On behalf of the Senior Leadership Team, I would like to say a huge thank you to you for supporting The Mustard Seed Street Church.

The Leadership Team has a deep sense of gratitude to our sponsors, donors and volunteers. We know that your contributions make a difference and we couldn’t do what we do without you.

There is always a lot happening at The Mustard Seed, whether it is in our food hamper distribution area, upstairs in our Family Centre, at the Food Distribution warehouse, or in Duncan at Hope Farm... Here you will always see the buzz of people working toward restoring hope and faith in the lives of others through relationships.

We believe in the potential of every person and we are committed to working tirelessly to see lives restored and empowered. Regardless of where someone is ‘at’ in life we know that there is an innate need in that individual to feel love, to be supported and to be gently held accountable. We do this through compassion, inclusion and engagement. Then, the ‘next step’ is to ensure the long-term success of our community members through continued support, education, training and job placement.

Recently, I was being interviewed by our local news station on a rainy afternoon. The interviewer and I were huddled together, while a grandmother, a mother and her four children walked out of the building. The adults had their arms full of groceries while the kids toted some recently donated books. The youngest daughter was twirling around under her ‘Dora the Explorer’ umbrella she had just received. She was so excited about her gift that she didn’t notice that she had bumped into us. As she peered through the clear umbrella with her big brown eyes, she smiled and saw I was wet. She handed her umbrella to me and said, “You can use mine.” It’s that simple; she was loved on; she shared her gift. And this is why we do what we do at The Mustard Seed Street Church.

The Senior Leadership Team is incredibly blessed to be a part of this community; to serve and to be His hands and feet. Again, thank you for your support.

If I could encourage to consider being a monthly donor and sponsoring a family food hamper, The cost is only $47.50 a month to feed a family of four; your consistent contribution will make a difference.

Blessings and with much gratitude,

Janiene Boice
Director of Development

and the Senior Leadership Team

Derek Pace
Interim Executive Director

Jackie Cox-Ziegler
Director of Administration
Have you ever experienced a day when you have been so busy you have forgotten to eat?

By the time the clock hits 5 pm, the hunger pangs start to pound, and all we can think about is what we can do to get nourishment. Imagine in that time that we are searching for food we can’t find any, and we don’t have any resources to buy the sustenance we need. Imagine, as uncomfortable as it might be, the desperation we would feel at this moment. Now imagine what it would be like to not have food for days. This state of starvation is what The Mustard Seed is committed to preventing in Victoria.

“Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor” (Proverbs 22:9, ESV). What this scripture is saying is those with “a bountiful eye” (meaning when one looks upon the miseries of others with compassion) will find blessing. God blesses those who feed others to alleviate their desperate state of hunger. We at the Mustard Seed can personally attest to this blessing. We get to be a part of so much love, life and light every day as we feed the hungry: we see God change lives; we meet so many amazing people; and we help prevent starvation. It’s such a blessing!

Our programs like Friday night Street Café, Saturday night Agape dinner, Sunday night family dinner and our Monday to Friday lunch ministry provide 3000+ meals every month. We prevent people from experiencing the crippling state of starvation.

Join us in being blessed by God as we feed the poor in Victoria together.

God bless you,
Pastor Sean

An Exciting Renovation is underway!
HeroWork will be installing a new processing kitchen at the Viewfield Food Distribution Warehouse. In anticipation of this, we recently partnered with Camosun College’s Chair of Culinary Arts, Steve Walker-Duncan, to get a taste of what cooking in the new kitchen will be like. This has resulted in the creation of food products such as soups and sauces from rescued food. Once our processing kitchen is complete in July 2018, our food waste will be reduced from 8% to 3%! A special thank you also to the Victoria Foundation and Rotary Clubs of Greater Victoria who, without their partnership, support and expertise, the Food Distribution Warehouse and this processing kitchen could not have been possible!“
#EveryPlateFull

Hunger doesn’t take a summer vacation.

Thousands of children in Victoria rely on school nutrition programs – so what happens when the summer months hit? Summer vacation can be especially difficult for families who rely on these meal programs to fill the gaps. This can also be a slower time of year for food banks, who see a decrease in donations from June to August. The Mustard Seed wants to ensure that we continue to do our part in sustaining and delivering nutritious items to our FSN partners running meal programs in our city during the summer months.

Join us May 28-June 8 for Food Banks Canada’s #EveryPlateFull campaign. Every dollar raised provides three meals. Sign up to host a fundraiser on our behalf or make a monetary donation through mustardseed.ca. For those hosting an #EveryPlateFull food drive, we encourage you to focus on pantry staples that are versatile and nutrient-dense: rice, oil, canned beans, canned seafood or canned tomatoes are a great way to start!

Help fill the summer meal gap.

food insecurity can affect almost anyone.

A lost job, an unexpected death – any of these events can cause people to make difficult choices about where to spend limited funds.

In Victoria, escalating housing prices, under-employment and social assistance rates that don’t match the actual cost of living only push food further down the list of bills to be paid each month; there are thousands who struggle.

Enter food insecurity. Isn’t it surprising then that Canada currently has a $31 million food waste problem?

It is estimated that 1.3 billion tonnes of food globally, ends up in landfills and compost every year (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations) – about 47% of this waste happens at home. Rescued food programs now provide an alternative to loss in the food-supply chain; food waste is now getting a ‘social value’.

