2023 ANNUAL REPORT





Community in action for a sustainable and food-secure future









































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MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Oh, what a year! In 2023, Vancouver Food Runners (VFR) scaled by 51% in terms of pounds of food delivered by volunteers to support Metro Vancouver nonprofits operating essential food programs. Through rain, snow, weekends, and holidays, dedicated VFR volunteers completed 6959 food rescues and delivered 1.26 million pounds of food (1 million equivalent meals) - a truly remarkable community achievement.

We would also like to give a huge "shout out" to VFR team members, Chloe, Kelsey, and Courtney, who beautifully navigated through a tremendous growth period while maintaining program excellence each and every day.

VFR's tech-based, efficient, and cost-effective food recovery model (powered by the Food Rescue Hero app and a team of volunteer drivers) increases access to food recovery Metro Vancouver. VFR's work supports the regional circular economy, normalizes the donation of surplus food in the industry, and advances sustainable practices in the food sector. In 2023, 150 food businesses donated healthy surplus food (91% fresh!) to 145 nonprofit partners operating essential food programs.

VFR's free program makes food recovery accessible to new sectors of the food industry, including hotels, restaurants, and catering and meal prep companies. Responsive volunteers provide same-day collection for smaller food donations and get food directly to nearby nonprofits. Through the program, 2.1 million pounds of CO2eq was mitigated last year.

At VFR, we also recognize that food recovery cannot solve food insecurity. That said, the need for food is urgent - food is expensive to purchase and food insecurity is rising in Metro Vancouver. As such, VFR plays a significant role in supporting nonprofits with critical food donations.

83.7% of the nonprofit partners that receive food deliveries through VFR's program provide additional supportive services, including housing, counselling, health services, educational and skill-building opportunities, employment services, childcare, and cultural programming.

At VFR, we aim to strategically partner with organizations engaged in deeper systems change work that leads to transformational outcomes for clients.

In 2023, VFR also had exciting developments in key program areas, which you can learn more about in this report: VFR's community meal program (pg. 7); student volunteer program (pg. 8); hub-and-spoke food delivery program (pg. 9); and VFR's e-newsletter (pg. 10).

We also acknowledge the support and partnership of the University of British Columbia (three practicum students led program monitoring and evaluation projects); the Sage Foundation Grow Program, which provided dedicated support for program developments throughout 2023; and key partners/stakeholders, including the City of Vancouver, Metro Vancouver, Vancouver Food Policy Council, Westside Food Collaborative, Vancouver Food Justice Coalition, Vancouver Circular Food Coalition, and all the incredible organizations in the food recovery space in the region. It is an honour to collaborate with so many individuals and partners working towards a just, equitable, resilient, and sustainable food system for all.

Heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported VFR's program in 2023. The program is a true community initiative (over 350 community members are involved each month!); and we truly could not do it without the instrumental support of volunteers, businesses, nonprofits, financial partners; and special thanks to the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlílwəta? H/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations on whose land we live, learn, and work.









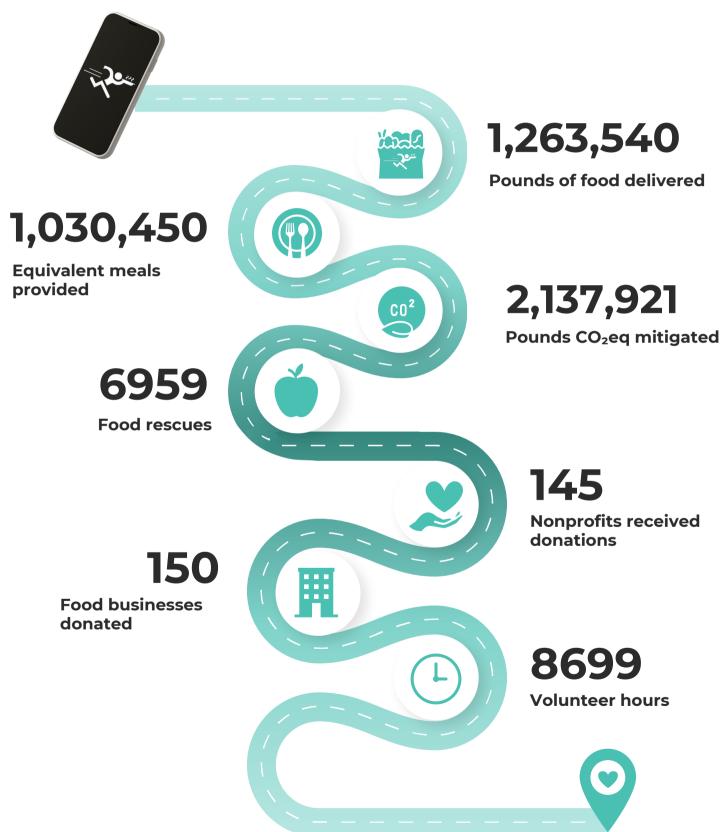


Michelle Reining Executive Director

2023 IN REVIEW







Food Business Partners:

