

RIGHT
TO
FOOD
ZINE

Winter 2020
Issue 23



the
COLOURING
BOOK
edition!



mural by
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photo credit
AVA CALDWELL



Interested in
contributing ideas,
articles, poems,
stories, artwork or
photos to Right to
Food Zine?

As a community partner, we are
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and what you feel is important. Find
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We are our own media.

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Right to Food Zine

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HEALING THE EARTH

BY LUKE BARNESMOORE

An Elder told me that the healing of Indigenous peoples would foment healing of the world.

Indeed it will, and we are working to bring the prophecy to fruition.

To bring the healing that has begun in Indigenous communities to all of humanity.

In origin we are all Indigenous peoples, no matter how long our ancestors have been subsumed by the MegaMachine. No matter how long we have forgotten what we are.

The healing of Indigenous peoples can only foment healing of the world if those of us who stand upon the borders between worlds act as a conduit for that healing to flow out through the rest of humanity.

We wanderers must act as the rivers through which the rain that falls on the tallest mountains flows down to the sea.

The process is nonlinear—healing of Indigenous people and healing of the world must walk together along the good road(s).

If the integrity of the web rises from each and every point of relationship between the strands, then we must heal all of the frayed relationships at once if the web is to regain its integrity.

I understand what I must do now.

I know that I must bring the medicine to the people.

I am forever grateful for the many great teachers I have had through the years,

for those who have taught me about the medicine.

I understand what I must do now.

I know that I must bring the medicine to the people.

Or, perhaps, that I must help the people to the medicine—it's all around us if we know where to look.

All the earth/spirit people.

We are One, nəc'a?mat ct.

Garden Sanctuary in DTES

writing & photography by AVA CALDWELL
illustrated by SABRINA RAWLINS

100 EAST HASTINGS
REDEVELOPMENT

Nestled in the heart of darkness, amongst the dead rats and broken syringes, there is an urban warrior who fights daily to maintain an incredible flower and plant oasis.



Her name is Theresa Gray. Her family is Tsimshian from Lax Kw'aams territory near the BC Alaska border, but she has lived in DTES for the past 30 years. Theresa has been through so many negative experiences such as the cultural genocide of Indigenous families and women language, through oppression, colonialism. Theresa has survived to become a support to build an Indigenous healing community. I have seen her attending every community meeting about homelessness, equality, caring for people, for green spaces, for help with homelessness and addiction;

I ONCE SAW HER 15
MINUTES AFTER SHE
HELPED TO NAXALONE A
DEAD MAN & SAVE A LIFE.

The garden is called both the Hastings Folk Garden and the East Hastings Memorial Garden. It is tended with love and gratitude by a team of dedicated volunteers with the [Portland Hotel Society](#), at 58 West Hastings. [Hives for Humanity](#) sponsors honey-making and bee-keeping. The garden is open on Wednesday each week.



Theresa has been caring for this garden for 2 years. It has pathways and alcoves where blooms of every hue can be found. It has willow trees, and iridescent purple spears of Butterfly Bush, huge double decker crowns of deep red bee balm that tower over you; the intoxicating scent invites you to sit down take a load off your feet, and just relax. Meditate. Enjoy the colours, the wildlife and breathe in the heady essence of summer. The garden has woolly grey sage, wondrously fragrant and yummy, so wonderful with a roasted turkey or tofu melange. It has a wild cherry tree, and I can only imagine the ravens dive-bombing each other as they compete for the delicious fruit.

IT HAS PEACE AND
TRANQUILITY TO SHARE.

Right now the garden needs soil and concrete supports and repairs. It needs daily help to make it into a gentle Learning and Healing Centre. The garden is being maintained by the work of about 8 volunteers. Right now she hopes that it doesn't become a "Killing Field" of overdose. If you'd like to get involved, please call the Portland Housing Society. You can call 604-683-0073.



There are some crucial City Hall meetings to plan future redevelopment of the entire 100 East Hastings Block. The city now owns both the "Balmoral Hotel" and "Regency Hotel" properties and will be submitting a concrete proposal for development in the next two years. It's critical to include the East Hastings Garden and make it an inviting place for people to admire the beauty of nature, hear a little street music, and be glad that you can feel either the sun or the rain on your face.

To get involved call Fiona York, [CCAP](#) office at Carnegie 604-665-2105 or FIONA@CARNEGIEACTION.ORG

Come and enjoy the oasis of nature tucked into DTES. Visit the East Hastings Garden. Please think about getting involved with Theresa and the other wonderful volunteers who try to keep it watered and healthy!

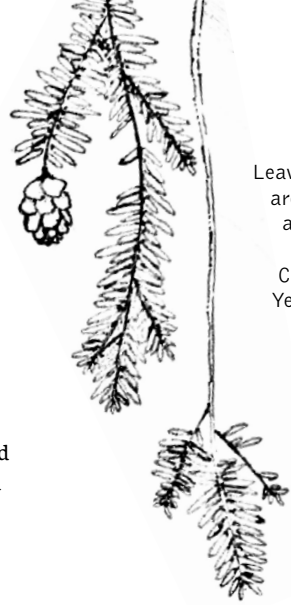


ROOTED IN PLACE: a local plant colouring page

written & illustrated by KAYLIE HIGGS

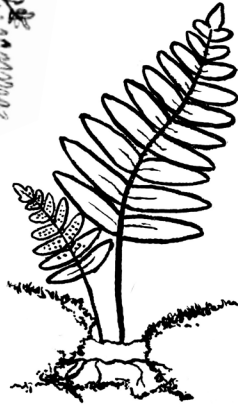
Around the region currently called Vancouver, there are hundreds of species of plants. Many of these beings can be food or medicine and have long standing relationships with Indigenous peoples and nations in these regions. Throughout processes of colonialism and capitalism, these plants have continued to flourish and grow throughout the cityscape and around it. The pictures here are representations of a few of these native, and introduced (as noted), local plants to colour and get to know—enjoy!

Please note that this is not a comprehensive piece; please make sure you have a relationship with a plant and the land where it is, and can comfortably identify it, before using it for food or medicine. This is especially important as some plants can be toxic, have dangerous look-alikes, are used only by specific people or nations in a region, or can be harmed by uninformed harvesting practices.



WESTERN HEMLOCK

Leaves and new shoots are high in vitamin C and can be eaten or made into tea. CAUTION: Western Yew looks somewhat alike and is toxic.



