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Like many others this year, Binners’ Project saw a number of disruptions to our programming due to the pandemic, including cancelled summer events (a highlight for binners doing waste education), the cancellation of our annual Coffee Cup Revolution, and many of our back-of-house sorting contracts put on hold, all of which reduced income given to binners.

At the beginning of this year, we were preparing for the worst. The binning community, along with the Downtown Eastside more broadly, is a highly vulnerable population characterized by multiple pre-existing health conditions, making them more susceptible to the severe impacts of COVID-19. As a result, we immediately pivoted our programs to ensure the safety of our members, and with great success. As we navigated multiple public health emergencies, including the opioid poisoning crisis, we were able to keep our members healthy and supported.

One of the pivots we made in March of 2020 was the temporary suspension of our social enterprise programs, which are the main income generator for binners. These income opportunities are the primary reason binners engage with us, and as a result, we saw lower participation this year. However, because of new supports from Binners’ Project like the income replacement (read more on page 5), we retained over half of our membership. We look forward to reengaging the rest of our membership as we continue to recover from the pandemic.

In spite of these challenges, our community of binners reminded us of its resilience and ability to adapt and grow in the face of change; to continue doing work that we can take pride in and celebrate successes both large and small.

We were able to bridge the gaps during isolation through the simple act of a phone call from a peer to check in (check out page 7 for more). This program allowed us to ensure binners were receiving important updates about the pandemic and continued to attend our weekly Binners’ Meetings.

After some site closures, binners slowly got back to work over the course of the year including at 6 new back-of-house sorting sites we began work at despite the pandemic. Overall binners participated in 3,100 hours of economic opportunities and earned nearly $55,000 from the social enterprise programs.

And in a year that saw financial difficulty for many, we felt the enduring support from
champions like you, who helped us raise nearly $40,000 in individual donations, the most we’ve ever brought in during a single year.

This year, we also said goodbye to our Director, Landon Hoyt who has moved onto new projects. We’re so grateful for his time with us and are excited to see what’s in store for him next.

I hope that as you read through the following pages, the stories of the binners inspire you and bring some hope for what is to come. Thank you for your continued support of Binners’ Project, and for helping us get through the difficulty of this pandemic, together.

Brianne De Man  
Interim Director
Binners' Project

Binners line up in the alley behind 312 Main during a weekly Binners' Meeting

About the Binners

Binners, also known as waste-pickers or dumpster divers, are people who supplement their income through redeeming bottles and cans. Binners’ Project is a group of waste-pickers dedicated to improving their livelihoods and destigmatizing the work they do.

This year we engaged a total of 89 unique binners throughout the year.

Our membership experienced a number of changes this year as a result of the need to scale back our programs at the beginning of the pandemic. This resulted in fewer binners engaging with us over the course of the year, however we saw steady increases in participation as we brought back-of-house sorting contracts back online.

Overall, we’ve been able to retain over half of our regular members and, starting in January, we began welcoming new members for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. This is a testament to the connectedness of our community as well as the success of the supports we were able to provide this year, despite the loss of work.

Binners’ Meetings

Binners’ Meetings have been the cornerstone of our programs since the beginning of Binners’ Project, and we were privileged to be able to continue them in a modified format this year. On March 17th, 2020 we adjusted our Binners’ Meeting to take place outside our office at 312 Main Street where we continue to hold it today.

We transitioned these meetings into a lineup where binners could check-in, receive valuable information and updates from the community, receive an ‘income replacement’ from us, and be scheduled for any shifts for the upcoming week.
We are proud to have been able to provide an income replacement to binners this year in recognition of lost shifts due to the suspension of waste sorting contracts. Because of the informal nature of their work, many binners were ineligible for government assistance given throughout 2020. However, our members still experienced significant reductions in income. Because of this, we implemented a small income replacement to support our members while they experienced fewer income opportunities. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have given out $48,000 in income replacement to our members and we are committed to continuing this program until more shifts are brought back online.

This year, we began work on a new training program funded by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction as part of the Employer Sponsored Training fund. With consultants from Roots & Rivers, we developed a custom training curriculum based on the unique needs of our staff who lead and deliver our waste sorting programs. This program runs for 8 months and will allow binners to build their capacity as we work to increase the number of income opportunities available to binners.
Francis joined Binners’ Project in 2018 and quickly proved himself to be a reliable and hard working member. He joined our staff team shortly after, and this year was promoted to Community Coordinator. This means he has more responsibilities to ensure the teams are set up at our sorting sites, paid at the end of their shifts, and new members are trained well.