Increasing access to food recovery in Metro Vancouver

Vancouver Food Runners leverages app technology (powered by Food Rescue Hero) and a dedicated team of volunteer drivers to redirect healthy surplus food from 150 businesses to 145 nonprofits across Metro Vancouver. In 2023, 1.02 million pounds of surplus food was integrated into essential community food programming (in-kind value: \$3.28 million); and 2.14 million pounds of CO2eq was mitigated from the environment, strengthening the local circular economy.

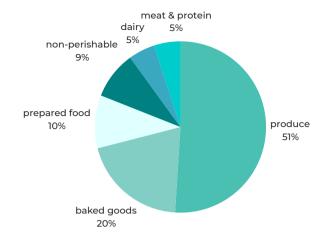
Through the innovative use of technology and volunteers, VFR's program model has made food recovery accessible to businesses that have traditionally faced challenges donating, including restaurants, hotels, catering companies, urban farms, offices, and wholesalers. Additionally, VFR's flexible, same-day collection process allows for a focus on fresh surplus food: in 2023, 91% of VFR donations were fresh (51% produce, 10% prepared meals, 10% meat and dairy, 20% baked goods).

Additionally, the Food Rescue Hero app platform allows VFR to provide all food donor partners with comprehensive data, which supports their efforts to prevent food waste within their operations.

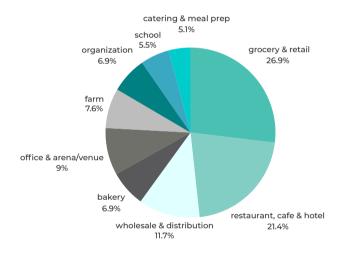
In the 2023 Food Donor Feedback Survey (conducted in partnership with UBC), these were the top three areas where VFR's food recovery program was working "extremely well" for businesses:

- 1) Effectiveness in coordination with VFR staff
- 2) Reliability of food donation collection
- 3) Supporting businesses in managing their surplus food

TYPES OF FOOD DELIVERED



TYPES OF BUSINESSES



Providing a free, simple, reliable, same-day food recovery service for all Metro Vancouver food businesses

UBC

tood

"UBC is proud to partner with Vancouver Food Runners. Environmental impacts from food waste and food security are both important issues that we work towards improving on our campus; and our partnership with VFR helps us with both of them. Beyond the positive impacts of being able to recover edible food, VFR is also very easy to work with. Their system is easy to use and their networks are always responsive. We are grateful for the work that VFR does in our community."

David Speight
Executive Chef & Culinary Director
University of British Columbia

"Sole Food Street Farms is grateful for a fruitful partnership with Vancouver Food Runners! Their dedicated staff and volunteers paired with an innovative end-to-end system seamlessly connects the local food system to ensure good food isn't wasted. As an urban farm social enterprise, this partnership ensures we can easily meet our objective each season to donate 1/3 of our harvest back to the community."

Heather Farmer
Program Manager
Sole Food Street Farms



Volunteering with VFR:

Community in action for a sustainable and food-secure future

Vancouver Food Runners is a true community program, and our food transport model relies upon a team of dedicated volunteer drivers to collect the food from a business or organization and deliver it directly to a nonprofit partner.

In 2023, 3177 individuals were registered on the VFR app, and 342 were active volunteer drivers. Together, volunteers delivered 1.26 million pounds of food to Metro Vancouver nonprofits to support the community and increase sustainable practices in the food sector.

Given VFR's large volunteer base, 99.4% of food rescues were completed, ensuring program reliability for both food businesses and nonprofits.

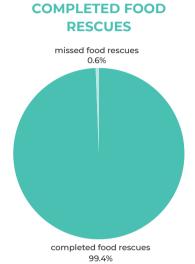
In 2023, an average single food rescue delivered 181 pounds of food, mitigated 362 pounds of CO2eq, and represented an in-kind food donation worth \$581. For those giving their time, this represents high impact volunteering. Volunteers also appreciate that volunteering with VFR is straightforward and flexible; and parents share that it is a meaningful and educational activity they can do with their kids.