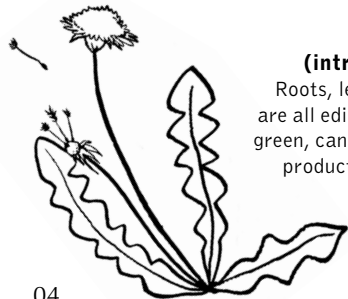
LICORICE FERN

Rhizome (root) can be chewed on or used in tea for flavour, as a sweetener, or as medicine for sore throats.



RED ELDERBERRY

CAUTION: contains toxins (cyanide) in the leaves, stems, and berries that can make one sick! Berries can be consumed after cooking or flowers can be used in tea.



DANDELION (introduced species)

Roots, leaves, and flowers are all edible and as a bitter green, can help with mucous production and digestion.



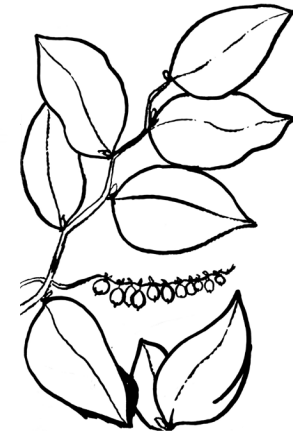
OREGON GRAPE

Edible berries that can help with digestion; tea from the root can also ease digestion.



BROADLEAF PLANTAIN (introduced species)

Leaves can be eaten or used medicinally by chewing up and placing on rashes or bug bites as a poultice to soothe the skin.



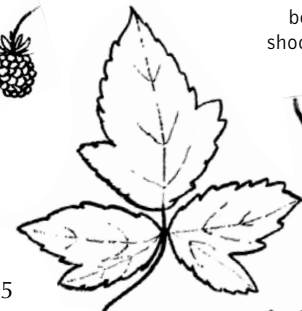
SALAL

Edible berries to eat raw or make fruit leather from; new leaves to eat, suppress appetite, or make tea.



TRAILING BLACKBERRY

Delicious edible berries and leaves that can be used for tea.



SALMONBERRY

Delicious, edible berries and new shoots; leaves can be used in tea.



As with any piece of writing or art, this work has been created within a network of relations. I would especially like to express gratitude to the many teachers who have informed this piece. In particular, Lori Snyder, Jenna Rudolph, and the resources shared by the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Indigenous Foods Network have informed my understanding of these plants and my relationship with them. This is just a small snapshot of the many relationships, histories, connections, foods, and medicines that these plants hold. Indigenous peoples have had relations with these beings since time immemorial and these relations are far deeper and more comprehensive than any of the materials shared here. By sharing these short introductions here, I hope to not diminish these relations in any way, but rather support readers in their relationships with these amazing beings.

I would also like to recognize my positionality in creating this piece as I am white settler of mixed european ancestry who grew up around UBC. I feel incredibly grateful to live and work as a visitor on unceded Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh lands and waters.



Plant Medicines & Diet Transformation:

WORKING TOWARDS HOLISTIC HEALTH & WELL-BEING

written by SHANNON HECKER
illustrated by SABRINA RAWLINS

Since I was a child, I remember having severe leg cramps and waking up screaming at night. By the time I was a teenager my back was often sore and into adulthood the symptoms only seemed to get worse. In recent years I have begun to realize that the pain I experience is not as common as I had thought.

Currently, I'm waiting to see a specialist at a regenerative healing clinic for chronic pain. It is likely I will get diagnosed with fibromyalgia. To fight my constant aches and tiredness, I do my best to get lots of sleep, keep active daily, practice meditation and stretch often. I do all that I can to avoid taking anti-inflammatories or pain relievers.

As a person who also experiences severe anxiety which comes along with bouts of depression, I've learned that a balanced diet is key to having balanced mental, emotional & physical well being. Instead of taking pills, I take plant medicine,

making various infusions with teas. I've learned from many different folks and studied a lot of literature around plant use and food as medicine.

Taking plant medicine, I also avoid the side effects common with many prescribed medications which often can be a trade off for relief of some issues, while creating entirely new issues especially liver damage which is known to be caused by taking pills. Now there are times where prescribed medications are completely necessary, but my belief is if you can prevent illness by focusing on one's holistic health.

Spirituality is a huge component of holistic health and well-being. That being said, to properly discuss what this may signify for different people & communities is way beyond the scope of this article. As a settler who grew up on the ancestral homelands of the Qayqayt people (New Westminster, "BC"), unceded & occupied Coast Salish land & waters, reconnecting to the earth and learning Celtic traditions and practices which my pagan european ancestors held pre-colonially is vital for my spiritual growth. At the same time it is equally important to honor the people and the land on which you walk, so I do my best to learn about the cultures and protocols of the Indigenous folks whose lands I live on.

Reading from and listening to oral accounts of many people, both Indigenous and settler, who carry plant knowledge leaves me in deep gratitude. I am grateful to have participated in local plant walks led by Indigenous Plant Diva, T'uy't'tanat—Cease Wyss of the Skwxw'u7mesh, Sto:Lo, Hawaiian & Swiss Nations, who is a traditional herbalist with knowledge of many local plants used for both food & medicine. To purchase local tea infusions find her on facebook at [FB.COM/RHTEACO/](https://www.facebook.com/RHTEACO/)

The following is some information T'uy't'tanat has shared on plant medicine for Fibromyalgia. All of these recommended foods and plants are helpful with various elements/ symptoms of Fibromyalgia.

