



powell street festival society

パウエル祭協会

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## Press Release

**The Powell Street Festival Society is excited to share that our organization is growing!**

**For Immediate Release - Vancouver, B.C. (Friday, July 9, 2021)** - In our 45th year and eager to support this growth phase, we are pleased to announce a restructuring that will create two new positions from the existing Executive Director role: Director of Programs and Director of Operations. Together, these two positions will lead Powell Street Festival Society as we continue to support Japanese Canadian arts and culture *and* the neighbourhood that we call home, *Paueru-gai* (Powell Street).

The executive director since 2015, Emiko Morita who has led the Society through this period of unprecedented growth, will fill the Director of Programs position and continue to oversee the Society's programming, projects and community engagement. The Director of Operations will oversee the operations of the organization, pursue funding and fundraising opportunities and ensure the financial health of the Society.

Over the past several years, Powell Street Festival Society has experienced a period of remarkable growth: Festival attendance has grown; the depth and variety of our year-round arts and culture programming has increased; and we have reaffirmed our commitment to social justice and equity work in the Downtown Eastside, first with a revision to our Society Constitution in 2020, and then with [on-the-ground action](#).

This growth has been made possible by the tireless efforts of our staff who have consistently delivered high level existing programming while embracing new opportunities for development. The Society has continued to evolve and has implemented processes and documentation systems to ensure smooth operation of our programs.

In light of these developments, the Powell Street Festival Society Board and leadership see this moment, now, as a moment of opportunity. By expanding the leadership team and shifting to a shared structure with two Directors we will support the organization's growth, commitment to high level arts production, and deepening relations with the Downtown Eastside community. The expansion is also made with the intention of supporting the exemplary work of the existing Executive Director, Emiko Morita and allowing her to focus on the provision of high-quality arts programming and community engagement in the Director of Programs role.

By dividing the responsibilities currently held in the single Executive Director position into two equal Director positions, both of whom will report directly to the Board of Directors, we are strengthening the resilience of the organization, ensuring continuity of leadership, and cultivating further innovation and growth.

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For interviews, phone Duston Baranow-Watts at (604) 343-0269 or [media@powellstreetfestival.com](mailto:media@powellstreetfestival.com).



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**About Powell Street Festival Society:** Powell Street Festival Society's (PSFS) mission is to celebrate Japanese Canadian (JC) arts and culture to connect communities. The main activity is producing Powell Street Festival (PSF), an annual celebration of Japanese Canadian arts, music and culture in Vancouver's historic Japanese Canadian neighbourhood, Paueru Gai, today known as the Downtown Eastside. The PSFS's vision includes a society enriched and interconnected through Japanese Canadian arts and fostering the recognition of Japanese Canadians as a creative force within the broader community. A grassroots organization with social justice at its core, PSFS is deeply connected to its geographic location in unceded Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh territories. The Powell Street neighbourhood was once a bustling Japanese Canadian community and today is known as one of the most impoverished districts in North America, the Downtown Eastside (DTES). The festival envisions itself as a space where progressive and quality arts presentation is an empowered contribution to society at large, enabling conversations about diaspora, diverse histories, and contemporary issues. Creative social engagement is combined with traditional and contemporary art practices, exploring Japanese Canadian diversity to its fullest. Festival programming supports a mix of traditional and contemporary art forms. Off-season events are spaces where both emerging and established artists can push their practices, challenging themselves along with the audience. PSFS connects artists across disciplines and builds communities across cultures and socio-economic divides, with a commitment to community engagement and development. PSFS, a charitable non-profit arts organization, gratefully acknowledges the financial support of The Canada Council for the Arts, BC Arts Council, the City of Vancouver, and its donors, all of which make this program possible. Donations can be made via Canada Helps. [www.powellstreetfestival.com](http://www.powellstreetfestival.com)