

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT





“

## ...almost overcome with emotion as I was there in the fifties

this is a great place to visit my father had a couple of friends who owned Fraser River fish boats. I used to spend summers on the docks painting and caulking boats back in the fifties. At that time there were at least ten canneries operating and literally dozens if not hundreds of people employed for those of you who do remember it. The Gulf of Georgia is a wonderful reminder of days gone by.

Rick R, Richmond, wrote a review Mar. 2019

**Photograph:** The *Bonita Belle* unloading her catch at the Phoenix Cannery, Steveston, BC, ca. 1950s. GOGCS Archives, G2004.019.007.  
**Cover:** GOGCS Archives Salmon Can Label Collection: G2001.038\_red; G991.030.001mm; G2015.009.202.



## CHAIR'S MESSAGE

### From Triumph to Turbulence — what a year it has been.

As I write this to reflect on the successes and challenges of 2019, we are experiencing a time of global uncertainty for our community and our sector. I sincerely appreciate the support of our community and our members during this challenging time in our history and look forward to coming together and celebrating at the Cannery, when it is safe to do so.

2019 was a dynamic year for our site, the celebration of our 125th 'Canniversary' and a great year for our Society, with over 68K visitors joining our staff for an unforgettable experience. The Society continues to champion a growing audience of international travel groups, students and ESL tours, along with our strong school programs, delivering on our mission in new and exciting ways. The continuing dedication to mission-based programming, tours and operations remains one of the strongest elements of our Society, the site and the work of our staff. We received a well-deserved award for "The Cannery Cat's Collection" exhibit from the BC Museums Association, and our virtual exhibit "From Tides to Tins" is now on-line. These are just two of our many successes in 2019. In January, the Society Board cooked up an annual appreciation breakfast for staff, volunteers and Steveston partners, in gratitude for the incredible community that we enjoy at the Cannery.

Our mission as a Society continues to grow and evolve; this year the Board and Staff came together to undertake the planning and implementation of a new 5-year Strategic Plan. This plan builds on the solid foundation of our Society, honouring our history and stretching our focus into new and exciting territory. We should be proud of how far we have come and our future directions.

The Society and Parks Canada continued building our successful partnership in 2019. Our ongoing collaboration has been successful in maintaining the historic structure and assets, through the replacement of the Fire Suppression System (work that continues into 2020) and other ongoing

capital maintenance. Additionally, Parks Canada working in tandem with Society staff, have invested in the creation of a new Interpretive Plan for our permanent exhibitions. This plan, to be unveiled in 2020, is an exciting evolution on the journey to site renewal and re-investment. The generous contributions Parks Canada has made ensure the 'Monster Cannery' will be standing for many years to come, with even more exciting and engaging interpretation. Our heartfelt thanks to the Government of Canada and the staff of Parks Canada for their continued support for this important landmark in our community.

Our own staff have done an outstanding job of engaging the community on many fronts and providing an excellent visitor experience. I am proud of the staff team and volunteers' efforts to meet our annual goals and deliver many exciting programs, exhibitions and events in 2019. I could not be prouder of our hard working and dedicated Executive Director, staff and volunteers. It has been a real pleasure to work with you this past year.

To our committed and caring Board of Directors and committee members, I thank you for the countless hours spent in service of the Cannery. It is an honour to work together with you to move the Cannery forward. Your ideas and energy help make our Society sustainable and relevant. Your contributions ensure we have a bright future ahead of us. Our success is built on your commitment.

Respectfully yours,



**Kit Grauer**

*Chair, Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society.*



## ABOUT US

**In 2019, the Society had over 250 active individual and corporate members.**

Established in 1986, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society is an independent, non-profit society and registered charity whose mission honours the importance of Canada's West Coast fishing history. Working in partnership with Parks Canada, the Society is responsible for the operation of the

Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site. In addition to operating the National Historic Site, the Society endeavours to interpret the history of the West Coast fishing by sharing stories of the fishing industry and communities through exhibitions, collections, programs, and events.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Elected April 2019

Board Chair	Kit Grauer
First Vice-Chair	Ken Flores
Second Vice-Chair	Peter Liu
Treasurer	Elizabeth Batista
Secretary	Ryan Garnett
Past Chair	Dave Semple
Directors	Eileen Carefoot Everett Pierce Geoff Matheson Jim Kojima Bruce Okabe Ralph Turner Susan Stiene Joan Bennett
Ex Officios	National Historic Sites Manager <i>Coastal BC Field Unit, Parks Canada</i> Chak Au, <i>Councillor City of Richmond</i>



Photograph: Volunteers and staff at the 2019 Richmond Maritime Festival.