TEAS FOR ENERGY

stinging nettles, rosehips, mint, wild & regular ginger, salmon berry/raspberry/blackberry leaf

TEAS FOR SLEEP & RELAXATION

chamomile, lavender & mint

VITAMINS

high doses of E, C, A, & B vitamins

MINERALS

calcium, magnesium & iron

ANTI-OXIDANTS

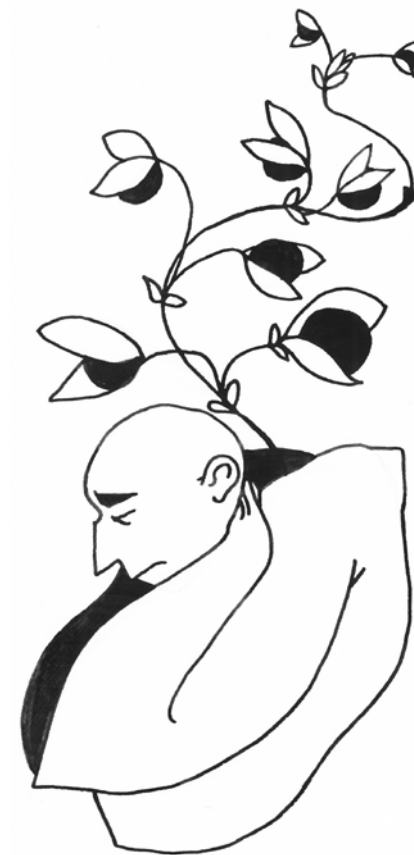
wild berries, pomegranate, mangosteen, açai, seaweed, blueberries

I also use some amazing salves made from wild harvested plants that work great for pain and inflammation. I love tinctures! I take wild chaga mushroom tincture for overall health and valerian root tincture for stress, anxiety and sleep issues. My favourite tincture is made from wild stinging nettle, which is rich in vitamin A, C, E & K, mineral iron, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, manganese, copper and boron. Cannabis tinctures, teas and edibles are also helpful for pain. To find some of these awesome salves and tinctures check out [Am Wist Medicines](#). All of the ingredients used are either wild harvested or organic.

WORKING TO
ACHIEVE HOLISTIC
HEALTH & WELLBEING
TAKES A WHOLE
LIFESTYLE CHANGE.

There are many kinds of diets and what works well for some does not work at all for others. The best way to find out what works for you is to focus on cutting out processed foods and replace them with whole foods.

For example, I've read that plants categorized as nightshades—which includes potatoes, eggplants, peppers & tomatoes—are likely to increase inflammation when consumed by folks who already have inflammatory issues. However, some studies show that many nightshades actually have anti-inflammatory properties and it's only a small percentage of folks who are very sensitive that have severe reactions.



By a process of elimination I've learned that my body really functions better without caffeine. I stop intermittently and when I get over the headaches I feel much more energized daily without it. I've completely cut alcohol and pop. I feel much better with a wheat restricted diet. I avoid eating processed foods and cook whole foods at home most of the time. Despite all of this, I still experience much pain and inflammation.

I'M BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED WITH MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF PESTICIDES, GLYPHOSATE & GMO'S.

To avoid consuming known carcinogens I have been focusing on trying to eat organic, which is nearly impossible to do while living on a fixed income as a person with disabilities. To eat well you end up giving up any kind of extra entertainment, or buying anything more than food. It's also taxing emotionally being consumed in thoughts about how to eat and buy healthy foods.

Much of what seems to be food sensitivity to wheat could actually be people's reactions to glyphosate accumulation in their bodies. The chemical glyphosate is prevalent in so many crops due to chemical pesticides and the creation of pesticide resistant crops with genetic modification (GMO's). Glyphosate is being found at alarming levels in all sorts of processed foods, especially children's cereals, as they are often wheat or corn based, most of which are GMO's. For more information visit: bit.ly/RTFZine_GMOs

Another thing to consider is the damage that has already been done to our intestinal tract with all sorts

of chemicals being added to our food directly or indirectly. Many pharmaceuticals wreak havoc on our digestive system: the foreign chemicals are very abrasive of our delicate intestinal lining. Taking antibiotics, prescribed medications or cleaning hands with antibiotic soap kills not just the bad bugs in our bodies, it also kills the good bugs, the ones in our intestinal tract that help digest the foods we eat to maintain a balanced gut flora. I use a variety of different probiotics to heal my gut such as live bacterial cultured yoghurt and naturally fermented foods like kombucha and sauerkraut or pickle brines.

Detoxing our bodies is a good way to reset our intestinal balance. Recently I've been experimenting with raw juicing, as my friend Misty Fredericks from the Oneida Nation who carries plant medicine knowledge shared her success stories with juicing and how she's cured herself from a few different health issues. Misty recommends buying organic to avoid consuming concentrated amounts of pesticides, I've learned through my attempts that using all organic ingredients is costly and often out of reach for folks like myself. To cut costs I try to buy wholesale, or buy discounted food. ([Sunrise Grocery](#) at Gore & Powell has deals on organic foods & \$1 bags of fruits and veggies).

Some juicing detoxes are very intense because people supplement every meal with juices or broth. I decided to simply replace breakfast with juice and ate lunch and dinner. For just over two weeks I made my daily concoction of apples, carrots, ginger & turmeric, sometimes adding fresh cranberries, celery, spinach, cabbage & pickled beet brine for some probiotics. I cut out potatoes, tomatoes, peppers and went two whole weeks without my favourite food—potato chips. I also avoided dairy,

refined sugars & wheat based products during this time, eating mainly fruits and vegetables and animal and plant proteins.

After only a week of skipping coffee and drinking raw juice on an empty stomach, I began to feel the difference. I could feel my stomach tightening up and was less bloated. I was feeling full in the morning and energized even though I only had raw juice. You will experience some discomfort during the initial detox of sugars of your system when you cut out refined sugars and processed foods.

A couple of weeks into my program I started to notice I was having more cravings for the foods I was giving up and slowly giving in. I've mentioned the challenges of juicing being unaffordable; an even greater challenge is having the willpower to stick to the program. I'm going to give it another try soon.

I've spent a lot of time trying to figure out if certain foods are able to reduce my inflammation and what foods may actually make it increase. I've correlated that my mood is affected by the foods I eat. I have noticed I feel much better when eating wild game, wild salmon or poultry with a large variety of vegetables both raw and cooked while avoiding processed foods. I feel much better when I reduce my wheat intake or avoid it completely. It doesn't take much for me to slip back into eating the foods I have removed from my diet, as I love them and, well,

BREAD IS SUCH AN EASY FILLER—IT'S CHEAP AND OFTEN FREE. AND WHO WANTS TO SAY NO TO FREE FOOD?

Once I get the foods with wheat & sugar out of my system I do feel more satisfied after eating, have more comfortable digestion and experience better moods when eating mostly vegetables with both animal and plant protein. Although I can't always afford organic, I try to so I'm always looking for deals and I grow what foods I can. It's a daily struggle to truly have a balanced diet while working towards holistic wellbeing, but it is definitely worthwhile.

