



Spring 2023

■ Celebrating 20 Years of Share's Backpack Program!

It began with just 25 food bags distributed each week to three local elementary schools: Fruit Valley, Hough and Peter S. Ogden.

In 2003, Schuyler Hoss was the Communication and Fund Development Director at Share and a board member for Vancouver Public Schools. "I was visiting an elementary school and talking to a few teachers. I noticed next to one of the desks a box of canned items and asked "What's that?" The teacher said she put out a box every Friday and some students selected items to take home, because they don't have anything good to eat until Monday."

It was an "a-ha!" moment for Schuyler, who shared the experience with Diane McWithey, Executive Director. "There was clearly a need here. We needed to find a systematic way to get food to students," he said.



Operations began in a long, narrow closet and today fills a large portion of the Warehouse at the Share Fromhold Service Center.

We've had volunteers of all ages, including dignitaries, like Governor Christine Gregoire in 2013.



Twenty years later, Share's Backpack program now delivers 1,000+ food bags each week during the school year to 85 local schools. And we didn't stop with just food bags. The program expanded over the past decade to include a weekly delivery of 27 pantry food boxes, 18 Fresh Food Pantries (each open once per month) and 66 'hotel' bags with food that do not require a can opener or a kitchen to prepare.

While the program operates under anonymity, we are still able to get feedback from the recipients. One way is through an annual survey, which is provided in English, Spanish and Russian. And the second is through the 'Share a Story' program.

"The strength of the Backpack program is built on the relationships Share has fostered with our local schools and early education centers," said Molly Evjen, Director of Volunteers & Community Resources. *"It is heart-warming to hear from parents who are willing to share about the importance of food for their families and it's absolutely delightful to see pictures that the children draw."* (Continued on page 2)



■ Backpack program cont.

Here is one recent share:

"I'm a single foster mom to four kids, ages 20-months to four years. I substitute at early learning centers, which provides flexibility to get my kids to and from various appointments through the foster care system.

But my monthly checks are often low. I am so grateful for the extra food to help feed my kids, plus the snacks that they can eat while we are running between appointments."

And during the holidays, Ayleen sent us a drawing of thanks, addressed to the 'Food Fairy.'



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For a list of management staff:
sharevancouver.org

2306 NE Andresen Road
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The Backpack program operates almost exclusively on the generosity of our community, including a partnership with the Clark County Food Bank, financial donations from community members and local businesses and the dozens of volunteers that fill and deliver all the food bags and pantry boxes each week.

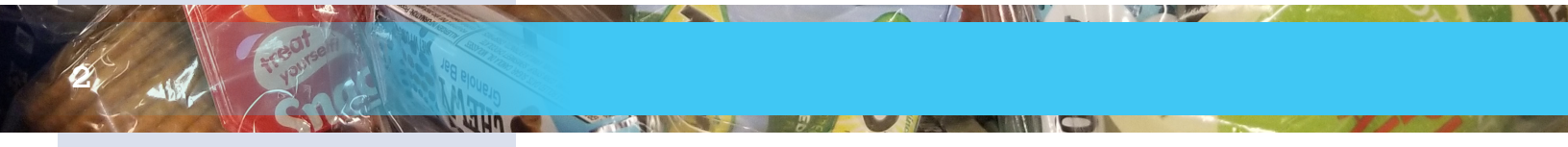
Throughout this year, we will continue to reflect on the program's inception, growth and community impact, as well as share notes and drawings of gratitude from parents and children. So be sure to follow us on social media: facebook.com/sharevancouver and Instagram @sharevanwa.

Just
\$15 a
month!

Dare to Share

IT TAKES COURAGE TO MAKE CHANGE.

Become a monthly donor today
at sharevancouver.org.



12-4-22

To Whom It May Concern,

Hi, my name is Chad. I'm writing this letter to express my sincerest gratitude in helping me get my life back on track.

I came to Vancouver from Seattle to get away from drugs, seeking the Xchange program to help me with a very structured, faith-based program with high accountability. On my way here, I lost everything: my luggage, my wallet, my money, including debit card, food stamp card, Washington ID and social security card.

I ended up living in a tent by Share House which is where I met my first glimpse of hope: Jacky and Jeremy. After explaining to them I was here from Seattle with NOTHING to my name, they immediately blessed me with food, a tent to live in, clothes and the help I needed to start the process to get into the Xchange Program.

