
UVSS Food Bank and
Free Store

2017/2018 ANNUAL REPORT

By Alexandra Ages and
Josephine Simpson



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Territory acknowledgement	1
Overview	2
Highlights	3
Data Analysis	9
Challenges	12
Looking Forward	13
Conclusion	15

TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that the UVSS Food Bank and Free Store is located on the traditional territory of the Lkwungen-speaking peoples, specifically those of the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEĆ First Nations. More than that, however, we would like to recognize the importance of using a decolonizing framework within the context of food security, and within any social justice practice as a whole. As settlers on this land, we have a duty to recognize that the place we call home does not necessarily belong to us, and that the Indigenous peoples on whose traditional territory we reside have a history with this land that far predates the era of colonization.

Territory acknowledgements should not simply be a token gesture of empty faith; instead, we believe that they should reflect a far more broad reaching goal of using our privilege as settlers to work alongside self-identified Indigenous peoples, and to come together to both recognize and undo the harms of colonization.

As our community continues to grow, the importance of recognizing decolonization as a core element of our mandate grows too. With this in mind, we strive to ensure that territory acknowledgements, and the far deeper meaning that they represent, continue to be a part of our practice.

OVERVIEW

This past year has seen a number of changes to the UVSS Food Bank and Free Store, from staffing changes in August, program development throughout the fall, a referendum in the spring, and rising numbers of usage rates overall. Bringing both challenges and opportunities, the 2017-2018 school year has been, overall, an incredible success. We are incredibly grateful to our supporters from the UVSS team and from the SUB, our wonderful community supporters, and above all, our dedicated team of volunteers.



Just a few of our lovely volunteers!

HIGHLIGHTS

CLOTHING SWAPS

Some of our most popular events this year have been our clothing swaps, which have had great community turnout and have fostered new connections—all while working to eliminate wasteful fast fashion practices! We hosted two swaps this year: one in October, and one in March. Our March swap also included DIY craft and upcycling stations.

REFERENDUM SUCCESS

Thanks in large part to our amazing team of dedicated volunteers, we successfully passed a referendum for a fee increase of \$0.75/\$0.37, for full time and part time students, respectively. With a total of 84.2% of votes in favor of the resolution, the Food Bank team is deeply grateful to our volunteers, clients, and the broader Uvic campus community for helping us to fight for food security and accessibility.



HIGHLIGHTS

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

This year, we received a very generous donation from Hoyne Brewing, as well as support from various other community groups. We have also been supported by the Uvic Student Ambassadors, who have helped us to purchase a new fridge, and the Uvic Sustainability Fund, which has helped us to reduce our carbon footprint by eliminating unnecessary plastic bags. Due to these donations, grants, and the other support we have received, we are now on track to not only fully clear our debt, but finish the year with a small surplus. An additional donation from Phillips Brewery is forthcoming.

FOOD SHARE NETWORK

Currently, we are receiving deliveries from the Mustard Seed Street Church twice a week, which contain everything from fresh produce, to bread, to various yummy snacks. These deliveries are by far our most popular, and speak to the broader success of the Food Share Network's AMAZING food reclamation program with local businesses. By both reducing waste and helping to feed the hungry, this program has been incredible, and remains a favorite of our clients, staff, and volunteers.



HIGHLIGHTS

FOOD SKILLS CONNECTION

The Food Bank and Free Store continues to be a key member of the Food Skills Connection working group, partnering with the Shelbourne Community Kitchen, Community Living Victoria, the Campus Community Garden, and the Community Cabbage to address food insecurity in the Shelbourne/Tolmie region by hosting free food literacy workshops. This year, much of the focus of our work has been on organizational planning, as we worked to obtain a \$5000 Community Partnerships grant from VanCity. Happily, we received the grant, as well as an additional \$5000. With these funds, we have invested in a mobile kitchen kit that will allow us to bring our food literacy workshops to groups who are interested in what we have to offer, making our services more accessible to a diversity of community members. Our new workshop framework will also allow the Food Skills Connection to be contracted to host food skills workshops by other organizations, providing an income to supplement grant funding.



