

BUILDINGROOTS



2024 IMPACT REPORT



Table of Contents

- 01 Land Acknowledgment
- 02 A Message from our Executive Director
- 03 Impact at a Glance
- 04 Food Programs
- 06 Community Leaders Program
- 07 Community Engagement
- 08 Moss Park Community Garden
- 09 Our Incredible Volunteers
- 10 Organizational Culture
- 11 Financials
- 12 Our Supporters and Partners



Land Acknowledgment

01



Inspired by the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Addresses, we aim to embrace the full intention behind land acknowledgements, recognizing all of creation. Our acknowledgement states we are on Treaty 13 land with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, home to the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, and many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. This land has sustained life for millions of years, providing water, flora, and fauna, teaching us how to live with the seasons.

We express gratitude to the First People of this land and their sacred teachings. We honour the wisdom of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat peoples, whose cultures reflect a deep relationship with "all our relations." We are committed to learning from and celebrating the land-based knowledge of all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

We pledge to transform our role from ally to accomplice, acknowledging our privileges and using them to challenge colonial and racial injustices. Our commitments include formal learning, fostering informal connections, and collaborating meaningfully with Indigenous organizations and communities.

Building Roots is committed to actions that honour our relationships with Indigenous organizations and communities. Our land acknowledgment will continue to evolve as our commitments deepen. We encourage everyone to join us on this journey of healing the land and our relationships.

A Message from our Executive Director

Building Roots took a transformative step forward in 2024, deepening our connection with Moss Park—its people and its land—while uniting staff, volunteers, and board members to shape our next chapter.

With a commitment to embedding urban agriculture in the heart of the community, we revitalized a 2,000-square-foot space across from our market into a thriving community garden. Featuring eleven raised beds, including a fully accessible one, the garden is both a source of fresh food and a gathering place for connection.

A major milestone was reimagining our market model. In September, we shifted from distributing pre-packed bags (a pandemic necessity) to an autonomous market, where residents can choose the produce that best suits their needs—fostering dignity and inclusivity.

December marked another milestone: the launch of our first-ever strategic plan, a three-year roadmap to sustainability, equity, and well-being in Moss Park. This plan strengthens our focus on fresh food access, urban agriculture, and community leadership.

Looking ahead, we're eager for a full garden season in 2025, an expanded Community Leaders program, and new partnerships to support holistic well-being in Moss Park. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters—I'm deeply grateful for all who make this work happen.



Caroline Clair

Our Team



Impact at a Glance

03



**454 Community
Members**

enrolled in our new low-barrier membership program



**21,865 lbs.
of Rescued Food**

was distributed in partnership with Second Harvest



**64 bags
of Produce**

delivered weekly to folks who are housebound, & our Indigenous neighbours at Toronto Council Fire



**100's
of supplies & materials**

for sexual health, harm reduction & other resources were provided to the community



**600+
Books**

were shared with community members through a Bookshare program supported by Children's Book Bank



**6,900
Free Meals & Snacks**

were shared in 2024 with community members



**37
New Volunteers**

joined in 2024, with a total volunteer roster of 60 amazing folks!



**11
New Garden Beds**

were constructed at the newly reconstructed Moss Park Community Garden



**500
Outreach Hours**

were dedicated to creating & deepening connections in Moss Park

Food Programs

04

Moss Park Market



In 2024, we made a pivotal shift in how we support food access in Moss Park, prioritizing dignity, choice, and long-term sustainability.

The lines for our market continued to grow in 2024. This was not sustainable for us as an organization, and many in the neighbourhood felt the market was inaccessible. We needed an approach that centered community agency and strengthened the future of our market.

In September, we transitioned to an autonomous give-what-you-can market model with a low-barrier membership system. This ensures that food remains accessible to Moss Park residents, while fostering a sense of ownership and participation. Members can now choose the produce that best suits their needs, contributing small amounts if able, thus reinforcing the collective spirit that makes this market thrive.

