



powell street festival society

パウエル祭協会

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



Aza Nabuko at Powell Street Festival (Photo: Yohei Shimomura, 2023)



Powell Street Festival (Photo: Hammer, 2018)

Powell Street Festival first took place in 1977 and has since expanded to be one of the largest and longest-running community arts festivals in Canada.

Powell Street Festival Society (PSFS) now functions as a non-profit registered charity arts organization based in Vancouver and the Paueru Gai Area—today known as the Downtown Eastside (DTES)—located on the unceded territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) Nations.

In addition to Powell Street Festival, the Society offers year-round programs and collaborates with local, national, and international organizations, artists, and communities to advance equity and well-being for all.

Mission: To celebrate Japanese Canadian art and culture to connect communities.

Values:

- **Community**—We foster engagement, collaboration and accessibility.
- **Artistic Excellence**—We cultivate and support artists and cultural producers.
- **Inclusivity and Diversity**—We program events and activities that welcome a wide range of participants, striving towards barrier free experiences.
- **Heritage**—We honour the location of Paueru Gai and Japanese Canadian history. Through this, we acknowledge a larger narrative of displacement and colonization.
- **Resilience**—We protect and maintain the financial and operational viability of the organization. Through this, we strive to sustain our capacity to fulfill our mandate and strengthen community.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

47TH ANNUAL POWELL STREET FESTIVAL

- **23,344 festival goers**
- **141 individual programs & events**
99% led by artists and performers of Japanese or Asian descent
- **127 programs featuring local artists and groups**
- **373 volunteers donating 4,970 hours**
We are proud to be founded on volunteerism and are grateful to our community of volunteers who continue to shape and support the Festival.
- **\$12,797 invested in social enterprise & neighbourhood job creation**
Every year, the Festival offers diverse low-barrier work opportunities to Downtown Eastside community members.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

47TH ANNUAL POWELL STREET FESTIVAL

Committed to showcasing dynamic and diverse programming, Japanese Canadian and beyond, Powell Street Festival presented an exciting lineup of events and initiatives, including:

- Performances and presentations by local and international professional artists
- Panels, workshops, walking tours, martial arts demonstrations and a sumo tournament
- Partnerships with organizations such as the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre, Van Vogue Jam and more,
- *Fuki no Mizu*, a bespoke water mister installation designed in collaboration with UBC's School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Applying lessons from the pandemic, we also produced Festival Connect, our on-the-ground livestream for those unable to attend in-person.



H.R. MacMillan Space Centre children's books readings collaboration with Emily Seo & Hanako Masutani (Photo: Gordy Tong, 2023)



Sumo Tournament (Photo: Andy Chan, 2023)



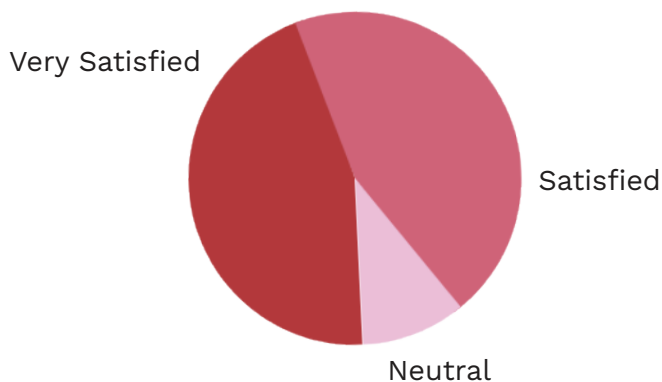
Izumonoookuni! (Photo: Matt Chun, 2023)

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

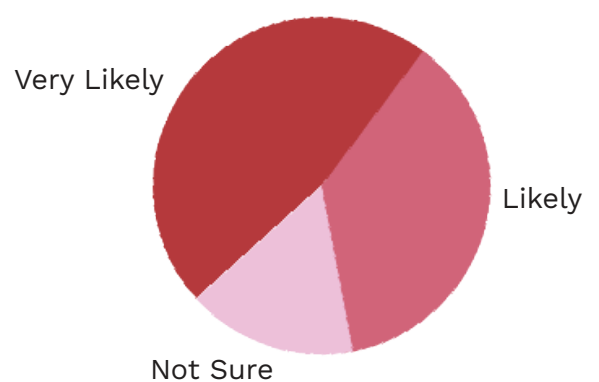
47TH ANNUAL POWELL STREET FESTIVAL

Our festival survey demonstrates that we continue to offer outstanding cultural experiences that foster a community of diverse and committed festival goers.