HIGHLIGHTS

WORKSHOPS

Over this academic year, we hosted two successful food skills workshops: “Winter Soup Showdown,” an introduction to basic soup- and broth-making, and “Kitchen Warm-Up,” a introduction to basic kitchen skills for youth. Kitchen Warm-Up was our first foray into mobile food skills workshops, and it was a resounding success. Being able to work with youth and their families/support workers at Community Living Victoria, a place that was known and comfortable to the demographic, was a huge asset. We are excited to move forwards with more frequent workshops as transition in to summer.

REMODELING THE SPACE

Over the 2018 spring reading break, we remodeled the Food Bank and Free Store space in order to increase efficiency and to promote accessibility. The change in layout has been very well-received by both volunteers and clients!



HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Over the past year, we have cultivated relationships with various on- and off-campus groups working towards broader social justice related goals. In January, we worked with the Victoria Women's March to promote their march, and received a generous donation of books following one of their book and bake sales. We have also fostered an informal partnership with the Uvic Students for Literacy Program, and now have multiple Food Bank clients who have children in the reading buddies program. We have also worked with Uvic's HerCampus chapter to support various events, including providing shoe boxes of donations to their Indigenous support program. Lastly, we have worked hard to engage with Uvic's international student body, specifically the ESL program, and were able to offer campaign materials in a total of nine different language due to our exceptional team of ESL-student translators.



HIGHLIGHTS

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

We have also invested in building stronger relationships with University administration, as many opportunities exist for collaboration and resource-sharing. In the fall, we met with Nicole Fetterly and Leanne Halligey, Campus Dietitians whose work targets many of the same areas of focus as ours: increasing student access to healthy, affordable food, increasing student food literacy, and creating a more holistic food system at UVic (including establishing a community kitchen on campus). We will work together to cross-promote events and opportunities and lobby UVic to prioritize student food security as it makes important planning decisions. We also reached out to David Protheroe, the Student Development and Programming Coordinator, with whom we may have the opportunity to build food literacy workshops tailored to students in residence. Our most recent collaboration was with Matt Greeno and Nadia Arriff, from Campus Planning and Sustainability and UVic Facilities. Matt and Nadia provided invaluable help in planning this year's Dump and Run event, sharing resources that we, as a student-run non-profit, simply do not have access to.