When I manage to eat a balanced diet, keep up with my stretching, meditating and other activities that feed my spirit I do experience less pain to a certain degree. Some days are certainly better than others. It takes a lot of discipline to avoid the foods that may harm us and only consume what we know to be free of contaminants. As I await my diagnosis, I will continue to work on changing my habits to be healthier and doing my best to keep a positive frame of mind. I am grateful for the things I have learned about different plants and have a willingness to use what mother nature provides to at least reduce my inflammation and pain.

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UNCONSENT: FOOD AND BUREAUCRACY

writing & photography by MILDRED GRACE GERMAN

Food is part of culture. Food is language.
Food is compassion. Food is love.
Food is ancestral.
Love and Struggle. Joy.

The many flavours of cuisines and delicacies
In multitudes. Numerous. Countless. Priceless.
Across many places. Across many nations.
Across borders, walled, and the invisible.
But one true undeniable connection.

This connection:

One root, all rooted. Rooted in Mother Nature
Feeding us. Nourishing us.
Giving us strength. Giving us breathe.
Giving us pulse. Giving us light.
Giving us life. Giving us spirit, soul.

From the high mountains, to the coastal sea,
To the glacier of ages passed by,
To the prairie lands, to the sways
Of green rice farms, to the golden harvests,
To everything that grow from beneath
The bosom of our Mother Earth, our Mother
Our survival, our Lifegiver. Our cradling arms.
Mother Nature provides, adjusts accordingly
To the seasons, to the changing colours
Of the leaves, to the strong branches in Winter,
To the tiny seeds that wake in Spring,
And bright greeneries glowing, smiling
Under the warmth and love of the Summer Sun

To what extent have capitalism, greed,
And lack of respect for our Lifegivers, Women,
Land, Water, and Mother Earth has led
To the massive distractions and extinction
Unrest. Injustice. Chaos.
This search, lack, and ruins of Paradise
Gone. Gone. Gone.
Here we stand surrounded by poverty,
Scarcity, scurvy, and more food-related

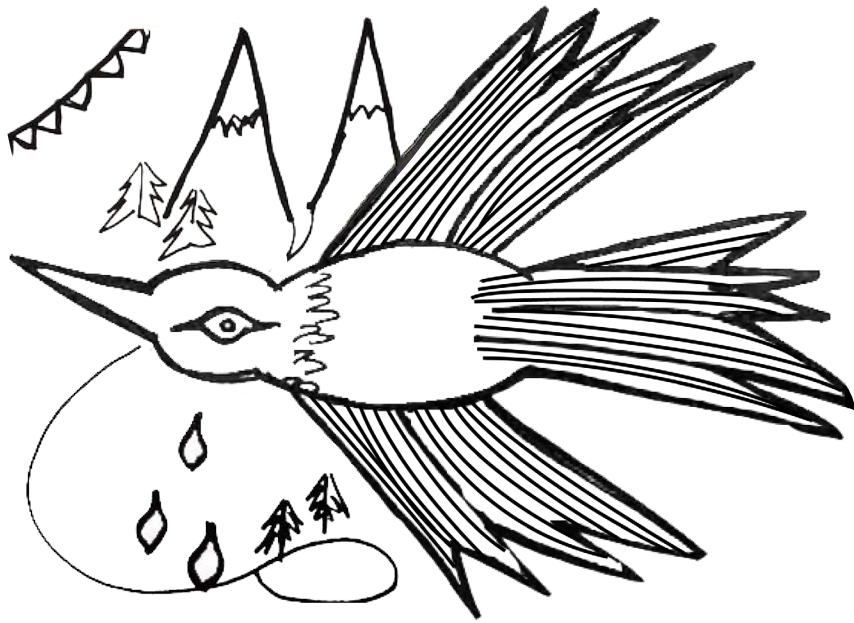


MOTHER NATURE FEEDS, an excerpt from the photography collection
SELF CARE: TO WRITE MY PARENTS' LOVE IN MY ARMS

Illnesses and madness. Hunger that hurts
Not only the physical, but deep down.
Deep down.

To the food waste worth of billions
Being thrown, to the pit, garburator, garbage hole.
While nothing goes to the malnourished children in millions.
To the scavengers. To the ones who eat and ask no more
No more questions. No energy left. No more milk.

To all the mothers crossing oceans as breadwinners
Away from their lands, children and families.
The modern-day slavery exists, ignored, denied,
Not correct, not accepted, not justified
From migrant farming, to child-bearing, child-minding
Migrant workers and migrant communities
Exploited, hungry, and no means of production
How many nations slave other nations
Due to food, hunger, lack of agriculture
While many lands rot produce, wild or not
Empty, sick, neglected and colonised
Who harvests? Who?
Who says who eats and no?



BIRD OF MANY COLOURS

WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY AVA CALDWELL

The Rainbow Ribbon Hummingbird is a mythical creature that thrives in my imagination. I am a singer, artiste, gardener, bird watcher, and shit disturber extraordinaire. I painted it first on [Red Dress Day](#) (February 14, 2019) as a response to the [MMIW](#) and the [BC Highway of Tears](#), for all the sisters I have lost to violence and murder. I depict my hummingbird crying tears of blood for MMIW which fertilize the lands it visits in its mythical migration of the human mind.

Hummingbirds are one of the Creator's messengers of life. I have begun to learn the beautiful Indigenous stories from my friend Louisa who is an elder from Bella Bella. She explained about the creation of life and the roles that spirit creatures play

in our lives. She attributes hummingbirds with magical powers of communication and hope. Those who have been blessed with a Hummingbird as their "Spirit Creature" are able to link many diverse communities and bring hope.

HUMMINGBIRDS ARE COMMUNICATORS & POLLINATORS. THEIR PRESENCE BRINGS US ALL INTENSE PLEASURE & AWE.

Here some facts about our beautiful flying marvels.

WHERE DO THE HUMMINGBIRDS GO?

Hummingbirds are found all over the world, treasured for their exquisite vibrant feathers and unique hovering abilities. They are tiny hurricanes, fluttering their wings at 250 beats a minute. They challenge helicopters in flying upside-down and backwards, achieving speeds of 60 miles per hour as they fly upwards in their courtship rituals. Hummingbirds are one of nature's amazing pollinators, and help many trees and plants bear fruit; their role has been gaining significance as the world bee population decreases due to pesticide/herbicide use.

