COVID 19 YEAR END REPORT

Building a Caring Food Community

Reporting for the period March 2020 - May 2021
Acknowledging our Responsibilities Living on this Land

The Grandview Woodland Food Connection (GWFC) is honored and privileged to work on ancestral and unceded homelands of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), sel̓íl̓witulh (Tsleil-Waututh), and skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Coast Salish peoples. As a non-Indigenous organization, we acknowledge our responsibility in building respectful and caring relations with both Indigenous communities and the land while continuing our work to decolonize our work and food systems.

Building a Caring Food System in Our Community

The GWFC believes that a healthy food system is a key social determinant in supporting the health and well-being of all residents in our community, and in particular, those most vulnerable. We achieve this through a community development approach that values education, information and skill sharing, social engagement, and the creation of grassroots community food security initiatives that build an accessible, just and sustainable food system for all.

Britannia Community Centre - an Essential Partnership

Britannia Community Centre is host agency to the GWFC, providing a range of necessary resources i.e. staff supports, office and program space, admin and with whom the GWFC has worked with as equal partners in our COVID Emergency Food Delivery Program. Britannia is committed to the wellbeing, sense of belonging, joy, and empowerment of everyone in our community as stewards of spaces that support social connection, creativity, recreation, reconciliation and the realization of the full potential of people and communities.
COVID 19 has revealed critical weaknesses in our food system, whether the vulnerability in our global food supply chains or the severe food inequity as it has affected lower income and communities of color disproportionately. This reality has led to some very important discussions around food systems change so urgently needed at this time.

Upon COVID lockdown (March 16, 2020) the GWFC paused most all programming and in partnership with Britannia Community Centre shifted it’s energy into our Emergency Food Home Delivery Program. People who were afraid to go outside had little means of accessing food and we were concerned that elders and seniors, individuals with compromised health, and low income community members had limited access to food.

With most social services, community food programs and food bank depots closed, long food lines, and slow grocery delivery we jumped into action, deeming food access an essential service. Within days, our Emergency Food Home Delivery Program was up and running and we were, and still throughout COVID, one of only a few organizations in the city delivering high quality, healthy food boxes to people’s home, ensuring people stay safe at home.

The GWFC along with Britannia were well positioned to take on this work. After years of community development work, we had established deep relations with community members, fostered collaborations with dozens of community organizations, funders and businesses, and engaged hundreds of volunteers over the years. This capacity was widely drawn on to support community members experiencing hardship from COVID.

More importantly, this experience has confirmed for us that we have a rotten food system but the COVID pandemic has only deepened our resolve to push for food systems change and poverty reduction legislation that would see all community members with equitable access and the means to purchase food of their own choosing.
The Grandview Woodland Food Connection may be a small organization, but with the support from Britannia Community Centre and the wider community we have made a big impact. This program has supported 630 households or roughly 1900 individuals throughout East Vancouver over the past year ensuring barrier free food access while significantly lessening their stress during these difficult COVID times.

11,000 Food Boxes delivered to date with a focus on highly nutritious food heavy on fruits and veggies ensuring that people stay healthy during the pandemic.

375,300 Lbs of food with 60% purchased and 40% donated or recovered food that has been distributed.

8485 Volunteer Hrs clocked by over 200 community members that have graciously offered their time to help sort, box and deliver food.

50+ Collaborations working together to support community members through the most dignified means, not just through referrals, but in funding and food procurement efforts as well as strategic planning around food systems change.

43 Businesses have donated food, including roughly 10,000 prepared meals.

$285,815 funds raised through partner support, the Canadian Government COVID Food Relief Fund, various funders and hundreds of community members.
Volunteers Represent the Best of Community

Our Emergency Food Delivery Program would not be possible without the many community members who have committed hundreds of hours of their time to help run this program. Some have been with us every week this past year showing up without complaint and simply putting the work in. They demand our recognition above all else.
Community Stories of Impact

In July I had a series of small strokes, severe anemia to the point my nails all spooned, hair fell out, I could no longer breathe. I couldn’t walk. I required transfusions, iron infusions my blood count was so low from malnutrition. Covid protocol was tight during that period.. after a week in hospital, I came home to nothing in the fridge.. The GWFC program rushed in to help me, immediately.. Having a variety of veggies I had to learn preparation and storage.. caught myself googling for recipes and freezing tips.. it kept me active even though I was confined to my home. Due to Covid shut down there were no services available to me for rehab.. except for this one.. I received healthy foods, a break from social isolation waving to volunteers at the doors. There are so many seniors, and families that need to eat good healthy food as medicine.. I would not have survived this pandemic without this food delivery program. - Food Recipient

We would like to take the opportunity to thank you and your wonderful volunteers for all the hard work and dedication in organizing the food boxes for our families......As you know we work with families that come to Canada as refugees with children 0-6 years old. Many of our families are on the poverty line and are struggling with the current economic climate. The food boxes you provided have supported them to meet the nutritional needs of their children and themselves. Many of them have challenges in accessing grocery stores/food programs due to the fact they often have to take a few buses to get there as well as take their children with them.........When we delivered the food boxes to them, the reactions that we received were priceless. One single mum with a special needs child was in tears with gratitude. Every family appreciated and was extremely thankful for the food donations. Quote from one family “Thank you for the wide variety of fresh and nutritious food, we feel blessed that people are thinking of us at this time.”.......On behalf of our agency we would like to thank you for supporting our most vulnerable families during this difficult time.
- Manjit Garcha, Circles of Care and Connection, Mt Pleasant Family Centre

Thank you to all the staff & volunteers of the GWFC/Britannia food distribution program for their hard work. Notably, the program offers compassion and care for others, such as myself. I am homebound in a wheelchair suffering immunological health condition which makes it difficult to access healthy food. With my medical (multiple health challenges) I have at times felt overwhelmed by COVID-19 restriction impact, social Isolation & depression. The benefits that I have received from the program have really helped especially the delivery of food directly to my home, nutritious healthy food (lots of FRESH fruits & vegetables). They have even included bone broth & bone marrow to aid my bone loss & teeth deterioration as well as extra dietary supplements. The program and all the volunteers have a BIG HEART! Please continue to support the food distribution program for I personally benefitted from this outstanding, fruitful program. - Food Recipient
Thank you Funders and Donors

Special thank you to the hundreds of community members who donated generously and which ensured an immediate COVID food delivery response before government funding kicked in. And to the Government of Canada Emergency Food Relief Fund and the United Way of Lower Mainland. Finally, a big thank you to the many local businesses who continue to donate generous amounts of food.

Community Donors ($20 - $500)


Local Food Business Donors

Fractal Farm, Buddah Squash Farm, City of Vancouver Sunset Nursery, East End Food Co-op, Italian Cultural Centre, Save on Meats, Tayybeh Catering, Nut Hut, Eternal Abundance, Pasture to Plate, Havanna Restaurant, Acron Restaurant, Choices Food Market, Vancouver Food Runners, Livia Restaurant, Liquids and Solids, Panne Formaggio, Greater Vancouver Food Bank, Cafe Justica, Cafe Etico, Cobs Bakery, Aji Gourmet Products, Terra Breads, Van Wholesale, Freshpoint, Help Change My City