Previously, food banks have been confined to providing mostly canned and non-perishable products. With integration of rescued food into food hamper programs, The Mustard Seed is able to offer a greater portion of items that are minimally processed. Fruits, vegetables and dairy now represent a third of a food hamper’s total volume. With increased access and availability of fresh, nutritious food, individuals are given greater support in choosing healthier options for their families. This change has an exponential impact. Those living with food insecurity no longer have to sacrifice quality of food to cut back on household spending.
hunger by numbers

what does food insecurity look like?

• you worry about running out of food
• you are not able to afford healthy food options for your family, or
• you actively miss meals

getting to know our community.

1 in 6 are currently employed
16% are single parent households
27% are youth and children
7% live on a pension
27% receive disability related benefits

monthly activity at a glance.

3,755 meals
3365 food hampers
96,000 lbs of perishable food rescued
9,000 cups of coffee served

we care about your air.

The Mustard Seed has helped to rescue more than 1 million pounds of perishable food over the last year, preventing over 600,000 pounds of green house gas equivalents from entering our atmosphere.
Meaghen’s Story

I first arrived at The Mustard Seed, seeking food and assistance. I was undiagnosed and living with Bipolar, PTSD, and a mild but persistent brain injury that made life difficult.

I couldn’t hold a job for more than a year, I moved around a lot, and kept wracking up debt just to stay afloat. It got to a point where, had it not been for my sisters, I would likely have ended up homeless. The Mustard Seed was the first place that came to mind to turn to for help, but the last place I wanted to go to. My parents had to seek help from similar organizations while my sisters and I were growing up, and I always promised myself I would never end up in the same position. I felt like it meant giving up the last bit of dignity I had left, and that I was giving up.

I was scared and ashamed, feeling like I was taking much needed resources away from someone more in need. I remember talking with a volunteer interviewer and breaking down into tears before I could finish my first sentence, but the kindness that he showed me instantly made all those negative feelings go away. Here was a complete stranger with a kind smile telling me everything was going to be OK. He said to me: “There’s no shame in coming here. Everyone needs a hand every once in a while. You’ll be out of this rut in no time!” I was taken aback by the compassion I encountered that day, and promised that I would somehow pay it forward when the time came.

After 6 months of accessing the food bank, and becoming a part of the community, an opportunity arose to participate in an internship at The Mustard Seed. I was accepted, and have since become part of the team. I have been with The Mustard Seed for four years, and consider it both my second home and second family. I found healing and restoration at The Seed and am forever grateful.
Willie’s Story

Willie was born into a life filled with violence.

“My father was a hardcore alcoholic. When he was sober, he was a loving father. Every weekend we used to go fishing and hunting. But my father went through the Second War and the Korean war. When he drank, he was like Jekyll and Hyde.” Willie learned to become violent from his father. “He raised me with a fist. He raised me knowing how to use my hands and feet. Because I didn’t know how to handle my problems, I exploded, and people would get hurt.”

He came to The Mustard Seed through meeting one of its staff, Fran, who has been operating the Prison Ministry since 1990. Fran came to meet Willie during his incarceration at William Head, a minimum-security penitentiary, where she meets regularly with several inmates a week. She describes her experiences working in this Ministry. “Wrong choices in life or the environment you come from can put you in a bad place. Sometimes it just takes a long time to change from who you were to who you were born to be. A lot of people in jail have been rejected, even by their own family. My goal is to let them be heard, accepted, believed, supported, forgiven, and to be loved.”

Today, Willie is employed as a janitor at The Mustard Seed - emptying trash bins, cleaning toilets, you name it. It’s not a glamorous or easy job, but he takes pride in what he does every day. The work is meaningful to him because he sees himself in our community members. “I’ve given my testimony to many of these kids. I’m not just here cleaning up garbage. I’ve walked away from God many times over the years. I feel like the prodigal son.”

Fran goes on to talk about Willie. “I’ll always be there for Willie. He’s a friend forever. And he’s gone from being incarcerated to full parole. He was free when he was incarcerated because he knew it was only his temporary home. He believed that he would get out, so he believed in his own journey of restoration and forgiveness – and I know many like Willie.”

The Mustard Seed is now Willie’s home. Ultimately, his story is one of restoration, healing, and success. He says, “I love the Mustard Seed. I love the people, even though a lot of them have challenges. I understand a lot of their problems because I’ve lived that way. I know the hurt and pain they’re going through. This isn’t a church or workplace to me. This is my family. I want to be here. This is where I believe God wants me to be.”
May 28-June 8
EVERY PLATE FULL
CAMPAIGN Hunger doesn’t take a summer vacation. Help us fill the summer meal gap for families who rely on food programs throughout the year. Join the #EveryPlateFull campaign!

May 28
HOCKEY FOR FOOD
A Canadian Classic bringing our community together for a road hockey tournament at Saanich Plaza.

July 28
HARVEST DINNER
Join us for our first annual Harvest Dinner; celebrating good food and community. Enjoy a delicious family-style meal prepared by some of our city’s finest chefs. Tickets on sale soon.

August 7-17
FAIRSTART FOR KIDS
Supports children in their academic success by ensuring every child starts the school year with the necessary supplies. Support this effort with a direct donation, call Meaghen at 250-953-1581.

September 6
625 Queens Avenue
Victoria, BC V8T 1L9
W mustardseed.ca
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Thank you sponsors.

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The Mustard Seed
Street Church