The dramatic impact of climate change has resulted in a new addition to the Pacific Northwest. Traditionally, there were 3 species of hummingbirds in the Pacific Northwest: the Rufus, the largest at 4 inches; the Costa's, and the Black-Tipped.

The 4th variety is the Ana's Hummingbird. This tiny beauty (1 ½ inches) hails from south of the 33rd parallel at Baja, California and Mexico. Only 40 years ago, as the north has "heated up", they started to fly further north.

THEY ARE ABLE TO SURVIVE WELL IN BC, AND AS FAR NORTH AS ALASKA BECAUSE OF OUR GLOBAL CLIMATE CRISIS.

The Ana's hummingbird has a silver body and wings with a vivid neon green chest and a fuchsia pink throat, called a "gorget". The male is particularly beautiful when engaging in mating rituals. It sings as it dances in front of its beloved. Although

the squeaks and buzzes are hardly audible to the human ear, it is enticing to any possible mate.

They typically live for 8-10 years, and mate typically have two minuscule eggs, that are hidden in a cone-shaped nest that is magically spun from re-used spider webs, lichen, and feathers, woven around twigs. Hummingbirds are natural recyclers!

Hummingbirds eat a lot of plant insects, and spiders, but nectar is their ambrosia. If you want to attract them plant flowers and shrubs with fragrant brightly coloured flowers. West coast shrubs varieties are *Buddleia Davidii*, *Monarda*, *Salvia*, and *Penstemon* are all beautiful additions to your garden. Of course, please set out many non-plastic sugar feeders, especially in winter as the nectar supply dwindles.

I worry about our little feathered friends when our cold weather hits. Rest assured, the larger Rufus flies south to Mexico in September/October. However, the Ana's Hummingbird must survive the lower mainland mild winters. It has the ability to slow down its entire respiratory system to where it is barely alive. However, it's critical to their survival to put out feeders!!

Please plant more delicious nectar-bearing flowers to encourage more Hummingbirds. The added benefit, you'll have the best garden on the block and a built in floor show when the hummingbirds put on their acrobatic displays daily. This spring, you'll see more little Hummingbird families moving to your yard, because you have the best food in the neighbourhood!

HUMMINGBIRDS RULE!

Nourish Your Body With Mindful Eating

written & illustrated by Lucy Li

People often expect nutritious food to be pricier and less tasty, but it's not always the case! Here are some research-based nutrition facts to give you ideas on how to select affordable food options that will nourish your body and mind.



PLANT-BASED PROTEIN

Protein supports growth, maintenance, and repair in the body. It helps metabolism by providing structural support and by acting as enzymes, carriers, or hormones. Proteins are made up of amino acids. The human body cannot produce nine of these acids—called essential amino acids. A complete protein source refers to a type of food that contains all nine. Some plant-based foods, such as beans with rice, quinoa & buckwheat are considered complete protein sources.



FRUIT JUICE VS. SMOOTHIE

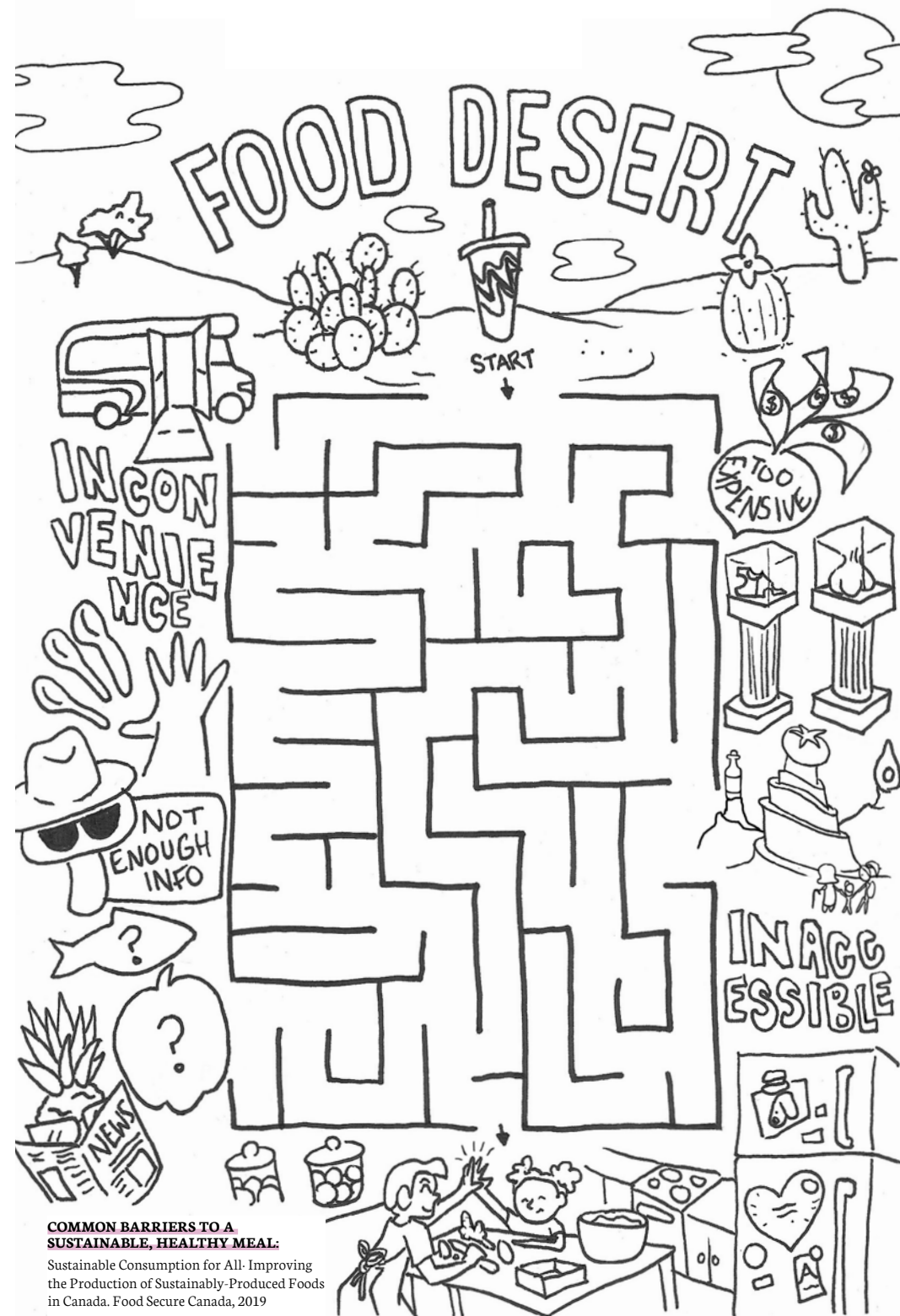
Many people believe that all fruit juices are healthy. Fresh fruit juice may provide antioxidants, but many bottled juice options are loaded with added sugar. This could increase the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and weight gain. It's very helpful to check out the nutrition labels of food products to make informed choices. Smoothies are generally a blend of whole foods, which means you're keeping all the nutrients from your fruits and veggies intact, including lots of fibre!