This past year was very hard on Francis, as his family doesn’t live in Vancouver. Since he wasn’t able to visit his friends whom he normally sees in Surrey and Coquitlam, he felt very isolated and alone. Even still, over this past year we have seen Francis come out of his shell more, and he attributes that to his work with Binners’ Project. He says: “You’ve got some people to talk to, some people you have something in common with, who you can relate to. You can work with them, and get to know them and they become friends; they become like part of the family.”

We’re so excited to see what Francis does this year!
Education & Awareness-Raising

As part of funding secured by the Community Coordinated Response Network (CCRN) from the City of Vancouver, Binners’ Project was able to conduct peer-to-peer wellbeing calls during the first 5 months of the pandemic, ensuring that members who were feeling isolated had access to the resources they needed and were aware the Binners’ Meetings were still running. This funding also allowed us to create a new Line Engagement role at our Binners’ Meetings, which we were able to continue giving as an income opportunity for binners even once this funding ended.

Community Engagement

Binners phone other members of Binners’ Project to check-in and provide meaningful connections during a period of isolation.

Peer Work - City of Vancouver
While we suspended the majority of our public community engagement programs this year, we facilitated a few workshops, individual tours, and virtual presentations between the community and our members this year. These programs help to bridge the gap between binners and the wider community, helping to amplify binners’ voices through storytelling.

**Workshops, Tours, & Presentations**

Naomi and Peter conduct surveys with binners at a bottle depot as part of our community outreach this year.

**Our community engagement partners this year were:**

- City of Vancouver
- Return-It
- Community Impact
- SFU
- Exchange
- Inner City
- St. George’s School
Policy Advocacy

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Early in the pandemic as employment supports were being delivered to Canadians who were formally employed, Binners’ Project wrote a letter to the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction requesting an increase in social assistance amounts for recipients who were otherwise ineligible for income supports, but who were nonetheless financially impacted by the pandemic. In response to this and efforts from advocates across the province, the Ministry temporarily increased social assistance rates by $300.

Return-It 2020 Beverage Plan

In the summer of 2020, our partners Return-It launched their regular public consultation on proposed changes to their stewardship plan, to which Binners’ Project submitted a discussion paper. In the paper, we highlighted the positive impacts that expanding the refund system to include milk containers will have on binners, as well as the benefit that integrating the acceptance of alcoholic and nonalcoholic containers at depots would have on increasing income to binners. We look forward to the implementation of some of these changes in the future.
Other-City Partnerships

Global Alliance of Waste-Pickers & North America Collective

This year we started work a case study on the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system in British Columbia. This work was funded by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) as part of similar projects happening in other countries helping to build the foundation for global advocacy efforts to make EPR policies inclusive of waste-pickers globally. The case study will be made public in 2021.

On March 1st, to celebrate International Waste-Pickers Day, we launched a photo contest alongside partner organizations in Montreal, Portland, and New York to demonstrate how binners view their work through their own eyes. Two winners were selected in each city and both winners were awarded a $200 prize. The winners in Vancouver were Cathy Moses (illustration) and Michael Leland (photo), pictured below.

After working more closely with our partner organizations across North America: Co-op Les Valoristes (Montreal), Ground Score (Portland), and Sure We Can (New York), this group made the decision to formalize as a North American subset of the Global Alliance of Waste-Pickers. Work will continue in 2021 to develop a name and website for our group—stay tuned!
Fundraiser & Donations

Community Donations

Our community came through with some amazing donations this year, including our friends at LUSH who donated toiletry products to our members, as well as TELUS who in partnership with Central City Foundation donated prepaid phones to various Downtown Eastside groups, including 10 phones for Binners’ Project.

Annual Fundraiser

This year we took our Annual Fundraiser virtual with the help of SFU Public Square. We were still able to keep our signature auction-style format of the event, and after some storytelling from binners, our supporters came together to raise $25,000 in just 30 minutes! While this was just short of our goal of $30,000, we were able to successfully close this gap by the end of the year.

Above: Glenn hands out products from LUSH to members at our weekly Binners’ Meeting
Anne gets a prepaid phone from TELUS, helping her stay connected during the pandemic.

Kashe shows off his new cape from Arc’teryx. Binners tested out these capes as part of Arc’teryx’s Bird’s Nest program, which turns leftover GoreTex into waterproof capes that are donated to the community.

Davin presents live on Zoom at our modified annual fundraiser.
Social Enterprise Programs

On March 17th in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we temporarily suspended all social enterprise programs. In April of 2020, binners saw just 71 hours of work, representing 12% of our pre-pandemic operations. However, starting in May we brought back services at select sites, and over the rest of the year we steadily increased our waste sorting services with clients, including 7 new ones. We ended the fiscal year with 546 hours to binners in March 2021, which brings us to 76.5% of our regular operations.