To further align with our values of food sovereignty, we also diversified our food suppliers, prioritizing local, sustainable, and culturally relevant options that reflect the community we serve. Through this shift, we're not just distributing food—we're co-creating a just, resilient food system that honours choice, community agency, and the land that nourishes us.

Food Programs *continued...*

05



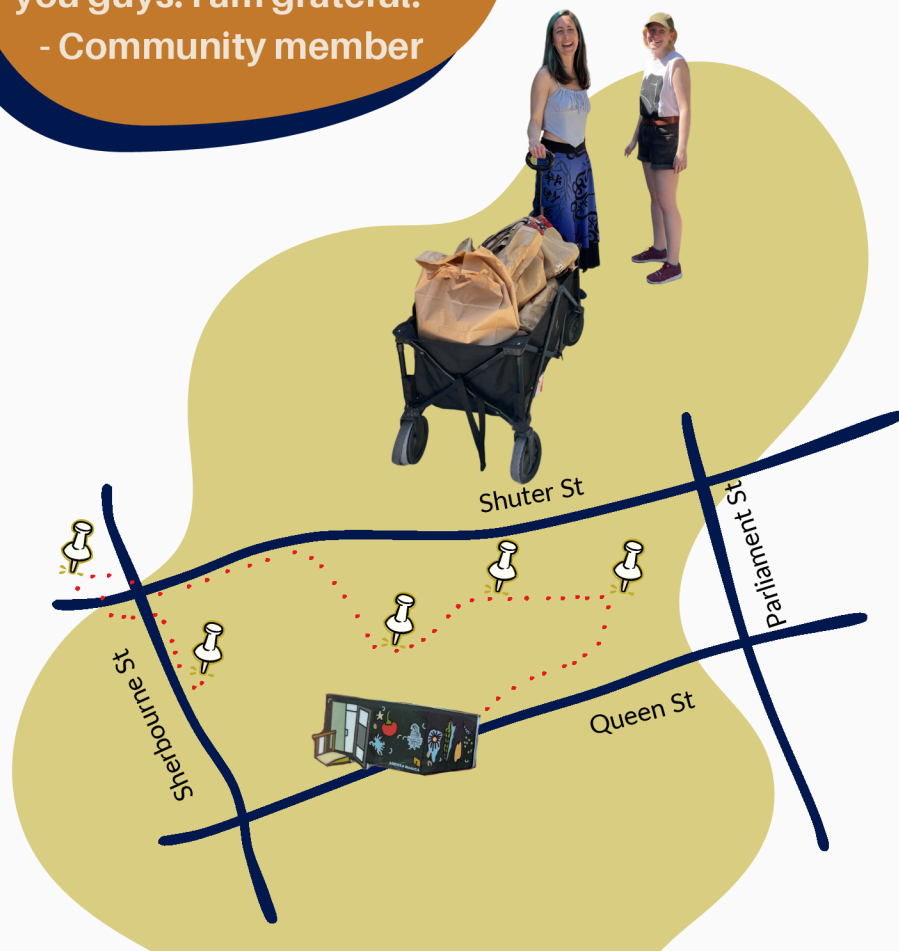
Coffee and Conversations

This element of our food programs offers immediate food support to community members. On market day, you will find volunteers offering warm or cool beverages alongside meals and snacks. Through a wonderful partnership with Club Sandwich, we have been able to offer an average of 200 sandwiches each week. Folks who have this food are often in situations where they don't have meals regularly, and everyone is very thankful for all our supporters who bring food, helping to make this vital program possible.

"I look forward to coming here every week. I get good food, I see my neighbours and you guys. I am grateful."
- Community member

Food Delivery Program

We bring food to folks who are elderly, have mobility issues, are on dialysis, struggling with cancer, and those who have mental health challenges. We can honestly say that we are serving the most vulnerable folks with this program; it takes a lot of time and human power, and we are really proud of it. Food delivery services are rare in the city, and the few that do exist (e.g. meals on wheels) have costs, so are not accessible for many. We bring these community members food, and we also check in on them, offering them respite from loneliness and connection to their community.



