



SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT



OUR MISSION

STARTING WITH FOOD SECURITY, WE BELIEVE

**EVERYONE DESERVES
ACCESS TO A BETTER LIFE**



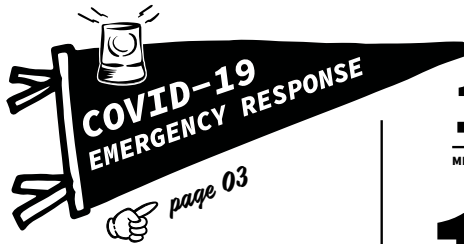
Since 2013 we have spent every day feeding, training, and supporting our at risk and marginalized neighbours.

At the centre of our success is partnership and iterative design. We believe that informed pivots and community feedback are the keys to being able to truly be in service.

An example of our partnerships at work is our meal program with Atira Women's Resource Society. 365 days a year, our production kitchen team prepares and delivers approximately 1,000 meals to our most vulnerable neighbours. These meals are produced by a team of employees facing barriers, packaged in individual fully compostable packaging and then delivered by Shift Couriers across the city via zero emission electric tricycles. Every part of the process matters deeply to us.

Each year we meet the challenges that layer onto our community and in the last two we continued to address the effects of the overdose crisis and COVID-19 with partners to alleviate isolation and suffering.

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1,800
MEALS SERVED PER DAY

+250%
MEAL VOLUME INCREASE



45,000
FACE MASKS



720L
HAND SANITIZER

166,066

**COVID-19 EMERGENCY
RESPONSE MEALS SERVED**

**FOOD
WASTE
RECOVERY**

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The equivalent of
14,253
MEALS SERVED



Saved
8.6T
OF WASTE FROM ENTERING THE LANDFILL



Saved
16.3T
CO₂ FROM ENTERING THE ATMOSPHERE



100%

ORGANIC, COMPOSTABLE
INDIVIDUALIZED DAILY MEAL
PROGRAM PACKAGING

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474,712

MEALS SERVED IN 2020

2,800,000+

MEALS SERVED SINCE 2012

48%

BARRIER EMPLOYEE RATE



COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

FIRST WAVE

As other food providers were forced to cease operations, many low-barrier food sources disappeared throughout the DTES. We responded as an essential service with rapidly scaled food production increasing the amount of people we sent meals to and the size of meals themselves.



All packaging is
100% organic &
compostable



Meals are served
in separate to-go
containers
to reduce contact

166,066

Meals served

1,800

Meals served per day

+250%

Food volume increase



720L

Hand sanitizer
distributed



45,000

Face masks
distributed



100%

Employee
retention



+5

Save On Meats
employees hired



FEEDING FIRST RESPONDERS

BRITISH COLUMBIA AMBULANCE SERVICE

When COVID hit we all grabbed our pots and pans for the 7pm “Thank You” to our first responders as the Pandemic locked us down, and while we also loved the routine of love and respect, we had another question, “Is anyone looking after the front line responders?”

We saw restaurants rallying for hospitals and hospital workers, but what about those on the front lines, on the streets and in our homes risking their lives to get us there?

We reached out to our partners at BC Women’s & Children’s Hospital and they connected us directly with Chief Officer Peter Kehler.

It turned out that they had indeed been forgotten about. That next week we started cooking for the five lower mainland firehouses and the ambulances would come by daily and pick up their dinner. Deeper friendships were formed as we are often serving the same people and it was a deep honor for us to show up for them.

At A Better Life, we believe that if the community is unwell, we’re all unwell and that certainly means those who have served the hardest during the pandemic





OUR PROGRAMMING

IN 2020, WE RAPIDLY ADAPTED TO SCALE & PROVIDE AN

ESSENTIAL SERVICES EMERGENCY COVID-19 RESPONSE



DAILY MEAL PROGRAM

The Daily Meal Program is the cornerstone of our work. By providing reliable, regularly scheduled and nutritious home-made favourites including fragrant butter chicken and rice, beef bolognese, pesto chicken penne along with a healthy variety of vegetarian options, we are helping break the cycle of poverty through food. We currently serve 1,000+ meals to residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside every day and have served approximately 2.8 million meals since ABLF launched in 2012.

