

# Our Home, Our Food, Our Resilience



Vancouver



A CITIZEN SCIENCE AND PHOTOVOICE FOOD ASSET PROJECT

# **Our Home, Our Food, Our Resilience:**

A CITIZEN SCIENCE  
AND PHOTOVOICE  
FOOD ASSET PROJECT



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This project was led by the Food Systems Lab, a research and innovation hub at Simon Fraser University that works on solutions for equitable collaboration to support sustainable and just food systems. We gratefully acknowledge that the Food Systems Lab at Simon Fraser University exists on the traditional, unceded, and ancestral Coast Salish Territory; the traditional territories of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. The region is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, and on this territory.

The Food Systems Lab team is deeply grateful to the citizen scientists who generously shared their photos and stories as part of this participatory research project. We would also like to thank our research assistants who participated in interviews, transcriptions and other aspects of the project: Maria Beskromnova; Florencia Comesana; Samantha Jung; Dominika Naliwajko; Dina Sadeghi; and Larry (Lok Hin) So. This project was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council New Frontiers in Research Fund.



Tammara Soma

## FOREWORD

On my journey and quest for food justice I have met many inspirational people along the way, but none have blessed me with so much joy and wisdom and sparked my passion for food research even more than the citizen scientists that have participated in this study. I can speak on behalf of the Food Systems Lab team when I say that we are truly humbled to have had the opportunity to work on this project together.

This journey started with the idea around unpacking what is meant by “food assets”, commonly referred to as the local food infrastructure that maintains food-secure communities and regions. These infrastructures may include grocery stores, community gardens, food programming centres and more. However, it is often unclear who gets to make decisions around what should be included and whether or not the current definition of food asset has taken into account the diversity of voices, lived experiences, and most importantly the colonial context



(in the case of Canada and City of Vancouver in particular).

To answer this question, we sought to leverage the voices and lived experience of a group of diverse residents. We embarked on a journey to identify the important places, knowledge, and meaning that shapes everyday practices for diverse community members who live, eat, work, and play in the City of Vancouver (unceded traditional territories of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations). The 10 citizen scientists generously shared their perspectives and insights through photovoice, a method of merging photography with interviews.



The photos and stories in this book are a reminder that there are layers of meanings embedded in food, some bringing wonderful memories of families and celebration, and others a reminder of hardship and obstacles. Food assets also go beyond infrastructure alone. As you will see throughout the pages, spirituality and culture are weaved throughout the photos.

The citizen scientists in this project bring an important perspective on key food barriers as well as strength in the City of Vancouver. They candidly share emotions, family and cultural ties, life-long learning, and hopes and aspirations for how we can stretch beyond our current industrialized food systems to seek a resilient, sustainable and just food system for all.

Dr. Tammara Soma MCIP RPP



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Leona  
Brown

A Gitksan mother of 3 children, of the Fireweed House and the Killerwhale Clan. As a Gitksan Refugee in the unceded territories of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-waututh, I have been taking on land based work and thrive as an ambassador for Indigenous People to Resurface our culture on the lands and waterways that we live in. I talk of Reconciliation and Decolonization and what that means. On my Healing Journey, it is vital for my children to know who we are and where we come from and how we live with the Lands and Waterways around us.

Part of that connection is with Salmon. I had never seen a fish go up stream until recently; it is important food for Indigenous people. We live on the Fraser River, the salmon have lifelong instincts of where their homes are to lay eggs. When fish were taken away, it affected Indigenous people, we lacked nutritious foods. If we look after our lands and waterways, the fish will populate and feed us again.



At Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House they have a fellow organization called Cedar Cottage Community Garden or Community Food that grows and gathers all these veggies, fruits and veggies, to sell to the local neighbourhood at a reasonable price, an affordable price. And here it is showing a picture of some food that I bought that cost roughly \$7 so it's a lot more than what I would get in a store for \$7. It's an important food source for low-income people and helps food security. It's also a happy space to be because it's in the Neighbourhood House and where we know the workers there so it's always good to go in and they check on me, you know, "what's going on" and they're always happy to see us. It's a good space.








This space actually made me happy, it was a tabling event where I'm showcasing the plants that I've harvested, that our group had harvested, and were showing them off and were also knowledge sharing with anybody who came to the table who wanted to know more about it. This event was a community event at the Aboriginal Friendship Centre. The theme was around homelessness, but they had many tables around medicine, they had tax tables, they had a table in the front where they were giving free haircuts, and a massage table. It was awesome to see... and then they provided lunch.








 This is cultural identity, Indigenous knowledge handed down and this is how we would grow plants. We use this space beside Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House to grow Calendula. Calendula is a medicine that is used for many things, you can eat it, you can drink it as a tea, you can put it in a salve. So, we grew it to make a salve to help people with eczema and psoriasis. We made a huge patch there, so we go there about every couple of weeks and pick the blossoms. So, these are my kids coming with me harvesting the plant. They know what it's for and they know how to pick it.



 I imagine, coming from an Indigenous point view as an Indigenous person, that we ate a lot of these mushrooms, but we just don't know a whole lot about them anymore. I think there is an underground following, an elite group, that go out and harvest. We need to be able to identify these mushrooms too. This one is growing right in the middle of the city beside the school and my kids are tempted to like touch and taste... but more education needs to be put up around it. I think it should be explored too as Indigenous people; it would be good to re-learn about this because it's another food source. We can use it not only to eat locally as part of addressing climate change and environmental protection but to address food security.