FIBRE INTAKE

Did you know most Canadians are only getting half of the fibre that the Dietary Reference Intake recommends? Women need 25g of fibre per day and men need 38g of fibre per day. Fibre is a non-digestible carbohydrate found in plant foods. It may help with bowel regularity, lower blood cholesterol levels, and make you feel full longer. Fibre can be found in fruits, legumes, nuts, seeds, vegetables, and whole grains.

By achieving adequate intake of all essential amino acids and fibres, as well as minimizing the intake of sugary drinks, you are helping to release the pressure on your organs and make your body function better!



COMMON BARRIERS TO A SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY MEAL:

Sustainable Consumption for All: Improving the Production of Sustainably-Produced Foods in Canada. Food Secure Canada, 2019

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Food for Thought is a column that holds space for subjects that may not be directly related to food, but are relevant to our diverse group of contributors and readers.

Oppenheimer Park:

THE RIGHT TO HOUSING IN VANCOUVER

written by RILEY EVANS
illustrated by NICHOLAS ALDRIAN

Oppenheimer Park, located in the heart of the Downtown Eastside, has become the site of a bustling tent city that a growing community of impoverished residents call home. The park has been the focus of growing tensions between various local governing bodies and organizations on how to address poverty and housing in Vancouver. Tensions came to a head when an eviction notice was distributed to residents of the park from the City ordering them to vacate by Wednesday, August 21st, 2019 at 6 pm—sparking outrage and debate.

ACTION ON OPPENHEIMER why was the eviction order given?

Over the past year, the population of the tent city in Oppenheimer Park has grown dramatically, reaching a peak of approximately 225 tents and 300 people in August 2019. The growing community saw almost double the number of incidents requiring service calls to the park between January and August 2019 compared to the year before. This enacted safety concerns and lead the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Police Department (VPD), Vancouver

Fire Department (VFD), the Vancouver Park Board and surrounding businesses to express major concern and call for the park to be returned to its original use as public greenspace. The VPD issued the following statement in August: “We are very concerned about the safety of the people staying there, our officers, firefighters, and City of Vancouver staff.” VFD reported excessive fire calls from the park and a report from the Strathcona Business Improvement Association stated that the tent city was negatively impacting businesses in the area.

The City of Vancouver was also having their concerns for safety and cost of servicing the park. Eventually, these tensions with the encampment came to a head. On August 19th the general manager of the Park Board issued an eviction notice demanding the inhabitants of the tent city to promptly vacate the park by August 21st at 6pm, with safety concerns being used at the primary rationale. In conjunction with the eviction order the City stated that they would be offering housing options to residents. Frustratingly, these options were inadequate in both quantity and quality. With only 140 units consisting of single occupancy room hotels (SROs) or shelter beds and often ridden with pests, mold and grime. The insensitive and poorly prepared actions of the City sparked a backlash from the community leading to protests.

eviction day

On the day of the supposed eviction, August 21st, the community organization [Carnegie Community Action Project](#) (CCAP) who address housing, income, and land use issues in the DTES organized an event in protest of the park eviction and to show solidarity with its residents. The “Oppenheimer block party” was a BBQ at the park aimed to protest, interfere, and witness the impending eviction. This resistance from the community and the lack of authority resulted in an unsuccessful effort to clear the park that evening. No one was forcibly removed from the park but over 119 residents did accept housing offers and the population of the tent city decreased significantly.

aftermath

Following the events of August 21st, the City continued its efforts to completely dismantle the tent city despite tremendous backlash. Still, Mayor Kennedy Stewart pressed on by seeking a court injunction that would allow the forcible removal of the remaining residents, not expecting the Park Board’s jurisdiction over Oppenheimer to be a barrier. On September 6th, Mayor Stewart requested that the Park Board grant the authority for the injunction so they could finally “clean it up”. To Stewart’s surprise, the Park Board refused after hearing the plight of the community and incited a tumultuous debate full of tension, conflict and even mild threats. The conversation ended on September 27th, when the Park Board voted in favour of a motion for a voluntary collaborative decampment strategy and refused to support the eviction. Mackinnon, the Park Board chair, issued this statement following the decision: “We do not believe that seeking an injunction from the courts with the goal of clearing people from Oppenheimer Park will bring us anywhere nearer to a true solution.”



VALUES, ACTION & CRITICISM: THE ISSUE OF HOMELESSNESS IN VANCOUVER

the city's short sighted approach

There has been an abundance of criticism towards the city for using an eviction to address Oppenheimer’s encampment situation. Many critiques are voiced by Chrissy Brett and Sandy Parisian, who are both integrally involved and invested in the community. Brett works as a liaison for the tent city and Sandy is the appointed “mayor” of Oppenheimer Park. Brett suggests that “safety concerns” are being used as a justification for a forceful eviction by the VPD and City. “If I, as an Indigenous grandmother, can feel safe staying in the park, then why don’t they? This is just a bully mentality because the VPD feel they have no control—they want an injunction because they are not in charge.” Brett remarks. She also suggests that clearing Oppenheimer Park would financially benefit the City, while casting aside its occupants. The City could save a lot of money currently spent on servicing and policing the tent community. In fact, the Deputy City Manager stated it had cost the City more than \$800 000 to date, as an argument for obtaining an injunction. Not to mention, an eviction would only ensure the safety of City Officials while further putting the residents of Oppenheimer at risk. People would be forced onto the streets to fend for themselves, if (and when) no safe, livable housing options are available. This view is supported by Park Board Chair Mckinnon “Simply moving [the campers] out of the park with no plan doesn’t make anybody safer.” Brett

stresses that evicting the park places blame on those who are most vulnerable and not the crisis itself—which is a lack of housing and collective government failure. Clearly, there is a common consensus that **EVICTION IS NOT A SOLUTION** and the City is being appropriately criticized by the United Nations, Indigenous leaders and the community for failing to realize (or outright ignoring) this fact.

