



powell street festival society
パウエル祭協会

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For Immediate Release

POWELL STREET FESTIVAL ISSUES STATEMENT ON UPCOMING FESTIVAL AND STATE OF AFFAIRS IN OPPENHEIMER PARK

Vancouver, B.C. (July 24, 2014) ... The Powell Street Festival exists to celebrate Japanese Canadian art and culture, in the historic Japanese Canadian neighbourhood in which Oppenheimer Park is central. The Powell Street Festival organizers wish to assure all that the festival this year **will** continue on August 1 – 3, 2014 and be a great celebration. However, we acknowledge and respect the concerns of the homeless and community residents in the Oppenheimer Park area, located on unceded Coast Salish territory. For this reason, the Powell Street Festival Society will **not** use the area of Oppenheimer Park where the protest is taking place and do **not** support the removal order or the threat of removal of residents in the park in any way.

The Japanese Canadian community has significant ties to Oppenheimer Park - once home to the legendary Asahi baseball team and the centre of a vibrant pre WWII Japanese Canadian community. During WWII the community experienced the confiscation of their homes and businesses, detention, relocation and internment. As such the Powell Street Festival Society has empathy for the current situation. While we had hoped to find a compromise that respects all park users, this does not appear to be achievable in the time available. We understand that while we have celebrated the Japanese Canadian community in the historically significant location of Oppenheimer Park for the last 37 years, there are many other issues at stake that create challenges for a timely resolution.

We are talking to the City of Vancouver to help us find nearby viable alternatives including the use of Powell Street and other streets. The alternatives will impact our programming and it will be disappointing, especially for the Japanese Canadian community. However, we will move forward with the celebration, the longest running community-based arts and culture festival in the lower mainland and largest Japanese Canadian event in the country, now in our 38th year. We are proud to be a Vancouver institution, and want to welcome everybody to come savour the Powell Street Festival as the go-to place to discover emerging contemporary Japanese Canadian artists, eat amazing Japanese food, experience taiko drumming, participate in our Sumo competition, and so much more! Please check our website and social media outlets for up to date information.

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For press materials, please visit: www.powellstreetfestival.com/festival2014/media/

For up-to-date information on the festival, please visit www.powellstreetfestival.com, www.facebook.com/powellstfest or follow us on twitter: @powellstfest,

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