Answering the call for this basic human need provides the foundation we need to heal our communities. When people are fed, they can take their medication, seek necessary supports including filling out government assistance forms and engage education and employment and generally, take better holistic care of themselves with the energy they receive from food and with the time and resources saved from searching it out.

Meals are made in the production kitchen by a diverse team committed to positively impacting their community. Everyday meals are carefully packaged and delivered by Shift, a local zero emissions electric bicycle delivery service directly to recipients throughout the DTES.

In 2020 we have served

474,712 MEALS



418,345

Meals served
to 30 hotels &
shelters



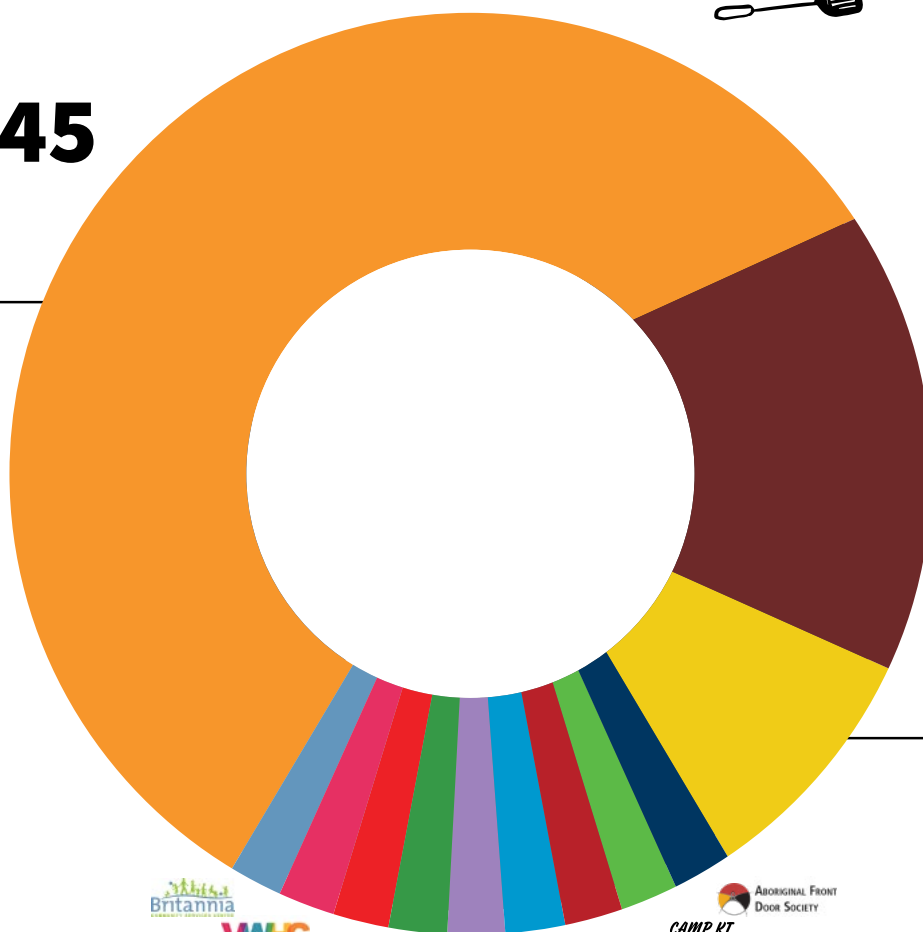
12,330

Meals served



4,560

Meals served



13,245

Meals served



“ We are so thankful to A Better Life Foundation for their partnership in helping provide nourishing and delicious meals to youth in our Street Life and Creative Life programs. Many of the kids in our Street Life program are street-involved and some are homeless. Obtaining a meal of any kind is an incredible help for them tangibly. And beyond the basic nourishment, it also feeds a deeper need—for belonging and a new direction. The youth build community and are able to connect to caring and consistent adult staff and volunteers who can provide mentorship and support they so desperately need. ”

KEELA KEEPING

Youth Unlimited
Director of Marketing & Communications





PLENTY OF PLATES & GREASY SPOON DINER

Pre Covid-19, our flagship Plenty of Plates and Greasy Spoon Diner events were designed to cultivate human connection, learning, sharing and empathy through in-person, face-to-face interactions. By making food in the kitchen together, serving residents of the DTES and enjoying family-style meals made by masterclass chefs, these initiatives inspired everyday advocates and provided the backbone of our fundraising efforts, rallying reliable donation dollars essential to the Daily Meal Program's operation.