Surindra  
Sugrim

Surindra was born in Guyana, South America and immigrated to Vancouver at the age of three. He has always had a passion for food and issues surrounding social justice and community development. After graduating, he initially planned to pursue a career in law enforcement. However, after graduating, he spent a decade working in social services, security, and sales industries. At one point, he operated a restaurant, and realized that he could find true passion in his love of food coupled with a strong sense of social justice. This has led to a career in food security. He currently works with a Vancouver based tech social enterprise aimed at addressing food waste at the corporate donor level.



I'm from Guyana, South America. In the last 200 years they [Indians] have migrated to different parts of the world. So, my family ended up in Guyana. This particular photo is of an item called dhal puri. Dhal puri is something that is very sought after, however not well known; it is a little time consuming and recipes are disappearing. Today you would have the equivalent of this dish, but it would be stuffed with potatoes. You would not have had potatoes in India 500 years ago. You would have had lentils. So, that's actually my mom making it. I wouldn't like to see something like this die down as a dish. It's kind of neat to know when you're eating something your ancestors would have eaten hundreds of years ago.







Dahl puri is also something that has nutritious value. When you speak of eating less meat, this is another way to sneak protein into your diet, and it can be grown in Canada. It's also bringing that ancient tradition into a new culture. I used to run a restaurant, I had this [dhal puri], the lentil roti and the potato roti available. For every 10 customers who came through the door – maybe one of them would know dhal puri and would say “oh my god! You have that?!” and “I can get it with chicken curry?! Wow so in Vancouver I’m getting this?!”. Normally you would have to go back to India or Guyana or New York where there are big Indian subpopulations. My mother is one of the few people that can still make this in our Caribbean culture, my mom has a reputation.



I don't think you would have seen so many banana plants 20 years ago in Vancouver as you do now. The reason I decided to put this image in is because I was having a debate with someone this week about globalism. Does it make better sense to say, you know what, let's not grow these things and let's ship them from Jamaica or Hawaii. Or is it a step in the right direction to produce bananas here. You can grow them in zone 9, so it could be possible to grow them in Vancouver. If they cannot fully fruit because it's too cold here, what if you can genetically modify this plant to make it a little more weather hardy. This brings out the whole ethics debate around genetically modified foods. Bananas are symbolic as part of a pro-globalization versus anti-globalization debate.





My family came here as refugees, we're immigrants from South America [Caribbean]. We have always maintained that, if it weren't for these ethnic grocery markets, I don't know what we would have done in terms of being able to afford fresh produce. So, I'd say markets like these do something for food security then they are given credit. The reason why these stores are able to thrive is because they are buying second grade produce and they are offering it at a cheaper price. The end result for consumers is the ability to purchase a lot more food with less, without really compromising quality. People are lining up to shop here. We need to see more small independent food businesses like this one.



I can honestly say for the years that I've visited, a Gurdwara is not just a place of worship. The community kitchen is not just a place for Sikhs. It's somewhere that everyone is welcome. So, you walk in there as a homeless person, or as a Caucasian person – I've never seen anyone to be made feel uncomfortable. I was asked my friends about the concept behind the Gurdwara and it's the idea that everyone is equal, everybody eats together. If you go into the lineup, nobody's going to question, "are you a member of this church? Are you part of this religion?". It's very open and accepting and I think that's an amazing feat along with the fact that they can always have a meal ready 7 days a week, 24 hours.







## Hsu Meilang

Youngest of seven children born to a busy shopkeeper family, Hsu Meilang was sent in her pre-school years to be raised by her two Buddhist nun Aunties in a rural Taiwan abbey with its own cottage garden and vegan kitchen.

She went on to graduate from Fu-Jen University in Fine Arts and Philosophy. After university, she eloped with a foreign journalist and, for three decades the couple lived in a dozen countries within North America, Europe and – mostly – Asia and reported from many more. With their three children grown, they retreated to northern California for a decade of farming and foraging on a one acre, semi-self-sufficient mountaintop homestead in a national forest.

Five years ago she moved to Vancouver to nurture her extended family. She lives in Strathcona, on the edge of Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside.



Every time I go out into the woods, into the beach, to the park, it kind of opens my heart. I'm having a kind of bath you know? It's bathing. Emotionally bathing. Abstract bathing, but it's there. So, when I come back, I feel really charged, fresh. Especially when I pick the food from that. It's just, kind of, brings the context that the mother nature is giving me that.

I feel this is very simple knowledge... when you are foraging, your instincts come in also. And you learn from nature. Nature is telling you things all the time if you open up. Listen to them. And you learn something from everybody also.