Photograph: GOGCS Archives, G2017.002.008, photograph by Peter Scurr ca. 1968.

# THE GULF OF GEORGIA CANNERY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

**Constructed in 1894, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was one of fifteen canneries that once lined the banks of the Fraser River in Steveston.**

The facility canned salmon until 1930 when it was repurposed as a net loft, fresh fish depot, and later as a herring reduction plant. After operating for 85 years, the facility was designated a national historic site in 1976 and opened to the public in 1994.

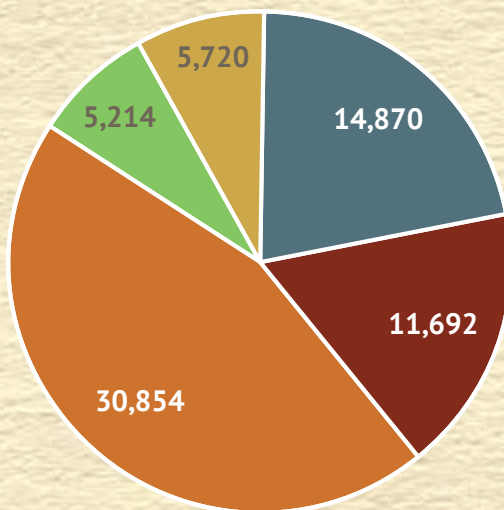
Located on the South Arm of the Fraser River, the site is a hallmark of the historic fishing village of Steveston,

located in the southwest corner of Richmond BC. Permanent exhibits include a functioning salmon canning line, a herring reduction plant, and fishing methods used on the West Coast. These are complemented by a flexible feature space that has displayed various temporary exhibitions connected to the Society's mission, including the two-year featured exhibition installed in 2019, *The Label Unwrapped*.

## 2019 VISITATION

**2019 saw another record year of visits to the site at 68,350 visitors.**

Feedback remained favourable, with over 91% of comment card respondents ranking their visitor experience as 8/10 or higher, and 95% of TripAdvisor respondents ranking the site as Excellent or Very Good.



### 2019 Visitor Attendance Total 68,350





# 2019 SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

## 125th Canniversary

In 2019, the Society celebrated the Cannery's 125th anniversary, marking the 125th year since the historic structure was built. Affectionately called the "Canniversary", we celebrated this milestone throughout the year during our special events, with a new feature exhibition and more. Marketing and Visitor Services Manager Mimi Horita worked with René Creative to create a commemorative logo, which was featured on all promotional materials and social media.

During the annual July 1st Steveston Salmon Festival on Canada Day, the Society celebrated the occasion with a 125th Canniversary cake, distributed by Society staff and Board members to a crowd of delighted visitors. In another notable Canniversary project, Collections Manager Heidi Rampfl worked with the BC Heritage Fairs Alumni Council to help create a video, installed in the Cannery for visitors to enjoy, highlighting the history of canning in BC.



Photographs (Top photo from left to right): Julia Sargeant, Tara Miller, Johanna Trapier; (Bottom photo) Tara with Youth Leadership Volunteers.



## Farewells and Hellos

The Society team said goodbye to two team members in 2019, with Trish Falkstone and Wilf Lim moving on to new opportunities. Their transformative hard work and team spirit will truly be missed.

Following their departure, the Society underwent a re-organization and addition of a new permanent full-time position on the Visitor Services team, with Tara Miller taking on the new position of Visitor Services Coordinator. Julia Sargeant has been hired as the Special Events Coordinator, bringing to the Cannery a background in heritage and events, with experience working at neighbouring Parks Canada Fort Langley National Historic Site. Johanna Trapier has joined the team as Education Programs Coordinator; Johanna is originally from France with a background in both history and education, formerly working as a French teacher. We thank the Cannery community for embracing the new team members and continuing to support the efforts of staff.