PLENTY OF PLATES



GREASY SPOON DINER



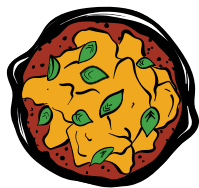
COVID-19 SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

POP & GSD EVENT PROGRAMMING AND THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT IT GENERATED PAUSED INDEFINITELY WITH THE ONSET OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN MARCH 2020. OUR FOCUS NECESSARILY PIVOTED AS WE RAPIDLY ADAPTED & RESPONDED TO THIS GLOBAL EMERGENCY HEAVILY IMPACTING US AT HOME IN THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

FOOD WASTE RECOVERY

With indefinitely postponed fundraising events and a growing gap in funding, we adapted to establish a new meaningful initiative. Partnering first with a single local grocery store and quickly expanding to add a second, our Food Waste Recovery program was developed to divert their perfectly edible yet unsellable food product from the landfill. By quickly establishing systems where perfectly delicious food is recovered from grocery stores, weighed, sorted and re-distributed to recipients throughout the Downtown Eastside, this initiative has seen incredible success in promoting food security and climate change action.

SINCE JUNE 2020, OUR IMPACT HAS BEEN AMPLIFIED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:



The equivalent of

**14,253
MEALS**

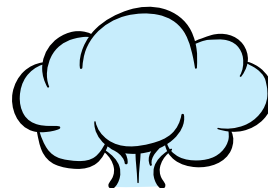
distributed to
individuals in need.



Saved

**8.3T
WASTE**

from being dumped into
the landfill.



Saved

**16.3T
CO₂**

from entering
the atmosphere.

FOOD ITEMS ARE DISTRIBUTED TO:

STREET ENTRENCHED YOUTH

INDIGENOUS GROUPS

SHELTERS

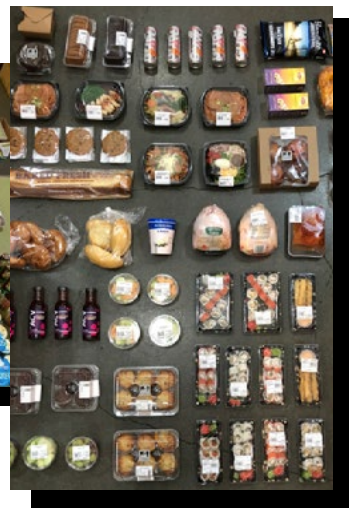
YOUNG MOTHERS

*SENIORS UNABLE TO
COOK FOR THEMSELVES*



In partnership with

foodmesh 



BARRIER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

To facilitate the high volume production of daily meals, events in the pre Covid-19 era and advocate through training, education and employment, we are closely aligned with longtime independently owned mainstay of the DTES: Save On Meats. Using both the commercial production kitchen to the front-of-house dining room, Save On Meats has been essential to the ABLF universe.

We recognize that there are more barriers to employment than physical and mental disabilities, or visible and invisible disabilities. We understand that history of addiction, poverty, literacy and criminal records can prevent folks from opportunities to gain employment and (re)define their lives. As a charity working alongside a for-profit business, we have the opportunity to steward inclusive hiring practices in the food service industry we are rooted in. Partnering with Open Door Group, the YMCA, Mission Possible Pacific Autism Family Network, and Jobs West Employment Services, we have helped onboard a Save On Meats workforce where approximately half of the employees identify as having traditional barriers to employment.



The food & beverage industry has a notoriously high staff turnover. In fact, 70%-80% high per year. By those same measures, “Barrierred Employees” turn over at a rate of just 30% per year. Beyond retention, we’ve benefitted from the stable, family-like corporate culture that only happens when there are years of staff continuity.

