

WePress

2023 Annual Report

We respectfully acknowledge that WePress is a community art space on the stolen and occupied ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We are grateful to be here uninvited, to live and work alongside the people indigenous to these lands who have stewarded the land since time immemorial.

Highlights of 2023 Summary

- Supported 10 artists through Radical Care Artist Residencies;
- paid 4 artists hired to create 'how-to' zines for art kits;
- 15+ members of the community hired to assemble art kits;
- Creation and distribution of 1500 art kits, including Chinese brush painting, watercolour painting, pencil colour drawing, and paint marker kits (some will be distributed by partners in the new year);
- 25,000+ hot, delicious, nutritious meals prepared by the WePress Community Kitchen and distributed them with our 7 partner organizations – Aboriginal Front Door (AFD) and Smoke Signals, Overdose Prevention Society (OPS), Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society (WAHRS), Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), PACE Society, and the CRAB Park Encampment and Eastside Community Action Project;
- Continued to work on the set up of our space at 185 E. Hastings Street;
- Collaborated with Powell Street Festival on *Setsubun*, *Hanami*, *15th Annual Asahi Tribute Game*, and *Minori* events during the year, and on four Paueru Mashup (dance) and two art-making Workshops in Oppenheimer Park in July 2023;
- Supported Watari with their collaboration event for *Day of the Dead* on Thursday, November 2nd;
- Supported DTES Arts Collective (Street Artists working with Overdose Prevention Society);
- Developed new relationships and deepened existing ones with other community organizations in the DTES engaging in mutual aid work;
- Received support from 14 new and regular volunteers (including Board members);
- Hired Ingrid Mendez as a part-time Director to lead WePress through a Visioning Process as well as a Strategic Planning Process, and to work with existing staff and board members to hire a full-time Program + Managing Director and a part-time Accessibility Coordinator to work alongside her; and
- Continued to work on our organizational 're-set' that includes funding, planning, developing organizational infrastructure, hiring new staff, and working on a communications plan.

A Vancouver Downtown Eastside Community Arts Space on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations

MAIL TO: PO Box 88005 RPO Chinatown, Vancouver, BC V6A 4A4

185 EAST HASTINGS STREET, VANCOUVER, BC V6A 1N5

✉ info@wepress.ca ☎ 604-670-3424 🏠 WePress.ca

f facebook.com/WePressVancouver 🐦 [@WePress_YVR](https://twitter.com/WePress_YVR) 📷 instagram.com/wepressvancouver

WePress

Programming Details

Winter

WePress collaborated with the Powell Street Festival Society (PSFS) on their *Setsubun* new year's event on Sun, Feb 3rd at Oppenheimer Park, with our Community Kitchen helping cook 300+ hot Japanese curry rice meals for the event. Due to the end of COVID-19 Response funding, the WePress Community Kitchen, which we started in June 2020, had to lay off some of its staff and reduce our meal preparation from 1000 meals from Monday to Friday to 500–550 hot delicious, nutritious meals from Tuesday to Thursday. We are continually grateful for the use of the Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall (VJLS-JH) kitchen and for their support through highly subsidized kitchen rent to support cooking meals for the unhoused and precariously housed. Our meals are distributed through our partner frontline DTES organizations: the residents of CRAB Park and Eastside Community Action Project (ECAP), Aboriginal Front Door (AFD), Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society (WAHRS) and their street outreach program, Overdose Prevention Society (OPS), PACE Society, and Smoke Signals. Many thanks to Herb, Dan, Lulu, Rhea, Hannah, and Dee who all helped WePress with so much work between 2021 and early 2023.

Spring

We collaborated with PSFS on their *Hanami Cherry Blossom Picnic*, helping cook and serve 300+ hot Japanese curry rice meals and hiring artist facilitators for the paper cherry blossom-making workshop. We engaged Linda Gorrie to help develop and implement a hiring process to hire a new Program + Managing Director. She helped us develop the job posting and a schedule. We assembled an amazing Hiring Committee of Manuel Axel Strain, Cecily Nicholson, and Kay Slater to help with the process. The job was posted throughout May and interviews were conducted at the end of June, with a decision about hiring taking place in July. We also supported three artists through our Radical Care Artist Residency program. As well, Shu Leung and Tristen Wybou worked on our Sector Innovation project, funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, gathering and assembling recommendations for the organization going forward.

