

# Binners' Project

Annual Report 2017



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# Opening Letter

**Despite considerable self-reliance and enormous positive environmental impacts, binners face important barriers to binning safely, efficiently, and with dignity. Beyond that, the income they earn in a day undervalues their effort, environmental impacts, and service to the community.**

## **That's where the Binners' Project comes in.**

We exist to improve opportunities for binners to generate income, to raise awareness of the value of their work, and uplift their perspectives on city spaces, waste management, and the informal economy.

2017 has been a turning point for Binners' Project and for many of our members. On top of record-breaking turnout to events and programs, more and more binner members of the project are stepping into leadership roles, helping develop and deliver programs that work better for clients and for the binners.

Behind the scenes there is similar momentum, with our network of supporters helping us grow the capacity of our members, and of the project through winning new contracts. For example, a whopping 63% of our new social enterprise contracts have been the result of client and supporter referrals. The same is true of our fundraising efforts, where about 40% of grant opportunities came through referral.

Thanks to the support of our network, this year it finally felt like we had the capacity to help the project achieve its real potential. As you'll see in a moment, more than ever binners are benefiting from involvement in the project.

One of the greatest successes of the past two years has been creating a ladder to employment, from drop-in meetings, to low barrier volunteering, to casual labor, to the first full-time binner employee. We continually work

with binners to innovate around the waste management and education programs we offer. This allows us to leverage and fairly compensate binners' expertise, as well as grow their work ethic. Already we're seeing great results: binners taking home \$109,200 in honoraria and wages in 2017 and reporting high satisfaction with the program structure, client base, and learning opportunities.

That said, opportunity and fair compensation for our members is just part of the equation. We exist for all binners, including those who will never join the project as formal members. That's why public education by and on behalf of binners is central as ever to our work – and why we continue to fundraise.

If you are reading this, it's very likely that you are already someone who has helped the program to grow, either through money, time, or advice. I want to express my heartfelt thanks for your support. The opportunities we are able to cultivate with and for binners is proportional to your investment in the Binners' Project, whatever form it may take.

If you haven't yet had the chance to support the work, please consider this an open invitation to do so. As you'll see in the pages ahead, this is a community-led and community-supported effort. Binners are leading the way, and with the financial support and referrals from people like you, the great work they do for our communities, environment, and themselves, will continue to exceed all expectations.

Sincerely,

**Anna Godefroy**

**Director  
Binners' Project**

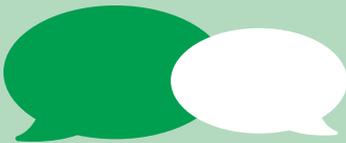


# Our Impact: A Snapshot

## Social



Binners presented  
**42 times**



In 2017, binners publicly presented 42 times on everything from homelessness to zero-waste policies; alley design, and social innovation

**Page 11**

has all the details on binners' **Multi-Sectoral Engagement** work

## Economic



Binners earned  
**\$109,200**



This year, members took home a total of \$109,200 for their contribution to the project plus refunds obtained from bottles & cans collected on the job.

**Page 5**

has more on our **Community Economic Development Programs**

## Environmental



Two binners diverted  
**375 kg**

of recyclables  
at **just one site**

This year we piloted a back-of-house sorting program. At just one site, two binners diverted 375 kg of recyclables.

**Page 8**

has more on **the sorting program**



65 binners attend training for our annual contract with the Fair at the PNE, where they received new gear supplied by Vancity.

# Binners' Project

## Members

Binners' Project is a member-based initiative, with 91 members (out of a total 144 meeting attendees) in 2017. Our members identify as low income and face obstacles to mainstream employment. For example, all of them report either a history of mental illness or addiction, living with a physical or mental disability, and/or being currently or formerly homeless.

## Staff

Between binners meetings, our team of staff binners and support staff work together to secure contracts, develop workflows, dispatch and train members, evaluate programs, and fundraise to support core operations and infrastructure projects. Wherever possible, we strive to hire from the membership. ►

## Weekly Binners Meeting

Binners' Project strives to make fairly compensated binning available to all who want it and to improve the visibility and meaningful involvement of individuals in the conversations that most affect them. The mechanism for all of this is the weekly meetings, where an average of 35-40 people come together with staff binners and support staff to discuss common goals, program developments, and delivery.

Individuals who have attended three meetings qualify as "members" – they are provided a uniform (hoodie, t-shirt, cap, and business cards) and are eligible to participate in [Binners' Project Community Economic Development](#) programs or public engagement efforts.



New full-time hires, Brianne and Davin, at the Coffee Cup Revolution in Victory Square.

This year, we retained former binner Davin Boutang as a full-time Outreach Coordinator to manage the membership and represent their interests on staff.