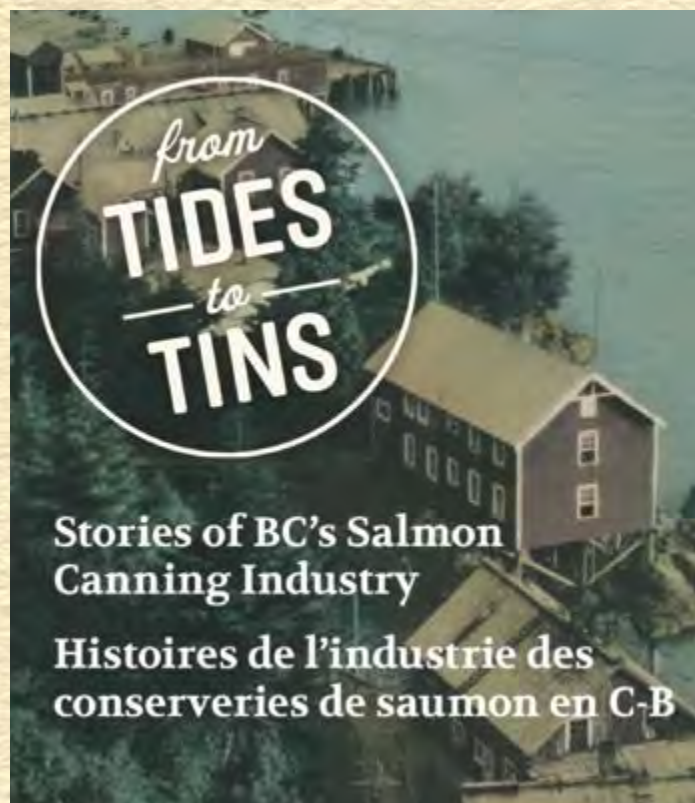
Photographs, left to right: Parks Canada mascot Parka with 125th Canniversary cake on July 1st Canada Day; Cannery Crew handing out Canniversary cake during the Canada Day celebration.



## Local history

We ate on the wharf and came to the cannery for the tour. First stop was a 23 minute film followed by a guided tour. You can do the tour self guided but do not think you would get the best experience that way. Daniel was knowledgeable and answered many questions. The history of the salmon industry and subsequent canning is very interesting and suitable for adults and kids as well.

Glen M, Lancaster, wrote a review Sept. 2019



## From Tides to Tins

Three years ago, the Society was awarded a grant through the Virtual Museum of Canada (VMC). Managed by the Canadian Museum of History, the VMC is a federally-funded investment program that helps build digital capacity in Canadian museums and heritage organizations, giving Canadians unique access to diverse stories and experiences. Staff and volunteers have worked diligently to complete this important digital exhibit and to finalize this expansive project. A huge thank you to Audience Engagement Manager Shannon King and Collections Manager Heidi Rampfl for their efforts and dedication.

The online virtual exhibit, sharing the stories and history of salmon canning on the West Coast, went live to the public in 2019 and can be found at [www.tidestotins.ca](http://www.tidestotins.ca). This engaging exhibition tells the story of Canada's West Coast salmon canning industry through an interactive timeline, map, a build-a-cannery game, and information on the process of canning itself. It also includes resources for teachers and parents, to bring the history of canning to life in their own homes.



## FACILITY

Beginning in late 2018, the replacement of the fire suppression system continued in 2019. It was made possible by continuing infrastructure investment provided by Parks Canada and the Government of Canada. The original system was installed during the Cannery's conversion from a working factory to a National Historic Site and the replacement of this system will ensure that the site is kept safe for many years to come. The new system is a significant upgrade for fire preparedness, and the Society and Parks Canada look forward to its completion in 2020. Along with the new fire

suppression system, Parks Canada also invested in the repair and replacement of the visitor bathroom plumbing in 2019.

These capital improvements are a significant demonstration of the care and commitment that Parks Canada and the Government of Canada have for our site. We thank Parks Canada for the continued support in making the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site the extraordinary place that it is.



**Fishy but fun! What a great way to learn the history of the fishing industry in British Columbia** but more specifically in Richmond. There are interactive activities for people of all ages to enjoy. The staff are knowledgeable and love interacting with guests.