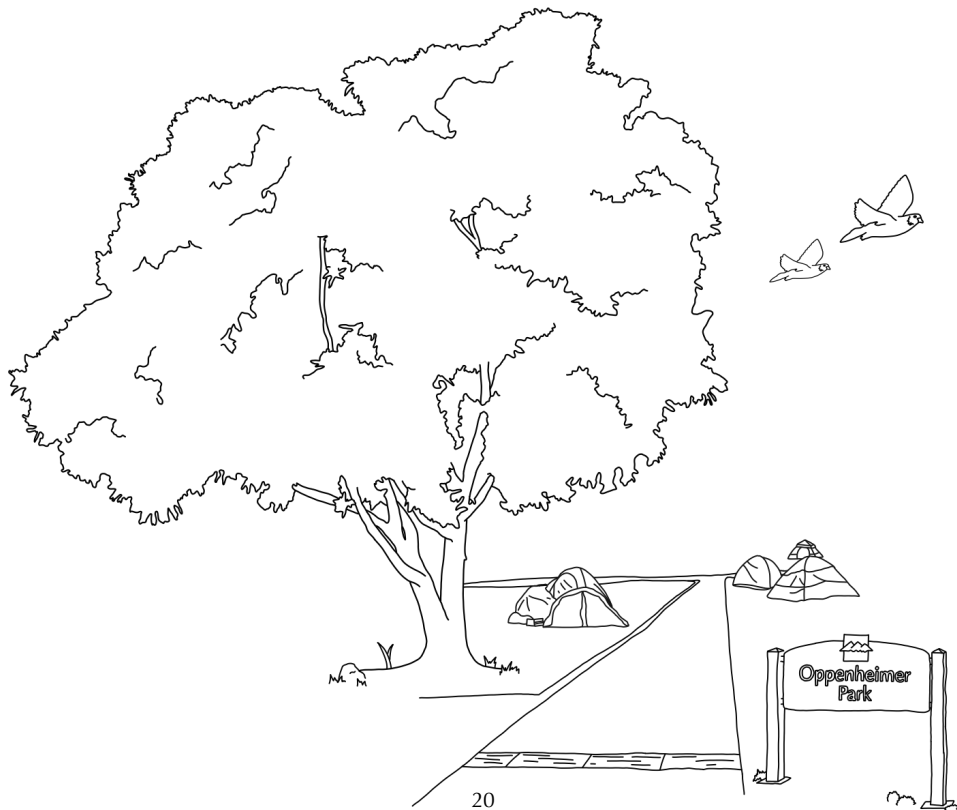
criticism

Leilani Farha, the UN’s special rapporteur on the right to housing responded to the City’s efforts to evict and remove the tent city as an “unacceptable and an egregious violation of the right to housing.” Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, the president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, also expressed his disapproval. He voiced that any efforts to forcibly eject Oppenheimer

Park campers, of which a large portion are Indigenous, as “callous and insensitive to the mental health, addictions, and poverty that they are battling as a result of an ongoing colonial legacy of systemic discrimination and oppression.” The comments from the UN’s special rapporteur and the Grand Chief shouldn’t come as a surprise to the City as it has both a local Charter and international human rights obligations to ensure that people are not being evicted or decamped without first being provided with adequate housing.

the right to housing

Adequate housing has been a major point of contention. The dirty, undignified SROs or shelter beds offered by the City to justify clearing Oppenheimer, have been deemed inadequate in discussions between the City, Park Board, and community members.



Sandy, Oppenheimers “mayor,” found himself living in an SRO describing his housing situation as “disgusting” and “the worst place ever.”

THESE CONDITIONS
 ALLUDE TO WHY MANY
 CAMPERS PREFER TO STAY
 WITH THEIR COMMUNITY
 IN THE PARK RATHER THAN
 SEEK HOUSING OR LIVE
 ALONE ON THE STREET.

Chrissy Brett speaks to this notion, stating that living in Oppenheimer “gives people stability, it gives people the ability to not have to worry about the day-to-day problems of having to carry your entire life on your back.” Ultimately, the obligation of the city to provide the human rights to housing invalidates any critic of those who choose to remain in the tent city rather than move into inadequate housing, as it is clearly stated that it is well within their rights to do so, until adequate housing is offered. Fortunately, the Vancouver Park Board has maintained their authoritative position to oppose seeking an injunction even in the face of relentless recommendations otherwise from the City, VPD, and VFD.

COMMUNITY, RESILIENCE & RESISTANCE: THE FUTURE OF OPPENHEIMER PARK

Motion B9

Since the Parks Board’s official decision against seeking an injunction, the City has unwaveringly continued to push for the eviction or ‘decampment’ of Oppenheimer Park. Nowadays, they are focusing on policy efforts aimed to undermine the Park Board’s authority. Their latest attempt is the proposal of Motion B9,

which would allow for the ‘decampment’ of individuals if housing was available for them. Major resistance from the community ensued. The current motion containing the term “decampment” is viewed as a direct violation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and an act of colonial violence. The community demanded that “decampment” be replaced with “voluntary decampment” in motion B9 to ensure the rights of the residents living in Oppenheimer Park. The CCAP hosted a rally in protest of the language and implications of Motion B9 on 23rd 2019.

what now?

Today, the Oppenheimer Park community is holding strong. Approximately 100 tents are still standing, despite the many attempts to tear it apart. They have a mayor, a community council, and a church. They have homes and neighbors and as Sandy describes it, “we clothe each other, we feed each other, we make dinners at night together when we get enough donations...we try. Some of us can’t work. We have people with disabilities, mental health issues but we take care of each other”. The residents of Oppenheimer Park are just a regular community of people who are unfortunately experiencing the systemic burden of homelessness and poverty that arose from the profoundly inequitable colonial and later capitalist systems our society was built upon. ANY attempt to take away the community that has been built in Oppenheimer in spite of this, must come with proper access to safe, secure, and dignified housing. This is a non-negotiable.