During 2017, eight members at large stepped into leadership roles, working as “Team Lead” staff. Team Leads coordinate binner teams to deliver our Community Economic Development programs. The work is part-time and flexible and offers a gentle introduction to office-based work for people who are interested in learning more about this kind of work environment. (For reference, 75% of Team Leads’ work takes place in the field and 25% in the office, participating in meetings and doing planning work). Currently, five team leads are working with the project.

In terms of support staff, Bidders’ Project got a boost when Brianne De Man joined the team as Communications and Operations Coordinator in February 2017. Together, Davin, Brianne, and co-founders Gabby Korcheva (Programs Manager) and Anna Godefroy (Director) do the day-to-day work of business development, fundraising, communications, finance and related matters.

2015

**156** Bidders earned income from our programs

2016

**252** Bidders earned income from our programs

2017

**354** Bidders earned income from our programs

# Community Economic Development Programs

Since its inception, Binners' Project has been delivering Community Economic Development programs to provide job skills and opportunities for marginalized people in the DTES. Through trial and error, internal and external consultations, the initiatives have been iteratively improved. The results have exceeded all expectations.





Terry, Sonia, Mark, and Sam finish back-of-house sorting at TELUS World of Science.

## Bottle Pick-ups (EST. 2015)

Since the beginning, our members have been doing courtesy bottle pick-ups for businesses and individuals. The program has binners visiting businesses and residences to collect refundable containers that are otherwise locked up in waste rooms and inaccessible to binners' alleyway work. Our members keep 100% of the refund. The pick-up program is especially suitable to newer members as a low-stress opportunity to develop and maintain positive client/vendor-type relationships.

Here are just five of our 40  
Pick-up clients:

**BASA**

The Bolton Academy of Spoken Arts





Davin helps out a guest recycle her water bottle at Central City Foundations annual Fair in the Square in Victory Square park.

## Public Waste Education

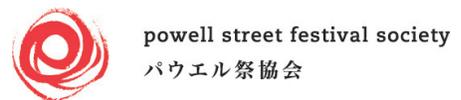
(EST. 2015)

Event organizers are increasingly expected to manage the environmental impact of their events and to engage local communities. Recognizing the social shift in waste management, Binners' Project launched the public waste education program in 2015.

Today, event organizers across the Lower Mainland contract Binners' Project to provide waste education at their events. Binners take on the role of assisting members of the public to sort out their waste. Binners' Project provided waste education at public events for a total 57 days in 2017.

Our members' interactions with guests have the triple benefit of teaching guests about recycling, helping the event hit its waste-diversion targets, and publicly demonstrating binners' expertise and work ethic. Event assignments are a favorite among members who report that it "builds their skills" and "gets them out of the DTES".

Here are five of our 18 Public Waste Education clients from 2017:



# Back-of-House Waste Sorting

(EST. 2017)

This year, in partnership with our network of progressive businesses and building managers, we piloted a program to provide binners with low barrier employment in waste management. The result is the back-of-house waste sorting program which was operated in three sites in 2017. In 2018, the program moves out of pilot stage with four sites committed in January and discussions underway with a handful of others.

Each week, for a fee, a binner visits the site to review recycling and waste receptacles and ensure items are in the correct streams. The binner compacts waste as needed (e.g., collapsing cardboard boxes), and takes the refundable containers with them when they leave.



## Sorting in 1 building for a year in numbers:

diverted  
**375 kg**  
of recyclables  
from landfills

gave  
**37**  
**binners**  
income  
opportunities

generated  
**\$800**  
in income for binners



saved the building **\$500+** in hauling fees

Early adopters of our new Sorting Program include:



312 MAIN





Binners attend one of our six consultations at the UBC Learning Exchange, for our Universal Cart Pilot where they provided feedback on the design.

# Infrastructure Projects

## Binners Hook

This year, Montreal and Calgary adopted the Binners Hook. It was invented by Vancouver binners to ensure safer, quicker access to bottles and cans. The program in Montreal is a City sponsored initiative whereas the Calgary version is a community based pilot.

The Hook, installed outside residences and businesses next to dumpsters, is designed to hold a bag of refundable containers that binners would otherwise have to root around to find. It also reduces the noise and litter associated with binners' work of digging through waste and recycling bins for recyclables.

The Binners Hook continues to be embraced by residents, with 143 installed throughout Vancouver this year and



an additional 200 installed in Montreal through a partnership with Coop Les Valoristes, Regroupement des éco-quartiers, and Société de Développement Social. Adding to the national momentum, Anna Godefroy and Davin Boutang had the pleasure of gifting a hook to the Governor General and Vice Regal Consort David and Sharon Johnston who have since installed it outside their home in Ontario.



## Universal Cart Initiative

For years, our members have expressed a need for purpose-built carts as an alternative to the shopping carts they acquire on the street. Inevitably, these shopping carts have defects and using them causes friction with law enforcement.