Chris D. wrote a review Aug. 2019







**Photographs, clockwise from top:** At work in Canfisco's Gulf of Georgia Net Loft, ca. 2017. Image 025A3291 courtesy of Canadian Fishing Company. Artifact nets in storage, and artifact shelving in the Cannery's Main Mezzanine storage area. Cover of Western Fisheries magazine from May 1951, Volume 42, Issue No. 2. The Canadian Fishing Co. Ltd. display at the Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, ON, ca. 1950. Image 1950BW courtesy of Canadian Fishing Company.

## COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES

**The Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society cares for over 7,500 artifacts in two collections: one belonging to Parks Canada, and the other to the Society.**

In addition to these objects, the Society maintains a Reference Library and an Archive of historic documents, images, sound recordings, reference books, and more. Collectively, these items tell the story of the West Coast fishing industry, and reflect the people, places, and events that were integral to this history.

In 2019 the Society continued to work on several important Collections projects. These included finishing up an extended inventory of the Society's artifact collection for Collections Rationalization Project, and collecting new interviews from and forming new connections to people involved in the fishing industry for our Oral History Program. Additionally, we continued our work to increase access to our collections by expanding our investment in and beginning the process of adding other collections information to our online database.

The Collections Department saw a significant increase in volunteer involvement in 2019 through the Oral History Transcription Project, as well as a project to scan and catalogue a selection of fisheries industry magazines from our Library collection. In total, ten volunteers contributed over 250 hours of their time to these Collections projects.

2019 was a year of significant acquisitions; most notably that of the Canfisco Digital Image Collection. This collection of digital images from the Canadian Fishing Company's corporate archives contains approximately 30,000 images of fishing vessels, canneries and other processing facilities, fisheries workers, and other fisheries related content. It is an important addition to our collection that will be available for all to view through the Society's online collections database starting in 2020.



## PUBLIC PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

### *The Label Unwrapped: The History of Canned Salmon Labels*

2019's feature exhibit, *The Label Unwrapped*, is a colourful exhibit that explores how companies used advertising tactics such as idealizing family life, patriotism, and Canadian symbols to sell canned fish. It also shows how canned salmon labels illustrate larger trends in the industry over time. The exhibit features many creative, beautiful, and thought-provoking labels from salmon canneries throughout BC. The exhibit will remain on display until Spring 2021.



### *The Cannery Cat's Collection*

The Society opened a second temporary exhibit in 2019 to celebrate the Cannery building's 125th "Canniversary". The whimsical exhibit, written from a fictional cat's perspective, focused on how the Gulf of Georgia Cannery has brought people together throughout its history as a workplace, a community anchor, and as an enduring symbol of Canada's West Coast fishing industry. The exhibit was created with the assistance of three youth volunteers from local high schools in Steveston and was recognized with an award of merit from the BC Museums Association.

### *Mystery in the Museum Spring Break Program*

In 2019, the Society offered a new historically-inspired mystery program for Spring Break. Families were invited to the Cannery to investigate a robbery – It was 1930 and \$500 was missing from the Cannery Manager's office. The program drew a lot of families to the Cannery who had never been to the site before. The successful format will be used again in coming years.

The Society offers many other successful events and public programs to encourage repeat visits from local residents and to invite new audiences to discover the Cannery. Annual events include the Cannery Farmers' Market, the popular Easter at the Cannery, Music at the Cannery summer concert series, Welcoming the Sun



a National Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration, Canada Day, and the Christmas season Festival of Trees.





Opposite page, top to bottom: *The Label Unwrapped* exhibit; Youth Leadership Volunteers with their *Cannery Cat's Collection* exhibit; Spring Break's Mystery in the Museum. Photographs this page, top to bottom, left to right: Volunteers preparing for Easter at the Cannery; *The Label Unwrapped* exhibit closeup; *Cannery Cat's Collection* exhibit closeup; Sammy Salmon comic book display in *The Label Unwrapped*.

## 2019 EVENT ATTENDANCE

In 2019, these events drew 30,854 visitors to our site and accounted for almost half of total visitation.

