

# potluck


Connecting People Through Good Food

## OUR ESG



### Potluck Catering

Potluck Catering is owned by Potluck Café Society; a non-profit organization based in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, dedicated to providing high-quality catering services while giving back to the community. Our unique business model ensures that 100% of our profits are reinvested into local initiatives that support the most vulnerable members of our society.

 604-609-7368

 [www.potluckcatering.org](http://www.potluckcatering.org)

# VISION

A DTES community where people enjoy opportunities for employment and self-determination despite obstacles and have dignified access to quality, nutritious food.

# MISSION

To improve the quality of life and economic vitality of the Downtown Eastside community by providing life skills, sustainable training, job opportunities, and accessible, nutritious meals to DTES residents.

# VALUES



**DIGNITY**



**COMMUNITY  
FOCUS**



**SUPPORTIVE  
EMPLOYMENT**



**ACCEPTANCE**



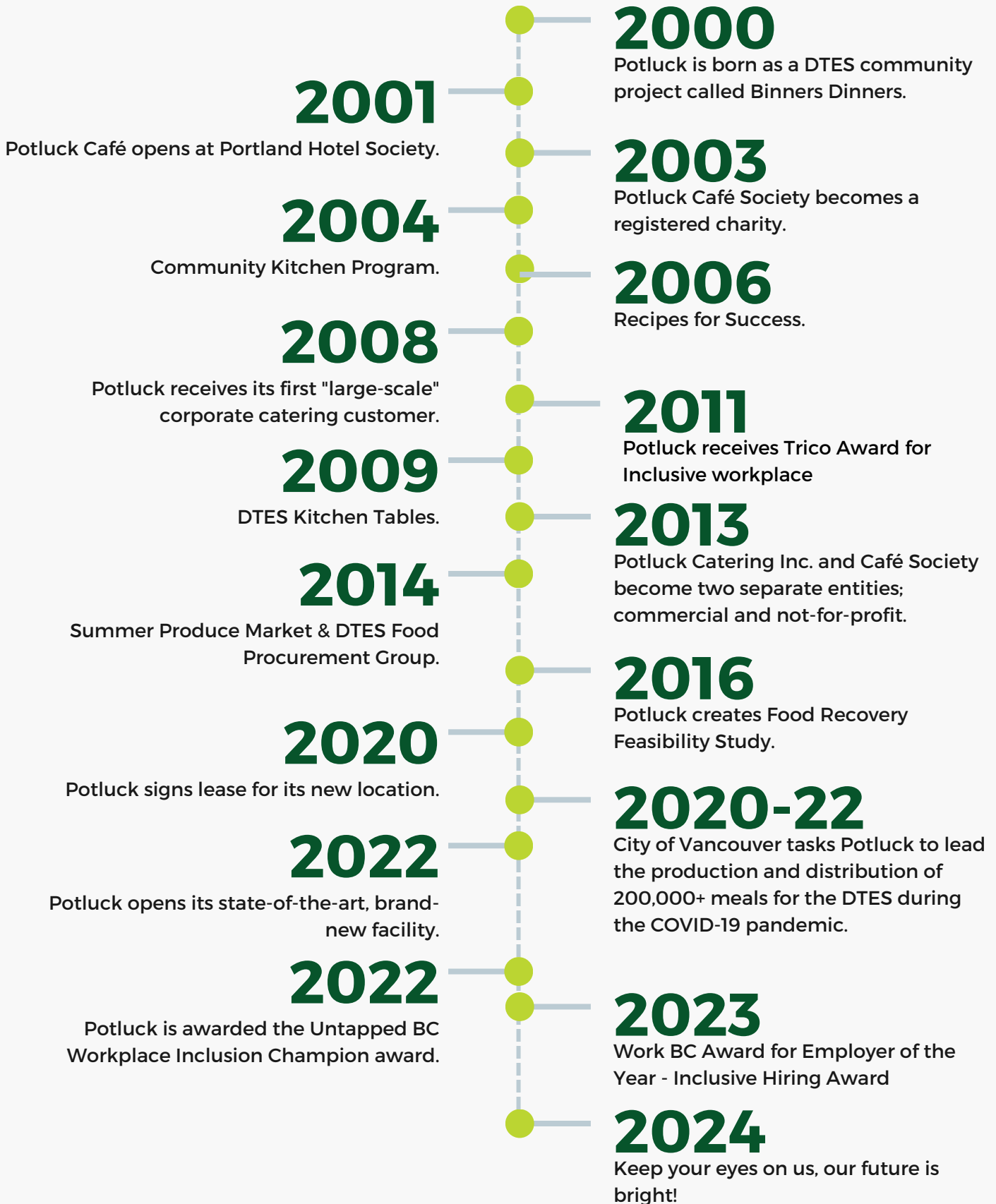
**RESPECT**



**COLLABORATION**



# OUR HISTORY



# OUR IMPACT

Since 2001, Potluck has provided over **350,000 hours of employment** for individuals that face barriers to traditional employment, resulting in over **\$4.4 million in wages**. We have also contributed over **420,000 nutritious meals** to residents of the DTES. Annually Potluck provides about **35,000 meals** to the community, including the following:



**35,000**  
**FREE MEALS**  
**ANNUALLY**

Every weekday, Potluck employs residents of the Downtown Eastside to distribute 100 meals (along with an extra 85 on Tuesdays to SRO's) to the unhoused along E Hastings Street and Crab Park. Funded by the Robert Bosa Foundation, one of our valued community partners, these meals provide crucial support to food-insecure residents.



**137,000**  
**EMERGENCY MEALS**

Post Covid-19, Potluck collaborated with its partners to distribute 130,000 emergency meals to the DTES community.



**50,000**  
**WEATHER RELIEF**  
**BEVERAGES**

During extreme weather conditions, Potluck offers lemonade in the summer months from June to August and hot chocolate in the winter months from November to March. In 2023, Potluck distributed a total of 46,000 cups of hot chocolate and lemonade, offering warmth or refreshment to those in need.



**850**  
**KIDS MEALS**  
**ANNUALLY**

Contributing 850 free kids camp meals annually for children living below the poverty line.