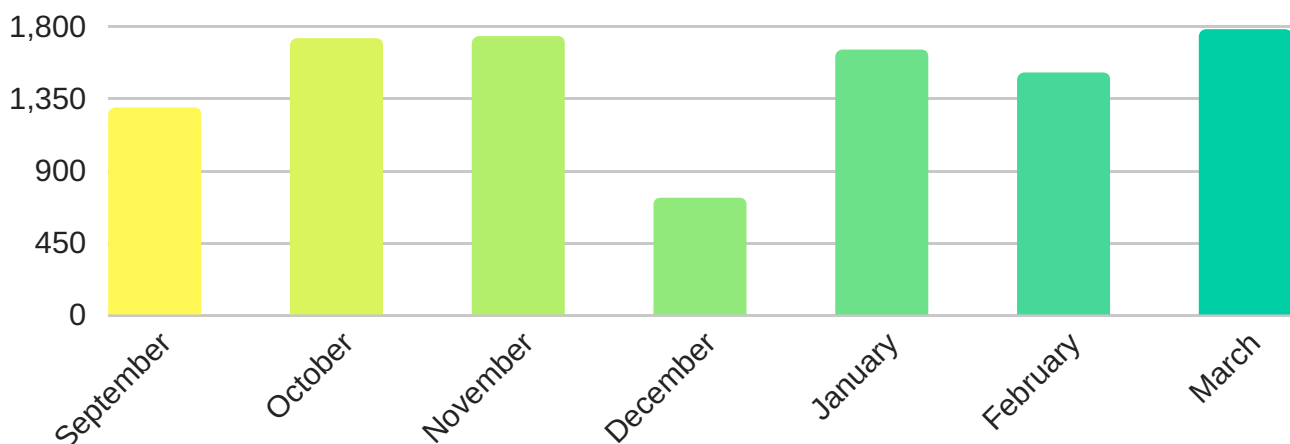
CAMPUS PLANNING
AND SUSTAINABILITY

BY THE NUMBERS

OVERVIEW

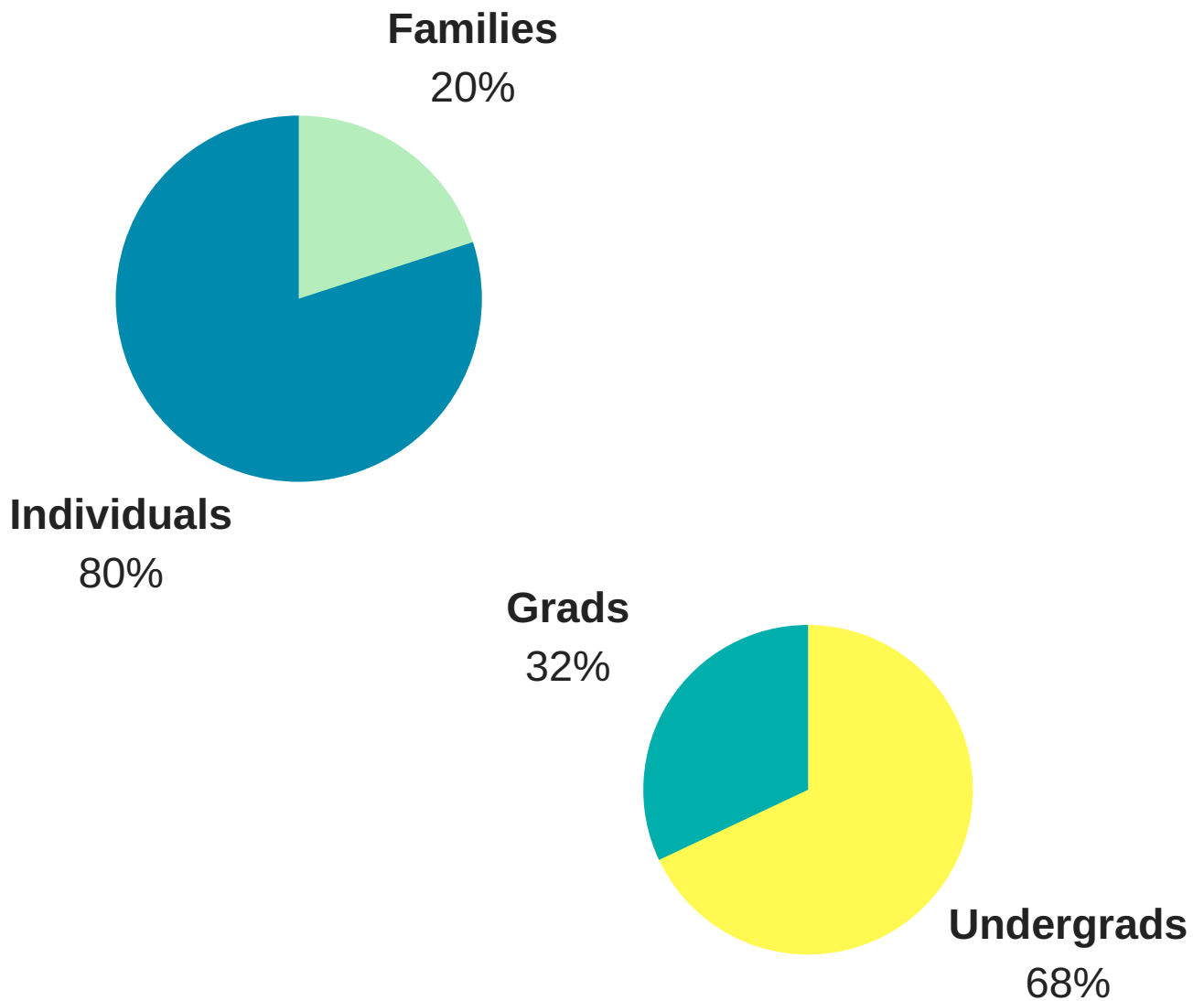
During the 2017 fall semester and 2018 winter semester, we saw a dramatic increase in Food Bank Usage. While we are grateful to be able to support so many folks, we believe that this is indicative of a broader issue of food security and economic inequality both on campus and in Victoria as a whole. In particular, we are concerned with the dramatic rise of family's needing to access our services, as well as the anecdotal evidence that has indicated that around 50% of our clients are international students. With international student fees set to rise 20% next year, we feel that usage will continue to rise as well, reflecting a lack of support given to Uvic's international student body. Overall, the increase in usage of our services by both domestic and international students is likely tied to Victoria's high cost of living, low minimum wage, and Uvic's tuition fees. With this in mind, we have and will continue to promote efforts to ensure that post-secondary education is accessible to as many people as possible by working to eliminate systemic barriers.