Easter at the Cannery	2,934	Music at the Cannery	962
Pull of the Net Multicultural Celebration	7,600 (2,163 indoors)	Culture Days	30
Doors Open Richmond	718	Salmon Science Expo	94
Welcoming the Sun (National Indigenous Peoples Day)	4,700 (1,252 indoors)	Cannery Farmers' Market	17,771
Canada Day	6,053	The Haunted Sea Halloween Event	309



## VOLUNTEERS

**We are extremely grateful for the sincere dedication of our volunteers to the Society and continue to build opportunities to engage our long-term volunteers, and to encourage new volunteers to join the Cannery Crew.**

One of the most integral parts of our Society's team (affectionately called the "Cannery Crew"), is our dedicated group of volunteers who appreciate the value of preserving and promoting local, regional and national heritage and culture. In 2019, under the leadership of Tara Miller in the newly created role of Visitor Services Coordinator, our volunteer program once again exceeded our expectations, providing over 4500 hours of volunteer time and service – an increase of 5% over the previous year.

Our volunteers devote themselves to a variety of tasks and programs in every department, ranging from public tours, special events, gift shop to school programs. In 2019, we saw a five-fold increase in volunteer hours in the Collections and Archives department, with two major projects in transcribing Oral Histories and digitizing a collection of fisheries industry magazines.

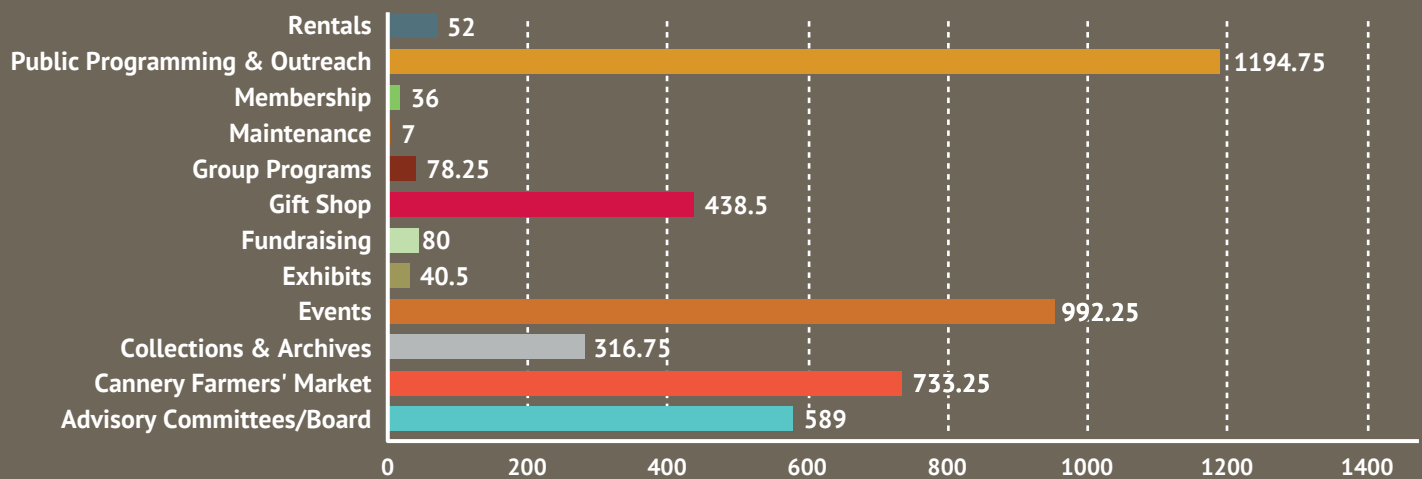
Photographs this page, clockwise: Canada Day volunteers; Volunteer Eileen Carefoot handing out Easter treats; Youth Leadership Volunteers at Cannery Farmers' Market; Cannery float at Steveston Salmon Festival Parade.  
Photograph opposite page: Cannery Volunteer appreciation BBQ.