Community Leaders Program 06

In 2024, our reimagined Community Leaders Program shifted focus to skill development and community impact. Working with U of T's Multidisciplinary Urban Capstone Project, we identified local leadership opportunities and provided training in areas that supported community stewardship, relationship building, and strategizing for neighbourhood futures. These areas included Conflict Resolution and Crisis Intervention, Collective Impact, Psychological First Aid, Building Neighbourhood Strategies, and Community Engagement Toolkits.

Other members took on operational and program leadership such as stewarding the Gathering Space, which hosts varying responsibilities for market preparation and the Coffee & Conversations Program. They also stewarded and tended our garden space, as well as co-facilitating garden tours. Harm reduction coordination was an area of leadership and expansion which included educating communities and their families about safer substance use, life-saving protocols, and drug literacy.



Graduating participants have moved into related roles with different organizations in the city, taking with them meaningful interventions and strategies for thriving community work and impact.

"Through the program, I have learned to listen to folks to create their own solutions to challenges in their life"

- Dorah, Community Leader

Community Engagement

In 2024, our community engagement work centered on relationships, recognizing that meaningful change was only possible through strong connections. We focused on fostering safe, supportive, and connected communities with compassion and kindness. We work from a harm reduction and trauma-informed framework while staying informed on emerging issues.

Each Saturday, our outreach table provided over 50 resources, including employment support, ODSP navigation, LGBTQIA+ services, food education, and harm reduction. The Bookshare program provides free books to children and adults alike, and is a great resource for many learning English. These resources were shared widely and used for direct 1:1 support, fostering crucial emotional and social connections.

We also deepened relationships with agency partners to expand support systems, reinforcing the power of collaboration in strengthening our communities.



"I really rely on you guys and your work to keep me around. Some weeks, this is the only connection I have with people and it makes a huge difference to my mental state.

Thank you."

-Community Member



Moss Park Community Garden

08



In 2024, we made the decision collectively as Board and Staff to discontinue our growing in Ashbridge. We made that decision in order to reallocate the resources to urban agriculture projects directly in Moss Park. We are extremely grateful for the many wonderful years we had at Ashbridges, with the support of the Ontario Heritage Trust. Much work was done to expand the produce, flowers, and trees grown on site, and there were so many special volunteers and staff that helped to make our work at Ashbridges meaningful. We are pleased to share that Ojibiikaan Indigenous Cultural Network, who had a small plot at Ashbridges, has taken over the full space.

In Moss Park, with the support of Toronto Community Housing, we were able to revitalize an old allotment garden space in the green area next to our market. It had been underused and fell into disrepair. Volunteers and staff undertook much of the physical labor including cleanup, building the new beds and the shed, moving soil, and planting. We installed new accessible ground material and built and installed 11 raised garden beds.

We planted pollinator plants along the perimeter and grew culturally significant foods such as callaloo, tomatoes, and hot peppers. We ran workshops to teach community members how to grow food on balconies, do their own pickling, and come together to enjoy connection with fellow community members, the garden, and its harvests. During our community hours, the garden is open for everyone. Neighbours are welcome to sit and enjoy the space, get their hands into the soil, or harvest some herbs for an evening tea.

Beyond providing nourishment, our vision for this garden is as a thriving, green oasis that supports community members' mental well-being and nurtures a collective spirit of care for both the land and each other.

Our Incredible Volunteers: The Heart of Building Roots

09

At Building Roots, our volunteers are integral to so much of what we do. Whether they're helping to run the market, tending to the garden, serving on our board, or supporting the community in a number of other ways, their dedication and passion make it all possible.

As we run programming year-round, they are with us in the snow, the heat, the rain, and sleet. No matter the weather, whatever the task, they bring skills, energy, and kindness, creating a welcoming space where neighbours can connect, learn, and thrive together.

We are deeply grateful for the time, effort, and heart that each volunteer brings to our organization. Their contributions not only support food access and community well-being but also inspire a culture of care, collaboration, and empowerment. To every volunteer who has given their time this year—thank you. Your impact is immeasurable, and our work would not be possible without you.

