

# East Van Feast Fam

## Britannia Teen Centre

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June 2014

## Off the Grill Becomes East Van Feast Fam

The food program moved into Britannia Teen Centre in fall 2013 and the youth took increasing ownership of the program, renaming it “East Van Feast Fam.” Youth took on a larger portion of the food preparation. They took turns shopping for groceries and cooking so that they could eat dinner together every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Vegetables, and fruits became an always present, and often popular, part of meals. Recently, a smaller group of teens created a planning committee and took charge of the food planning, purchasing and preparation, ensuring that 20-30 young people have a chance to eat hot, healthy meals, 3 nights a week. Half a dozen youth completed a food safe training.



## Food Rescue

A partnership with City Studio’s food rescue program has reshaped the nutrition. Youth leaders drop off “Fill Me” baskets at local organic markets and then return to pick up baskets full of fresh, healthy food—blemished but yummy food that cannot be sold. Through an influx of about 25 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables three times a week, youth are exposed to new foods and flavors. Access to leeks, mushrooms, sweet potatoes and beets have brought in new recipes and creativity.

## Building Relationships



The food program has been the entry point for building and strengthening relationships – both amongst the teens and between teens and adults. Young people are accessing doctors and nurses at the new Youth Night at Reach Clinic. UNYA drug and alcohol counselor, Priscilla, has been a familiar face. The youth have benefited from relationships with Teen Centre Staff and their programming. Partially this program has been successful because numerous groups are working together to tighten the “social safety net” needed to catch young people who are at risk of falling through systemic cracks. Twice monthly case management meetings have strengthened transectoral relationships among health care

professionals, recreational staff, outreach workers, police, and ministry social workers to strengthen supports for individual youth who need extra help.

## Youth Night at Reach Clinic

The New Youth Night at Reach Clinic offers an interdisciplinary team to address youth health issues that range from a sore throat to depression. Through a partnership with BC Children's Hospital RICHER Initiative, Reach Clinic, and East Van Youth Clinic, the clinic offers walk-in and appointment services on Wednesdays 5-7pm. A therapeutic drum circle will start up again in September.



## New Supplies

Donations have allowed for state of the art kitchen equipment, including two induction hot plates and a portable handwashing sink for outdoor food prep.

## Next Steps

Youth and the community centre want to move the program back outside for the summer months to reclaim the common space of Britannia Community Centre for everyone in the community. The youth want to provide meals for the community again, not just the youth in the Teen Centre. Britannia Community Centre and the Library are also excited to move the program outside again. They welcome the integration of youth with the community through food. This program was very positive in summer 2013, and program growth over the last 8 months provides an even more exciting opportunity for this summer. Youth leadership, food rescue, onsite UNYA drug and alcohol counseling, and the Reach Youth Clinic Night are new developments that make this program not just about nutrition, but positive youth development.

***Resources are needed to make this dynamic program happen. Britannia is seeking \$5000 to add to another \$3000 donations from various organizations, and in-kind staff and equipment donations to run the program this summer. Please support East Vancouver Youth!***