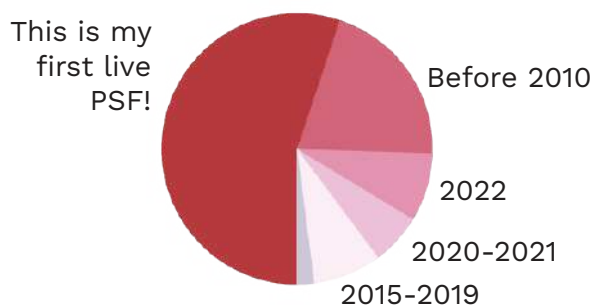
How would you rate your experience at the festival?



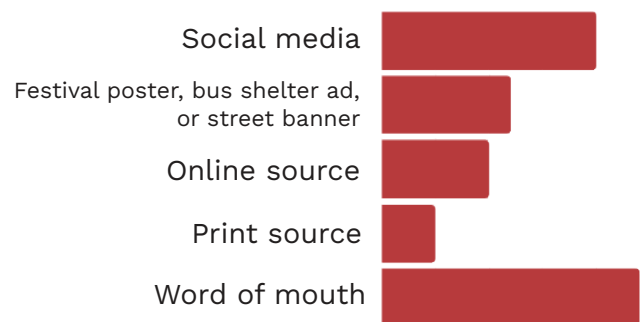
Based on your experience this year, how likely are you to attend next year?



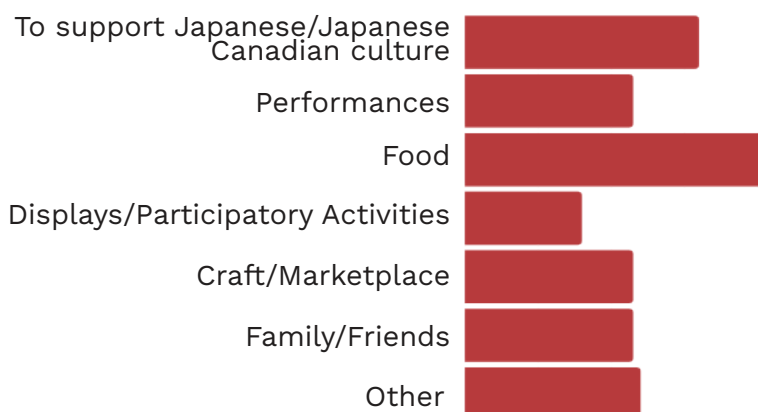
When did you attend your first Powell Street Festival?



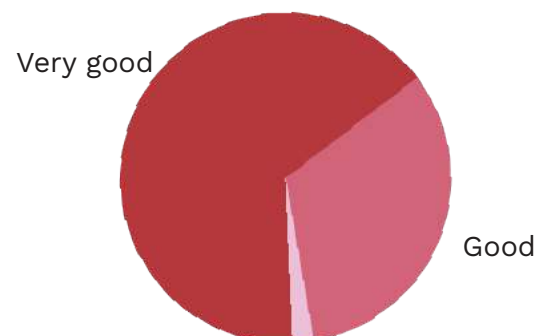
How did you hear about this year's Festival?



Why did you attend the festival?



How was your interaction with volunteers?



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

JAPANESE CANADIAN YOUTH COHORT

From May to August, we welcomed our cohort to the PSFS community. This program for three Japanese Canadian youth ages 19-29 aims to create an embodied experience of Japanese Canadian identity.

“I remember there was one particular conversation where we learned a lot about each other's personal identity, family history, and reasons behind wanting to be a part of the Youth Cohort. The conversation was deeply personal and didn't feel forced... it really left me with an amazing sense of community that I hadn't experienced before, the feeling of being seen by others who understood my identity as something whole and not fragmentary. I think we all came to this experience looking for something; for me, I had so many unanswered curiosities about my own Japanese Canadian heritage. To share that journey of discovery with other people that I could relate to on many levels was really something special.” - Noah

The program began with online training, education, intergenerational relationship building, and skills development, culminating in a 10-day production residency in Vancouver, where the Cohort traveled to sites of Japanese Canadian cultural interest and gained hands-on experience as members of the festival production team.