Would you like to share your experience? Contact us:

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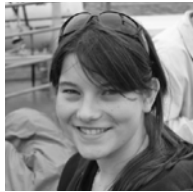
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A TRIBUTE TO HENDRIK BEUNE

by Stan Shaffer & dm gillis

Henrik was a valued member of the Right to Food Zine team and an essential contributor for five years, from 2014–2019. Arriving at meetings on his ever-present bicycle, he would have an informed and well-researched approach to topics of discussion.

Importantly, Hendrik was a Board Member of the DTES NH for three years, and an active champion of other DTES organizations, too numerous to mention.

Always with the newest issue in hand, he was a tireless supporter of the social justice magazine, Megaphone Magazine, for which he was a writer and vendor, selling it throughout the DTES.

Hendrik moved to the DTES because he wanted to help the community. He had a deep knowledge of the many aspects of the neighbourhood, assisting RTF Zine in pursuit of leads, but he also wrote articles on a variety of topics relevant to our times, often from a contemporary scientific standpoint. Articles on the subject of permaculture for example, so important to him, followed by a list of other noteworthy and critical issues, such as, sustainability; intestinal microbes & fermentation; food waste; a Sun Yat-Sen Gardens tour; the 2016 Vancouver Food Summit; "Voting Outside the Box" for the 2016 general election; GMO foods and the agro-industrial system, urging readers to support local farmers. One of his final pieces was a whimsical Valentine poem about bees.

It's no surprise that many of the issues he held so dear were eco-focussed, as he lived an environmentally healthy life.

Less known, however, is that Hendrik was once the owner of an oyster farming business and taught deep sea diving. As one of his brothers, Eric, recalls, Hendrik, before moving to BC, was quite

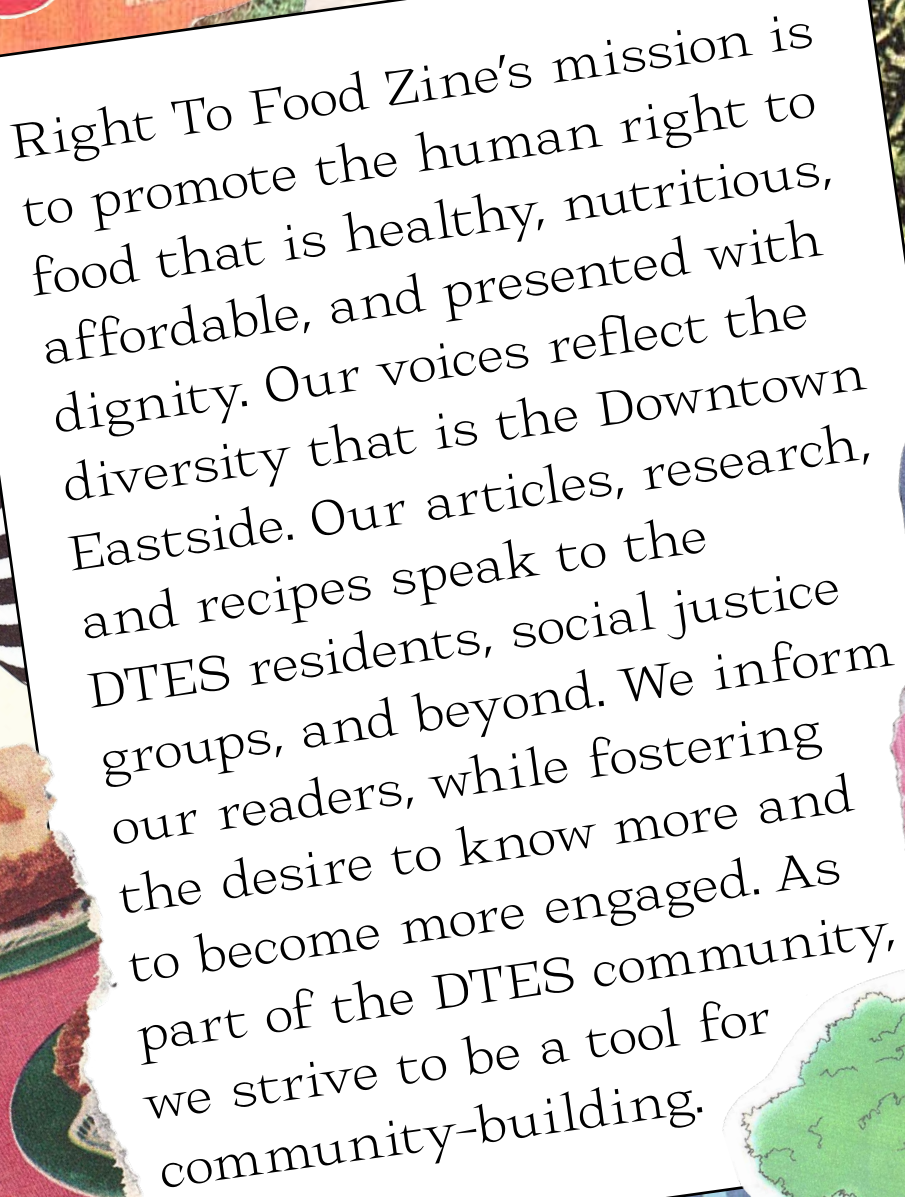


22 MARCH 1951 HOLLAND–
14 DECEMBER 2019 VANCOUVER

straight-laced—short hair, jacket and tie. But his move to Canada, long ago, transformed him into a more relaxed, longhaired West Coast hippie.

Last fall we learned that Hendrik had bowel cancer and was spending his final weeks at a UBC hospice. His brothers from Holland visited in rotation, as did his many friends and colleagues from the Coast and from the many DTES organizations Hendrik supported. Sadly, Hendrik passed on December 14, 2019 and there was a memorial service on December 18 at the Mountain View Cemetery. An open celebration of Hendrik's life is planned for Thursday February 6 at 12 pm at SFU's World Arts Centre, 149 West Hastings.

We gratefully recognise and celebrate Hendrik's wisdom, invaluable assistance and vital connection to the neighbourhood that is the DTES. Most important is his dedication to the causes of food security and social justice.

A collage of images including a hot tub, a hand holding a glass, a bee, a cake, and a tree.

Right To Food Zine's mission is to promote the human right to food that is healthy, nutritious, affordable, and presented with dignity. Our voices reflect the diversity that is the Downtown Eastside. Our articles, research, and recipes speak to the DTES residents, social justice groups, and beyond. We inform our readers, while fostering the desire to know more and to become more engaged. As part of the DTES community, we strive to be a tool for community-building.