I hadn't showered in 3 weeks and in expressing this, they again blessed me with a 3-day stay. I can still recall all the dirt and grime I was finally able to rinse off myself.

In writing this thankful letter, I find myself almost tearing up, because I probably would have died if it wasn't for the help of Share. The amount of love and care I was shown, being an outsider from Seattle, so quickly, was the only thing that helped me to carry on.

I now have over 30 days clean and sober and I owe my life to Share. They paid program fees for 2 months and now I'm able to give back to the community by donating my time and labor to help cleaning the Living Hope Church after services, helping with community dinners, digging and wheelbarrowing for Sunshine Preschool and various other jobs which we call service hours, which he me give back for all that I was given.

My life has hope and meaning again and I own that thankfully to Share, specifically Jacky and Jeremy and others, in helping me and showing me soooo much love.

Sincerely,
Chad

We received this heart-felt letter from Chad in December. Below, Jacky and Jeremy, both Share Outreach Care Specialists, expand on how team worked helped Chad to succeed.

"When we met Chad last November, we immediately provided him with basic need items and chatted about what his goals were. He wanted to get into sober living," said Jacky.

Chad had traveled to Vancouver for Xchange, a faith-based organization that provides homeless street outreach, medical outreach, sober living and more. Jacky connected with staff at Xchange and they did have space for Chad, so he completed an interview process. "Chad was honest about where he was at in his journey and where he wanted to be."

With a focus still on Chad's immediate needs, Jeremy secured a motel voucher, arranged for food boxes and helped Chad begin the process to secure a State issued ID, SNAP benefits and a new phone through the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Before moving into housing, Chad also spent one week at the detox program at Rainier Springs. In the meantime, Jacky worked on Chad's housing and through ARP contract funds, Share was able to pay the move-in fee and two months of rent.

"I helped him to move in and met with the house manager to ensure a smooth transition," said Jeremy.

After a few months, Chad decided that Oxford House would be better suited for him to reach his goals. So Jeremy once again helped with the move-in.

"Chad is still clean and sober and he loves the new program. He is always so positive and grateful and is a major success story for true collaboration between agencies. As long as we all work together, we can accomplish great things."

■ Cleaning Up Our Community, One Bag at a Time

Just an hour spent with the staff of Share's Talkin' Trash program shows you the dedication they have to their work.

"Sorry our 'office' is wet," joked Vernon. Rainy days are common and don't prevent the team from visiting their regular sites for clean-up or new ones that are requested by community members.

On a particularly wet Tuesday in March, the team of five visited and cleaned up two sites in just under an hour. The first was a regular stop and served as an ideal, hands-on training space for a potential new team member, David.

"Safety is a priority," said Tony Colin, Talkin' Trash Supervisor. "And I wouldn't ask my team to do anything I wouldn't do."

As Vernon, Domenoch, Aundre and Jonathan got to work, Tony provided training to David in real-time: be sure to alert occupants when you arrive and ask if you can provide them with information on needed resources; this is the way to safely collect sharp items, including syringes; make sure not to overfill bags, which makes them heavy to carry and to lift into the truck; don't forget to secure bags closed so they don't spill; and more.



The next stop was an illegal dump site. There was a heaping pile beneath the canopy of Evergreen trees which was just feet, ironically, from a 'No Dumping' sign.

"It's amazing what people just throw away," said Tony.

A bookcase, a wooden desk and chair, a suitcase and a red and green floral lawn chair pad; multiple bags and boxes of food, some partially empty and others unopened; a baby bottle, paperback books, a ceramic dinner plate, towels and a floor rug; and many more everyday items amongst the mud and rocks.

And there was plenty of garbage as well. *"The worst part for me is the squishy, icky stuff,"* said Aundre. He also shared that you learn early to sift through and pick up garbage carefully and in small amounts because you never know what you might find.

They filled 18, 55-gallon sized bags and had the site cleaned in about 15 minutes. They would come back later to transport the larger pieces directly to the dump.

In 2022, the program collected a staggering 279 tons. In visual terms, that's equivalent to the weight of 46 African elephants.

Currently or previously experiencing homelessness is a commonality for the team members. But their life experiences are unique.

