



The Future of our Social Purpose Enterprise

Filling a Need – Community Outreach






In a culture of generational poverty where society has been economically marginalized, the Downtown Mission embraces challenges and fosters behind-the-scenes partnerships from our caring and generous community. Responding to the varying needs of “at risk” populations, the Downtown Mission built a “needs” specific program that offers vocational supports to employment-challenged individuals. Since 2010, the Downtown Mission has provided the necessary vocational tools, personal supports, and networking resources to individuals to change attitudes and achieve goals. Six years later the program is taking the next step with a mandate to become more accessible to a wider spectrum of participants with built in systems for support and success as well as diversifying its training opportunities to attract and retain a greater number of applicants.

Policy

In keeping with our Mission Statement:

The Downtown Mission exists as a Place of Sanctuary.

In response to the mandate of the gospel, through outreach we provide:

-  food for the body,
-  nurture for the spirit,
-  shelter for the homeless
-  advocacy for the impoverished,
-  and opportunities for human growth.

The DTM is committed to inclusion and diversity. In the provision of service, volunteerism and employment opportunities we are committed to ensuring that we are accessible to all. Within the policies, acts and attitudes of those working, volunteering or utilizing services of the Downtown Mission we will ensure that opportunity to access material, spiritual, and emotional supports will be provided to all without regard to race, ancestry, place or origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, same-sex partnership status, family status, or disability. Employee, volunteer, program, and trainee/student diversity will form a key building block to the

Mission's human resources/volunteerism/training practices. Fair and equitable treatment will apply to all aspects of employment, volunteerism, and training; the Mission will safeguard that each person has equal access to the benefits of employment, volunteerism and training. Pro-active steps will be undertaken to provide opportunities for growth and development for all in celebration of the differences and individuality represented by current and prospective staff, volunteers, guests and students. Accommodation will be made at work and in education, where necessary and reasonably practical, to provide ways that support the employee's/student's dignity, worth, and productivity.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, students and guests of the Mission.

Diversity and Inclusion: It's Relationship to Training/Social Enterprise at the DTM

The purpose of our training/social enterprise is to provide an opportunity for education, workplace training and success to those facing barriers to employment. It is, therefore, mandatory to determine what barriers the program participants may experience whether through the application process, acceptance, throughout the training or support after graduation. It is the premise of the author that the current training program does not fulfill our mandate with respect to offering access to educational/training opportunities to all who might benefit by same. Specifically, the trainees do not fully represent the client base which we serve. Therefore, our method of recruitment, acceptance, education and training offerings, and subsequent work placements must be examined to determine the practices which are hindering diversification of the program. It is our mandate to advocate on behalf of those we serve therefore that advocacy must begin internally. By producing a higher number of successfully trained graduates we are ensuring that in return we are creating life-long supporters of our programs, future fundraisers, and mentors, creating a self-sustaining program.

Recognized Applicant Barriers: attitudinal/behavioural, procedural, and physical. Barriers prevent people from maximizing their contribution to society because of their race, ancestry, place or origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, same-sex partnership status, family status, economic status or disability. We need to ensure that our training and placements recognize the significance of these barriers, finding suitable opportunities for each student to work in an environment which provides supports.

Management responsibilities: It is the responsibility of management to ensure that all policies, practices, guidelines and/or procedures do not permit discrimination and regularly review practices and procedures to ensure they are free of barriers and biases. This intentional ongoing monitoring of the program will ensure the greatest percentage of successful outcomes of the training/social enterprise programming. By recognizing actions that limit success we are providing the opportunity to alter the program to become more inclusive through time and practice.

Reasonable Accommodations Will Include:

- Modification of the program, as necessary and where feasible, to include a training opportunity for all applicants. This will include extending the program to accommodate participants who may have particular hardships which may include but are not limited to: language barriers, culture differences, physical disabilities, hearing impairment, etc.

- Work hours within the training program may be altered where necessary through application to the manager of the training program.
- Religious Holidays/Practices: It is the mandate of the Mission to not only recognize alternative religious holidays and practices but to share opportunities to learn and develop practices which are respectful and celebratory of all lifestyles, religions, and cultures. An open information exchange is welcomed and as the organization adapts practices to be more inclusive we will benefit through strengthened programs, services, and opportunities – creating meaningful relationships with a greater portion of our community.