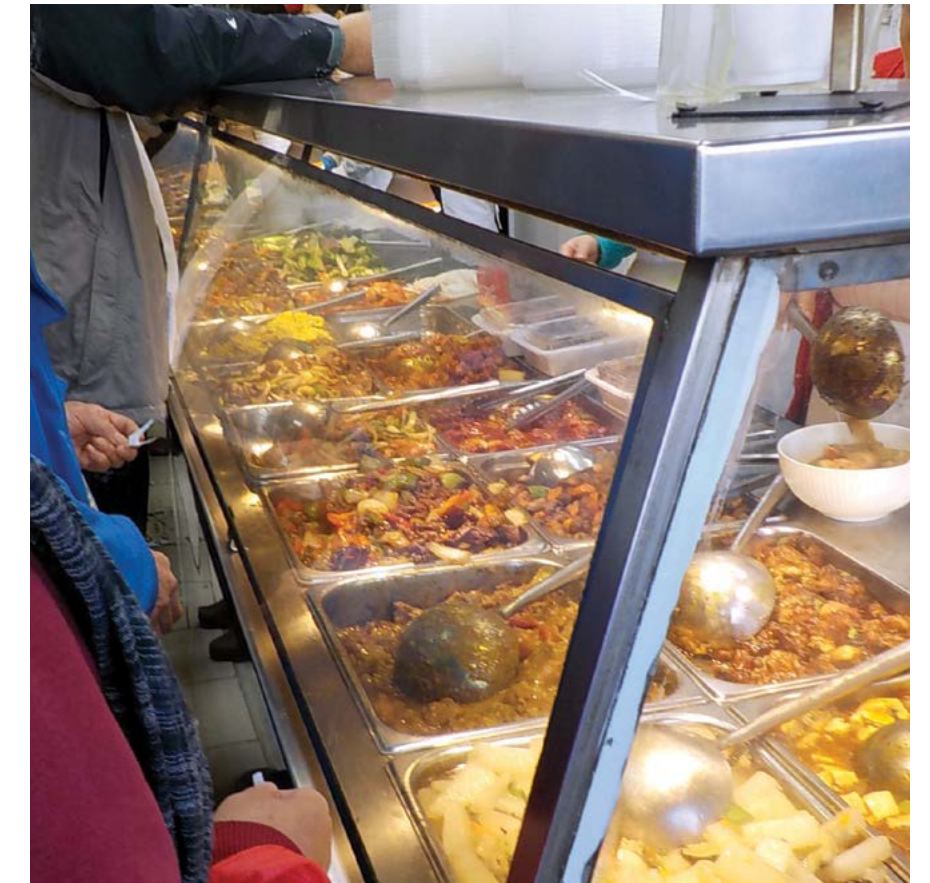


So this is my favourite, Sunrise Market. Their food is always very cheap. My spirit just loves that kind of affordable, plenty.

You know, when you go to supermarket, nobody talks to you. Those people [referring to people at Sunrise Market], they all talk to me. They all tell me, "Oh, you can use this to do that." And you know the Chinese have this wisdom about cooling and heating?

I said, "oh, this vegetable is cooling. I cannot have it." She said, "just add some ginger." Ah! Why didn't I think that way? Because the balance...

You're tapping into them. Most people don't talk to you, but if you tap into them, they all talk. And that's what I mean about this community gathering. They're all sources of wisdom, and if you tap into it, they will open up.



People who have a little bit of money but have no kitchen of their own because they all stay in single room occupancy housing. They come here for cheap food. And you know, one plate costs you seven dollars, but you got rice, you got nutrition, you got vegetables. It's a sensible resource for people who live in the city and have no way to cook for themselves, you know, because a lot of apartment no cooking allowed. And this is a great solution, and I have a problem with Chinatown keeping on developing into a yuppie society.





So, even in the winter you still have tomatoes. And I preserve the dandelions. And the mulberry leaves. Those are all for medicinal function. And so, even in the winter, you can still have your summer.



On this seashore you would see a lot of seaweed, and all variety of seaweed, and sea vegetables. And because it's a preserve area, so you don't see garbage. You still have the boat going to Vancouver Island, past the channel, but on the whole, the reason I love it so much is people cannot pollute this place. Here, it's protected. And I wish we could do that to all our seashores! Then we would feel safer about our environment and our intake from the water. I won't harvest those sea vegetables in a polluted area.







Diana  
Jacobson

My name is Diana Jacobson, I'm in my 50's and I have a Swedish and an Indigenous background. I'm originally from Thunder Bay Ontario and I have one sister and I come from a large family. I love to read, write poetry, draw and paint. I love to go for walks and once in a while go to the movies. My interest in the Photo voice project was wonderful and I loved every minute of it. My part was to take photos and submit them and tell about my food experience with the photos.