"I left my job as an essential worker, but wasn't ready to retire. I had heard about Talkin' Trash and I wanted to help the community," said Vernon.



Domenoch lived at The Outpost, Vancouver's first Safe Stay Community, when he was first hired.

Staff are paid minimum wage and each week they can use eight hours of paid time for self-development. This could include meeting with a Housing Navigator to secure housing, going to a medical appointment, obtaining education or even interviewing for a new job.

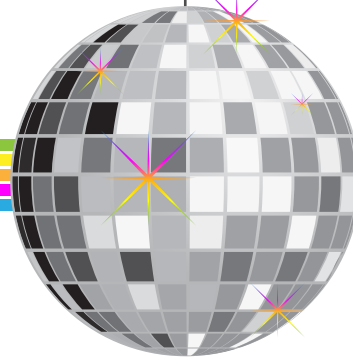
Talkin' Trash operates through grant funding from the City of Vancouver and there is an eye on expansion to serve more local communities.

The program is transformative, helping people who are most in need with employment, benefits and training, with a focus on securing housing. **Tony's supervisory style as a coach is key, helping him to connect with each employee, with success measured by each staff who graduates from the program.** *"We're happy for them when they move on. It means the program is working."*



presents:

DISCO FEVER



groove at the Share gala!

Supported by: Pacific Lifestyle HOMES

Join us for a night of Celebration!

Saturday, April 22

Hilton Hotel Vancouver

Registration opens 4:30 p.m.

Dinner served at 6:00 p.m.

With emcees Ali Novinger and Jennifer Rhoads!

- Sponsorship Table of 10: \$2,000
Includes 2 bottles of wine, 2 guests at VIP Reception prior to the event, cocktails & appetizers, plus event recognition!

- Individual Tickets: \$150

Reserve your seats: sharevancouver.org
(Click 'Events' then 'Disco Fever')

Sponsorships available!

Contact Tenly Hall at thall@sharevancouver.org

Silent Auction: online + exclusive items for event attendees only!

Silent Auction Sponsor:



Photobooth & Red Carpet—smile!

Photobooth Sponsor:

Disco-themed **Centerpieces!**

Centerpiece Sponsor:

Raffle Tickets: win 1-week in an Oahu condo!

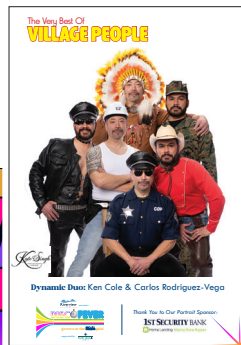
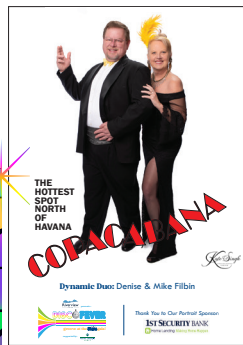
Raffle Sponsor:

Heads & Tails: win a pair of 14kt white gold chandelier earrings with 1.1 cts of diamonds!
(Retail value: \$3,000)

Thank you to:

Plus 'Vote' with a donation for your favorite **Dynamic Duo** & stay for our **Earthquake Ethel's Disco Dance After Party!**

Are you a We Share Member? You may have access to free or reduced-fee tickets.
Contact Amy Hammerstrom at ahammerstrom@sharevancouver.org to claim your seats!



■ Volunteer Spotlight: Getta Burns

As shared by Holley Walhood,
Hot Meal Food Coordinator

I met Getta on the first day she volunteered and we became fast friends. Getta is such an amazing asset to our program; she's funny, she's sassy and she is always eager to help in any way needed.

When she was learning the ropes, she was focused on learning all the little details of how every task needed to be done. I told her, *"There are many ways to do things and you are free to do what you think is best."*

That was all it took; she was off to the races, organizing everything, cleaning, sweeping, sorting, making sandwiches and filling sack lunches.

She was such a breath of fresh air! She has blessed and enriched both my life and the lives of our clients immensely. Everything she does, she does it with a smile on her face.



Getta is very kind and friendly to all the guests that come into the Share House dining room to eat meals. She chats and jokes with them, making them laugh.