Because of continuing pandemic-related restrictions and closures, we were not able to do waste education at events like Car Free Day and the Fair at the PNE. We have also continued to put services on hold with clients like the Vancouver Convention Centre and the Vancouver Aquarium as both experienced closures throughout 2020. We look forward to bringing these partnerships back online throughout 2021 and 2022.

Bertha and Brenda sort waste at one of our new women-led sites this year.
Back-of-House Waste Sorting

Due to closures at some sites this year, our sorting program saw lower impact than we reported last year. However, we were excited to bring on new back-of-house sorting clients including sites at: Hudson Pacific Properties - Bentall Centre, Aritzia, The Bloom Group (three sites), A Better Life Foundation (Save on Meats), and a new site with Atira Property Management.

Measures of Success

Over the course of 23 days of data collection at one site, binners diverted 532kg of waste from the landfill. This represents an average of 56% of landfill waste being diverted into other streams, including: compost, mixed paper, and mixed containers.

Snapshot of the impact of our social enterprise programs in 2020-2021:

- **76** binners were involved in social enterprise programs
- **3,100** hours of economic opportunities
- **$54,951.55** went directly into the pockets of binners through these programs
- **27** income opportunities each week, on average
Client Testimonial

“At Aritzia, we’re committed to embedding responsible practices in everything we do. Since the start in August 2020, our partnership with Binners’ Project at our Vancouver Support Office increases our waste diversion rate, engages our people and supports positive change in the communities where we work. Binners’ Project’s experience in community building and waste diversion has been a valuable addition to our Sustainability efforts and journey and we look forward to our continued partnership.”

Rebecca Loyo Mayo
VP, Sustainability.

Social Enterprise Programs Revenues
2016-2021, 2022 Projected

Please see page 20 for more info on the labelling of our fiscal years.
Shirley has been working with Binners’ Project since 2017 and is now one of our Team Leads. You can find her working at some of our women-led sites, like social housing buildings managed by Atira. Before the pandemic, Shirley’s favourite spot was the Vancouver Convention Centre, where we had teams sorting waste 8 hours a day for 7 days a week. Work with the Convention Centre has been put on hold during the pandemic, and we hope to return there soon.

Shirley’s favourite thing about working with Binners’ Project is seeing the tangible impact of her work on how much waste is diverted. At one site they sorted through 10 bags of landfill waste, and reduced it to just 2 bags by the end. The client was so impressed, and didn’t realize that so much waste can actually be composted!
The launch of the Universal Carts was further delayed during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, we look forward to launching this program in 2021. While the launch was delayed, we were still able to continue testing with binners, including with a mock-up of the station locking mechanism.
The Binners Hook continues to be a signature initiative of Binners’ Project and has been accepted widely across Vancouver. We sold 15 hooks this year to residents who were looking to support their local binners by putting out their refundables as they spent more time at home.

Binners Hook

One of our Binners Hooks in action in a laneway near East Vancouver
Strategic Projects

This year, consultants at KPMG conducted a Market Research Study for Binners’ Project. This study looked at the serviceable market for our social enterprise programs and provided tools and next steps for the continued growth of our fee-for-service revenues.

This project was completed as part of the Investment Readiness Program, with funding distributed by Vancouver Foundation. We also received supplementary support from Vancity Community Foundation and Community Impact Real Estate Society to complete this work.
In late 2020, we began our first strategic planning process alongside binners, staff, and our steering committee. Part of this process involved assessing successes and capturing learnings from the past 6 years. Our success has grown to a point where we must decide how to grow in a way that is sustainable, and best achieves the mission and vision of the binners and Binners’ Project.

Five key goals were identified as priorities over the next 3 years as we implement the strategic plan: **Community, Capacity, Foundation, Scaling, and Voice**. We also envisioned a structural model that ensured binners were kept at the forefront of everything we do.

The strategic plan was completed by consultants from **Roots & Rivers**, and funded by the **McConnell Foundation**.

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**The strategic projects were supported by the following partners:**

- Roots & Rivers
- McConnell
- KPMG
- Investment Readiness Program
- Vancity Community Foundation
- Community Foundations of Canada
Binners' Project
Financial Overview

In 2019, we switched to a April-March fiscal year, and the reporting period for that year was named ‘2019-2020’. The current fiscal year being reported on is named ‘2021’.

COVID-19 Impact

This year, we experienced a $404,500 reduction in planned revenue, almost 80% of which was fee-for-service revenue from our social enterprise programs. Without this revenue, we needed to raise emergency funds through grants, allowing us flexibility to continue providing financial supports directly to binners. We were also eligible recipients of government benefits like CEWS and CERS (categorized here as ‘other revenue’).