**Packaging Excess**  
**Meal Program**

Potluck staff carefully package any surplus meals that meet food safety standards and distribute them to unhoused residents along East Hastings. This initiative aligns with our commitment to minimizing food waste and reducing our carbon footprint. Peer staff are employed to distribute these meals every weekday, furthering our mission.



**350,000**  
**HOUR OF**  
**EMPLOYMENT**

Potluck is proud to be a supportive employer that provides employment to individuals who face barriers in our community.

# RECOGNITION

Potluck is dedicated to cultivating an inclusive workplace characterized by integrity, respect, dignity, and transparency across all levels. Our team represents diverse backgrounds and navigates various challenges, from health concerns and financial constraints to immigration status and single parenthood.

We are proud to be acknowledged for our efforts by receiving the following accolades:



### **The Untapped Trico Award for Inclusive Workplace**

Trico - 2011

Awarded for social entrepreneurship that uses market-oriented production and sale to provide public benefit.



### **The Untapped Workplace Award**

Open Door Group - 2022

In recognition of the economic benefits provided to vulnerable populations on the Downtown Eastside.



### **The Inclusive Hiring Workplace Award**

WorkBC - 2023-24

Presented to person-centered organizations offering employment opportunities to barriered employees.



# WHAT WE DO

## Environmental - Social - Governance

We are pleased to deliver our ESG report, showcasing our meaningful contributions to the community we serve.



This report is structured to outline our practices and initiatives across the ESG framework – **Environment, Social, and Governance.**

In addition, we highlight our community engagement efforts, diverse programming, and our innovative hybrid business model driving our impact.

Potluck conducts annual internal assessments to ensure our practices align with our mission, both environmentally and socially. We actively seek community feedback to ensure our approach is respectful and effective.

Unless otherwise indicated, the data presented in this report spans from Potluck's inception. Additionally, when referring to "society," we mean the non-profit Potluck Café Society and its programming, while "business" or "company" denotes our for-profit catering arm, Potluck Café and Catering. "Potluck" encompasses the entirety of our hybrid entity.

# OUR APPROACH

At Potluck, our commitment to the environment, our team, and our community is at the heart of what we do. These three pillars guide every aspect of our business, driving our success today.



