



ANNUAL REPORT

2019

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PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES



Founded in **1969**, SPEC is one of Canada's oldest **environmental/urban sustainability non-profit and charitable organization**. We aim to empower communities and individuals to take actions through hands-on education, research and advocacy.



We develop practical solutions in the areas of sustainable **food systems, zero waste, renewable energy** and sustainable **transportation**.



SPEC would like to acknowledge that our work takes place on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) and Stó:lō Nations.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD

This year, 2019, was SPEC's 50th anniversary and we couldn't help looking back over the decades to appreciate what this organization and its community have accomplished. Remembering an incredible hurdle overcome, it was only ten years ago that SPEC nearly closed its doors, hit hard by the 2008 financial crisis; funds dried up and we lost most of our staff. Shortly following was the discovery that "Big Blue" – our beloved building at 6th and Maple, was a leaky condo and full of mold. It was quickly condemned and we were evicted after 30 years. This double whammy precipitated serious discussion about the future-- but SPEC had come too far over 42 years for us to give up. We met in living rooms and board members staffed our programs until we slowly emerged from financial collapse. By 2015-16 we were re-established at Kits Neighbourhood House, guided by an excellent executive director, and began hiring specialized program staff. We were reinventing ourselves as an urban environmental organization teaching, training, and advocating adaptation and mitigation strategies and behaviours to address collective environmental problems, the urgent climate crisis in particular.

Recognizing the inextricable link between social and environmental justice, SPEC also began earnestly exploring the justice dimension of our work. It is widely acknowledged that racialized communities are disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of environmental degradation and climate change. In light of this, we undertook to examine how we, as individuals and as an organization, benefit from and support ongoing structural racism, and to determine strategies for addressing these issues using a lens of social justice and committing to better

educate ourselves and our community in ways of practice informed and inclusive environmental work. For example, we began a decolonization project to understand how we practice systemic racism towards Indigenous peoples and commit to doing better.

To address age discrimination, we also started a project to encourage seniors to cultivate and reclaim a dignified social role as elders, in an effort to improve social solidarity. Social solidarity, a form of social capital, allows us to rebuild the commons and forestall the worst effects of the climate crisis. In 2017, we formalized this work in an updated strategic plan with steps to achieve our vision of a "healthy, just and vibrant urban life that enhances local and global ecosystems." In late 2018 the IPCC stated that the window for action to avoid runaway climate change was 11 years. With that in mind, the SPEC board agreed that our 50th Birthday party must serve the community and be oriented around actions. We began planning "Lovin' The Earth," a climate action fair bringing together 25 environmental, business and community groups, all demonstrating how we can shift our behaviours and advocate for policies that support a sustainable future. In August of 2019, we hosted 2,500 people in a wonderful community celebration of climate action at Riley Park. We closed out the year with our annual AGM where departing board members were thanked and new ones elected and welcomed. Five-year veteran Board President, Carole Christopher, handed the reins to Kate Menzies. Our Program Teams (Food, Energy, and Waste) committed to continue their many excellent programs. And we look forward to the next decade.

With respect and solidarity, on behalf of the 2019 SPEC Board of Directors,

*Dr. Carole Christopher &
Kate Menzies*



Dr. Carole Christopher
Chair



Ruth Briggs
Secretary



Chris Gooderham
Treasurer



Alison Krahn
Director



Art Bomke
Director



Daniel Rotman
Director



Emily Danaher
Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



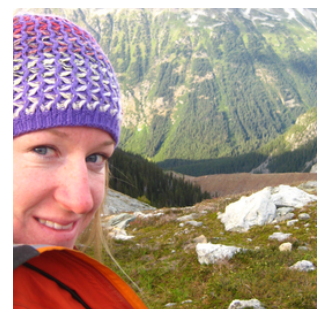
Dr. Eyal Lebel
Director



Farhad Raoufi
Director



Ivan Cheung
Director



Kate Menzies
Director



Magali Vander Vorst
Director



Paul Crosby
Director



Rashmi Gunjur
Chandrashekara Aradhya
Director



Dr. Tara Moreau
Director

— “ —

As a recent member of SPEC staff team, I really look forward to the opportunity to engage school aged children in food literacy and environmental education. SPEC and its volunteers advocated for a school gardens program with facilitated garden lessons over 12 years ago that continues to expand and reach new schools and neighbourhoods.