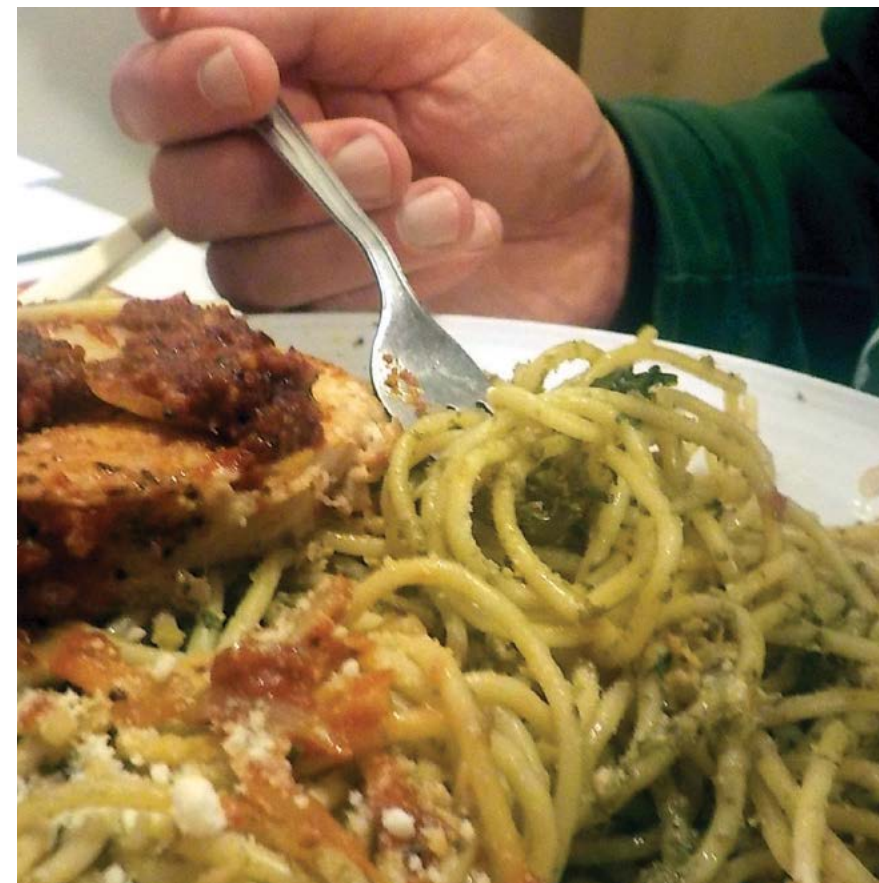
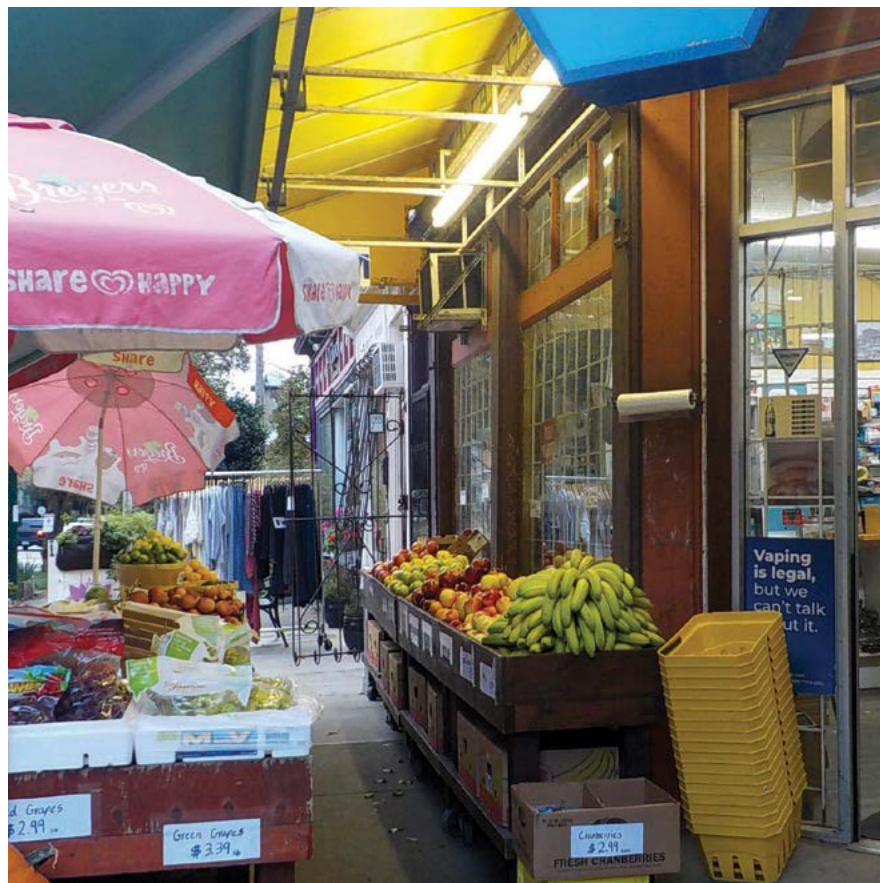


I've been to the Food Bank a few times on my own, there's just not enough, you know, to last a whole week. So, if there were more fruits and vegetables then maybe people would eat a little healthier instead of boxes of Kraft dinner and stuff like that.





It feels like having [this store] in my neighbourhood means more people in my neighbourhood have access to fruits and vegetables. Like the West End is pretty expensive... a lot of my neighbours don't have money, enough money. So, I think having that in my neighbourhood means more people in my neighbourhood can have access to fruits and vegetables.



What you see on that photo, hopefully everyone can have that kind of meal. Something green, something protein and all that mixed together and just hopefully one day everyone can have that. Like have a healthy meal every single day and hopefully these photos will help bring that together. It's kind of heartwarming for me [because] seeing a nice plate of food kind of brings me back to the memories where I didn't have food and it kinda brings a little bit of heartbreak because I know I didn't have that and seeing that just kind of makes me feel... sort of blessed.





Seeing that plate of food kind of reminds me of my childhood and not having enough to eat. And the hope and aspiration is hopefully people will have enough to eat.



We need to open our eyes a bit more and help people who are in need. From the cart you kind of know the person's not only homeless but he also doesn't get enough to eat so I kind of put two and two together. I'm hoping this photo will actually get action to. Help people in need. The dream for me is hopefully everyone will have a place to live. Also, if they have a place to live, they'll have access to food, you know, so kind of those together.





Kara  
Keam

Kara moved to Vancouver in 1993 to the Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood and although she has moved away for periods of time like a homing pigeon she always finds her way back to the neighbourhood. Kara's career has been walking alongside people at times of transition in their lives as an employment counsellor, outreach worker and program facilitator. She enjoys good quality food, puttering in the garden, taking pictures of her neighbourhood (especially flowers) and dancing to motown in the kitchen while cooking. Kara's Grandmother taught her the value of hard work, cooking with love and the joy of caring for others.



These are crocks made in Medicine Hat, Alberta not too far from where I grew up. It was common to see these in homes on the kitchen counter full of pickles, sauerkraut, and sometimes fish. My Grandmothers generation preserved a lot of food by canning, brining, drying and freezing it was a way of life prior to the 1970's when processed, packaged food became widely available. Homemade food was shared with friends and neighbours.

I have seen a resurgence of learning how to preserve food and the joy of culinary arts. Unfortunately, in my lifetime I have also seen the explosion of food banks from a stop gap measure to assist someone during a crisis to a full-blown main food supplier to 1.1 million Canadians. We need to find a way back to ensuring everyone can experience food security.





