



**Downtown Eastside
Neighbourhood House**

Providing Programs, Education,
Leadership, Social and
Recreational Opportunities to
Residents of Vancouver's
Downtown Eastside



573 East Hastings St.
Vancouver, BC
604-215-2030
<http://dtesnhouse.ca>

**The
2017 Annual General
Meeting
of the
Downtown Eastside
Neighbourhood
House Society**

October 4, 2017 6:30 pm

573 East Hastings St.



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4 October 2017

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. Last year, through our combined programs, we offered over 40,000 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 truly quantified by numbers. This weekend, one mom said the DTESNH "is a place where they care about us."

This year we met extreme challenges, but we persevered and found rewarding outcomes. The DTES is the epicenter of the current fentanyl crisis. We have lost neighbours and friends. We have lent aid to those in loss and grief. Our staff, volunteers, and partner organizations have rallied many times and many ways in the last 12 months. One small example is the Alley Health Fair, which was at risk of collapsing during its reorganization. It was resolutely picked up by the DTESNH. The outcome was extraordinary: the event gathered over 3,000 attendees and hosted 35 organizations, offering on-the-spot services, such as Naloxone use training, Hepatitis-C testing, and hearing tests.

As further outlined in this year's report, we have championed new projects and initiatives, and strengthened the projects our volunteers and staff already carry out so well. Following the recommendations from the *Needs Assessment for Social and Recreational Programming* report provided by Alice Sundberg Consulting, we have worked to mitigate challenges from gentrification. With added funding by the City and Vancouver Foundation we are training local leaders in Board governance through our new *Let's Speak Up* project. During the provincial election, we fostered our neighbours' civic engagement in our *Lunch and Listen* program. We drafted and supplied an anti-poverty policy for BC's provincial political parties, and helped draft a DTES food security charter for Vancouver Coastal Health.

Highlights from last year include the second successful execution of our unique Christmas Gift Basket fundraiser. It was a great success thanks to the extraordinary work of our Board and fundraising committee members, as well as our many neighbours. Funding from Face the World as well as the City of Vancouver along with storage accommodation from RainCity Housing made it a success. In 2018, we look forward to expanding the project with the UBC Land and Food Systems department by offering a second basket full of our in-house products.

We are working hard to address other features of the *Needs Assessment for Social and Recreational Programming* including expansion to a multipurpose space. Our focus for the following year is to expand our space. To this end we are working on the next stage of our strategic plan to expand. The Board has done much of this work, and we are now ready to solidify it with a functional plan toward acquiring a new house. We are also rolling out increases to our programs in the Community Drop-In (CDI) with expansion in food offerings and by adding the *Let's Speak Up* project.

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.

Our staff's inspired work has created new opportunities for the House, ensuring it is a vibrant and welcoming space for our community. Our Kids' Kitchen is stronger than ever thanks to Christa and Arlette's leadership. Sarah, Kate, Michele, Sarika, and Stephen have been dedicated and committed peer support staff who ensure our successful outreach to the community. Simin has created an extraordinary program, called *Lifetime Leisure*, with our seniors. We had some staff changes this year. We welcomed Odo to our Senior Management Team as our family worker.

We wish to thank the UBC Ethnography program, UBC School of Social Work, UBC Faculty of Education, VCC nursing, Langara, and VSB students for their expertise in helping us develop program improvement strategies. Their work has already increased our capacity.

Our volunteers provide 600 hours of service every month. Our programs would not operate without them. Rasheed, our volunteer coordinator, continues to design ways to make the volunteer experience better by supporting our students, family and community volunteer members.

A special thanks to the Board members who continue to help the organization grow. Their long hours and effort enable us to improve the quality of life for our neighbours in a respectful, hospitable, people-focused community space. Their work led to the revision of our By Laws to be compliant with the relatively new Society Act, the strategic planning to look at short and long term goals and the continuation of investigating possibilities for a new house, starting with a functional plan in process.