(Sharlene Singh)

— ” —



Oliver Lane
Executive Director



Barbara Constantine
Fund Development
Coordinator



Sharlene Singh
School Gardens
Program Coordinator

STAFF



Jen Fischer
Cambie Garden
Engagement Coordinator



Olga Lansdorp
Ecosystem Services on
Farmland - Project
Coordinator



Sophia Yang
Climate Change and
Renewable Energy
Education Facilitator



We are grateful to have the support of community partners, organizations and sponsors to pursue the goal of environmental conservation.

Acme Delivery Company	Gaia Green Products Ltd.
Aviva Community Fund	Little Mountain Community Fund
BC Ministry of Agriculture	Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics
BC Gaming Community Grant	The McLean Foundation
Government of Canada	Nada
CBC Vancouver	Patagonia
Chris Spencer Foundation	Recycle BC
Click	Recycling Alternative
Kitsilano Neighbourhood House	Renewal Funds



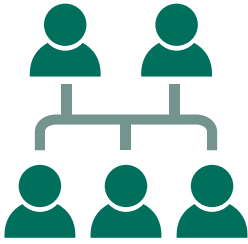
FUNDING SUPPORT



The Soap Dispensary
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
Tense Watches
Telus Community Board
UBC
UBC Botanical Garden
Vancity
Vancouver Community Foundation
Vancouver Sun
West Coast Seeds
Whole Foods Market
SPEC individual donors

10,000+ members

of the general public through the Climate Action Fair, Waste reduction training, Renewable Energy Experience walking tours and the Westside Community Farmers Market



37 businesses and community groups

through team building for sustainability tours and on-site training for waste reduction



OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS



50+ local farmers

through training, networks and on-site support



100+ teachers

with on-site training via Pro-D Day workshops and the Sustainable Communities Field School



50+ climate leaders

due to the Climate Narratives training



3,000 children and youth

via School Gardens Program, Climate Change Renewable Energy workshops and the Eco Literacy program

VOLUNTEER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE



SPEC is grateful to a team of passionate and committed volunteers who contribute in various ways via project leadership, governance, community outreach, administrative support, communications work and fundraising. Please join us in thanking the following individuals for their dedication and contributions to SPEC:

**BRIANNA
THOMPSON**

Members of our Food Team for
their involvement in various
projects including the
development of the 2020 South
Coastal British Columbia
Compost Guide.

**CODY
ALBA**



**SYD
PORTNER**

Members of the Waste Team for
their consistent participation in
meetings, sharing resources and
helping with with project tasks.

**HENRY
MWANDEMERE**

LEADERSHIP

Steven Fetterly
Chris Gooderham
Ruth Briggs



PURPOSE

Seeks to educate individuals, businesses, communities, and children about renewable energy, energy conservation and sustainable modes of transportation. We also advocate at a municipal and provincial level for energy and transportation policies that move us toward energy conservation, responsible energy production and a healthy and just urban environment.

ENERGY & TRANSPORTATION TEAM

ACTIVITIES

- The t-Rex: Renewable Energy Tours
- Climate Change and Renewable Energy workshops
- Collaborative Projects with the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU)
 - Climate Action Map
 - Climate Narratives
 - Carbon Offsets
 - Renewable Energy Demo at Riley Park (RED)



the RENEWABLE ENERGY EXPERIENCE t-REX TOURS

PURPOSE

Whether it's green transportation, energy efficient buildings or an urban farm, it's just a question of taking another look around. This team explores a diverse array of renewable energy assets at Olympic Village and facilitates discussion about a zero fossil fuels future.

These 75 minute walking tours explore the renewable energy in the city starting at Olympic Village skytrain station concluding at the Creekside Community Centre.