Background: Current Culinary Assistant Program (CAP)

Through the Downtown Mission’s Culinary Assistant Program, participants facing a variety of personal struggles and employment barriers have the opportunity to target their career goals, to gain industry standard on-the-job training and to develop skills to equip them to become “job ready” in the food service and hospitality industry.

The Downtown Mission’s CAP Team

- Fiona Coughlin, Director of Development
- Mary-jo Kovacs, Manager of Volunteer Services
- Roger Poirier, Kitchen Supervisor
- Stacey James, CAP Snack Station Supervisor
- Andrea Grimes, CAP Program Employment Skills Trainer

Program Outline

While participating in CAP, students benefit from the Downtown Mission’s Employment Skills Training Program three days a week. Workshops are specifically designed to identify a student’s hard and soft skills, to target their career goals and to create a realistic blueprint for employment. The curriculum addresses these topics: - Communication in the workplace - Teamwork essentials - Decision-making and problem-solving techniques - Conflict management - Employer expectations - Job search strategies. Job ready graduates are encouraged to access the resource center to further explore ongoing employment opportunities and; to network with community service agencies offering job search supports in partnership with the Downtown Mission.

Phase I

A two-month program trains students in the kitchen at the Downtown Mission. Under the supervision of trained staff, students are introduced to basic food preparation techniques and cooking skills as well as learning the principles of safe food handling. Moreover, students are actually involved in preparing meals that feed about 200 guests who enjoy meals at the Downtown Mission each day, seven days a week.

Phase II

Upon completion of Phase I of the program, students receive additional eight weeks of comprehensive training in the DoGood Diner located in Windsor’s Charles Clark Square and DoGood Donuts at the City Market. In this front line placement, students interact directly with the public by processing orders, preparing the meal and completing point of purchase transactions – real life experience in a busy food

service environment. Through the generosity and support of the City of Windsor, the DoGood Diner continues to provide an environment to enhance skills development for “job ready” students while providing an essential service to our community.

Off Site Training

During the four-month program, CAP students are required to take the Food Handlers Course administered by the Windsor Essex County Health Unit. Passing the exam is mandatory in order for students to receive their certificate. This community-based partnership ensures that students receive supplementary tools to prepare them for entry-level jobs in the food service and hospitality industry.

Culinary Skills Training

Our technical skills training provide students with the specific food preparation and food safety techniques to meet industry standards to achieve entry-level employment in the hospitality industry.

Continued Supports to Achieve Success

The Downtown Mission’s open door policy provides CAP students with a number of supplementary supports. The team at CAP networks with a number of community-based service agencies whose multi-level programs assist students with the management of their post-CAP job search.

Delivering a Solution

In realizing that the number of employment-challenged and “at risk” populations in our community was increasing at an alarming rate, the Downtown Mission developed a signature program that delivers entry-level skills training for individuals wanting to pursue careers in the food service and hospitality industry.

Application Process

The Downtown Mission offers CAP training sessions every eight weeks and is open to any candidate who meets qualifying admission criteria. An interview process determines the applicant’s suitability into CAP, applications are available at the Floor Services desk upon request. Current Recruitment is conducted through partnerships with OW supports, our website, and social media advertising.

Perceived Strengths

We advertise: “As successful CAP graduates, 35% of our students have become gainfully employed and productive members of their communities - adding social value to their lives. As such, many continue to support the Downtown Mission as volunteers, to “give back” for the rewarding experience they encountered during their placement. At the Downtown Mission, opportunity knocks for those determined to open those doors ...to work!”

Perceived Weaknesses

- Need to explore record keeping and tracking of graduates
- Recruitment is low – yet organizations such as WEST (Women’s Enterprise Skills Training) and MCC (Multi-Cultural Council) indicate they have many suitable candidates who are unaware of the program offering or do not meet criteria
- Students drop out. A system of measure needs to be developed to determine the reason a candidate would exit a fee free training and educational opportunity.
- Students provide unpaid work for 16 weeks, if our businesses succeed we need to make sure we examine optics of compensating work or not.

- Return on investment – graduates rarely return to the Mission in any capacity though welcomed. To realize success in this program we should enjoy a regular flow of graduates as volunteers, employees, and donors. Those who require ongoing support also should be returning for support and guidance in their search for employment.