Every Friday she comes in a half an hour early with a coffee in each hand. We take a few minutes to sit and relax, enjoy the warmth and

flavor of our coffee and catch up on the events of the week. And every time she leaves at the end of her volunteer shift...our space is immaculate and organized!

Getta is a beautiful spirit with such a kind and loving heart. I'm so blessed to know her and I would say that everyone who meets her feels the same way.

Volunteer to Feed Our Community!



- Pack & deliver 1,000+ weekly food bags for kids & their families
- Prepare & serve 6,800+ monthly free meals to the community



Share
hot meals
program

Sign-up Online Today: sharevancouver.org/volunteer

■ Donor Spotlight: The Linen Closet

A clean, warm and inviting bed is a welcome comfort to us all at the end of the day. And it's especially important for people moving into shelter or new housing. Few people understand this more than Lynn Finley and her family, who opened The Linen Closet in 2018.

The organization accepts donations of new sheets, comforters and pillows, which are distributed to nonprofits that work with people who are experiencing homelessness, including Share.

"Even though we have grown and serve shelters in seven states now, we especially love serving our home community here in Vancouver. Since 2019, we have delivered 160+ new sheets sets and 30+ blankets/comforters to Share," said Lynn.

"We strive to deliver comfort, hope and dignity to families and individuals who are experiencing hardship. Nothing feels as good as a clean pair of sheets to rest your head or tuck your child into at night."

"We always look forward to meeting the Share team when we bring new bed linens. In fact, we have more sheets to deliver in the next week or so as a result of our Second Annual "Love Your Neighbor" Sheet Drive," she added.

Share's volunteer department will be grateful for the delivery.

"Lynn seriously keeps our beds ready for clients and we are so grateful for this continued partnership," said Molly Evjen, Director of Volunteers and Community Resources.



Join us on Sunday, October 15 at ilani for Soup's On!

This year's theme is Soup-er Heroes!

Superheroes, like the clients served by Share, are diverse and encompass various genders, races, and backgrounds.

We encourage you to come dressed as your favorite, whomever she or he or they may be.

You can also just come as you are, because everyone can be a hero for our community by helping us to raise vital funds to support children, teens, women, men and senior citizens right here in Clark County.

**Batman (aka Bryce Davidson) and Thor (aka Eric Sawyer) say:
Don't miss it, it's gonna be Soup-er! (Pun intended!)**



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Donations small & large
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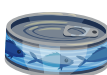


■ Mark Your Calendar to Support Our Appeal for Meals Donate Dollars: June 5-11 + Food Drive: June 1

Our annual Appeal for Meals raises vital funds to support our Fresh Food Pantries, Backpack, Summer Meals, Outreach and Hot Meals programs—and *need for food assistance remains at an all-time high!*

These programs annually provide:

- 252,000+ lbs. of non-perishable food to 85 schools
- 160,000+ lbs. of fresh produce, dairy, eggs & bread at 18 local schools
- 84,150+ free meals to the public
- 12,550+ free summer meals to kids 18 & under at 18+ locations
- 2,376 hotel bags
- 972 kid-friendly food boxes to 27 local schools

you  **help!**

Make a **financial donation** June 5-11

Become a **Matching Donor** for our campaign; contact Kim Hash at khash@sharevancouver.org

Drop off a donation of **non-perishable food** during our Food Drive on June 1 (*details at right*)

Host a Food Drive (*details at right*)

**FINANCIAL DONATIONS
 WILL BE MATCHED!**



FOOD DRIVE

Thursday, June 1 | 12 to 6 p.m.

Share Fromhold Service Center, 2306 NE Andresen Rd.

- Canned or easy-open chicken & tuna
- Canned soup (*not condensed ideal*)
- Peanut Butter (*no glass jars, 28 oz or less*)
- Canned fruit & fruit cups
- Chili (*pop top ideal*)
- Squeezable apple sauce, smoothies & yogurt
- Pasta (*2 lb. or less*)
- Rice (*2 lb. or less*)
- Mac & cheese, Cup O' Noodles
- Chewy granola & snack bars
- Cheese and/or peanut butter crackers
- Reusable grocery bags

Host a Food Drive!

We can provide a list of high-need items, plus blue collection barrels. For details, contact Maggie at (564) 888-0821 (call/text) or mbernetich@sharevancouver.org.