5

public tours at
Olympic Village

HIGHLIGHTS

26

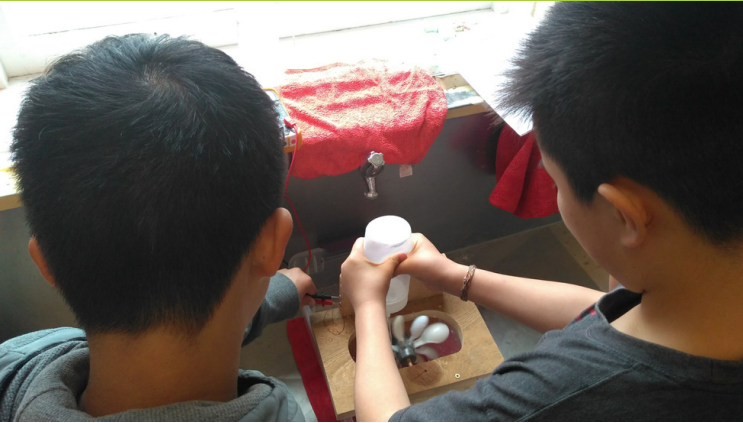
participants

\$25

total donations for
climate change &
renewable energy
workshops



CLIMATE CHANGE & RENEWABLE ENERGY WORKSHOPS



PURPOSE

Geared towards Grades 4+, these engaging, hands-on workshops provide students with science-based information on the causes and impacts of climate change, to empower students to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions by exploring systems of renewable energy.



HIGHLIGHTS

50

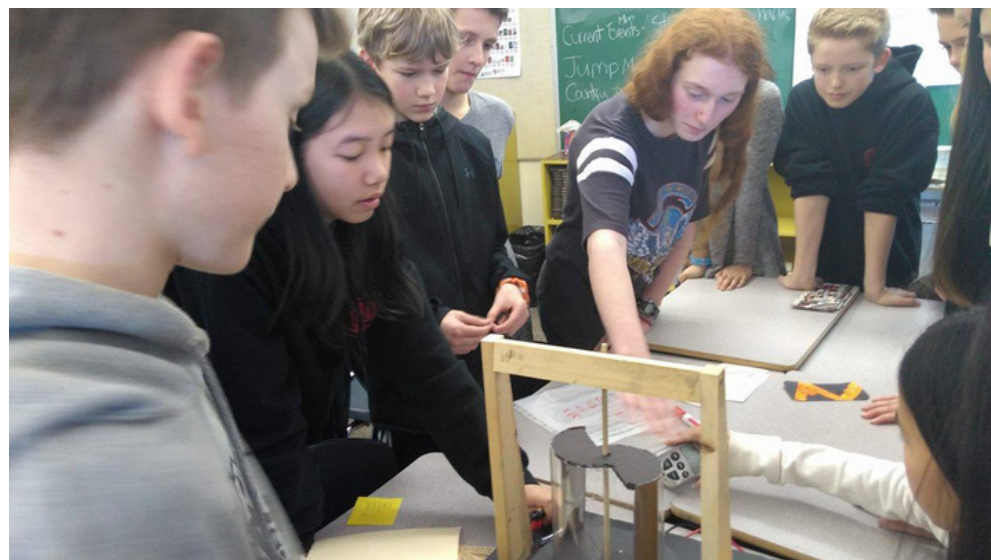
facilitated
workshops using
renewable energy
models