This is a picture of the East End Food Co-op on Commercial Drive, but picture is about the individual in the background sitting on the sidewalk.

I moved to Vancouver in 1993 and worked as a receptionist raising a daughter on one income. When I would go to buy groceries, I would see this individual and be annoyed that they were asking for money from people who were struggling to buy groceries. One day in exasperation I said “why are you here and not somewhere where people have money to give you”. He said “you know, I’ve tried other locations but people in East Vancouver treat me like a person and they are generous compared to other places.” That, was the end of that discussion, but an awareness that the spirit of how you give can be as powerful as how much you give.




These are mason bee homes which I see spreading all over the city. People are planting gardens that specifically attract bees and there is a greater understanding that our future survival is tied to theirs. Hives for Humanity has done an incredible job educating and taking beehives into the community on roof tops and in parks. It is really a powerful urban movement to see bees getting real estate.








 This beautiful mural faces the green belt between, Commercial Drive and Britannia Community Centre. The building is now a Choices grocery store, but it was a grocery store / restaurant called Circling Dawn that served all kinds of organic vegetarian & vegan food in the early 90's. My friends and I who were all young mom's with kids in tow would meet there for chai tea and smoothies at the "Dawn". Mojave was the lady who ran the store and prepared wonderful food. She was a fountain of information on cooking, nutrition, seed saving, ecology, and much more. When I see that mural, I remember all the joy spent laughing, talking, and learning at the Dawn. Mojave was a seed saver, but she also planted many seeds of food and environmental activism in us as young women.



 This is my daughter's hands while we were out having Pho together. It is these simple pleasures of sitting down, having a meal, a cup of tea that bring joy in my life. Although my grandmother passed away many years ago I will always remember her hands wrapped around a mug, kneading dough, holding a baby. I hope that one day when I am no longer here my daughter will find comfort in remembering me while having a cup of tea.







## Elwood Price

In March on this sign on a highway going to the hospital in Fort Williams during a blizzard, I was born. A pack of wolves was chasing a bull moose in a hunt.... it came charging out of the woods and rolled our dad's brand new chevy. It, us and the Chevy was down a gully, where we stayed for a week before we were found. Lucky mom and dad always had a lot of pickled canned items especially during the winter just in case.

This city is called Thunder Bay in northern Ontario. They said I was born with a gift, I believe it is to be able to get systemness in trying times. I've never been hungry in my 63 years of life... what a good gift.

Alright, let that sink in for a bit...



This area is very nice even though it's at Main and Hastings. You wouldn't know that it was like that... If you don't want to sit inside the restaurant or there is no seating, you can always just go there.







Sometimes you have to wait a while to get a good meal, especially like certain times, like Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Years. [The photo] shows all the people that don't have any place to go for Thanksgiving dinner. They're really just there for the meal, they're there so they can spend Thanksgiving dinner with other people.

There's not as many people at the lunch because there's people who are working and doing other things right. So, this is the lunch on Tuesday, last Tuesday, and that's the day after Thanksgiving. It was a very good meal with seafood chowder and garlic toast and then a dessert. And a water and juice.







It's coming up to lunch time at 12 o'clock the First United across the street serves 300 people lunch, only lunch, they only serve lunch and that's it. They serve it within 15 minutes so you gotta be there right at noon, sometimes it's done in 10 minutes, however long it takes, is how long it is. They serve 300 meals, sometimes in 7 minutes, 7 minutes!



This is the Three Sisters, that used to be called the Green Door... It is the fact that the community does support and help when a need occurs, but it takes a lot of volunteers, you know, it takes a lot to cook like 400 meals, right. It really does. And to get all the food and everything. I say, it probably takes 15 nuns...







## Rachel Cheang

Born and raised in Singapore, Rachel Cheang is a fourth-year undergraduate student at UBC. She organizes for climate justice and divestment with Climate Justice UBC and facilitates justice and equity-centered workshops with Check Your Head and CityHive. Rachel believes in the power of collective action in mitigating climate change and strives towards building networks of care and support within justice movements. She was drawn to this project because of the way it centers lived experiences, stories and care in its conception, and prompts us to honor our food assets within and beyond our neighbourhoods in Metro Vancouver.



This photo was taken at Hastings Elementary School where I'm currently volunteering with an organization called Growing Chefs. It's a 7 week program and it's 3 of us volunteers who follow a curriculum to teach food literacy to a class of grade 5 students. This is a photo of a class we had on pickling. We were teaching the children how to preserve their foods at their most nutritious point. And it was really fun because some students really like pickles, and some didn't too much. It's really interesting to see how easy it is to pickle your own food.





This photo was taken during Halloween... So they had all these chocolates mixed in. With that, we introduced the new food policy and explained to them what a balanced meal looks like. We had very orangey-themed foods [for Halloween]. And we taught them how to put together a healthy snack that has something sweet, a vegetable, a grain, and some proteins... The students just love doing things with their hands and I think a big part of it is giving them ownership... it helps them grow up with the mindset that they have control over their health. It's also about getting them think about where their food is coming from... It's also a good reminder that food is something so common that ties us all together.



This grocer is in Chinatown. It really reminds me of home because back home in Singapore we often have family meals at home and my mom and I would visit a wet market... I would watch my mom manoeuvre her way around the wet market; it's very narrow but it feels very familiar and very communal. And I really miss that, so part of me reclaiming my identity and my culture brings me back to places like these in Chinatown. Whenever I see the aunties and popos there, they always say good morning to me in Cantonese and places like these reminds me of the language and the foods that I ate growing up that nourished me.