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, Potluck Café society, the Network of Inner City Community Services Society, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, Strathcona Community Centre, Carnegie Community Centre, the UBC Leaning 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 opportunity to celebrate our volunteers at the Good Neighbour Awards.

We are excited to work with you in the upcoming year and look forward our continuing successes.

Regards,

Benita Ho
President

Carol White
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Benita Ho – President
Opal Levis – Secretary
Josephine Martyn - Treasurer
Elizabeth Ballantyne - Director
Bill Beauregarde - Director
Hendrik Beune - Director
Seynabou Diack - Director
Lisa Hobman - Director
Lisa Hung - Director

Staff Team

Odo Abena
Arlette Akayezu
Rasheed Ahmed
Sarah Brittain
Matt Campbell
Mason Chiu
Sarika Khan
Christa Grona
Michele Routhier
Simin Sun
Rory Sutherland

Our Programs

Community Drop In

The Community Drop-In staff(CDI) is proud of the important work we do, by providing organic, nutritious and skillfully prepared meals. We are delighted to have served roughly 15,000 delicious meals over this past year.

Monday Breakfast Community Drop-In: Neighbourhood residents are repeat consumers of our Monday breakfasts, thoroughly enjoying our healthy oatmeal. We remain vigilant to ensure there is no sugar added and instead offer healthy choices of cinnamon, vanilla, honey, and fresh fruit.

Tuesday Night Prep Team: These dedicated volunteers continue to demonstrate their commitment to the DTESNH by skillfully preparing boxes of donated organic produce and crafting delectable, nutritionally-packed home cooked meals for CDI. Prep Night volunteers bring thoughtfulness, and creativity to the dishes they prepare that are raved about by all.

Wednesday Afternoons Community Drop-In: Participation continues to be fully packed as our space buzzes with conversation taking place over delightful meals. Haircuts are provided for those in need of a trim and the Right to Food Zine meetings are open to anyone with an interest in food justice issues. The CDI volunteer team is a mix of local residents, practicum students, and those with a passion for food justice; they share the common goal of supporting one another and our neighbours. We could not do what we do without their wholehearted effort!

Family Drop In

The Family Drop-In continues to see an increase in participation every Tuesday & Thursday, and provides a broad range of engaging activities including nutritious snacks and dinner. Lots of fun and healthy undertakings included Gardening, Summer Out-trips, Birthday Celebrations, the Felt Family Day, Djembe Drum & Dance, Story Time, a Puppet Show, and our annual Easter Egg Hunt with 70 enthusiastic families and their children. We were pleased to offer valuable Life Skill Development workshops and Certifications in Food Safe, First Aid+CPR as well. During our Cultural Month, volunteers and families presented information about their heritage, enlightening participants of a broader perspective in cultural knowledge highlighting food, music, and dance. At the end of the 7th week, families had enjoyed healthy meals with exposure to meal theme's from 14 different Countries, which included Sweden, Mexico, Iran, South Africa, Israel, Ghana, Brazil, India, Greece, Ireland, Australia, Jamaica and Canada.



Just as we did last year we are working with Heart of the City Festival to host a performance with our families on 26th October 2017. Halloween party, Thanksgiving and Christmas party preparation is going on. Preparations are being made for the 2018 Family Fair. FDI is putting together a greeting card, colouring book and a menu book as part of the 2017 gift basket

Community Drop-In Expansion through Let's Speak Up!

The expansion of the Community Drop-in now includes breakfast on Tuesday mornings followed by a discussion group thanks to funding for our Let's Speak Up Program. With this new additional service, there is an increased demand for our breakfasts, serving up to 70 meals per week and growing.

Part of our success includes targeted engagement with residents, inviting them to participate in small discussion groups that consider topics such as civic engagement, urban development, the history of the neighbourhood and increasing socio-economic diversity on the Boards of community-serving service providers. Summer student staff has also played a valuable role as they have widened their own experiential learning.

Kids Kitchen

Kids Kitchen is very popular for children aged 8-12 years of age. The goal is to introduce cooking skills over a 12-week cycle on Sunday afternoons, where kids learn to plan and prepare healthy recipes and engage in nutrition-related activities.