1000+

school aged children
reached

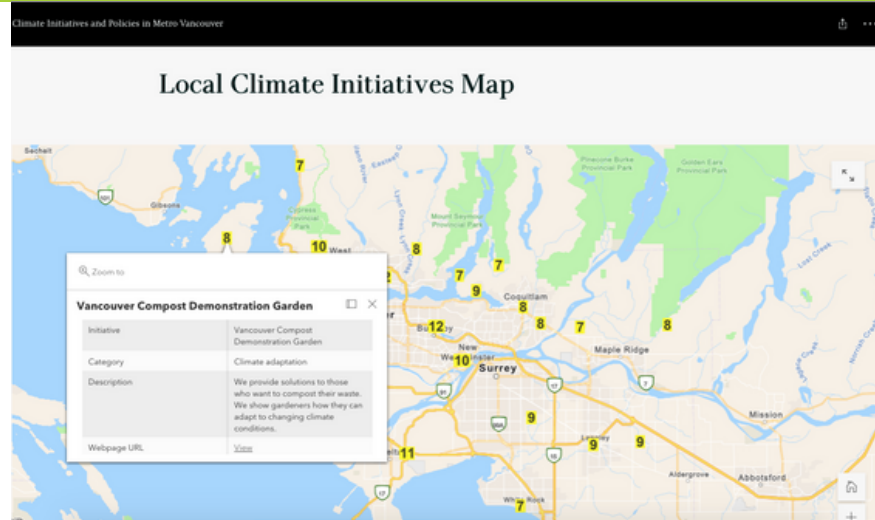
8.7

hours per workshop



NEW PROJECTS

CLIMATE ACTION MAP



SPEC and UBC Collaborative for Advanced Landscape Planning (CALP) worked together to create a Climate Initiatives and Policies Map. The objective is to increase public awareness and encourage collective climate action by mapping climate initiatives and policies in and around Metro Vancouver to local climate opportunities. Up to 90 active climate initiatives working on issues from climate mitigation to climate justice, as well as, climate adaptation in the Metro Vancouver area were found and added to the map.



CLIMATE NARRATIVES

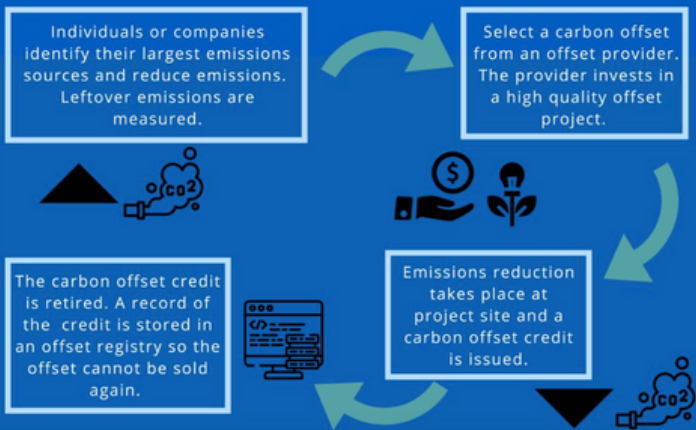


Climate change is no longer a distant issue for future generations. It is happening now

and the need for clear and effective climate communication is more necessary than ever. Through this Climate Narratives daylong meeting, SFU Faculty of Environment and SPEC bring together experts to exchange ideas, tools, and insight on how to make climate advocacy more relatable to the values that people hold dear.

NEW PROJECTS

OFFSET PROCESS



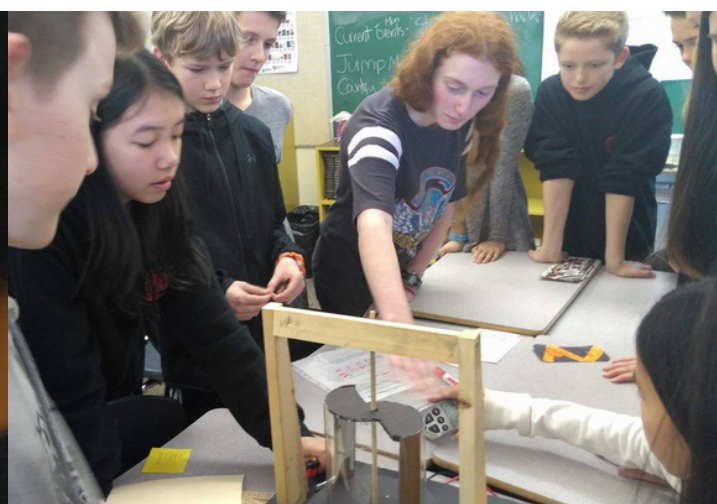
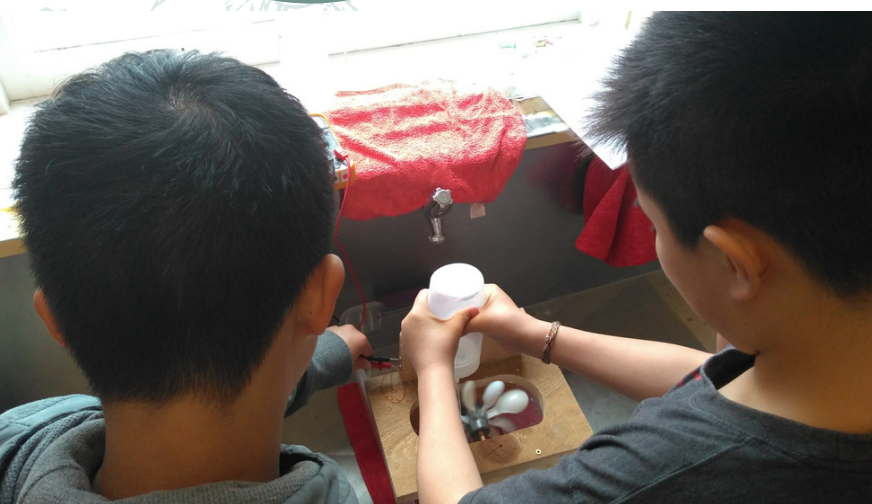
CARBON OFFSETS