VFR also brings volunteers together through community events. In 2023, events included an in-person volunteer feedback session, a top volunteer appreciation event, two film screenings, and six VFR virtual volunteer tutorial sessions. In addition, a 2-minute VFR volunteer video was created in 2023.





In 2023, volunteers completed 6959 food rescues totalling 8699 volunteer hours.



88% of food rescues were completed by weekly volunteers

Meaningful, flexible, high impact volunteering that can be done with friends & family

"Being there for our neighbours fills my heart."

"Fabulous way to give back! Super easy!"

"Knowing that the food isn't going to end up in the waste bin, but in somebody's belly, is well worth the few minutes it takes."

"When there are people in need, community comes to the rescue. It is inspiring to see all the great work that thousands of people are doing in the city every day."

"As my work schedule varies a lot, it is a volunteer activity that can work around that."



Nonprofit Recipients:

Supporting Metro Vancouver nonprofits operating essential food programs

In 2023, VFR volunteers were able to deliver 1.26 million pounds of food (1.02 million pounds of surplus and 240,725 pounds of food delivery support) to 145 nonprofit partners operating essential food programs.

For residents experiencing food insecurity, being able to access healthy food in their own neighbourhood is a lifeline and helps to increase equitable food access. As reported in VFR's 2023 Nonprofit Partner Feedback Survey, the top four barriers to regular food access for clients were: 1) food prices/low income; 2) access to transportation; 3) mental health challenges; and 4) physical mobility challenges.

83.7% of nonprofit partners that received food through VFR's program provide additional supportive services, including housing, counselling, health services, educational and skill-building opportunities, employment services, childcare, and cultural programming.

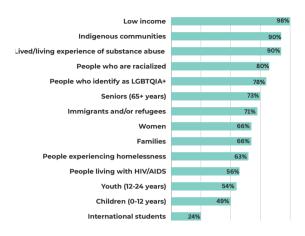
Food donations cannot solve food insecurity, and we aim to strategically partner with organizations engaged in deeper systems change work that leads to transformational outcomes for clients accessing comprehensive social services.

Many of the organizations we partner with provide community meals and food boxes, recognizing that underlying food insecurity must be addressed for client programming to be successful.

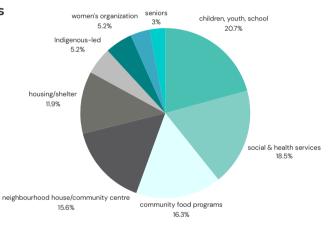
In the 2023 Nonprofit Partner Feedback survey, the top four outcomes of VFR food donations were:

- 1) More food distributed to clients (expanded food programming)
- 2) Increased food choices for clients
- 3) Improved quality of food for clients
- 4) Helped clients/residents cover their own food costs

POPULATIONS SERVED BY NONPROFITS



NONPROFITS RECEIVING FOOD





"Your donations have a profound impact on the lives of our tenants. They provide our tenants with not only nourishment, but also a renewed sense of hope and dignity. Your unwavering support has created a strong sense of community within our organization. It also has inspired us all to work towards a more compassionate, inclusive society and work to create a brighter future for those in need."



"Vancouver Food Runners has provided fresh fruits and vegetables to our community and to our programs. The facilitators use the food donations to provide snacks for participants who attend the various programs. In addition, the food donations are accessible - people in the community can come and help themselves to what they need. We have families, seniors, adults, and unhoused people accessing the donations. VFR has positively impacted our programs and enhanced access to fresh fruits and vegetables to the Marpole community. We would not be able to access the food donations if Vancouver Food Runners did not handle pickup, delivery, and coordination of the food donations. We do not have access to vehicles to pick up and labour time to coordinate food donations."



More Than Words

































Community Meal Program (

In partnership with <u>Chef TJ Conwi</u> of <u>Ono Vancouver</u> and <u>ReRoot</u>, Vancouver Food Runners has been supporting a community meal program that uses surplus ingredients to create nourishing meals for Vancouver residents experiencing food insecurity. VFR volunteers bring surplus food donations to Coho Commissary, then Chef TJ and his team use the ingredients to make healthy meals; and, finally, VFR volunteers pick up the meals and deliver them to Vancouver nonprofits participating in the program.