As a person of colour, I find that these physical spaces are a way for racialized communities to reclaim their status and identity. When I go in and I see the auntie who works there, and the Chinese grandmothers [shopping] it brings me back to my family. Chinatown its very closely located to the downtown east side and these small grocery stores are keeping the price point low for other communities. In my view, it's not just seeing them as commercial spaces but also heritage spaces. I think we have a very specific way of thinking about 'what is heritage' and 'what is worth preserving', and often these shops are left out. I want to see the city take into account the affordability and heritage value of these food assets.



So, this is Phnom Penh, I had dinner with a friend that evening. And this dish I think they call it "flat, yellow, egg noodles" with chicken wings. When I ordered this dish, it reminded me of a dish back home called 'Mee Pok'. When I first came to Vancouver I would go around finding comfort food from home. I would go to these restaurants that serve Southeast Asian food, but it never quite tasted the same. But when I ate here, it actually really reminded me of that exact dish from home and I was surprised. I love Phnom Penh because it definitely feels like a very homely place... they have established themselves as being associated with the taste of these two dishes that you can't find it anywhere else.







## Harrison Pratt

Harrison Pratt was born and raised in South-East Vancouver, on the unceded lands of the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh) and Tsleil-Waututh (Səlilwətaɬ) Peoples. He graduated with a BA in philosophy and political science at UBC in 2020 and was a recipient of the BC tuition waiver program for former youth in care. Through his involvement as a co-researcher in the Relationships Matter Youth 'Aging Out' of Care participatory action research project, he was encouraged by the lead researcher to participate in the Our Home Our Food Our Resilience photovoice project. His commitment to emancipatory methodologies has challenged the research process.

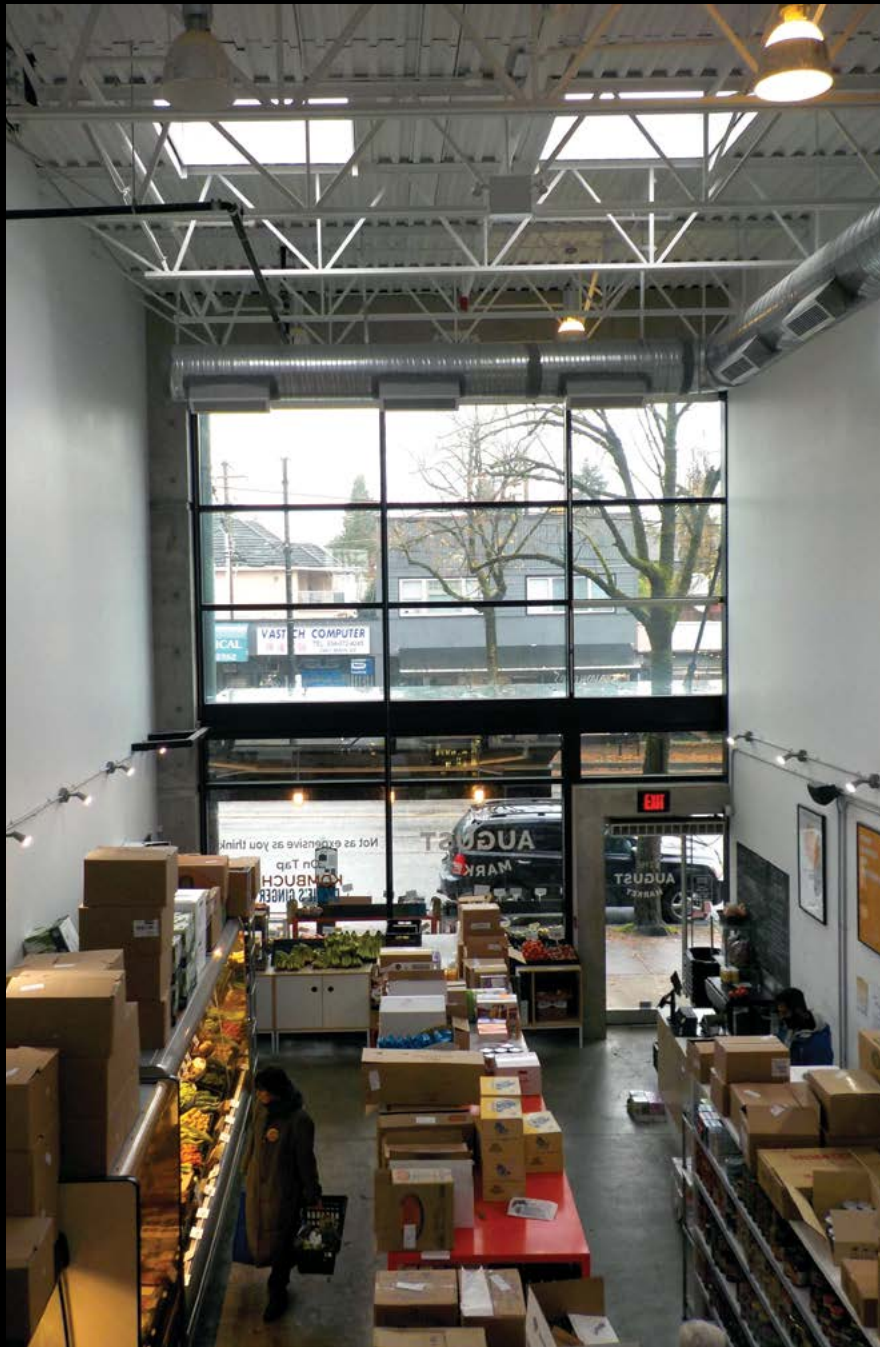


I think the stove is a gathering place. It can sustain an individual, but it also can sustain a household. And it can also sustain a community. Where are the community kitchens?