Students from UBC's ENVR 400 course and SPEC collaborated on a research project to assess the effectiveness of carbon offsets on reducing personal carbon footprint. A carbon offset is a credit for a reduction in CO₂ or other greenhouse gases to counterbalance emissions occurring somewhere else. A more detailed infographic and further information about necessary steps before purchasing offsets can be found on SPEC's website.



RED AT RILEY PARK

This interactive installation project is (Renewable Energy Demonstration (RED) located at Riley Park Community Garden is a joint collaboration between SPEC's Energy & Transportation Team, UBC ENVR 400 and Little Mountain Neighbourhood House. This display aims to educate the surrounding community about viable energy alternatives to fossil fuels for home use.



LEADERSHIP

Art Bomke
Olga Lansdorp
Tara Moreau



PURPOSE

Building a just, sustainable and resilient food system by engaging children, teachers, communities, NGOs, local businesses, and government officials in learning about and supporting sustainable food systems.

FOOD TEAM

ACTIVITIES

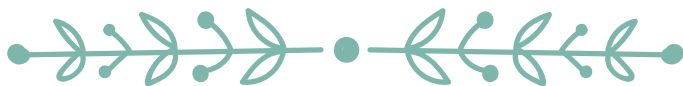
- Cambie Square Communal Garden
- Ecological Literacy through Gardening at Riley Park
- School Gardens Program
- Westside Community Food Market



CAMBIE SQUARE COMMUNAL GARDEN

PURPOSE

Located on the SW corner of Cambie and 10th Avenue, the Cambie Square Garden is a communally run demonstration garden. Volunteers gather and share in the work together (as there are no individual garden plots); planning, planting and harvesting.



HIGHLIGHTS

3

garden workshops

31

participants/volunteers



>20

crops were harvested and enjoyed
amongst dedicated volunteers



FARMLAND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PROJECT

PURPOSE

The Farmland Ecosystem Services Project aims to provide information to the public, local governments, however, our primary work is to provide guidance and support to local small-scale farmers, through networking events and practical workshops, In 2019, the we hosted the following events:

- Pest Management Workshop
- Pollinator Workshop
- Planting Hedgerows
- Farmer Training Sessions
- Cover Cropping Project



HIGHLIGHTS

60+

attended the Small Scale Farm conference hosted in partnership with Kwantlen Polytechnic University

19

local farms received detailed analyses of their soil fertility and recommendations for crop success

16

local farms received a special mix of cover crop seed



SCHOOL GARDENS

PURPOSE

School Gardens are gaining ground as important green spaces for learning, especially outside in nature. These living classrooms engage students to reconnect to the natural world, through observation and exploration of biodiversity, plant life, natural cycles and food literacy.

The School Gardens program was introduced over 10 years ago. The goal of the program is to connect children to their food, each other, nature and their community.



HIGHLIGHTS

Lessons on pollinators and pollination, soil science, saving seeds, seasons, garden planning, fall garden clean up, insects and local food systems.

800+

students served

1,200+

hours spent learning in
the garden and outdoors

250+

food literacy lessons
delivered to K-12
students

— “

It is so wonderful to have someone from SPEC who can guide us and organize lessons/activities at appropriate times. I find myself integrating the garden into my teaching practice a lot more than I used to. Thanks to SPEC, I am more aware of what is in the garden and how I can use it as an outdoor learning space. I am constantly encouraging my kids to take care of our Earth, and the garden is one way to do that (ie. composting, growing own food, insects).

” —

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY FOOD MARKET

PURPOSE



The food market is an annual collaboration between SPEC and Kitsilano Neighbourhood House that takes place every Thursday from 3 PM to 7 PM, at the corner of West 7th Ave and Vine St. The goal is to help small scale and new local vendors in the Westside to gain more exposure and sell their produce directly to customers. In addition, a coupon program is implemented to help low-income and vulnerable populations access locally grown food.