Anthony is a pillar of BR, not just his commitment to weekly support, but his deeply entrenched love for community that inspires us all. We are beyond grateful for his time, his knowledge, his energy and kindness.



An absolutely stalwart volunteer. Vishal brings us books and menstrual supplies weekly, delivers good food out to our community partners, and in the summer brings rooftop fresh produce in. His dedication makes a world of difference, many, many thanks!

Organizational Culture

To advance equity and inclusion initiatives within the organization, in 2024 we joined FoodShare's year-long Prioritizing Racial Equity Action Group. This initiative is reshaping our internal practices and policies, ensuring justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion remain central to our work. Our Director of Community Engagement is leading this project, participating in sharing circles, focus groups, and coaching to further organizational policies that decrease barriers to equity.

Through a specialized government grant, we were also able to invest in professional development and skill building for staff which included training in areas of leadership, social change, Indigenous Cultural Safety Training, anti-Black racism, conflict resolution, fundraising, and mediation.

This has opened up greater frontiers for capacity building and organizational learning that we will continue to build on for more functional and engaged community change and frontline impact with community members.

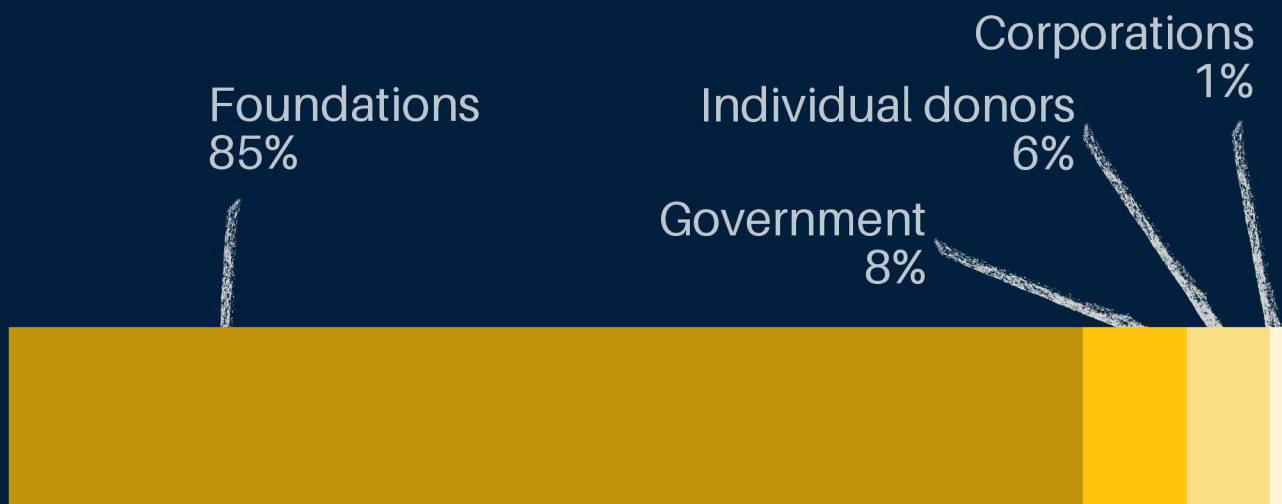
**"Sometimes you just need people to listen and not try to fix you.
Thank you for just listening and being here with me."
-Community Member**