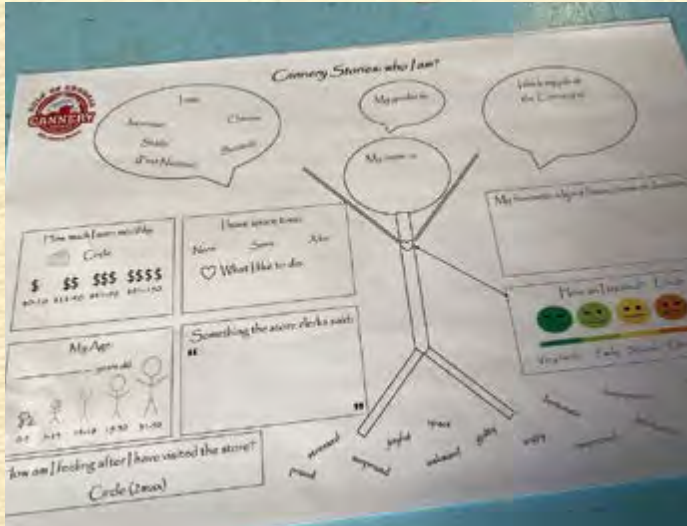
## 2019 Volunteer Hours





## SCHOOL AND GROUP PROGRAMS

In addition to our public guided tours and events, the Society offers interactive group programs and tours for a variety of audiences including schools, seniors, English language learners, out of school care, and other special interest groups. These programs give participants of all ages and backgrounds a specialized learning experience at the Cannery.



### School Programs

The Cannery presented 238 school programs in 2019. Of these, 169 programs were booked by Elementary schools from throughout the Lower Mainland. The most popular school program remains Cannery Stories—a look at the social history and multicultural background of cannery workers - which was booked 64 times in 2019.

**In a follow up survey of teachers, 100% of the respondents rated the program content 4 or 5 stars out of 5.**

### Group (Special Interest) Programs

In addition to the popular school programs, a growing segment of special interest groups have also booked tours and programs. The segment which showed the largest growth in 2019 were commercial tour groups, with 72 bookings, including visitors from USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea, China, Brazil, Mexico, Netherlands and more.

With the flexibility to customize our programs and tours, we look forward to seeing growth in other segments such as English Language Learners, and Seniors, with the addition of a Visitor Services Coordinator position to create focused programs for these and other special interest audiences.



Photographs, this page and facing page: Props and materials from the Cannery's school programs.

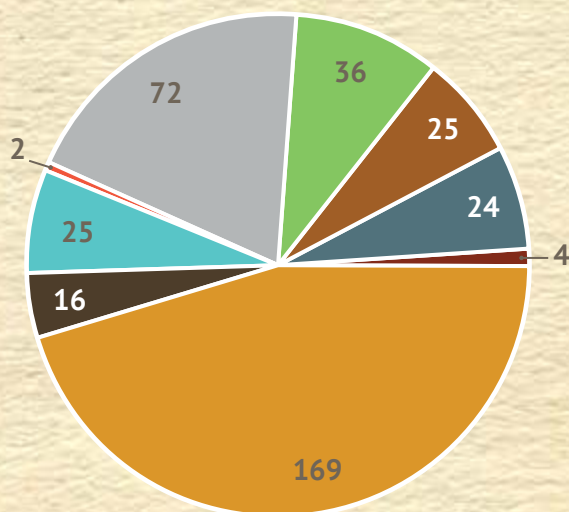




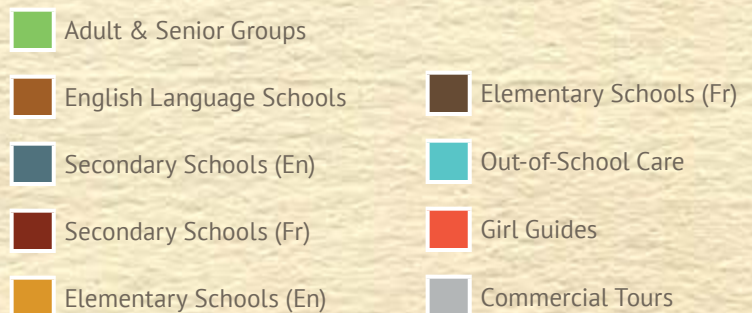
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**It was fantastic. Seriously it was one of the best field trip experiences we have ever had** in the three years I have been in this program. We will be back again. I would not change anything. To our surprise the group activity was a big hit. They loved it. Keep up the good work.