## Environmental

We prioritize the health of our planet for future generations. Through sustainable practices and energy-saving measures, we minimize our carbon footprint. We distribute surplus food to the Downtown Eastside, utilize eco-friendly containers, and source locally to reduce waste.

## Social

Potluck is dedicated to enhancing community well-being through nutrition, health, and economic development initiatives. Since 2001, we've provided 350,000 hours of employment and served over 420,000 meals in the Downtown Eastside. Our mission is to boost food security and employment opportunities for vulnerable populations.



## Governance

With a diverse board and inclusive employment practices, Potluck supports our employees' success. We prioritize empathy, respect, and transparency throughout our organization, fostering an environment of excellence and compassion.

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

## Environmental Impact

Financial stability and environmental health are inversely related, meaning an unhealthy environment disproportionately affects those in poverty, who, in turn, contribute to environmental degradation. Poverty-stricken communities often resort to harmful practices like land overuse, improper waste disposal, and resource depletion.

At Potluck we have made a conscious effort to prioritize our environmental impact through the following categories:

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

**Energy Use Intensity**

**Waste Diversion**

**Human Health**



### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Potluck prioritizes electrical efficiency, favoring electric appliances over gas whenever possible. With nearly 95% of BC's electricity sourced renewably, this shift significantly reduces carbon emissions. Serving mainly local clients also minimizes our carbon footprint, while amenities like bike racks encourage eco-friendly commuting. Accessibility by public transit further enhances our environmental impact.





# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



## Energy Use Intensity

Our kitchen layout maximizes natural light, reducing reliance on artificial lighting. Energy-efficient LED lights and vacancy sensors are used to minimize unnecessary electricity usage, as well as infrared sensors on our kitchen exhaust hoods that optimize energy consumption by activating only when cooking equipment is in use. Wherever feasible, Energy Star appliances are chosen to further reduce energy demands. Lastly, low-flow fixtures and dual-flush toilets are employed to conserve water.

## Human Health

Potluck's facility design prioritizes staff well-being with ample daylight and street views, with a transparent street-facing feature wall fostering a connection to the community. Low-VOC finishes, and furniture promote indoor air quality, while acoustic comfort reduces staff stress levels.

## Waste Diversion

By selecting a space that requires no demolition, significantly less waste was generated in the construction of our facility. Durable, long-lasting materials were used to increase the longevity of our building, with dedicated space provided for compost and recycling storage. In addition, surplus food is packaged by our peer staff and distributed to the community, ensuring zero food waste.

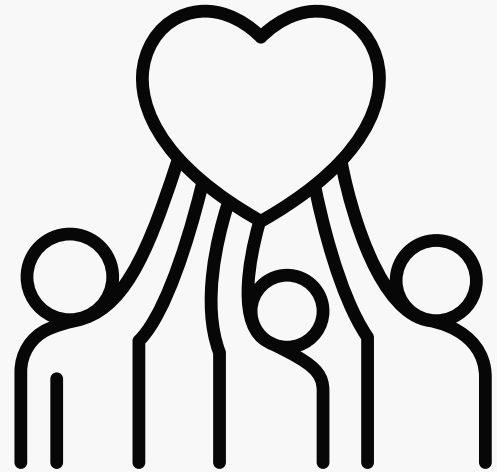


# SOCIAL IMPACT

## SOCIAL IMPACT

Give a person a meal and you feed them for a day – Train someone at Potluck Café Society and you give: employment, wages, skills, healthy food, self-confidence, self-worth, dignity, and hope.

At Potluck, our community members are integral to our mission and vision, demonstrating remarkable dedication and resilience in the face of adversity. Residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) face significant nutritional vulnerability, compounded by challenges with mental health, poverty, inadequate housing, and chronic illnesses like HIV/AIDS and diabetes to name a few.



Limited incomes make it difficult for DTES residents to afford basic necessities like food and housing, impacting their physical and mental well-being. Relying on charitable food systems often means access to outdated and unhealthy options. By addressing the nutritional needs of the DTES community, we contribute to the improvement of the overall health of BC residents.

# EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING



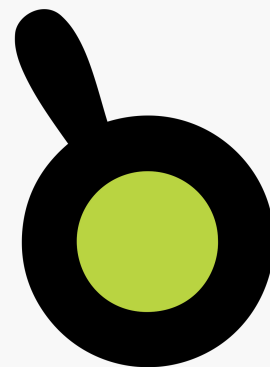
In the Downtown Eastside, job stability is a challenge for many residents.

Potluck's kitchen roles offer flexibility with casual shifts, allowing staff to pursue additional income sources. We employ more staff than typical catering companies, accommodating those who prefer fewer shifts due to personal challenges or income assistance restrictions.

Hiring employees facing multiple barriers requires extra support in the beginning and tolerance for some instability day-to-day, but often results in strong employee retention in the long term. This stability benefits both the business and employees, providing consistent work, income, and a supportive community environment.

Our approach comprises three key components:

1. **Paid Employment Over Volunteerism**
2. **Intentional Hiring of Barrier-Facing Staff**



# EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING



## 1. Commitment to Paid Employment Over Volunteerism:

Potluck prioritizes paid employment over volunteer contributions, recognizing the potential displacement of valuable job opportunities. An example of this is when a qualified person who has the privilege of being able to afford to work for free is doing tasks that a resident could be paid to do. While volunteerism is essential, we believe it should not overshadow the need for sustainable employment, especially in communities like the DTES.

## 2. Commitment to Hire Barrier-Facing Staff

Purposefully hiring individuals facing employment barriers address social and economic inequality in Vancouver. It not only fulfills Potluck's mission of empowering the community but also stimulates economic growth by providing meaningful employment opportunities and bolstering local economies.



# ECONOMIC IMPACT

**At Potluck, our staff is our biggest asset.**

We believe in nurturing their growth and supporting their future aspirations as part of our social responsibility.



## Peer Employment Program

Potluck’s Peer Employment Program involves hiring individuals that face barriers to traditional employment and reside on the downtown Eastside. Our peer staff work amongst the community by engaging in social programs that are developed to, empowering them to work within the community. Our peer staff work through our social programs, which are developed to address food insecurity and increase employment opportunities. They are essential for our social programming, including the Community Meal Program, Extreme Weather Relief Stands, and other Society Community Events.

Potluck has offered \$4.4 million in wages, equivalent to 350,000 hours of employment, to individuals residing in the poorest neighborhood of Canada.

## Employment Support Worker

Our Employment Support Worker (ESW) ensures our staff have access to a safe environment where they can address any challenges they face. Tailoring support to individual needs, the ESW provides resources covering employment, training, mental and physical health, legal services, housing, food assistance, immigration, daycare, progress tracking, goal planning and more.

## Living Wage

With inflation, unemployment, and homelessness numbers being at an all-time high Potluck strives to alleviate financial strain on our peer staff by providing wages close to BC's living wage. Potluck is committed to supporting our barrierred employees, regardless of increased production and labor costs.

# COMMUNITY TESTIMONIALS



“I am a single mother myself and it was an opportunity to give back to mothers and to provide an opportunity for moms and kids to have a good time, all the while it was an opportunity for us to give back. It feels rewarding and is a genuinely good feeling to finish a day's work knowing that I might have made a difference in one person's life.”

**Jillian - Peer Staff**

“It's not just about standing in a busy corner to hand out meals, other organizations are doing that. It's about building relationships with people we are giving meals to, checking to see what they need, and sharing that information back with work. There is a dignity to doing the work.”

**Shawn - Peer Staff**

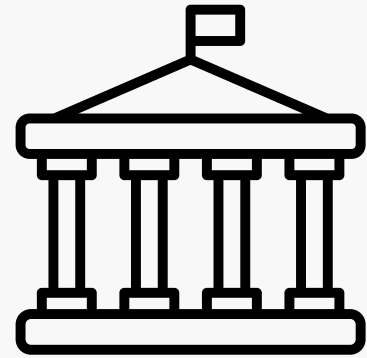


“This was the first time I have worked at a job that has a purpose and it's not just a paycheck. I have also worked at the hot chocolate stand and from what I have seen, with Potluck, there is a purpose to everything that we do.”