In 2023, 38,100 meals were delivered by VFR volunteers to YWCA (Crabtree Corner), Aboriginal Front Door Society, Directions Youth Services, Kilala Lelum, Health Initiative for Men, and Tamura House (Lookout Housing and Health Society).

VFR and Chef TJ also had the pleasure of working with film director, Ben Cox, on a Telus Originals documentary, The Interceptors, which highlighted the community meal program and its impact.



Using surplus ingredients to create nourishing and delicious community meals

"The food prepared by Chef TJ's team at Ono Vancouver has been a much appreciated and very tasty treat for our community at YWCA Crabtree Corner. The meals they deliver reach 100 participants three times a week during our daily free lunch program. Those attending include families living in our housing units, families attending our daycare, seniors, and folks hungry for a lunch. The community expresses excitement when they see delicious spring rolls or vegetarian curries served. The weekly meals we receive in-kind means we are not having to spend as much cost on cooking the daily meals, so some of the savings help to continue our much-needed Grocery Hamper Program. We are truly grateful for the ongoing support from Chef TJ and Ono Vancouver."

May Kwan, Community Programs Manager, YWCA (Crabtree Corner)



















Student Volunteer Program 🚇

In 2023, Vancouver Food Runners continued to develop its Volunteer Program for High School Students. This program is an immersive learning experience, engaging students in high-impact food rescues and fostering meaningful discussions around critical social issues. Using a school bus, students actively participate in rescuing surplus food, typically ranging from 500 to 1500 pounds per day, from local businesses and deliver it to nearby nonprofits.

At food businesses, VFR staff facilitate discussions on food waste prevention and advancing the circular economy. At nonprofit sites, leaders share information on the intersections between food insecurity, poverty, health, and other key societal issues. By actively participating in food rescues, students gain firsthand experience in the logistics of redistributing surplus food, which deepens their understanding of increasing sustainable practices in the food sector and social responsibility.

In 2023, 16 student volunteer sessions were completed, and 230 students participated. Collectively, the students rescued 15,500 pounds of surplus food, underscoring the program's tangible community impact. As VFR continues to expand its educational initiatives, it remains committed to inspiring the next generation of leaders and fostering values of social responsibility and sustainability.



Youth in action for a better tomorrow

"The VFR Volunteer School Program has been an incredible experiential learning opportunity for our school community. All students in the Senior School at York House School have been given the opportunity to take part in a local food rescue, learn from both Chloe and Kelsey about food insecurity, and also visit Evan at the Heart Tattoo Society, who explains the incredible work that is being done in Vancouver to support the community. The content in the sessions is tailored to meet the needs and questions of the students, with topics covered varying from future careers in nonprofits, to the societal issues affecting the Downtown Eastside, to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. They also learned about the importance of dignity in the choice of food available and the regularity of food offered, as central to the organization's mission. When students return to school after each session, it is clear the learning that has taken place and the impact that the experiential learning opportunity has had on them. Thank you SO much Vancouver Food Runners!"

Lizzie Gregory, Coordinator of Community & Experiential Learning, York House School

"Collingwood's partnership with Vancouver Food Runners allowed our Grade 8 and 9 students to be immersed in a day of community engagement, service learning, and ethical social action that shapes their involvement in volunteerism and service learning into higher grades. Though we knew we were signing up to meet enthusiastic and knowledgeable Food Runners' staff, we did not know that the program would act as a reliable bridge in creating community partnerships that continue to shape our other service learning and community engagement programs."

Brad Jolliffe, Assistant Director of Student Life, Collingwood School







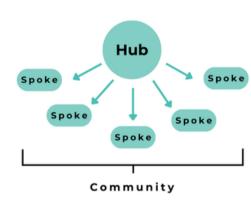
Hub-and-Spoke Food Delivery

VFR volunteers provided several organizations, including South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, CityReach Care Society, DTES Distribution Hub/Heart Tattoo Society, and Delta Starfish Pack Program, with hub-and-spoke food delivery support. In 2023, 240,725 pounds of food was delivered by VFR volunteers to assist organizations needing additional food transport support for their programs.

The hub-and-spoke model provides a means of food distribution that relies on a central hub location (where the food is organized/prepared) and a number of spokes (peripheral sites where the food is distributed to the community). Rather than clients having to travel to larger food bank sites, which can be difficult due to time, transportation challenges, mobility issues, cost, and childcare, they can access food at smaller food distribution sites (spokes) in their own neighbourhood. This allows for increased food access and more equitable food distribution.

