

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE



DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE
NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

2020 Annual General Meeting

August 26, 2020, 5:30p.m. PST
573 East Hastings Street





photo by Mantovani Andr a Photography

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Opening Message

Dear members,

We recognize that our House is on traditional Coast Salish Territory and extend our gratitude to its people. We offer a warm welcome to everyone attending this year's AGM of the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House Society.

The Downtown Eastside (DTES) community trusts the DTESNH for our grassroots work and right-to-food-advocacy for nutritional food promotion. Over the last 12 months, through our combined programs, we offered over 39,000 meals to those in our community. Like all neighbourhood houses, people are our greatest asset and the impact of our safe and welcoming space cannot be fully quantified by numbers.

In the months since our last AGM, we have seen a lot of growth and progress, as well as meeting the ongoing challenges in the community. COVID-19 struck during the final weeks of this year and threw the local service landscape into disarray. Our staff, volunteers, and partner organizations have rallied many times and in many ways since the pandemic began. One example is the multiple funding sources that have emerged to allow us to increase our food output while following public health guidelines at a time when many services had been forced to shut down. We immediately shifted service to provide takeaway meals, grocery hampers for families and seniors, and delivery of hot meals to at-risk individuals living in under-served SROs.

The DTESNH current location will soon be undergoing a renovation and we will be temporarily relocating in the next year or so. There is no doubt the project will be challenging but we are confident that it will be a huge success and are excited for this new opportunity.

Highlights since the last AGM include the launch of the one-acre DTESNH Urban Farm project. We began early in March, reactivating the abandoned Sole Food site at Hawks and Hasting. The farm has flourished and is currently producing about 20 boxes of fresh, organic produce weekly for our meal and hamper programs. The Chinese Seniors Garden Program also thrived in the last year's growing season, with the seniors attending the local farmers market to sell their vegetables and connect with the community. These projects could not have happened without the extraordinary work of volunteers and community partners, as well as our many neighbours that provided input and support. In this time of uncertainty, we are grateful for our core staff team. They have remained committed and stepped up to these challenges with skill, creativity, and determination. Our Operations Manager, Maria Gaudin, has returned from maternity leave and is back to leading the kitchen team to make meals for the community that have the right to food at their heart. Our Family Program Coordinator, Kim McGauley, is skillfully engaging families in the neighbourhood and Lucia Woolgar, our Let's Speak Up Coordinator, is facilitating deeper engagement from our neighbours than ever before, recently securing an additional three years of project funding. The Board is also very thankful for our steadfast Executive Director, Rory Sutherland, who continues with diligence and heart as he manages various aspects of the House from maintaining financial health to supporting volunteers and staff, plus everything in between.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Staff, Board, students, and volunteers, as well as our funders, donors, and the foundations that make our good work possible. Our success this year would not be possible without their talent and

commitment. Their dedication and effort keep us optimistic for the DTESNH's future. We wish to thank the UBC Ethnography program, UBC Land and Food Systems, UBC School of Social Work, UBC Faculty of Education, VCC nursing, and Douglas College Therapeutic Recreation students for their expertise in helping us develop program improvement strategies. Their work has greatly increased our capacity. Our community partners and partner groups who work with us also deserve recognition. These include: Raise the Rates, the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, the Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Network, Watari, the Vancouver Food Bank, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, Strathcona Community Centre, Carnegie Community Centre, Ray-Cam Centre, Playwrites Theatre Centre, Yarrow Society, VPL Strathcona the UBC Learning Exchange and the many organizations who contributed to the Alley Health Fair, Summer Connect, the Family Fair, and Home Ground. We also thank our sister neighbourhood houses and are thankful for the support and collaboration. We are excited to work with you in the upcoming year and look forward to our continuing successes.

Sincerely,

Rory Sutherland (ED) and Benita Ho (Board Chair)



PROVIDING PROGRAMS, EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP, SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO RESIDENTS OF VANCOUVER'S DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Benita Ho, *Board Chair*
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Peggy Alca, *Treasurer*
Jastina Aujla, *Secretary*
Elizabeth Ballantyne, *Director*
Seynabou Diack, *Director*
Andy Ngae, *Director*

STAFF MEMBERS

Rory Sutherland, *Executive Director*
Maria Gaudin, *Manager of Operations*
Leilani Reum, *Interim Manager of Operations*
Kim McGauley, *Family Program Coordinator*
Maleeha Sohail, *Volunteer Coordinator*
Lucia Woolgar, *Let's Speak Up! Coordinator*
Christa Grona, *Kids Kitchen Facilitator*

Community Programs



Above: photos of kitchen staff and volunteers on Wednesday CDI, photo credit Jarmila Storkova



COMMUNITY DROP IN

The Community Drop-In program continues to be our most attended program, with roughly 15,000 delicious meals being served over the past year. We are proud to be serving organic, locally sourced, nutritious meals to any individual who resides in the downtown eastside community.