However, as a result of the dramatic cuts to our social enterprise programs, our income to binners is lower than in a normal year. We also had a number of projects planned and funded before the pandemic that focused on strategic and program development. As a result, our Other Project Expenses were higher than in a regular year. Combined with the decreased revenue opportunities for binners, this means our income to binners analysis is lower than normal. As things return to normal over the course of 2021-2022, we anticipate this ratio to adjust accordingly.

5 Year Revenue Analysis

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<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Grant &amp; Donations</th>
<th>Fee-for-Service &amp; Sale of Goods</th>
<th>Sponsorships</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$18,730</td>
<td>$148,081</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$98,073</td>
<td>$288,091</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$183,009</td>
<td>$346,694</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>$365,564</td>
<td>$445,779</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$88,836</td>
<td>$514,550</td>
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2021 Fiscal Year Revenue Breakdown

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Donations</td>
<td>$514,550</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fee-for-Service</td>
<td>$88,836</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsorships</td>
<td>$46,000</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Revenue</td>
<td>$66,560</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$715,946</strong></td>
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4 Year Income to Binners Analysis

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<tr>
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<th>2018</th>
<th>2019-2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
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<td></td>
<td>$275,205</td>
<td>$312,652</td>
<td>$442,103</td>
<td>$556,063</td>
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<td></td>
<td>$116,596</td>
<td>$174,018</td>
<td>$285,502</td>
<td>$176,546</td>
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Acknowledgements

Our work takes place on the shared, unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish) & səl̓il̓wətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

We acknowledge the binners, whose dedication and effort inspires the incredible team of staff, volunteers, funders, and supporters Binners’ Project is fortunate to have in its corner. Additionally, we take this opportunity to recognize the contributions of the following groups and individuals:

Core Staff

Core staff are full or part-time with Binners’ Project. This year, we said goodbye to our Director Landon. We are sad to see him leave, and are excited for what the future holds for his next projects!

- Brianne De Man, Interim Director
- Iris Ting, Social Enterprise Programs Manager
- Kevin Gombart, Operations Manager
- Davin Boutang, Community Specialist
- Ed Hawkey, Head Coordinator

Leadership Team

The leadership team is made up of the following binners:

- David Washpan, Community Coordinator
- Francis Taban, Community Coordinator
- Andrew Jack, Team Lead
- Bertha Cardinal, Team Lead
- Bev Welsey, Team Lead
- Brenda Shorty, Team Lead
- Dave Collicott, Team Lead
- Gerry Maynard, Team Lead
- Glenn Grafton, Team Lead
- Joyce Many Chiefs, Team Lead
- Kashe Soukup, Team Lead
- Kelly Angeconeb, Team Lead
- Lesley Clark, Team Lead
- Mike Audet, Team Lead
- Sheldon Bowers, Team Lead
- Shirley Vivian, Team Lead
In June of 2020 Tides Canada changed its name to MakeWay Charitable Society. Binners’ Project joined the shared platform in 2015, and it 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 10–12% of revenue to the collective operation of the shared platform.

**Binners-Staff**

Binners who started as volunteers and decided they were ready to take on more work with us:

- Alex Martin, Binner-staff
- Anne Heidsma, Binner-staff
- Brian Rutledge, Binners-staff
- Brian Wheatley, Binner-staff
- Curtis Traverse, Binner-staff
- Dwayne Flohr, Binner-staff
- Gael LePocher, Binner-staff
- Jon Guerette, Binner-staff
- Kyra Dietsch, Binner-staff
- Matt Lottridge, Binner-staff
- Michael Clark, Binner-staff
- Pat Bazinet, Binner-staff
- Peter Josic, Binner-staff
- Sam Hamm, Binner-staff
- Sonia Bruin, Binner-staff
- Zenda Valiant, Binner-staff

**Steering Committee**

The steering committee provides administrative oversight to Binners’ Project.

- Jeanette Ageson, Chair
  Publisher, The Tyee
- Scott Fraser
  Former President and CEO, Encorp Pacific
- Steve Johnston
  Executive Director, Community Impact Real Estate Society
- Alexandra Kenyon
  Associate, HCMA Architecture + Design
- Ann Cooper
  Project Coordinator, Green Events, City of Vancouver
- Jessica Borich
  Principal Strategist, Prism X Strategy

**MakeWay Charitable Society, our Shared Platform**

**Advisors, Consultants, & Volunteers**

- Lani Brunn
- Shane Frei
- Melanie Kwan
- Johanna Li
- David Schwartz
- Shaugn Schwartz
- Derek Senft
- Annelies Tjebbes
- Austin Lui
Don’t wait until our next report for an update!

Join us on social media or our low-traffic email list to keep up with our activities year-round:

binnersproject.org/signup

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@binners_project
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