As we grow and change our program to better meet the needs of our community...

Opportunities through growth

Record Keeping: Through the development of standard practices with regard to follow up on students who leave the program and graduate we will determine the true success of the program as well as the areas that are failing to meet the needs of the student. This will allow us to alter the program to build retention and provide the support to the graduates to attain their optimum level of success.

Recruitment: Outreach to organizations such WEST, WYC (Windsor Youth Centre) and MCC will afford us the opportunity to forge partnerships to ascertain our program gains top of mind awareness for referrals as well as enhancements necessary to make this program an inclusive option for all who experience barriers to employment.

New Recruitment Strategies

- Build in newcomer supports
- Provide diverse streams to support various interests, abilities and skills
- Provide and promote supports in place to assist students to enter and complete the program, and long term mentorship and support following completion of the program to ensure success in their chosen field.

Drop-Out Rate: As the program is no charge to the applicant, many may choose to enter it on the chance that they will learn culinary skills while their preference may be in line with another skill set. By expanding the program to allow a more diverse training portfolio we may be able to retain more students entering the program. Further, performance evaluations throughout the program – assessing the needs of the students as well as the expectation of the program, should prevent a high portion of the dropouts experienced. Through interaction, we can determine how the program has failed to meet the needs of the student and learn to adapt to produce more successful graduates. Should all efforts fail to retain a student, an exit interview should be completed to determine the cause.

Compensation: Through partnerships with “feeder” organizations as well as industry partners there may be unexplored funding opportunities for the students. Co-op placements as the final leg of their training may prove to be the “carrot” the students are missing. Striving for resume ready experience to add to their curriculum vitae, possible financial compensation from the co-op placement, industry contacts etc. will be sought.

Inclusion: By providing a pre-program for newcomers to Canada which will allow them soft entry into the training curriculum done simultaneously with ESL classes, they will be provided a safe and welcoming atmosphere which will provide exposure to culture and language as it relates to their chosen field of education, readying them for a successful entry into the program. For candidates where

language barriers are not an issue, we will continue to develop practices that ensure the most fluid and welcoming atmosphere for their training and employment experiences.

Support: Through the development of a more comprehensive system of metrics we will determine the missing components in the program hindering the success of our entrants and graduates. By providing consistent support and mentorship we are building a program of acceptance and guidance as opposed to entry level training. Having a defined system of support will ensure the success of each candidate to whatever level they aspire to attain.

Threats of Maintaining Existing Program

Failure to alter the existing program would equate to missing opportunities to serve those in our community who can greatly benefit from a program optimized for success. Further, by failing to build partnerships in our community we are missing opportunities to expand the program, help more people and strengthen ties with industry who in turn can strengthen the Mission. Our current record of less than capacity enrollment and dropout rates indicate we are not marketing the program properly and quite possibly the program is not providing the system of supports necessary for the candidate. Further, to maintain our training to “in-house” facilities we are closing off streams of contact that would expand our community of training opportunities. Expansion provides the ability to tailor to the specific needs of the student and forge relationships with a larger more diverse spectrum of our community.

Future Program Recommendations

As we grow and become more experienced in the needs of those with employment barriers our programs are ready to advance to a broader spectrum of skill training. Building on the strengths of our current program we can grow to offer more diverse career training, with a system of supports and opportunities that allow each student to experience success in an environment most suited to their needs.

Orientation

Upon acceptance to the program, a private interview will take place between the student and the training manager to determine any special needs, requirements or perceived barriers that student may face in the successful completion of the program. The manager will then make recommendations to trainers for additional measures which will accommodate the needs of the student.

Pre-Program – Four Weeks (For students experiencing communication barriers)

- The student will take an observational role in a variety of departments: kitchen, guest services, reception, foodbank and social enterprise locations becoming familiar with the function of the Mission working closely with staff and management to support them in their ability to adapt to the culture and language. Thereby supporting the transition into Basic Training more quickly and ensuring they have had the opportunity to experience the avenues available to them.

