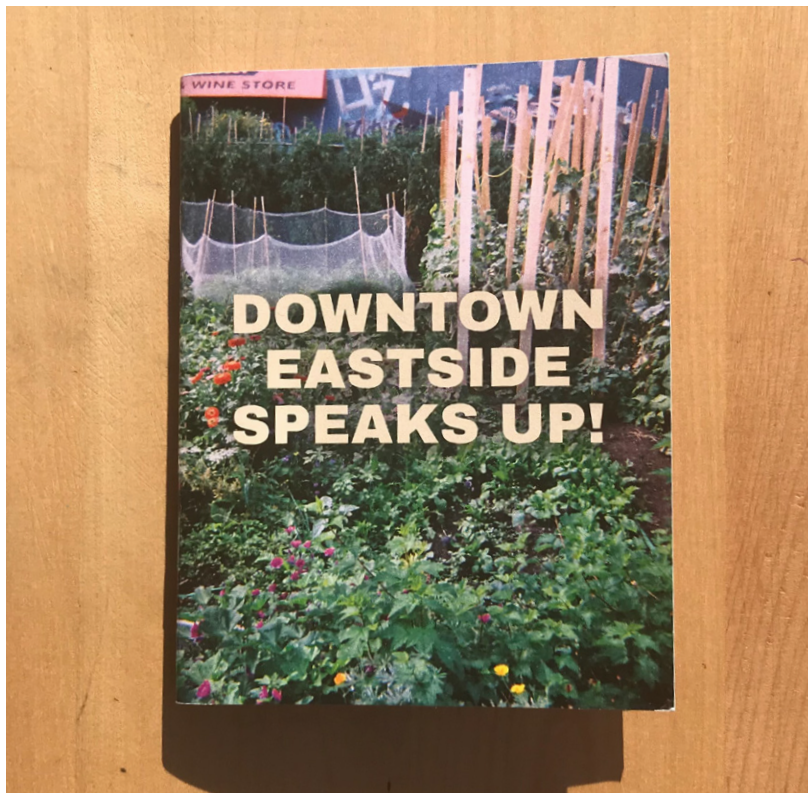
Let's Speak Up! (LSU!) is a participant-led program that helps DTES community members support each other and participate meaningfully in civic decision-making processes. The program, currently in its final year of a three-year support grant from the Vancouver Foundation, has many inspiring successes to share.

Following last year's Participatory Action Research survey project, LSU! participants published their survey results in *Downtown Eastside Speaks Up!*—a booklet that the group made together. This document has served as an important initial step in acknowledging shared social concerns in the DTES and identifying ways of fostering justice through grassroots projects. One such project involved LSU! participants working with the SRO Collaborative to advocate for vacancy control measures.

We're proud to report that, this past year, all LSU! members successfully completed all 10 modules of the Vancouver Community Coalition Against Prohibition and Overdose "Street Degree" program. This peer-driven initiative provides educational content related to drug supply safety, overdose prevention, housing, and food security.

Finally, over the past year, LSU! participants developed a survey initiative to investigate Covid-19-related problems in SRO buildings. LSU! has begun collaborating with other local community groups and organizations to further this work advocating for housing security.

Moving forward, we hope to retain a stable group of LSU! participants, to continue developing collaborative relationships with other DTES organizations, to support DTES residents' ongoing civic engagement, and to advocate for the authority of their lived experience and voices in Vancouver's decision-making processes. An internal review of LSU!'s core values and purpose, with a focus on group inclusivity, is a priority for the immediate future.





## OUR VOLUNTEERS

We love our volunteers! Without the generosity and dedication of the DTES NH team of volunteers, we would not be equipped to offer our current range of programming. Over the past year, as people return from pandemic-related breaks, it's been wonderful to see that team expand and flourish. We currently benefit from the work of over 80 benevolent friends—both newcomers and longtime contributors—who support 11 different programs, from Monday morning's Community Drop-In to Sunday's Kids' Kitchen.

Translation is an area where volunteers have made crucial contributions this past year. Our programs have become more widely accessible thanks to the services of fourteen volunteer translators. Some of these bilingual (or multilingual!) friends have provided in-person translation for Family Drop-In participants, while others have worked from a distance (in some cases, a very big distance!) to translate written information to Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Farsi, Arabic, and Spanish. Although our shared desire for food security and community wellness transcends language barriers, we are very grateful for the added connections and understanding that our translators provide.

As we embark on a new programming year, strategies for improving our Volunteer Program are already in place. We're working on creating an "on-call" system that would allow Community Drop-In staff to request volunteer assistance on short notice. Volunteer training materials, resources, and feedback forms are regularly created and updated, to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for our volunteers. And finally, while our volunteer screening and orientation practices help ensure that all DTES NH volunteers understand and support our mission and values, we also aim to be safely flexible and to remove as many barriers as possible for DTES residents who wish to share their time and talents with their community.





## **Sister Organizations/ Partners**

Aboriginal Front Door  
Arts Umbrella  
Carnegie Community Centre  
Community Impact Real Estate  
CUBS UBC  
Downtown Eastside Women's Center  
Dudes Club  
Environmental Youth Alliance  
Farmers Market Coupon Program  
First United Church  
Good Food Organizations  
Greater Vancouver Food Bank  
Heart of the City Festival  
Hessey Consulting and Architecture  
Hives For Humanity  
Insite  
Lookout Society  
Oppenheimer Park  
Our Place  
Playwrites Theater Centre  
Potluck Cafe  
Raincity Housing  
Ray-Cam Centre  
SRO Collaborative  
Strathcona Community Centre  
UBC Learning Exchange  
UGM  
University of British Columbia  
Vancouver Moving Theatre

Vancouver Neighbourhood Food  
Networks  
Vancouver Public Library  
Vancouver Second Mile Society  
VANDU  
Watari  
WePress  
WISH  
Yarrow Society  
Kiwassa Neighbourhood House  
Vancouver Community College  
Studio Print Group

## **Funders/Donors/Supporters**

Alca Consulting  
All of our wonderful volunteers!  
Alexandra Foundation  
BC Farmer's Markets  
BC Gaming  
BC Housing  
Bocci  
Boughton Law  
Brittania Community Services Centre  
Canada Helps  
Crabtree Corner  
Charitable Impact Foundation  
Choices Market  
City of Vancouver  
Community Food Centres Canada  
Community Impact Real Estate  
DTES Response

Environmental Youth Alliance  
Ethical Bean  
Face the World Foundation  
First Nations Health Authority  
Fisherman's Market West Vancouver  
Government of Canada  
Greater Vancouver Food Bank  
HAVE Culinary Training Society  
Heather Burt Editing  
Investing in Canada's Infrastructure  
Program  
Ministry of Children and Family  
Development  
Nickle Family Foundation  
Orbis Investments  
OXD  
Patrick Moore  
Perkins & Will  
Pro Organics  
RBC Foundation  
SRO Collaborative Society  
TD Friends of the Environment  
Thought Farmer  
United Way  
University of British Columbia  
Vancity Community Foundation  
Vancity Savings Credit Union  
Vancouver Coastal Health  
Vancouver Foundation  
Wawanesa Insurance  
WePress Society  
Whole Kids Foundation