When VFR volunteers support with delivering food from the hub to the spoke sites, this allows nonprofit staff to focus more of their time, money, energy, and resources on their core program work as well as supporting clients directly. Nonprofit staff have immense gratitude for this food delivery service that VFR volunteers provide.





"VFR Food Rescue Heroes who support our program (huge shout-out to regular volunteers like Doug, Anna, and Kulwant!) are so crucial to helping us ensure that food reaches neighbours who need it the most. By supporting the transportation side of our hub-and-spoke model, you are allowing SVNH and our partners to be more efficient, save money (as it reduces the need for trucks and drivers), and have more time to connect people to services beyond food, like employment programs, childcare, and government benefits.

Most importantly, you are helping community members access food, connection, and resources closer to home. This gives people more breathing room, which is huge when they are experiencing multiple barriers, and frees them up to spend more time with their loved ones, get back on their own feet, and give back to the community.

In 2023, VFR volunteers delivered 69,822 pounds of food from our Food Hub at Langara to spoke partners. The direct impact of the work we do together is astounding. Thank you for supporting us and the community!"

Joey Liu, Food Security Manager, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House Food Hub





















VFR E-newsletter



In 2023, VFR sent out 26 bi-weekly e-newsletters to 1435 subscribers. VFR's newsletter aims to foster community, share food systems knowledge, advocate for progressive policy changes, and amplify and celebrate diverse voices in the food community. Last year, VFR's newsletter had an average open rate of 55.6% and is widely enjoyed by VFR's volunteer base.

VFR newsletters featured contributions from 11 food systems leaders and academics, five food businesses and partners, six VFR lead volunteers, and four VFR program updates. The newsletter features provide a deeper understanding of key food systems issues for readers.

Sharing knowledge & advancing a just, equitable, and sustainable food system for all



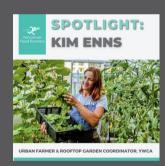






























2023 Financial Overview 🌉

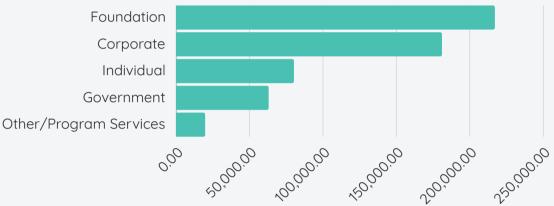


In 2023, Vancouver Food Runners continued to maintain a lean administrative footprint, with 95% of expenditures going directly to support food program costs (only 5% for administration). Given VFR's substantial growth in 2023 (51%), and the need to expand the team, VFR successfully fundraised for additional positions in 2024.

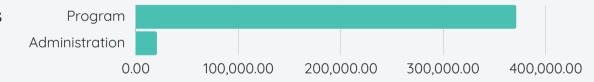
Efficient food recovery model: Through VFR's innovative use of app technology and a team of volunteer drivers, VFR is able to keep its program costs low. VFR volunteers are able to deliver food donations from businesses directly to nonprofit partners for their food programming, so our food recovery model does not require a warehouse, fridges/freezers, large trucks, or salaried drivers.

High-impact giving: In 2023, every \$1 donated to VFR resulted in over \$10 worth of food (more than 3 meals) being delivered to the community. For our financial partners, this represents a high value return on donation investment.





2023 Expenditures Total: \$391,796





John Nelson, CPA. **CGA Director**



"Through the 2023 year, Vancouver Food Runners has continued to maintain a lean administrative footprint with 95% of operating costs devoted to service delivery. Despite maintaining a similar expenditure level as the prior year, the Society was able to expand service delivery by 51%. Given this substantial program growth, plans for additional positions are in place for 2024 to allow for additional expanded service. Thanks to the incredible efforts of the team, significant fundraising was undertaken to fund these future positions. The 2023 calendar year ended with a surplus, which is earmarked for VFR's expansion plans in 2024. The Society's strategy of pursuing diverse revenue streams to fund its operations has left it in a strong financial position going into 2024."

2023 Financial Partners Thank would



Vancouver Food Runners operates a free food recovery program for Metro Vancouver food businesses and nonprofits, ensuring that food recovery is accessible and convenient for businesses that wish to donate their surplus food. This work supports Vancouver's circular economy and helps to normalize the donation of surplus food within the food sector.