A cart built for binners will both improve their efficiency while binning and decrease negative interactions with law enforcement. In addition, it will ease some of the challenges of pushing a loaded cart especially for elderly people and people with mobility issues.

Working shoulder-to-shoulder with binners, City

planners, engineers, and various stakeholders, our team is developing a cart-share system that will operate like a low tech bike-share. Individuals will have access to memberships that allow them to take and return the carts.

The carts are sturdy and oversized, such that they cannot easily fit inside buildings or broken down for scrap metal. They will clip to bikes to become trailers.

The effort is structured as a three-year pilot and has been embraced by the City of Vancouver staff and council as a local economic development priority. A prototype cart was delivered in January 2018.

A big thanks to early sponsors of the Universal Cart Initiative!





# Education & Awareness-Raising

**Our education and awareness-raising efforts strive to improve binner involvement and credibility in civic governance and, over time, influence policy, city planning, and the construction of inclusive systems. This outreach work also aims to grow public recognition of binners' contributions and our Community Economic Development Programs offerings.**

**Importantly, in every instance, members are compensated for their travel expenses and time.**

## Multi-Sectoral Engagement

The project routinely receives invitations to participate in policy discussions, consult with private agencies, and present to the public on a range of issues affecting binners.

This year alone, our membership presented 42 times across the Lower Mainland and in places like Ontario and Manitoba, on various topics. These include discussions on homelessness, zero-waste policies, alley design, and social innovation. Binner's Project staff and members sit on a range of committees dedicated to community economic development and social hiring, such as Exchange Inner City and Urban Core.

These invitations are exciting signs of systems-level change in the perception of, and value for binning. This consideration has directly supported innovation and planning at the city-level and substantially ►

contributed to funding streams, interest in our Community Economic Development programs, and public support.

Although many invitations are forthcoming, there are some topics where binners are less proactively engaged. Conversations around gentrification, acceptable use of public space, social hiring, and green or socially responsible procurement practices routinely overlook binners' needs and perspectives. It's especially on those fronts that we actively seek opportunities to present with our members, whether at City Council, in meetings with various industries representants, speaking with media, at schools, and more.

Recognizing that policy is often informed by research, this year we made a concerted effort to improve Binners' Project connection to on-going research work and, in particular, support the representation of our members' perspectives in academic research.

To this end, Binners' Project has agreed to serve as an official research "site" for researchers Dr. Jutta Gutberlet and Dr. Crystal Tremblay. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council-funded study assesses the changing nature of the governance structures used by waste-pickers organizing in Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Nicaragua, and places beyond.

Furthermore, Davin and Anna co-authored a paper with UBC Sociologist Dr. Lindsey Richardson on the topic of informal recycling, income generation, and risk. The paper is under review at the International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health. To build on this work, in 2018 we will be working with Dr. Richardson to develop a framework for evaluating the impact of binning on communities and people who engage in this activity to support their livelihood.



# Events Hosted by Binners' Project

As part of this ongoing effort to meaningfully inform policy and public discourse, we routinely convene events designed to bring different groups into direct conversation with one another and with our members. This year, we hosted two such events and co-convened or participated in several dozen more.



A binner counts coffee cups at the 2017 Coffee Cup Revolution.

## Coffee Cup Revolution

Every year, thanks to sponsorship and community support, Binners' Project hosts the Coffee Cup Revolution to demonstrate what a coffee cup refund system can achieve as well as open a dialogue on how binning can support green communities, and vice versa.

2017 was a record-breaker, with binners collecting 53,783 coffee cups in just 3 hours.

The event was record-breaking in several other respects:

- Thanks to our sponsors, binners took home the highest-ever income from a Coffee Cup Revolution event. At 5 cents a cup, \$3,652.75 went directly into the pockets of the 201 individuals who braved the elements to participate.

- The depot was 100% binner-run and operated. Team Lead Michael Leland led 17 members who expertly and independently designed and ran the depot.
- The roundtable discussions were the best-attended yet. Forty-eight people – among them City planners, architects, engineers, binners, low-income residents, business owners, recycling advocates, journalists, students, and more – engaged in lively conversations for two hours.

The event, always well attended and covered by media, received extra attention this year thanks to the City of Vancouver's ongoing public consultations regarding the city's Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy.



Community members attend a roundtable discussion on the informal economy, facilitated by binner-staff Davin, at our annual Coffee Cup Revolution.

Thank you to everyone who financially supported this year's "revolution"! Together we're making the city greener and more inclusive.



... & more!



Bill, Binners' Project Team Lead, addresses UBC Sociologist, Dr. Lindsey Richardson and Binners' Project Director Anna on a panel to discuss binning and the informal economy.

## Binning & the Informal Economy: A Panel Discussion

On May 23, with the support of our friends at SFU Woodward's Vancity Office of Community Engagement, we hosted our first ever public event attended by 100 people.