The Culinary Passport program is a hit, where we cook our way through recipes from around the world. This valuable life skill introduces participants to new types of recipes and cuisine. Kids also learn important kitchen skills such as kitchen safety, knife skills, ingredient measurement, and how to follow recipes. Each 12-week cycle ends with a parent/care-giver dinner at the Neighbourhood House. Kids help to select the dishes to prepare for their parents, and assist in cooking and serving food to their families at the dinner. We continue to see a record number of kids in all registration slots quickly fill up. Our cook-off competition, is a fantastic way to end the program where our young chefs work in groups to create a dish from given ingredients.

One Community Family Fair and Picnic

This year our family fair and picnic was held at the end of August on one of the memorable hot summer Sundays. Our hardworking summer students, Arlette and Mason, organized a fun filled day of activities for the whole family.

Along with a climbing all, petting zoo, games, drumming and our colouring book project as well as great food we were able to include this as part of our involvement in Canada 150.

Parents and Tots Drop In

The parents and Toddler pilot program took off in June 2017 in an attempt to give parents and their kid's, access to a proper feeding program. Toddlers and their parents engage in a combination of movement, songs and rhymes on Thursday mornings from 12:30-1:30. The Parent and Tots' drop-in has partnered with Fraser Health to host a Dental Health and Tooth brushing session on 21st December 2017. We are also working with other community partners to develop this program to better serve the community.



Banana Beat

Banana Beat continues to make an impact on the health of our DTES 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!

Mobile Smoothies

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 NH 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 DTES NH Family Picnic. As people mingle and socialize around this low tech activity, the humble blender delivers both a concise nutritional lesson and delicious smoothies to all.



Fathers For Thought

Fathers For Thought has been in operation for over three 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. The group is excited to be helping out in this year's DTES NH gift basket fundraiser by lending their hard work and artistic skills to designing and silk screening tea towels for the project.

Let's Speak Up

The Let's Speak Up! is a new project that seeks to support residents and community-serving organizations in the DTES who want to include more community members on their Board of Directors and committees. This project aims to prepare residents and organizations for effective and relevant representation to advocate for the DTES community in a time of flux. Project activities include: creating a personalized access program by reducing the barriers for individual community members that are interested in serving on boards; support and offer resources to board and community members who have committed to including more DTES residents in their governance structure; develop a charter for inclusive governance signed by participating organizations; instigate a public dialogue around the benefits of equity and socio-economic diversity in social service governance and their impacts on community resilience. This program will be developed and run over the next three years with the collaboration of local organizations and individuals. Lets Speak up is hosting a panel Nov 20 at SFU as part of its community engagement launch. This project is also working closely with the Community Action Network.

Volunteers

We had an exciting year at the neighbourhood house with volunteers joining us from our community, across the lower mainland, some from other provinces and even a couple from other countries! Our volunteers include our neighbours, practicum students from Vancouver Community College, Langara College, SFU and the University of British Columbia, local residents and individuals that we have successfully recruited from on-line postings as well as through word of mouth. Over the year, we have seen a steady growth of volunteers from the neighbourhood and those that have committed to support us over the medium-long term. We have also gauged a lot of interest from volunteers for our seasonal gift basket fundraiser, the annual family fair and other special events and programming. We offer monthly volunteer training sessions as well as regular training in first aid, naloxone training, and food safe and special topics in an effort to support our volunteers to give the best in programming.

We are grateful to all our volunteers who have supported us at the Neighbourhood House.



Right To Food Zine

The Right to Food Zine continues into its fifth year of publication in affiliation with the DTES Neighbourhood House in 2017. Over the past year, publication issues addressed important topics including; poverty reduction, food security, and housing/homelessness, the fentanyl crisis, how drug use affects people living with aids, and an evolved approach to food and drug policies. It also featured a poster and information about the Wild Salmon Caravan, as well as articles about the life of soil, our pantry of the future, people in Strathcona who roll up their sleeves to work hard. We collaborated with several UBC ethnography students who wrote about their placements in various agencies in the DTES. They also speculated about their hyphenated identities, being Chinese and Filipina Canadian.

