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# SOUTH VANCOUVER NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVES IN RESPONSE TO THE  
COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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# ABOUT SOUTH VANCOUVER NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE (SVNH)



SVNH is a community based organization that serves the **Sunset**, **Victoria-Fraserview**, and **Killarney-Champlain** neighbourhoods in South Vancouver

## VISION

Everyone in South Vancouver lives in a healthy and engaged community.

## MISSION

SVNH plays a leadership role in building healthy and engaged neighbourhoods in South Vancouver by connecting people and strengthening their capacity to create change.



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# THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VANCOUVER

About 100,000 people live in South Vancouver.

Of this:

- 80% are **visible minorities**
- 56% are **newcomers to Canada**
- 68% speak a **non-English language** at home
- About 30% of SVNH participants are **seniors**

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*6,769 people participated in programs at the SVNH, which are run in partnership with 520 volunteers (South Vancouver Neighbourhood House Annual Report 2018/19)*



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# FOOD RELATED PROGRAMS AT SVNH

## GARDENS



Community gardens for preschool and out of school care children, support local Sunset garden, Growing Eden Garden program

## WELLNESS PROGRAMS



Food Skills for Families, food is used in youth and childcare services, and food is often a component of other programs that are offered.

## COMMUNITY KITCHENS AND MEALS



Family meal every Monday, Tuesday donated bread pick-up from Cobb's Bread, multicultural lunch every Thursday, youth food group

## FOOD BANK



Provided space for the Greater Vancouver Food Bank to operate a Food Hub on Tuesday mornings. Started off with about 160 (2018) participants, but grew to serve 500+ (2020).

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# SVNH'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19



- Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB) consolidated into two locations (April 2020): Queen Elizabeth Theatre and Mount Pleasant Community Centre
- SVNH participants express concerns for accessing the two locations
  - Lack of transit
  - Many don't speak English
  - Physically straining

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## AT SVNH FOOD GOES FROM:

Food used as a tool for **social engagement** and **community wellness**, fostering **resilience** and **food literacy**, as well as **healthy eating**



Food emergency supply

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## EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION

- As of April 14th, 2020, food distribution occurred weekly on Tuesdays from 10:00am - 12:00pm.
- Food needed to be picked up by employees or volunteers from the GVFB.
  - BCAA provided **4-6 volunteers** and **2-3 trucks** to transport food from the GVFB to SVNH.
- About **10 volunteers** at SVNH would then bag the food for distribution.
- Participants found out about the program through word of mouth. On April 14th, 2020 **75** bags were handed out and **50** people were turned away. By mid-May 2020, **300 - 350** people (majority of which were **seniors**) were accessing the program.





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# SVNH'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19



## EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION

- Participants lineup outside and are let in a few at a time.
- Participants normally receive **two bags**, in which the contents vary.
  - Often contains: starch, protein, fruit/vegetable, sweets, canned goods.
  - Vancouver Soup Company also provided donations.
  - Gift cards were provided some weeks.



- In June, GVFB started dropping off food at SVNH.
  - Funding for the program provided by United Way and Food Banks BC.
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# SVNH'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19



## FOOD HAMPERS FOR FAMILIES

- Food hampers provide enough food for **2 weeks** for **4-5 people**.
  - Participants pick-up food hampers from SVNH.
- **5 staff** and **5 volunteers** are required to set up the boxes, and **3 staff** and **2 volunteers** are needed on the day of pick-up and delivery.
- **14** Food Hampers were provided the first week of the program, now **100-120** Food Hampers are provided weekly.
- Over **800 families** have received a Food Hamper.



## SAFE SENIORS, STRONG COMMUNITY

- Built on existing program called Better at Home
  - In partnership with **United Way** and **BC211**
  - Volunteers assist with grocery shopping and delivering \$5 frozen meals to 140-160 seniors
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## CHALLENGES AND MOVING FORWARD

SVNH can only have **30** people in the building due to COVID-19 restrictions. For this reason, the Emergency Food Distribution will end on August 18th. Partners, such as libraries and community centres that could provide a space, are closed.



Left with a gap for those accessing this program - **300-350 people** weekly (**75% seniors**).

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Food Hampers for Families will continue for the fiscal year.

A food navigator has been hired to help community members locate resources and access to food.

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

A lack of social infrastructure and investment in South Vancouver neighbourhoods has been exacerbated by COVID-19, leading to greater inequities in this community.