Beyond our partnerships with step-to-work organizations, we have joined forces with the Provincial Government of British Columbia’s President’s Group as a member of their advisory committee; we advocate for more accessible, inclusive entry-level workplaces and educating other businesses on the benefits of hiring individuals with traditional barriers to employment.



OUR PARTNERS

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE
SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER WITH
LIKE-MINDED ORGANIZATIONS**



HOUSING AGENCIES

We partner with local housing management orgs to support people with access to shelter through consistent and reliable daily meals, providing them a double platform of stability on which to build their lives.



Atira is a social enterprise and a socially responsible multi-service property management agency with more than a dozen programs and 16 non-market housing sites across the Lower Mainland. Atira Women's Resource Society funds transition housing and support services for women affected by violence and abuse. We provide 890 meals per day to residents of Atira managed buildings.



The Rainier Hotel Program is a women's only treatment program and supportive housing site for women in drug and alcohol recovery, working one-on-one with women to develop a program that meets their specific needs. We provide 30 meals a day to these women.



Lookout Society and Sakura So provides housing and a range of support services to adults with low or no income who have few, if any, housing or support options.

FOOD RECOVERY

We've incorporated food recovery into our programming to increase our impact and further our reach in our community with perfectly delicious food that would otherwise be headed for a landfill. Win/win!



FoodMesh provides apps, programs and services that helps businesses and charities safely donate and claim donations. By diverting waste from grocery stores that is edible, but sellable, we've recovered over 6 metric tonnes of food through FoodMesh.



Sole Foods transforms vacant and contaminated urban land into high-yielding farms which provide jobs, agricultural training, and inclusion. They are able to donate an average of 3 tonnes of surplus produce per season.

DAILY MEAL PROGRAM FACILITATORS



BSIBio doesn't just offer the most sustainable products on the market as an option, they have dedicated their entire product line to solutions that are kind to the planet. They are the source our containers that we package our meals in - fully compostable and individually packaged to promote social distancing.



Shift Delivery is a worker owned co-op located in East Vancouver that specializes in last mile delivery. They deliver our meals exclusively on zero emission, electric powered tricycles and design the logistics to ensure our meals get to the people we serve as hot and fresh as possible.

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

We support the employment and economic initiatives of neighbourhood organizations with meals for their vendor meetings and by providing contracts for their services at our commissary kitchen.



Megaphone produces a high-quality monthly magazine and annual calendar that low-income and homeless vendors sell on the streets of Vancouver and Victoria to earn income and build community. We provide monthly meals for their vendor meetings to encourage participation.



Binner's Project is a group of waste-pickers aided by support staff dedicated to improving their economic opportunities, and reducing the stigma they face as informal recyclable collectors. We employ the Binner's to help us sort the waste at our commissary kitchen which increases the waste we are able to divert to the landfill, and provide their members with food while they're on the job.

OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

We support the employment and economic initiatives of neighbourhood organizations with meals for their vendor meetings and by providing contracts for their services at our commissary kitchen.



DUDES Club provides space to facilitate a participant-led community for men's mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health and wellness through different events prioritizing supportive relationships, engagement in health care, and Indigenous world views.



Youth Unlimited is an organization that meets vulnerable youth in Greater Vancouver where they are at through their multiple community programs and forming genuine relationships without judgement.



Vancouver Women's Health Collective is a non- profit organization that helps self identified women foster health, wellness, and equity through feminist approaches to advocacy, shared knowledge, and low barrier programs and services.

CAMP KT

A communal hub and tent city for unhoused persons located in Strathcona Park.

THE ROAD AHEAD



With our successful programming around Waste Food, we're focused on scaling that work in 2021 and far beyond. Tasty and nutritious food has never been more in need with a growing number of individuals finding themselves food insecure due to COVID and job loss. We are seeking and engaging partners from all sectors to help us scale our daily meal program to meet this and the many needs of our communities. We are also standing in active solidarity and still believe that everyone regardless of colour, creed, or social status, deserves a better life.

If you can help, we'd love to hear from you.

[DROP US A LINE](#)