From my understanding, [the shop owner is] not really interested in building a grocery empire. I think he's just interested in selling cheap affordable food and kind of building community that way... When the wholesalers are trying to get rid of food that they can't sell, food that isn't marketable, food that isn't popular for whatever reason, and it gets marked down very heavily... the food that he brings in... even though it's very much very cheap, the quality is very high as well.



Food is not just about humans, it's about all beings. So I think food systems have to re-center all life forms because we're all interconnected and I think part of the problem with the dominant food system is that it is very much industry-centered and driven. Who really has a say with industries anyways?





There's a lot of fig trees in Vancouver... But I also took this photo because there was a point in my life where I was homeless and sometimes I walked around the neighbourhoods and gleaned from fruit trees... Although there's a lot of trees in the city, I think that people should respect taking only what they need. I think that principle is missing from the system that actually incentivizes taking what you don't need. If people are going to take things, people should consider taking what they need since other people and animals eat these foods too, and need to survive. And our lives are better when we have the diversity of life around us.



I think there's a strong connection between food and autonomy. The more skill sets you get, if you practice these things to survive, and develop new skill sets - finding people who think like you and creating your networks of mutual aid - the more sophisticated you can become over time and the more you can become a teacher as you constantly engage in the learning process.







## Manjit Thandi

I immigrated to Canada in 1967 with Biji (mom) and three siblings to join Pitaji (dad), after seven years. It was truly a daunting, frustrating and an overwhelming journey. Experiencing cultural shock, learning English and maintaining Punjabi values, presented a set of new challenges. Fortunately, motivation and encouragement from teachers and parents enabled me to obtain B.Ed. (UBC) and Diploma in Educational Psychology (UC). Growing up in a rural village has always sparked my interest in researching the origin, distribution and accessibility of food. Harvesting, sharing and celebrating the bounties of nature is a major component of the annual Visakhi Festival, around the world. I enjoyed participating in all phases of this exciting project.



I mostly buy fruits and vegetables from here and the Persian store. Due to some cultural similarities, I feel closeness and connected. However I am Punjabi, from the Punjab province underneath Kashmir in the northern part of India. My family background is farming, therefore, the sight of ethnic food, gardening, agriculture and dairy farming remind me of my childhood back home.





Food is very important part of our lives as well as socializing. For example, the picture here shows how these elegant looking women are sitting and enjoying over a cup of tea. Two of them are sisters, and one came from India to visit. This type of gathering is significant for me, since I get first-hand information about the village life. A lot of sharing is happening with three generations living together...there is a grandchild in the background. This is very interesting in our culture and we value it. She brought these yummy treats from India... and is letting others taste the flavor of their homeland goodies. When I came to Canada we could not find certain items in the stores and we used to miss that. Nowadays, there's more stuff available... for me it means having access to different varieties of food.



These are the seeds I am preserving for next year. I have a variety of hot peppers, flax seeds, lentils, and poppy seeds... they're very special because I grew them in my garden, It gives me lots of satisfaction and I feel happy... I used my own hands, and it's like we rose from earth and we are going to end up and become part of earth, When I work in the garden – it is almost as if my ego diminishes, I become humble and connected. It is such a powerful and wonderful feeling and plus when you see the growth... next day the plant is slightly bigger. It's a reminder that we are part of nature and have a life cycle just as other creations... also growing stuff in my garden is actually helping with food production.





This turmeric is from India. I brought it from my husband's aunt from our village. These are chia and sesame seeds, cinnamon, red pepper, and masala. I grow my own coriander seeds from cilantro to make masala. I buy black chickpea flour... it is very rich in protein and gluten free. I'm preparing a very traditional stuffed bread called paratha. By combining these ingredients and chopped up vegetables, the finished dish becomes highly nutritious, filling and satisfying compared to just being all starchy. Whenever I make it I wish my kids would learn... I feel that eventually our traditional food is going to disappear. We're all becoming one huge mass like a melting pot rather than preserving our own individual identities and specialty foods.



This is on Commercial Drive and the event's name is "Sharing Food, Sharing Culture". The newcomer women shared their stories of identity and belonging through food... I was very fortunate to get access to this community food event. There were three different tables set up for Filipino, Venezuela, and the Middle East. They were preparing their dishes and we had a chance to participate and help out. It was interesting that everything was green on this table, green plantain and green chutney. "Flavours of Hope" actually sells these pre-prepared food packages. These women are also part of it, they are a group and do their demonstrations at various locations. Hopefully, in my cooking, I can incorporate some ideas... I ended up making a couple of friends there. I felt a sense of community and pride in these women as they were sharing their knowledge and specific skills.