**Matthew Black - Peer Staff**

# GOVERNANCE

Potluck Catering and Society boasts a diverse board of directors and members dedicated to steering our inclusive employment practices, living wage initiatives, and advocacy for supportive public policies. Our employees are essential to Potluck's success, and we actively nurture our values of empathy, respect, compassion, and acceptance through tangible actions. Embracing a bottom-up approach, we prioritize transparency and honesty across all levels of our organization.



## Potluck Board of Directors

**Liz Lougheed Green (Co-Chair)**

CEO Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC

**Alex Nixon (Co-Chair)**

Executive Director, White Rock BIA

**Maz Artang**

Principal, Aughdem Recruitment

**Liam Briggs**

VP, Avis and Young

**Bobby Sangha**

CEO, CareCorp

**Nick Mobilio**

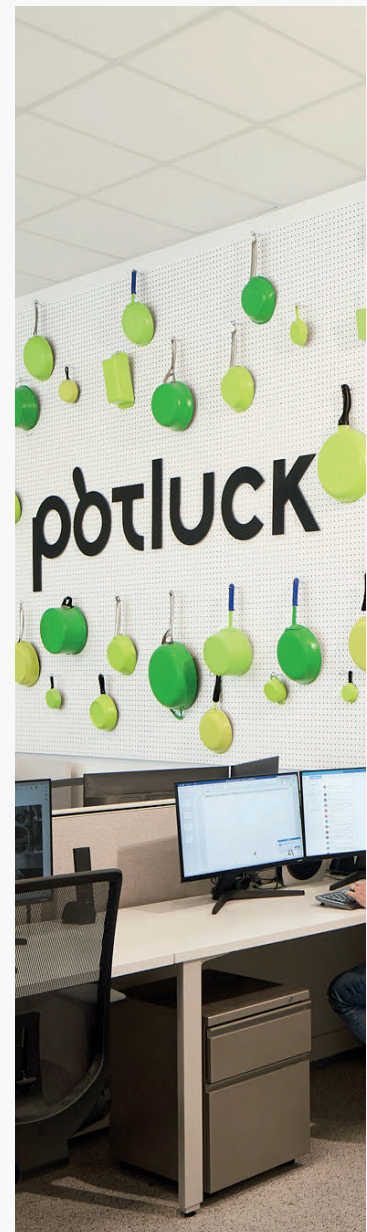
Director, PWC

**Tyler Steele**

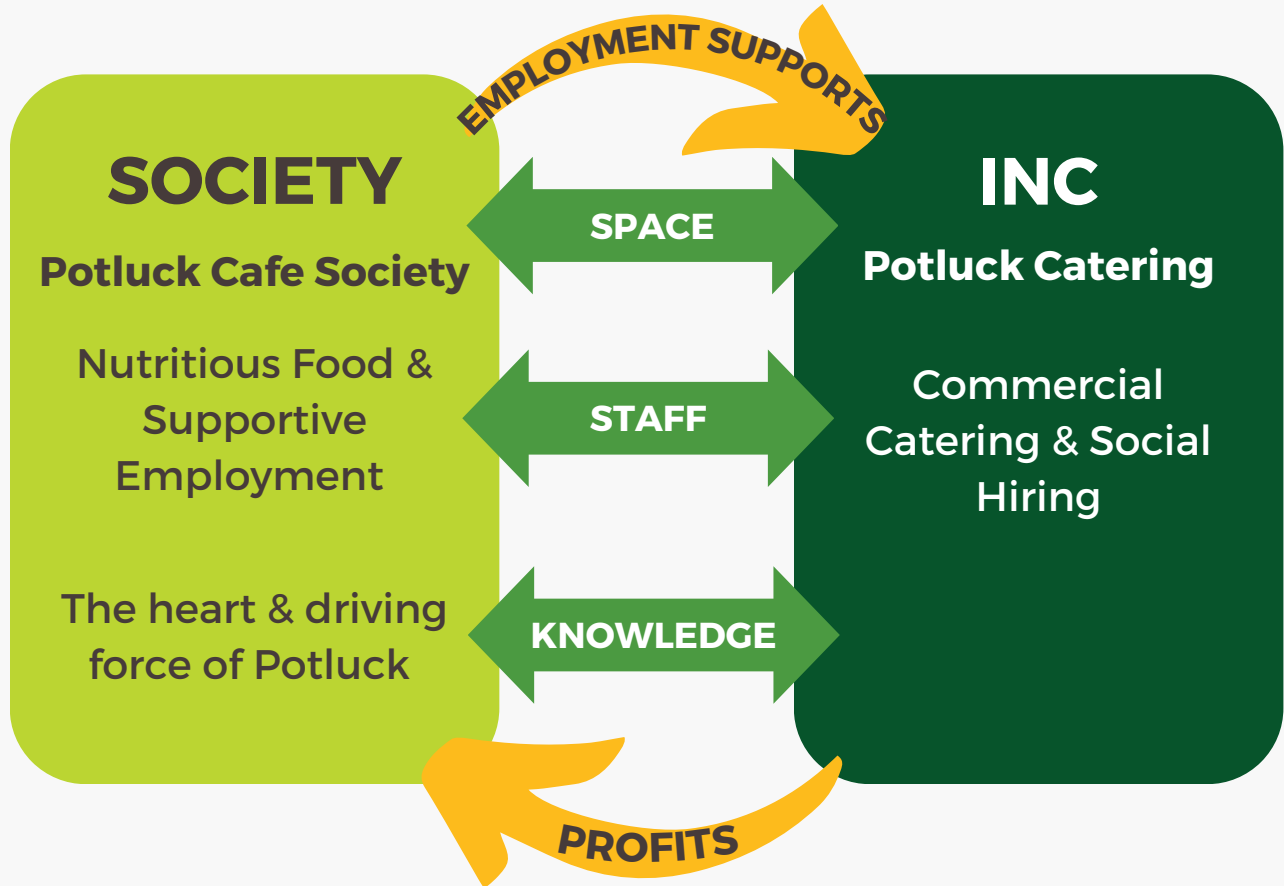
Richardson Wealth, JSK Partners

**Michael Coletta**

Investment Advisor, Haywood Securities



# BUSINESS MODEL



Potluck's distinctive hybrid structure integrates both for-profit and not-for-profit elements. Potluck Catering is owned by Potluck Café Society. This unique business model ensures that 100% of our profits are reinvested into