HIGHLIGHTS

20+

vendors

<60%

of vendors were in
their first 3 years
of operations

\$16K+

in vendor income

14

committed volunteers

210+

hours volunteered



LEADERSHIP

Eyal Lebel

Daniel Rotman



PURPOSE

This team works to educate, empower and generate self-awareness of waste reduction to the public and local businesses.

WASTE TEAM

ACTIVITIES

- Master Recycler



MASTER RECYCLER

PURPOSE

Now, in its fourth year, very popular the Master Recycler Vancouver program offers a free eight-week adult education program on waste

reduction and prevention. Students in the program gain knowledge from industry experts and attend field trips to local waste processing and recycling facilities.



HIGHLIGHTS

66

program graduates

3K+

hours of
community
outreach

>100K

estimated reach to
community members



THE FIELD SCHOOL

PURPOSE

The Field School program is a collaboration between SPEC and UBC Botanical Garden, UBC Psychology, and UBC Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability. With opportunities for team-building activities throughout the day, the experience aims to build positive relationships within your team in an outdoor setting.

This program was made possible through a generous donation to UBC from Patricia Wales (BA, '75). In addition, funding for SPEC is provided by Sitka Foundation and the Gow-Jarrett and Millard Family.

2488

participants



HIGHLIGHTS

(since 2015)

85

business and
community groups

FEATURED EVENTS



PURPOSE

A training program with 2 sessions, aim to help businesses reduce waste in the workplace

GREEN TEAMS TRAINING PILOT



121

attendees

HIGHLIGHTS

5

groups
(Vancity, Telus, Nintendo,
YMCA & Visier)

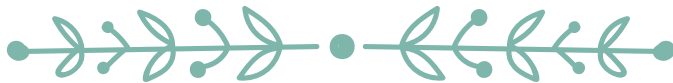


Sinister Seniors & the Pender Ocean Defenders

CLIMATE ACTION FAIR

PURPOSE

The first large scale event hosted at Riley Park brought together a mix of organizations, activists and municipal members of government to discuss and find meaningful solutions to climate change through action - to promise to reconnect to nature and each other.