VFR would like to thank the following foundations, companies, institutions, and individuals for their instrumental financial support in 2023. We simply could not do it without you.





































































1988 Foundation

Andrew Mahon Foundation

At The Kitchen Table Foundation

Bajus Financial Partners

Dillon Consulting

Doug Soo Memorial Fund, held at the Vancouver Foundation

Dr. Ann Worth Charitable Foundation

Dragon Fire Fund, held at the Vancouver Foundation

John Hardie Mitchell Family Foundation

Kennedy Duncan Foundation

Ketcham Family Fund, held at the Vancouver Foundation

Lightburn Family Foundation, held at the Vancouver

Foundation

Local Content Telus Team

Munford Family Foundation

Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship

Ouesnel Foundation

The Harvey and Jody Dales Philanthropic Foundation

The Tuey Charitable Foundation

The Hamber Foundation

The Wolrige Foundation Walsh Foundation

Wray Foundation

Y.P. Heung Foundation

Woodwards Products Limited Zacks Family Charitable Foundation

ZLC Foundation

Over \$1000

Bill & Risa Levine Christian Co Darcy Greiner Dean McDonald Deborah Cooney Gary Baker John A. Scott **Mark Schaller**

Sharon Thiessen

Over \$250

Alan & Gwendoline Pyatt Barb Estey Bruce & Kathie Jagger **Connie Tsang** Craig Berkey **Cynthia Woodward** Dave Rawlyk **Eric Lidemark Golnar Sepahi** Gwendolyn Yip & Santa Ono Tricia Armstrong Heidi Pullem **Hugh Drummond** Isabelle Robinson Joanne Chong Kim Mackie Krishna Pendakur Lakeisha Yui

Maia Courtenay Matthew Dallen Michael Epp Nancy & Jim Boyle Nancy & David Johnson **Negin Alavi Susan Christie Thomas Zuiderveen Trevor Brady Vincent Law Wendy Harris Whitney Bekkers**

Top 100 Volunteers in 2023 🕌



VFR's community-centred food recovery program relies upon the support of hundreds of volunteer food drivers who ensure that healthy food is delivered to nonprofit partners across Metro Vancouver operating essential food programs.

VFR would like to give a special thank you to our lead volunteers in 2023. Your support means the world to us, and you help to keep VFR's program running strong through rainy and snowy days, weekends, and holidays. The dedication of all our volunteers inspires the VFR team each and every day.















Luciano Loi **Barb Estey Carrie Trousdell** Mona Shad Sasha A Scott Ellis Raquel & Raul Mancenido Beth McCracken Anna Kam Greg Aulin VJ & Heather Kulwant Bhullar Julie Marsden **Gai Coutts** Lauren Mavnard Holly Liu Elaine Perry Catherine Marino Mike Woodbridge Donna Cho Jim & Nancy Boyle Janice Johnson Yin Murray **Richard Steward**

David Draeseke

Guy Gareau Enzo Federico Ann Moore Amanda Walsh Tim King Lawrence Ng **Lindsay Gowler** Otis Yuen Janet McDonnell Harry Tam Doug Miller Jill Schroder Teresa Clark Elaine Wynne Roger Hanna Kai Chang Dominique St jean Luc Hervieux Yvona Los Hilary Angus **Garth Munro & Susie** Gerken Cheryl Steele Richard Babcock Ming Lam Jenn Mason

Kelly Neil Susan Heathcote **Gary Horswell** Michelle Chen **Tom Smith Garry Shearer** Stephan Wehner Azizah Rajwani Jan Waines Michelle Gordon Nadia Karmas Michael Cafferky Adrienne Martin Suzanne Steenburgh Loretta Janz Thomas Hicks Sue Wagner Joan Dublanko Pauline Chow Jim Pigott Jessica Quade Sarah Artuso Marianna Pankalla Michael Kurtz Wendy Quan

Annemarie Nordman Melissa Fong Alison Scarlett Karen Chua Jordan Irwin Gardner Hannah Smith **Grace Chan** Sarah Hamilton Pierre Lekkas Sheila Creighton Jess L Dave Rawlyk Andrea Brown Theresa Volk **David Frost** Alan Cheng Stan Levenhorst Paul Cultum Julie Selby Tammy Grinnell Syl Sak Wendy Underwood **Sharon Hanna** Jane Melo **Toby Wong**

Board of Directors

The VFR team would like to extend its immense gratitude to VFR's Board of Directors who provide ongoing support and guidance in the areas of strategic planning, governance, program development, fundraising, communications, and internal policies. Thank you!

Tristan Jagger

Debbie Butt

David Jagger

Wendy J. Harris

Dr. Debra von Mandl





Good food belongs to people, not landfills! Donate Today





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