Every Monday we serve a hearty breakfast of oatmeal to many longtime residents who show up every week. We remain vigilant to ensure that there is no added sugar in our oatmeal; instead, we offer healthy alternatives such as cinnamon, vanilla, dried and fresh fruit to be added on top.

Our Tuesday Night Prep group volunteers are the unsung heroes of community drop in. Every Tuesday evening, they skillfully prepare boxes of donated produce into delectable, nutrition-packed meals for our Wednesday community drop in. Prep night volunteers bring thoughtfulness, and creativity to the dishes they prepare which are raved about and sought after by many residents in the community.

Wednesday community drop in continues to see increased participation, as we are fully packed for the entire duration of the program. The space is abuzz with activity, individuals have the chance to interact with fellow community members, and the Right to Food Zine meeting is open to anyone with an interest in food justice.



Left: photo by Mantovani Andréa Photography



MOBILE SMOOTHIE

Our Mobile Smoothie Project continues to foster community development and to attract those of our neighbours who might never attend our more traditional Community Kitchens. The Mobile Smoothie Project visits 7 partner organizations for approximately 30 minutes, the day before cheque day. This critical component provides high nutritional value to those who often have run out of money and experience barriers to healthy food. Aside from the trusty Vitamix blenders that go along on our regular smoothie program, the neighbourhood house also has a Blender Bike! This year's Neighbourhood Blender Bike events have been the Alley Health Fair, HomeGround Festival, UGM Summer Connect, and the Summer Family Fair. As people mingle and socialize around this low-tech activity, the humble blender delivers both a concise nutritional lesson and delicious smoothies to all.

BANANA BEAT

Banana Beat continues to make an impact on the health of our downtown eastside residents by serving over 12,000 individuals fresh bananas in the early morning hours on cheque day. This significant impact represents far reaching benefits; including, bringing nutritional wealth (in the form of potassium and other nutrients) as well as dignity and the reminder of inherent deservedness to hundreds of our neighbours who line up in the pre-dawn hours, awaiting the opening of offices to access their Social Assistance payments. We also distribute bananas to local housing projects to accommodate some of our more isolated neighbours. Our community members have come to rely on the DTES NH for our grassroots work, care and nutritional food promotion. Thanks to our staff for their continued hard work again this past year, distributing over 2 tons (roughly 4000 pounds) of Bananas!

Family Programs



DRAWING AND PAINTING WITH ARTS UMBRELLA

Arts Umbrella has successfully ran two 8-week sessions during the course of the 2019–2020 school year. Children between the ages of 7–11 had the chance to create beautiful works of visual art. They got to test their skills in multiple mediums, and overall have a positive experience with art and creating things that they can be proud of. We look forward to another year of Arts Umbrella courses at the Neighbourhood House in the 2020–2021 year.

EARLY YEARS DROP IN

The Early Years Drop In (EYDI) Program quickly became a family favourite since starting in April 2019. Every Friday morning parents with children aged 0–5 are greeted with a healthy breakfast, tea, and coffee. The space is facilitated to be a safe place for moms and dads to connect with one another about parenting, mental health, child behaviour, and other issues facing parents. EYDI continued to partner with the Neuro-Emotional Literacy Program (NELP) with their coordinator coming in bi-weekly to give follow up sessions throughout the year. Parents had the opportunity to participate in a Nobody’s Perfect Parenting workshop, put on in partnership with Kiwassa Neighbourhood House.

FAMILY DROP IN

The Family Drop In (FDI) Program has continued to be one of the most beloved programs at the Neighbourhood House. Every Tuesday and Thursday families are welcomed into the space to participate in different crafts, activities, workshops, and play time. Families and volunteers are also provided with a healthy snack and delicious dinner. Lots of fun has been had in the past year including such events as our community garden outings, the Christmas dinner celebration, a workshop series on healthy eating on a budget, and families having the opportunity to cook dinner during FDI. The program wouldn’t be able to run without the help of our amazing and committed volunteers. Each week they work tirelessly to create healthy dinners, provide fun games for younger children to play, and thoughtful arts and crafts for older kids to participate in. With all of their help we have created a safe, comfortable, intimate place which families say, “Feels like their own living room.”



KIDS KITCHEN

Kids Kitchen is a popular program for children aged 8–12. We introduce cooking skills over a 12-week cycle, where kids learn to plan and prepare healthy recipes and engage in nutrition-related activities. Kids also learn important skills like kitchen safety, knife skills, ingredient measurements, and how to follow recipes. We end each cycle with a parent/care-giver dinner and a Cook-Off Competition at the Neighbourhood House. Kids help select the dishes to prepare for their parents, and assist in cooking and serving food to their families at the dinner. The Cook-Off Competition is a fun way to end the program where our young chefs work in groups to create a dish from given ingredients.

We continue to see a growing number of kids interested in the program, and registration slots fill up quickly.