“My most memorable in-person experience was getting to know and work with the Downtown Eastside community. Whether it was handing out ice cream in the heat of the summer or the small interactions with people during our set up and take down. Everyone who calls Oppenheimer Park their home was very welcoming and had something positive to say about the festival. I felt very privileged to be part of the festival production not only to participate in the Japanese community but also to harmonize with the community in Oppenheimer Park.” - Sean

We will welcome a new Cohort in May 2024.



JC Youth Cohort members in Steveston (Photo: Mayu Takasaki, 2023)



At Oppenheimer Park (Photo: Kathy Shimizu 2023)

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

360 RIOT WALK



PSFS continued the stewardship of **360 Riot Walk**, an interactive walking tour of Vancouver's 1907 Anti-Asian Riots, created by artist Henry Tsang. It uses 360 video technology to trace the history and route of the riots in what is today known as the Downtown Eastside. This unique project interweaves the narratives of racialized communities, reclaiming how and what histories are told.

The project has also expanded into education, piloting a field trip walking tour and a teacher resource for online tours.

VISIONING PAUERU GAI: PUBLIC SPACES IN THE POWELL STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD

Bringing together artists, urban planners, community organizers, architects, landscape architects, and members of the Japanese Canadian, Indigenous, and Downtown Eastside communities, this event seeks to catalyze important conversations about memorialization in the historic JC neighbourhood of Paueru Gai (Powell Street area) – today known as the DTES.

This event is the first in a series of iterative community engagement events.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

DTES COMMUNITY CARE

This year-round suite of programs and events aims to enhance the DTES community's well-being by supporting those facing complex barriers including poverty, racism, mental illness, housing precarity, and addiction.

In 2023, we invested \$301,748 to support job creation, care packages, meal preparation and grocery delivery in the DTES.

- 68% of these funds created skills-building and low-barrier jobs for DTES residents
- 26% were spent on groceries distribution to SRO tenants and care packages
- The remaining 6% covered peer salaries for the implementation of Powell Street Festival, off-season events and our DTES Community Care Programs

In November, we launched our **Winter Care Package Fundraiser** with a goal to raise \$10,000 to assemble and distribute 300 care packages to unhoused and precariously housed people living in the DTES. It is our fourth Care Package project since 2020.

With many thanks to individual donors, we exceeded our goal and look forward to distributing the 300 packages in the new year. Special thanks to City of Vancouver for their support.



Our DTES Community Care Programs collaborate with:

- **WePress Community Kitchen**, which prepares 700-1,000 meals per week for unhoused and precariously housed individuals living in the DTES.
- **DTES SRO Collaborative** and **Watari Research Association** on the Chinatown Grocery Program and DTES Indigenous Elders Grocery Program, which deliver groceries to underserved elders and SRO tenants, supported with thanks to **Bing Ho's** family and friends.
- **Community Impact Real Estate Society** and **EMBERS Eastside Works**, whose grants enable us to support low-barrier employment and capacity-building for people living on low incomes.
- PSFS' **Advocacy and Outreach Committee**, a team of dedicated volunteers who participate in DTES community-building efforts and organize annual events (see next page).

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

With the support of our Advocacy and Outreach Committee (AOC), we hosted numerous events at Oppenheimer Park, including **Setsubun** (Feb 5), **Hanami** (April 2), **Asahi Tribute Game** (Aug 18) and **Minori Harvest** (Nov 5), providing capacity-building paid work opportunities, food and resources for DTES residents, and cultural activities which share Japanese Canadian history and culture. Special thanks to WePress, Yakashiro Farm & Gardens, Vancouver Japanese Language School, Oppenheimer Park, Carnegie Community Centre, TD Park People and Vancity for their support.

See AOC's zine, *paueru gaizette*, on our website.



Setsubun event at Oppenheimer Park
(Photo: Matt Chun, 2023); cover of *paueru gaizette*



Courtesy of Meredith Hama-Brown

おやすみ (Oyasumi): A Collection of Japanese Canadian Short Films (May 25): In partnership with The Cinematheque, PSFS presented おやすみ (Oyasumi) which featured twelve Japanese Canadian short films curated by Natalie Murao.

Finding Her Beat (Feb 18): A taiko performance by Vancouver's Sawagi Taiko, the first all-women taiko group in Canada, followed by a screening of Finding Her Beat documentary and a Q & A.