community initiatives that support members of the DTES. Potluck Café Society has been a registered charity since 2003 and Potluck Café & Catering became an incorporated business, and 100% subsidiary owned by the society, in 2013.

The business model allows Potluck to provide low-barrier employment opportunities to the community and contributes profits back to the society's community programs. The society in turn provides wrap-around employment supports that enable business staff with various employment barriers to be successful in the long term. Potluck Catering contributes its full profits back into Potluck Cafe Society, to further the goals & mission of its parent society.



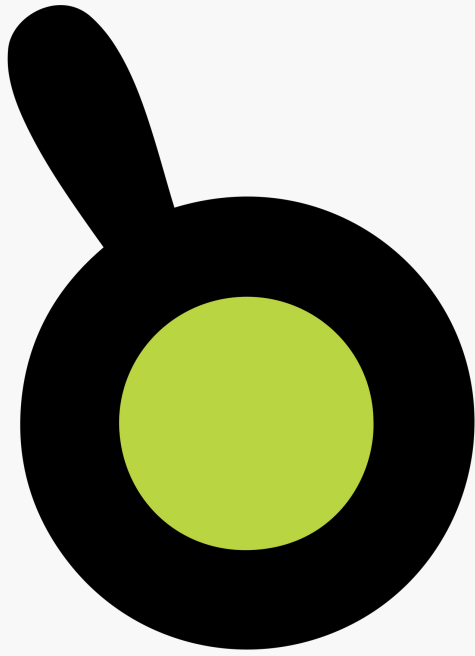
# OUR PARTNERS



Potluck Café Society is a vital community asset and a longstanding social enterprise. Since 2001, it has been enhancing lives and strengthening our community by providing economic empowerment to inner-city residents facing multiple barriers to employment, as well as ensuring food security for the local community. Potluck has demonstrated its role as a strong collaborator and a key leader in community economic development in Vancouver and the DTES.



- Jennifer Johnstone - Central City Foundation



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