Basic Training – Weeks 1 & 2

- Core Employment Skills Training Program should begin with career goal assessment and inventory of transferable skills. Workshops are specifically designed to identify a student’s hard and soft skills, to target their career goals and to create a realistic blueprint for employment.
- Classroom curriculum addresses these topics: Skills, Experience, & Interest Inventory - Communication in the workplace - Teamwork essentials

Streaming – 6 Weeks

- Students rotate through 3 work experience placement options from a selection of Social Purpose Enterprises: Retail Operations, Food Service, Maintenance & Hospitality
- Stream supervisors submit placement evaluations for each student upon completion of each two week session
- Classroom curriculum addresses these topics: Decision-making and problem-solving techniques - Conflict management - Employer expectations

Work Experience Placement – 2 Months

- Students Complete a practice interview with the supervisors of their top two stream selections
- Students are placed based on their preference, performance evaluations, interviews and general aptitude toward their stream.
- The fourth stream of business management is added for students who excel in their interview and are interested in developing skills in Leadership, Strategic Planning, Marketing & Communications
- Classroom curriculum addresses these topics: Resume Writing – Interview Skills - Job search strategies. Communication skills to improve interactions with future employers allowing the candidate to create a fertile landscape for career success.
- We may consider compensating students financially as they move into phase two
- Job ready graduates are encouraged to access the resource center to further explore ongoing employment opportunities and; to network with community service agencies offering job search supports in partnership with the Downtown Mission.

Mentorship

- Each student will be placed with a mentor who will assist them in defining their career goals and provide long-term post graduate support as the student enters the workforce. This mentor will provide their experience, knowledge and utilize their connections within the business community to provide the guidance and support to ensure the students' best possibility for success. Mentors will be selected on the student's specific experiences and goals.

Co-Op Placements

- Successful graduates will be matched with a paid or unpaid co-op opportunity. These placements will be determined on an individual basis through discussions between the student and the Social Purpose Enterprise Coordinator and designed to specifically meet the needs of the students where possible. As an example, if a student has recently relocated and language and culture is the perceived hindrance to employment every effort will be made to match the student with a placement where they are supervised by individuals who have experienced similar transitions.

Workplace Culture

- Through a specific outreach to a variety of organizations, recognition of identity which may include special needs, practice recognition of Holiday/Events the DTM will provide more training opportunities, more successful graduates and improve the current program offering by training and recognizing each students individuality. By recognizing the limitations of the current program and the need for diversifying the education streams and entrance requirements the program will become a more successful training opportunity, thereby providing a foundation for educated, trained, diverse graduates who will in return become dedicated supporters, volunteers and staff of the DTM and its programs services.

Diversity

- The purposeful recognition of the need for diversity in recruitment, program offerings, and training will, in turn, strengthen the program and educational offerings to our prospective candidates. More successful candidates, with extensive community involvement, creates heightened awareness of our Mission and creates opportunities for ongoing support.

Employment Skills Team

- Fiona Coughlin, Director of Development
- Mary-jo Kovacs, Manager of Volunteer Services
- Andrea Grimes, Employment Skills Trainer
- Hope Lovell, Diversity and Inclusion – Contributor
- New Position – Social Purpose Enterprise Coordinator

Culinary Skills Team

- Cheryl Abela, Kitchen Supervisor
- Roger Poirier, Restaurant Supervisor

Retail Skills Team

- Chari-tees leadership (may be a partner charity)

Maintenance and Hospitality Skills Team

- G & T Janitorial

Business Management Skills Team

- Fiona Coughlin, CFRE
- Olga Skliarova, CPA

Limitations, Recommendations, Future Work

- We are currently limited by the renovation of a recently purchased secondary building which will house our social enterprises, current and future. We continue to plan and formulate streams of training and education that can be offered in our new space, while seeking collaborative partnerships with like-minded charities in our area.
- Revamping the program to this extent requires a high level of staff support and “buy-in”. We are currently reviewing the existing program with the Trainer to determine success data of the CAP program and determination of ability to diversify streams effectively. Examining if further training of the trainer is required.
- As the space in the new building is created we will continue to partner with local charities to finalize and initiate the new training opportunities.
- Grant requests have been submitted to offset costs of a Social Purpose Enterprise Coordinator of the new program and ensure the successful integration of students.
- Partnerships with community businesses will take significant time to cultivate to the extent that we could offer a co-op placement to every student. In addition, paid co-op placements are the ideal and funding streams must be thoroughly investigated.
- The programs will remain a work in progress to consistently undergo review ensuring that each cohort is at capacity upon beginning each session and ensuring the success rate for graduation and employment continues to rise.