Finally, the Winter issue will be ready for distribution by mid-November and will include a full-coloured poster promoting the NH Gift Basket, and articles about the coffee cup revolution, gluten-free diets, the Let's Speak Up initiative, and the opposition to industrial expansion at Crab Park. We are grateful for the continued support and generosity of those who has championed our efforts to represent the Neighborhood House and the many vital issues impacting the DTES community.

Seniors Program

The Senior's Program includes the Alder's Club, which is an outdoor program designed just for seniors, organized by the Sasamat Outdoor Centre in partnership with the DTES NH. From September 2016 to 2017, the club meets monthly on alternative Tuesday afternoons. The program focuses on providing opportunities for seniors to meet new people, increase physical activity and develop skills in an outdoor environment. Over 50 seniors participated in the program. Based on the phone survey conducted in June 2017, all the interviewees gave very positive feedback about the tours. The Alder's Club program has been a successful example of collaboration between the DTES NH and external organizations. The DTES NH would love to continue working with other organizations in order to provide more services and support with our seniors in the future.

Lifelong Leisure Club

As part of New Horizons for seniors, the Lifelong Leisure Club represents a unique initiative that features community leadership and the peer-led model. Seniors play a leading role in designing themes, planning and facilitating workshops and tours, which include yoga, aboriginal culture, farm tour, tai chi, arts, gardening, etc.

Seniors who facilitated these workshops/tours developed their leadership skills and all communicate they feel more comfortable about public speaking through the experiential learning experience. Others who participated in the program enjoy the relaxing learning environment when their peers shared skills with them. In fact, some of the participants signed up for becoming workshop facilitators. Now the seniors see more possibilities of what they can do in the community and they are interested in bringing more positive changes to the Downtown Eastside.



Alley Health Fair

The Annual Alley Health Fair is a street festival that brings together organizations and service providers in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside to promote health and wellness, and educate participants about local services available to them. The event includes music, lunch, hair-cuts, massage, health testing, bicycle and wheelchair repair, among many other features.

This year the Neighbourhood House took over the administration of the event with huge support from our sister agencies in the community. Caroline Brunt and Byron Cruz and a host of committed staff from over 35 agencies all pitched in to make this a remarkable event.

The fair is a City of Vancouver “Homeless Connect” event. We are grateful for their financial support along with VCH and the Phuoc Lac Charity Society.

Thank you: Sponsors and Funders

- Alexandra Foundation
- Cadillac Fairview
- City of Vancouver
- Choices Market
- Ethical Bean
- Face the World Foundation
- Greater Vancouver Food Bank
- Pro-Organics Marketing
- Province of British Columbia
- Service Canada
- Telus
- UBC Partnership Recognition Fund
- United Way
- Vancouver Foundation
- Whole Foods
- Superior tofu
- And our many donors

We wish to thank the many volunteers and partners who worked with us on our Christmas Gift Basket Fundraiser and the generous help from Face the World Foundation. We are looking forward to our 3rd Annual Fundriaser.



A Shout Out to Our Partners

Throughout the year we partner with many sister organizations. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to those people and organizations that have partnered with us on programs and events throughout this past year.

Anita Lau from the **Women's Drop In Centre**

Ross Moster from **Village Vancouver**

Natalie Porter from **VPL Carnegie Branch**

Cindy and Bobby from **UGM**

Carol Brunt at **VCC**

Ivan Arlantico at Vancouver Infections Diseases Centre

Kerry Greer from **UBC Land and Food Systems**

The Strathcona Community Centre's **Backpack Program**

40 plus DTES Agencies who worked on the **Alley Health Fair**

Terry Hunter and Savannah Walling from **Vancouver Moving Theatre**

The many artists, organizers, performer & health practitioners

All of our neighbours and community friends

Colouring Book Project Samples: Neighbourhood Small Grants