Total Number of Monthly Visits



BY THE NUMBERS

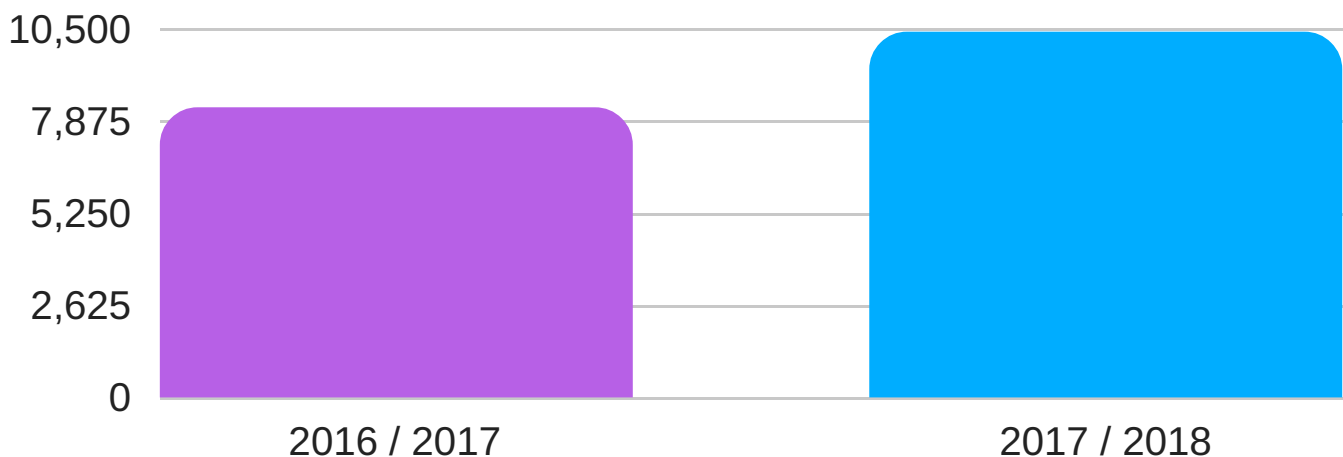
DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN



BY THE NUMBERS

YEAR TO YEAR COMPARISONS

Overall, the past two semesters have seen a 26% increase in food bank usage. In 2016-2017, the Food Bank logged a total of 8264 visits between September and March, whereas we saw 10,418 visits in 2017-2018 during that same timeline. Given the many different systemic factors that have contributed to this increase, it is highly unlikely that there will be a decrease in usage in the near future. We strive to continue to find new ways to meet rising demand for our services, and to promote food literacy within our community to reduce reliance on food banks overall.



OTHER CHALLENGES

LIMITED SPACE

As we now serve between 400-600 people each week, we've found the physical space of the food bank and free store to be increasingly limited. With popular deliveries such as the Mustard Seed produce shipment, we regularly see line ups of 20-30 people outside of our doors as we struggle to unload the food as quickly as possible. With our community continuing to grow, this is an issue that will only become more pronounced, and given the rate of growth we've seen over the past two years, the timeline for this particular problem is quite short. Our volunteers and clients are regularly bringing up concerns relating to the space, ranging from the chaos that comes from having 15 hungry people crowded together in a small room, to the accessibility concerns that come from a space not easily navigated by folks with different abilities. This issue is currently one of our key concerns, even more so than funding, as without the space to serve our community, our ability to help hungry students is limited. Though our small-scale renovations helped increase the accessibility of the space, the reality is that the UVSS Food Bank and Free Store needs a new home, and soon.