HIGHLIGHTS



Rebecca Hamilton, youth Climate Strike organizer



Eco-friendly soap and bubbles from The Soap Dispensary

~2300

attendees

14

workshops and activities

10

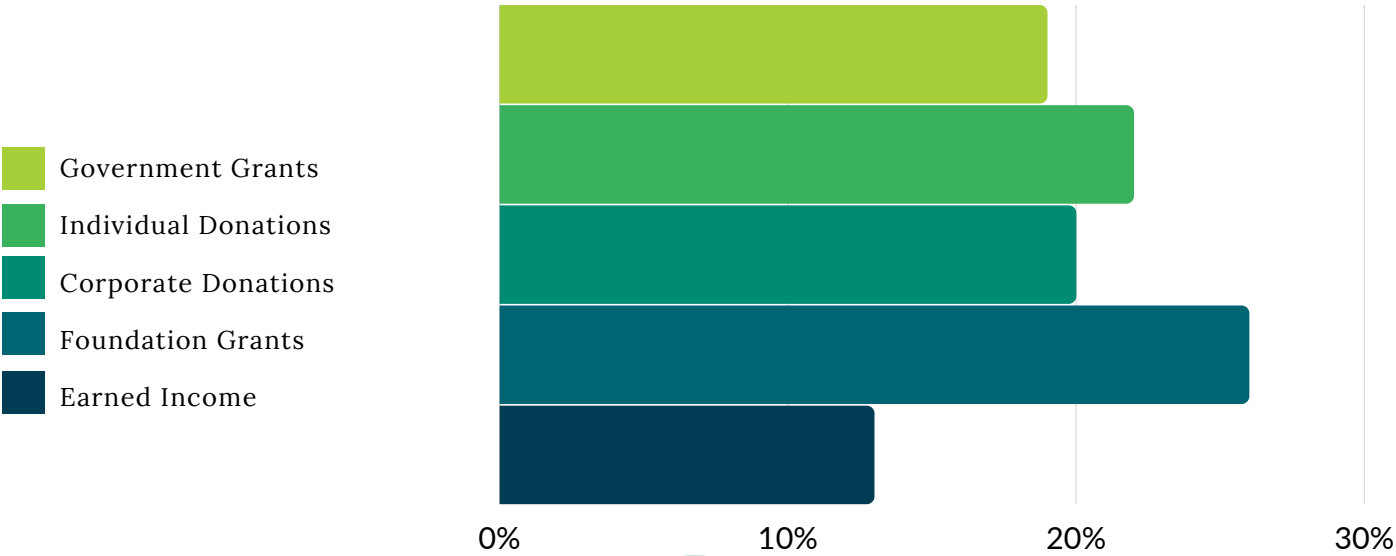
sponsors and in-kind sponsors

54

volunteers

29

guest exhibitors



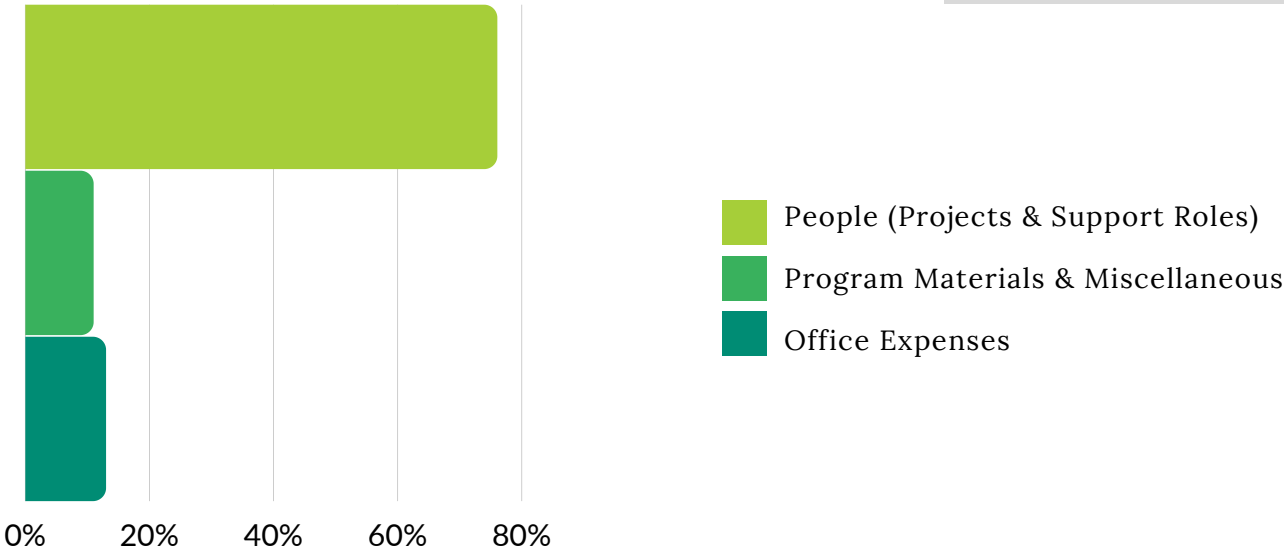
Total Revenue:

\$176,158

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Total Expenditures:

\$189,988





VOLUNTEER

Volunteers play an important role in all our accomplishments and we are eager to connect with people who are motivated to make a positive impact on our urban environment.

To start, join others at one of our team meetings, lend a hand at an outreach event or share your administration, fundraising or communication skills.



LEARN

SPEC workshops, activities and events are designed to connect and inform motivated individuals, families, groups and businesses.

Our goal is to inspire and to provide useful tools for exploring newer and deeper ways of sustainable urban living and action for change.

Information and calendar listings can always be found on our website.

GET INVOLVED



DONATE

Individual donations make our activities possible and are the most sustainable way to fund our work, as they make us less vulnerable to the fluctuating availability of government and foundation grants.

No donation is too small, and all donations above \$10 receive a tax receipt.

WAYS TO GIVE:

- Online through the website
- Over the phone
- Mail a cheque

CONTACT US



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This 2019 annual report was prepared by Oliver Lane, Sharlene Singh and Anna Huynh with contributions from members of the board, teams and other volunteers.