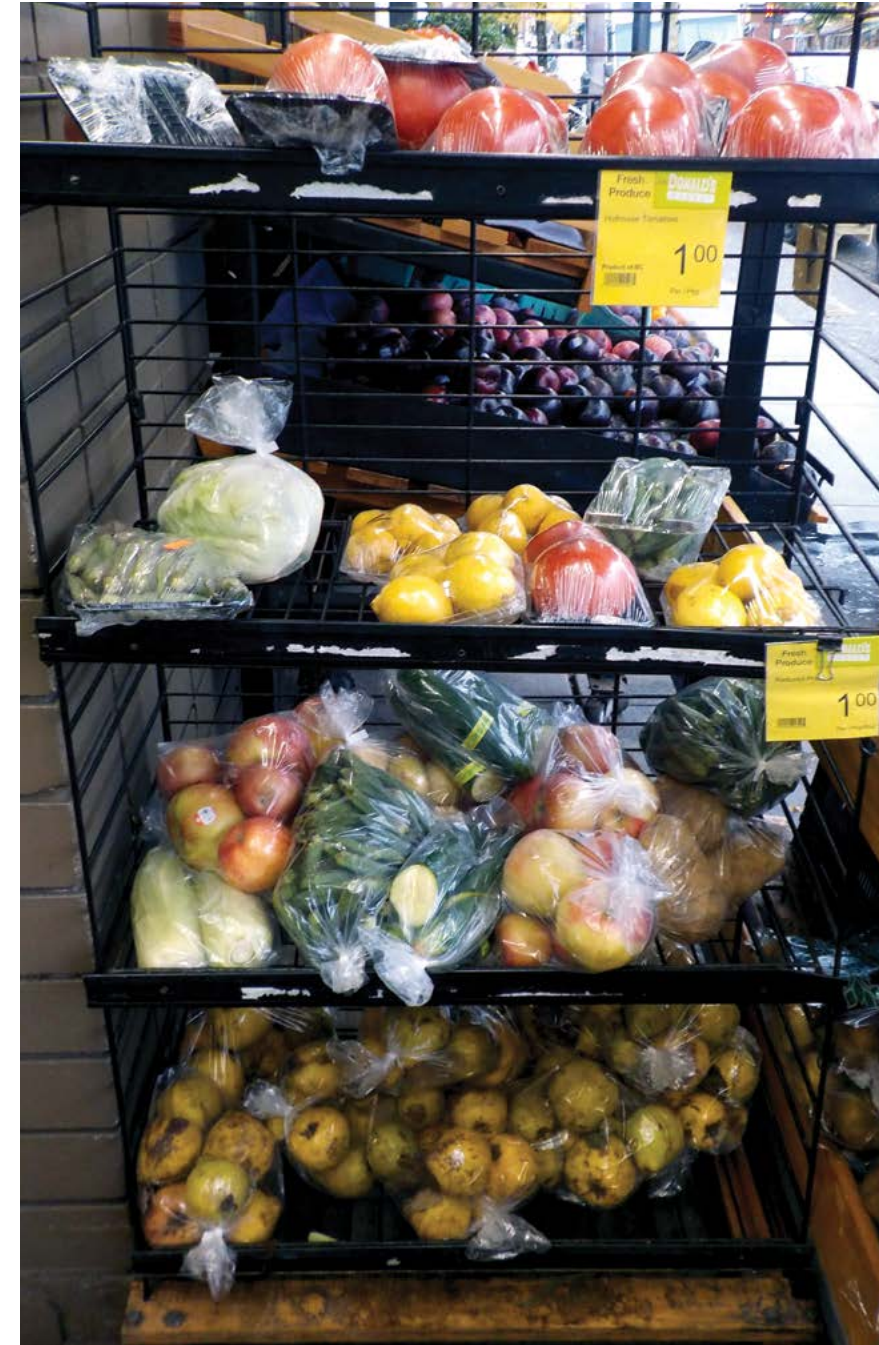






## Sky Dawn

Sky Dawn is a neuro-diverse agender person of European and Indigenous ancestry, who has been living on the traditional unceded lands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples for the past 10 years after moving from Canmore, on Treaty 7 territory in the Rocky Mountains. Sky is a low-income artist who focuses on trying to use as much second hand or found materials for their practices, which largely revolve around weaving, embroidery or beading. They are passionate about food and eating.



I have a love hate relationship with the Donald's Grocery discount shelf. There is amazing variety of stuff slightly too old to sell in the regular produce aisle, there are apples and okra, and I ended up getting some corn, lots of tomatoes and peppers. I will see something and will get inspired. The downside is that there is a lot of plastic waste unfortunately created through this struggle for cheap food but it's also amazing; I could make a great stew for under 5\$







There's herbs, teas, and a lot of medicinal herbs at Quidditas on Commercial Drive. I just really like this place because it sells in bulk. I have a lot of chronic pain so there's certain herbs I will use and infuse with oil and then make salves from them. I'll like rub on my wrists when they start to hurt. And I do like this place because... people there are often happy to chat about things, 'oh you know, I'm feeling under the weather what can you recommend?' and 'Oh, have you tried elderberry tea? Have you tried like cleaver tea?' And then you'll go home with your little bag of herbs, and feel good after drinking some nice warm tea.



The knife was made by my cousin and uncle out of recycled metal and my aunt hunted the moose whose antler became the handle. They live in Northern Saskatchewan. The closest city is four hours away from them and the closest town is half an hour. So, they really have to work really hard to have their food – my aunt has become a master of fermenting and preserving food.

I was really proud to show off the knife and use it to harvest. Lavender I can use for tea as well as culinary and like medicinal – it's great to have when you're resting at night or for relaxation. So, for me I just felt like really happy that they made me this knife.







This is a photo of a local grocery store where they leave the dumpster open and leave unsellable food in boxes beside it. The workers don't seem judgmental when people are going through them unlike some other stores. Inside they sell a lot of produce that is close to expiring for very cheap, so it's nice to see food not going to waste, even at the end of its shelf life.



Sometimes you're really busy and you need to get some food that just feels good to eat. And [this restaurant] is a family owned business. And it's all really good quality vegetarian Chinese food... I hope these family restaurants are able to thrive and don't have to worry about the rent going up so much that they can't keep going or that they have to cut quality.







“The thing is, it’s one, you know? Everything in the end connects into one. There’s no compartment. It’s all connected. It should be. Everybody’s life should be that way. That’s how we should meditate. So, it’s not only about food I’m talking about.”

– *Hsu Meilang*





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