LOOKING FORWARD

OVERVIEW

As we conclude the 2018 winter semester, we look forward to new changes in the Food Bank and Free Store for the summer and fall semesters. With an increased budget, new projects that were previously unfeasible can now be considered, and in particular we now have the opportunity to pursue more community outreach.

CULTURAL FOODS PROGRAM

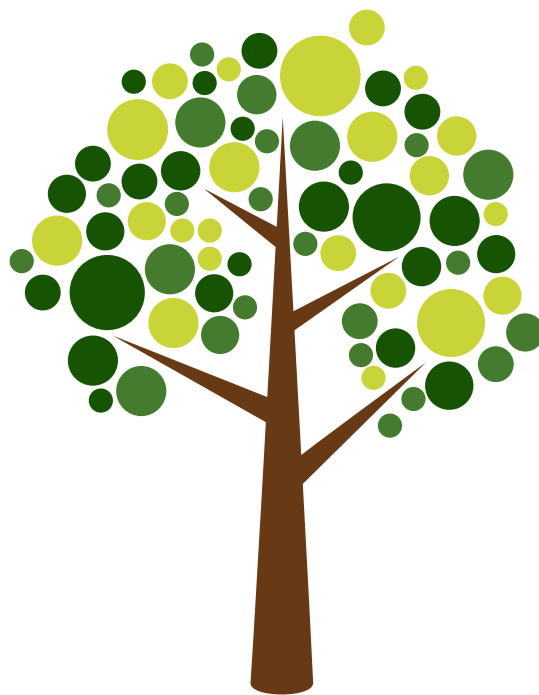
Originally in the works for 2017, this project was unfortunately set aside due to funding limitations. However, beginning in the fall of 2018, we hope to introduce this program officially, ideally in partnership with either VIPIRG or SOCC. As VIPIRG noted in their recent report, "Beyond Rice and Beans," there is a tremendous need for increased access to cultural foods, particularly for racialized students. In order to help meet this demand, we would like to purchase cultural foods directly from local immigrant-run businesses, and support distribution to Uvic community members. Throughout the summer, we hope to finalize the details of this program, and will hopefully launch it at the start of the new semester.



LOOKING FORWARD

SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL JUSTICE

With additional funding, we now have the resources on hand to not only continue our current sustainability initiatives, but to invest in more long term sustainable food security projects. We have currently cut back on 70% of our plastic bag usage, and will hopefully further those reductions in the fall of 2018. We've also worked to promote sustainability in our workshops and events, and now have the funds to incorporate even more environmentally-friendly elements into our food justice workshops. Above all, we look forward to continuing our partnerships with other members of the Uvic community who focus on long term sustainability, and hope to build even more partnerships in the future.



CONCLUSION

Overall, the past two semesters have brought with them numerous challenges, opportunities, and connections. With our amazing volunteer base and incredible clients, we have met the challenge of increased need for our services head on, and hope to continue feeding our community for as long as we are needed. From the referendum, to various workshops, to increased community work, this year has gifted us with numerous opportunities, all of which we are immensely grateful for. Above all, the 2017/2018 year was an amazing learning experience, with many lessons that can be applied in the future to continue supporting the Food Bank's growth.

On a less cheerful note, the conclusion of this semester also means the formal end of Josie's time here; as both an Assistant Coordinator and as a volunteer, Josie has contributed so much to both the food bank and to the broader Uvic community, and we will miss her dearly. However, we know that she will be pursuing her dreams in new and exciting ways, and feel confident that wherever she goes, she will bring her optimistic and supportive attitude. Thank you for a great year Josie!

We've achieved a lot this year, and look forward to all the possibilities that a new school year brings. As a whole, the food bank family has grown a lot these past few months, and we are extremely grateful to everybody in our community for their continued support.