We talked about the informal economy, health and employment, the nuts and bolts of binning, and how people across the city can help Binners' Project continue to increase its members' social and environmental impact.

Thanks to our supporters  
& co-hosts for packing, programming,  
& documenting the event!



... & all our guests!



Anna speaks with Radio Canada. Logos of some of the outlets featuring Binners' Project and members in 2017 follow underneath the image.



... & more!

## Media Engagement

We continue to proactively engage media in developments related to Binners' Project, as well as to encourage general coverage of the informal economy in and beyond Vancouver.

Coverage of our members and Binners' Project events, programs, and infrastructure projects was strong again this year, with reporting in all major Canadian media and feature stories in key local dailies, such as the Vancouver Sun and Metro News. As in past years, we have made a concerted effort to make our members and staff available

to media and to work with producers to facilitate in-person interviews in-studio and afield.

Key features this year included a Vancouver Sun story on the new waste sorting program; Global National News feature of the Coffee Cup Revolution; and CBC Vancouver's in-depth piece on the Universal Cart Initiative.

# Financial Overview

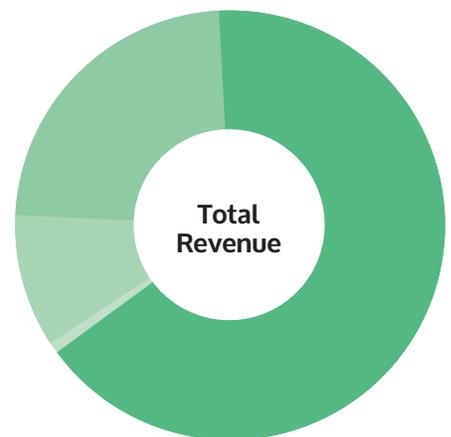
Binners' Project exists thanks to the financial support of the philanthropic, government, and corporate sectors and, increasingly, the general public. The Binners' Project operating budget in 2017 was \$429,367. Grants continue to be the core funding stream, accounting for 66% of total revenue. For the most part, this covers core operations, such as binner and support staff's time, organizational infrastructure, and membership expenses.

Importantly, in 2017, our Community Economic Development programs made decisive strides towards financial sustainability. Funds generated by the program accounted for 23% of revenue (\$98,073), more than five times last year's record. Our current estimates suggest that the revenue generated by these programs could cover their hard costs by 2019 (including support staff cost) and that by 2021 they could sustain some of the core operations of the Binners' Project, without which those programs wouldn't exist. In the meantime, we continue to seek grant funding and sponsorship to bridge the gap.



## 2017 Revenue Breakdown

Revenue Source	Amount	% of Total Revenue
Grants	\$282,300	66%
Fee-for-Service & Sale of Goods	\$98,073	23%
Sponsorships	\$42,500	10%
Donations & Other Revenue	\$6,494	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$429,367</b>	<b>100%</b>





Lyle, Doronn, and Robyn help out with the crowd at a panel convened by Binners' Project about binning and the informal economy.

# Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the 91 members of **Binners' Project**, whose dedication and effort inspires the incredible team of staff, volunteers, funders, and supporters the project is fortunate to have in its corner. Additionally, we take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of the following groups and individuals.





Steering Committee members, Jeanette (orange) and Rebecca (red) at the Coffee Cup Revolution, accompanied by Councilor Andrea Reimer (Vancouver City Council), Karen Storry (Metro Vancouver), and Amanda Lee (Vancity).

# Our Staff in 2017

- Anna Godefroy**     *Co-founder & Director*
- Kelly Angecone**     *Binner, Team Lead & member since 2014*
- Davin Boutang**     *Binner and Outreach Coordinator & member since 2014*
- Bertha Cardinal**     *Binner, Team Lead & member since 2015*
- Brianne De Man**     *Communications and Operations Coordinator*
- Andrew Jack**     *Binner, Team Lead & member since 2016*
- Gabby Korcheva**     *Co-founder & Programs Manager*
- Michael Leland**     *Binner, Team Lead & member since 2014*
- Bill Piggott**     *Binner, Team Lead & member since 2016*

## Our Steering Committee

Kathleen Leahy, *Chair*

Jeanette Ageson

David Lee

Rebecca Loyo Mayo

Lori MacIntosh

## Our Special Advisors

Ken Lyotier

Kiri Bird

Belinda Li

Ann Cooper

# Our Partners & Funders



## Tides Canada: Our Shared Platform

Binners' Project is a project on Tides Canada's shared platform, which provides governance, human resources, financial, and grant management for leading environmental and social projects across Canada, allowing projects to more effectively achieve their missions. All projects contribute 10% of revenue to the collective operation of the shared platform.

BINNERS' PROJECT



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