This year, we paired with our Chinese Seniors program to teach the kids how to make dumplings. We used fresh ingredients from one of our gardens, including Chinese parsley, green onion, and kale. The kids visited the garden and learned about soil, seeds, and how plants grow. They also learned how to grow and harvest traditional Chinese vegetables.



Senior Programs

CHINESE SENIORS PROGRAMS

Every Saturday morning there is a weekly gardening session where seniors gather together to plant seeds, weed, water and harvest the vegetables. The seniors take turns watering the plants two to three times per week, ensuring healthy, vibrant growth in this little garden space. As a community program, the seniors work together and share food together. They take the lead at the garden and decide what to plant and how to manage the work.

The seniors are experienced, skilled gardeners and take a great deal of pride as their effort pay off and the garden flourishes. It turns out that the garden not only functions as a physical space for seniors to practice their gardening skills, but also as a learning zone where lots of intercultural and inter-generational learning happens every day.

The seniors attended the local Farmers Market this year. They sold vegetables from the garden and shared the enthusiasm for the project with the community. This project raised \$600, which they used to fund activities for the group over the winter season.



photos by Clare Yow

Community Initiative Programs

FATHERS FOR THOUGHT

Fathers For Thought has been in operation for over five years now and has established itself as a strong resource for fathers living in the Downtown Eastside. Community interest got this program going and it draws heavily on fathers in the community lending their knowledge, skills and hard work to the group. In this program, group members come together to cook a meal and clean up afterwards, while giving dads a safe place to share resources, discuss their experiences and support one another. In addition to formal workshops on wellness-related topics, individual dads take turns facilitating sessions on topics of personal interest.

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE



FATHERS FOR THOUGHT

artwork by Wade Crawford

LET'S SPEAK UP!

This was the final year of the Let's Speak Up! test grant with the Vancouver Foundation. Throughout this year, there were 10 local residents consistently involved with Let's Speak Up!. This group attended capacity building sessions and established a group that meets consistently and discusses local issues, as well as developing projects that aim to address these issues. Recently, they organized the creation of the Community Survey process. Through this process, we engaged 100 local residents to receive feedback on how services can improve in the neighbourhood. The next steps with these surveys will be to analyze the data and present on our findings with other local organizations and city planners.

In addition, Let's Speak Up! has developed meaningful partnerships with other local organizations to further mutual interests. By collaborating with the Our PLACE's governance project steering committee, LSU! Is working to increase neighbourhood involvement in decisions made by the City of Vancouver. In addition, LSU! Has developed a policy proposal for community engagement at the Union Gospel Mission.

Lastly, through the involvement of Let's Speak Up! In Community Drop-In, vegetarian Tuesdays have been established. In addition, nature documentaries have been shown on a weekly basis. This is due to the interests of our guests!

LSU! has applied for the Scale Grant with the Vancouver Foundation to request funding for the next 3 years.



Our Volunteers

We had a very exciting year at the neighbourhood house, and none of it could have been accomplished without the help of our amazing volunteers! We had volunteers join us from the downtown eastside community, all across the lower mainland, some from other provinces, and even a couple from other countries. We also had wonderful practicum students from Vancouver Community College, Langara College, Simon Fraser University, and the University of British Columbia who enthusiastically helped out across all our programs during their practicum stay at the neighbourhood house. Over the year we have had a steady growth in volunteers, from individuals volunteering for the minimum three

months, to some of our volunteers consistently showing up for over two years! Leading the charge in all things volunteer is our amazing coordinator Maleeha who successfully recruits volunteers through online postings and word of mouth. We offer our volunteers monthly training sessions about the neighbourhood house, and also on special topics such as first aid, naloxone administration, and food and kitchen safety. Our volunteers are the backbone to what we do at the neighbourhood house, we are so grateful to each and every one of our volunteers who has supported us and given us their time over the past year!

Our Sponsors and Funders



SISTER ORGANIZATIONS/PARTNERS

Aboriginal Front Door
Arts Umbrella
Carnegie Centre
Carnegie Community Centre
Downtown Eastside Womens' Center
First United Church
Greater Vancouver Food Bank
Good Food Organizations
Heart of the City Festival
Insite
Lookout Society
NICCSS
Oppenheimer Park
Our Place
Potluck Cafe
Pathways to Education
Poverty Reduction Coalition
Raincity Housing
Raise the Rates
Ray-Cam Centre
Second Mile
Strathcona Community Centre
UBC Learning Exchange
UGM
Vancouver Moving Theatre
Vancouver Public Library
VANDU
Vancouver Neighbourhood Food
Networks
Watari
Yarrow Society
YWCA, Crabtree and Sheeway

FUNDERS/DONORS/SUPPORTERS

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BC Gaming
Cadillac Fairview
Central City Foundation
Choices Market
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Costco
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GMR Foundation
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Vancouver Foundation
Wassena Insurance
Wawanesa Insurance
Whole Foods
Yen Bros Food Service
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