Summer

Throughout the summer, the WePress Kitchen continued its work feeding folks in the DTES. In July, we collaborated with PSF to host four Paueru Mashup dance workshops in Oppenheimer Park and two art-making (painting and omamori-making) workshops and helped bring cold water and frozen juice, freezies, and popsicles to participants and those spending time in the Park. We hired Haisla Collins to help us assemble 500 Beading Art Kits that include the how-to zine she created for us to share with the DTES community. We also supported PSFS's end of summer *15th Annual Asahi Tribute Game* in A Vancouver Downtown Eastside Community Arts Space on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔl (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations

2

MAIL TO: PO Box 88005 RPO Chinatown, Vancouver, BC V6A 4A4

185 EAST HASTINGS STREET, VANCOUVER, BC V6A 1N5

✉ info@wepress.ca ☎ 604-670-3424 🏠 WePress.ca

📘 facebook.com/WePressVancouver 🐦 @WePress_YVR 📷 instagram.com/wepressvancouver

WePress

Oppenheimer Park on Saturday, August 19th, helping cook 350 meals of hot dogs and corn and supporting the annual baseball game. As well, Shu and Tristen completed our Sector Innovation report – much gratitude to them for their commitment and hard work.

Fall

Our hiring process was slightly delayed but we have now hired Ingrid Mendez as our Director (part-time) to help lead WePress through visioning and strategic planning processes, and to help us hire a full-time Program + Managing Director and part-time Accessibility Coordinator. We collaborated with Watari by providing funds for art supplies for their *Day of the Dead* event on November 2nd. We worked with 4 artists to complete 'how-to' zines and hired 15+ DTES artists to help assemble the art kits for distribution through our partner organizations in December (with some to be distributed in the new year). The art kit assembling sessions are community-building, fun, and employment opportunities all rolled into one – providing social inclusion, paid work, a sense of purpose, hot meals from our Community Kitchen, snacks, drinks, and a chance to connect with other artists. The art-making across the DTES that results when our art kits are distributed is still an important part of WePress, even as we work on our 're-set.' We are also in the process of supported 6 more artists through our Radical Care Residency program, and working to support the DTES Artist Collective (Street Artists like Smokey D.) through the Overdose Prevention Society.

Many Thanks

Thank you to our [funders and partners](#), including the BC Arts Council, Province of British Columbia, City of Vancouver, Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of Canada under the Community Services Recovery Fund, the Province of British Columbia, the Vancouver Foundation, HAVE Culinary Training Society, Affordable Housing Advisory Association, Powell Street Festival Society, Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall, and Mair Foundation held at Vancouver Foundation. Special thanks to all the groups supporting the DTES Community Kitchens (DECK) Network and especially the groups who distribute our meals from the WePress Community Kitchen – AFD, OPS, WAHRS, VANDU, PACE Society, Smoke Signals, and the CRAB Park Encampment and ECAP. Also, many thanks to the informal mutual aid network of the DTES that supports unhoused and precariously housed people and the work of WePress.

Special thanks from staff to our Board members, Sharon Belli, Shauna Butterwick, Ann Hepper, and Kate Hodgson, for their ongoing support of the work of WePress. Many thanks to Julia Aoki for serving on our Board as well. And thanks, as always, to all our volunteers and supporters who make WePress what it is!

A Vancouver Downtown Eastside Community Arts Space on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔl (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations

3

MAIL TO: PO Box 88005 RPO Chinatown, Vancouver, BC V6A 4A4

185 EAST HASTINGS STREET, VANCOUVER, BC V6A 1N5

✉ info@wepress.ca ☎ 604-670-3424 🏠 WePress.ca

📘 facebook.com/WePressVancouver 🐦 [@WePress_YVR](https://twitter.com/WePress_YVR) 📷 instagram.com/wepressvancouver