



# downtown eastside neighbourhood house

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2019 agm

May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 5:30pm  
573 East Hastings Street



**Downtown Eastside  
Neighbourhood House**



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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 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 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. 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 in many ways in the previous months. One small example is the NH securing funding from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to initiate a one-year overdose prevention project at the Fathers for Thought program. We also look forward to facilitating the Alley Health Fair later this year, for which we recently confirmed the funding. We are looking forward to many positive outcomes again at this year's event.

Highlights since the last AGM include a large kitchen renovation and IT upgrade project, both expanding our program and administrative capacities. The Chinese Seniors Garden Program has also flourished, with new and larger garden beds that allows more participants than ever to engage in the project. 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 January of this year we had an exciting and successful fundraising dinner at Torafuku. We thank all the chefs, especially Clement Chan, who created an extraordinary menu and kindly donated all proceeds to the DTESNH.

We had many new hires last year and our core staff team is coming into its own, leveraging new opportunities and representing the House well in the community. Leilani Reum has done an amazing job stepping in to provide maternity leave coverage for our Operations Manager, Maria Gaudin. We are thrilled to announce that Maria gave birth

to a baby girl on April 15! 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.

We are also very thankful to have part-time staff Mason, Christa, Arlette, Simin, and Maleeha continuing to bring their strengths to the work of the NH.

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, Vancouver Moving Theatre, 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 opportunity to celebrate our volunteers at the Good Neighbour Awards.

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

Regards,

Benita Ho  
President

Rory Sutherland  
Executive Director



Providing programs, education, leadership,  
social and recreational opportunities to  
residents of Vancouver's downtown eastside.



### **Board of Directors**

**Benita Ho, President**  
**Opal Levis, Secretary**  
**Josephine Martyn, Treasurer**  
**Elizabeth Ballantyne, Director**  
**Hendrik Beune, Director**  
**Seynabou Diak, Director**  
**Lisa Hung, 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, Lets Speak Up Coordinator**  
**Christa Grona, Kids Kitchen Facilitator**  
**Arlette Akayezu, Summer Work Student**  
**Simin Sun, Seniors Program Facilitator**  
**Mason Chiu, Casual On-Call Staff**  
**Nazanin Khoshnoudian, Summer Work Student**

# Community Programs

## 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, honey, and fresh fruit to be added on top. Haircuts are also provided for those in need of a trim.

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.

Our community drop in volunteer team is a mix of local residents, practicum students, and those with an interest in food equality; they share the common goal of supporting one another during the busiest time of the week. We could not do what we do without their wholehearted effort!

## 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 100 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.

## 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!

## 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.



# Family Programs

## 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 upcoming year families can look forward to more healthy eating workshops, our family summer fair, and much more. 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 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.

## Early Years Drop In

The Early Years Drop In (EYDI) Program started in April and replaced our previous Parent and Tots program. 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 has also partnered with the Neuro-Emotional Learning Program (NELP) to help teach parents about positive affect emotions and the importance of emotional intelligence. Parents will also get the opportunity to participate in the Nobody's Perfect parenting workshop later in the year.

## Drawing and Painting with Arts Umbrella

Arts Umbrella has successfully ran three 8-week sessions during the course of the 2018-2019 school year. Children between the ages of 6-11 have 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 our ongoing partnership with Arts Umbrella in the coming 2019-2020 school year.



# Community Initiative Programs

## Lets Speak Up!

Let's Speak Up! is a project that seeks to support residents and community-serving organizations in the downtown eastside 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 downtown eastside 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 year and a half with the collaboration of local organizations and individuals.

## 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.



## Right to Food Zine

The Right to Food Zine continues into its seventh year of publication in affiliation with the DTES Neighbourhood House in 2019. 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, and people in Strathcona who roll up their sleeves to work hard.





# Senior Programs

## Chinese Seniors Program

Over the last months we completed a large renovation project at our Community Garden in partnership with Carnegie Center and Wing Wing Sausage Co.Ltd. The garden is located on the corner of Hastings and Jackson, inside the parking lot of Wing Wing Sausage Co.Ltd. This is an innovative outdoor program that provides seniors with access to inner city green space and to meet their interests of gardening and farming.

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.



# 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

Alexandra Foundation

BC Gaming

Cadillac Fairview

Central City Foundation

Choices Market

City of Vancouver

CLICK

Costco

Ethical Bean

Face the World Foundation

Global Girl Power

GMR Foundation

Government of Canada

Ministry of Mental Health  
and Addictions

Open Road Communications

Phuoc Lac Charity Society

Pro Organics

United Way

Vancity Community Foundation

Vancouver Costal Health

Vancouver Foundation

Wassena Insurance

Wawanesa Insurance

Whole Foods

Yen Bros Food Service