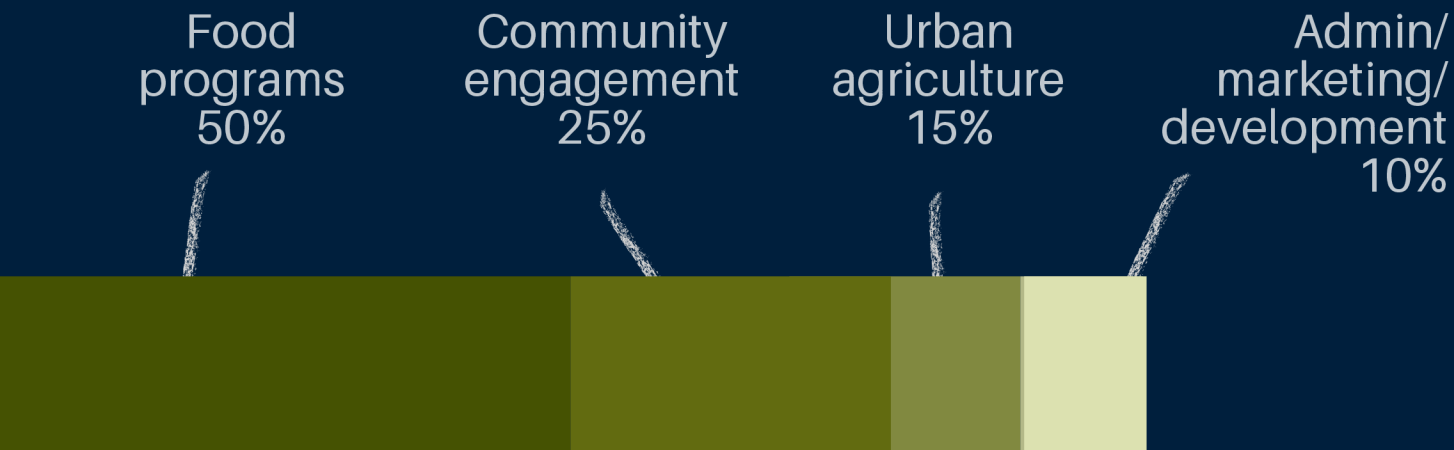
Financials

11

REVENUES



EXPENSES



Our Supporters and Partners

Our work would not be possible without the steadfast support of our community of funders, partners, local businesses, and a team of dedicated volunteers. Our deepest gratitude goes to them.

the
SPROTT
FOUNDATION

They have been generously supporting our work annually since 2020 and are dedicated to addressing homelessness and hunger in Canada by supporting initiatives that enable self-sufficiency and dignity for those in need.

BALSAM FOUNDATION

The Balsam Foundation enables and galvanizes the well-being and potential of communities, committing to a future where all Canadians benefit from a high standard of health and well-being. They have been our annual supporter since 2022.

**P&L Odette
Charitable
Foundation**

The P&L Odette Charitable Foundation is an immensely important contributor to our ability to run our programs and services. Its multi-year commitment to the Moss Park community is vital for our continued stability.

Donors

The Peter Gilgan Foundation, Azrieli Foundation, Echo Foundation, McLean Foundation, McLean Smits Foundation, The Elephant Shoes Foundation, Woodbine Entertainment, Raw Signal Group

30 Monthly Donors and numerous individual donors

Local Business Partners

Moss Park Espresso, Esra's Market, Meza Catering, Above Food Brands, Home Depot, Bondi Produce, Broadfork, Allure Aluminum, Telus, Backyard Urban Farm Company, Masala Guys, Patagonia, Vost Buket, Jaffari, Costco, Kis Paper, Giant Tiger.

Community Partners

Brick Street Bakery, Club Sandwich, Community Fridges TO, CFCC, Community Matters Toronto, Community Benefits Toronto, Empower Moss Park, Endeavour Consulting, Equitable Action for Change, FoodShare TO, Here 2 Help, Johnson Family Bakery, LUSH, Moss Park Coalition, Muslim Foundation, Neighbourhood Information Post, Period Purse, Second Harvest, Sherbourne Health, Soapscum, Sojourn House, South Riverdale Community Health Centre, Steps to Support, The Children's Book Bank, The Neighbourhood Group Community Services, TMU Urban Farm, Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Public Library - Parliament Street Branch, University of Toronto - Multidisciplinary Urban Capstone Project.

And our incredible team of volunteers, without whom none of this would be possible.



Connect with us:

✉ info@buildingroots.ca

🔗 buildingroots.ca

📘 [/buildingrootsTO](https://www.facebook.com/buildingrootsTO)

📷 [@buildingrootsTO](https://www.instagram.com/buildingrootsTO)