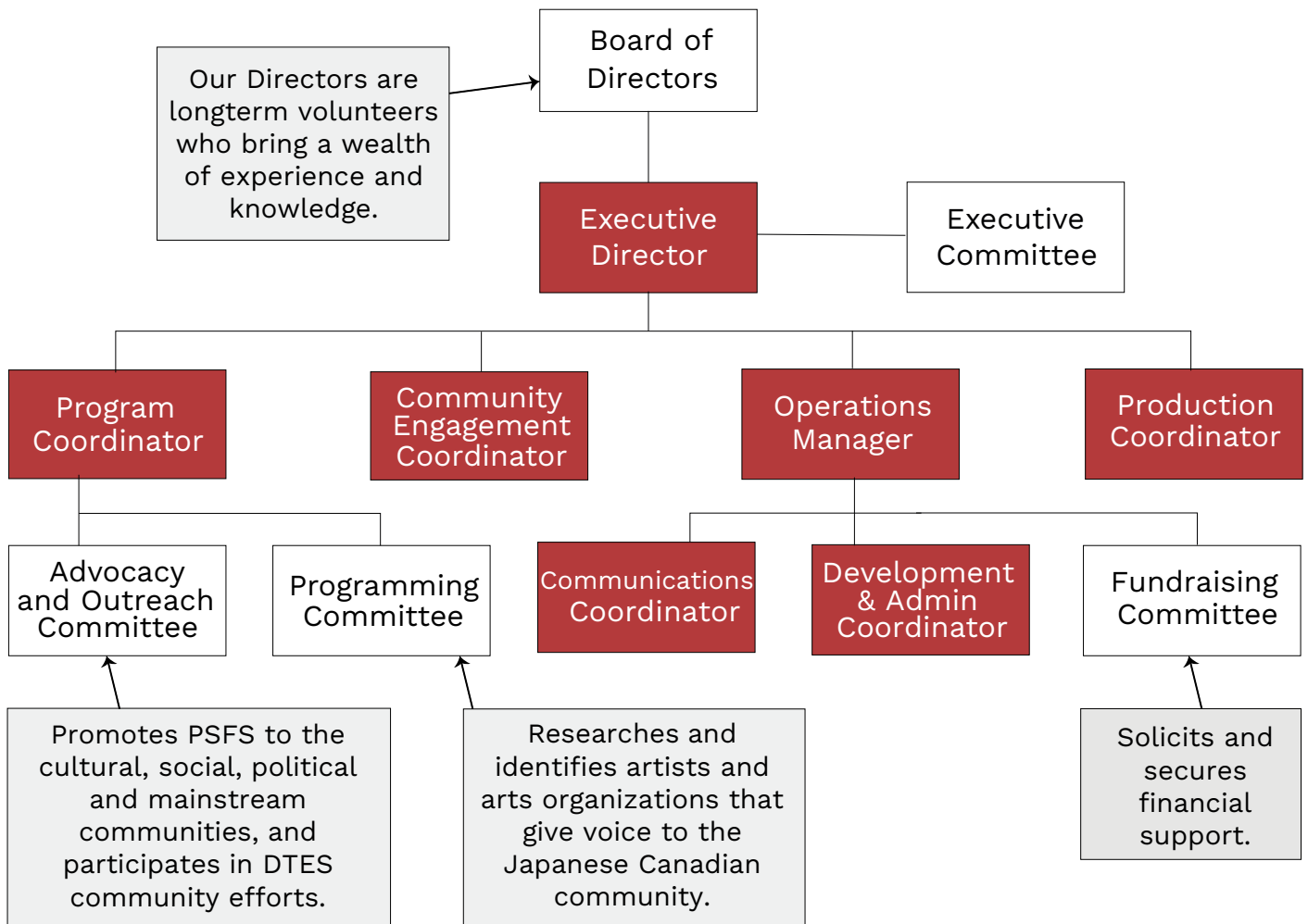


(Photo: Matthew Chun, 2023)



How We Work

With the support of year-round staff, the organization continues to rely on our community of volunteers, who include the Board of Directors and Committees. The team expands during the festival production season to include summer staff and volunteer festival coordinators.



Powell Street Festival Production Staff (Photo: Tracy Moromisato, 2023)

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Powell Street Festival (Photo: Marco Gazzoli, 2022)

Join us in anticipation of the 48th Annual Powell Street Festival and exciting year-round programming in 2024. Whether you are a long-term festival-goer, previous volunteer, sponsor, or are new to PSFS, we want to celebrate with you.

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