November 2019, Surrey School



## 2019 School and Group Program Bookings Total 373

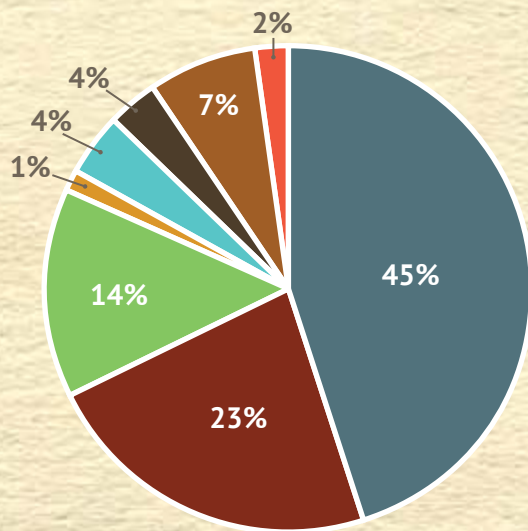




## FUNDING

**The Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society receives funding under contract from Parks Canada to support the site's operations. Additional funds are generated through admission fees, gift shop sales, site rentals, grants, sponsorships and fundraising.**

### 2019 Revenue



	Parks Canada Contract	\$500,000
	Gift Shop Sales	\$ 249,606
	Admission Fees	\$155,393
	Membership, Fundraising & Donations	\$15,512
	Site Rentals & Parking	\$43,792
	Special Events	\$38,267
	Grants & Sponsorships	\$79,642
	Other Income	\$22,482

**Total \$1,104,694**

## 2019 SUPPORTERS

### GRANTORS

Summer Students – Canada Summer Jobs	<b>\$14,000</b>
BC Gaming Commission Community Gaming	<b>\$15,000</b>
Virtual Museum of Canada	<b>\$25,000</b>
Richmond Community Foundation	<b>\$2,500</b>

### SPONSORS

Port of Vancouver	<b>\$20,000</b>
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### MEDIA SPONSORS

Steveston Insider

Tourism Richmond

### DONORS

Jack Dlugan, Ron Hyde, Doreen Erickson, David Paiger, Carl Yokota

### IN-KIND DONATIONS

Canfisco, City of Richmond, Ocean's Brand, Steveston Harbour Authority, Save-On-Foods, Wilfred Wilson



## REPORT ON 2019 TARGETS

### TARGET

### ACTUAL



**Maintain admission target by 68,000**



**68,350 visitors to the Cannery**



**Increase group admissions by 1%**



**Group bookings UP 10% (373 groups)**



**Maintain store sales at \$245,000**



**Store revenue exceeded target at \$249,000**



**Increase fund development**

- a** \$15,511.66 earned compared to the target of \$15,900.
- b** 18 grant and sponsorship requests made.



**Increase community engagement**

- a** Grew volunteer pool with 22 new on-going volunteers.
- b** Grew Social Media following by 330.



## LOOKING FORWARD

### Maintain admissions

**1 TARGET 68,000**



- (a) Promote new programs and install on-site display for virtual exhibition.
- (b) Enhance special events through mission-based programming.
- (c) Create a local ambassador program

### Increase group program admissions

**4 TARGET 5% ADMISSIONS GROWTH**



- (a) Expand programs for new audiences.
- (b) Increase promotion to school districts; highlight French programs.

### Maintain store sales

**2 TARGET \$245,000**



- (a) Review Gift Shop operations with a goal of further enhancing sales.
- (b) Link merchandise to events and exhibitions.

### Increase focus on reconciliation

**5 TARGET 5 NEW PROGRAMS**



- (a) Develop programming which includes the voices of Indigenous, Japanese-Canadian and Chinese-Canadian communities.
- (b) Expand Halloween event to highlight sustainability.
- (c) Reduce our carbon footprint.

### Increase fund development

**3 TARGET \$15,000**



- (a) Apply for grants that align with our mission.
- (b) Create fundraising materials for events.
- (c) Develop donor-based fundraising as a revenue source.

**6 INCREASE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**



- (a) On-board **10** new Gallery Attendant Volunteers.
- (b) Increase volunteers for school/public programs.
- (c) Increase social media followers by **300**.





## Excellent Tour Guides Bring the Cannery to Life

We visited the Gulf of Georgia Cannery in early June during our Vancouver vacation. It was less than an hour drive from our North Vancouver hotel.

The Cannery's restoration is remarkable given that when it was abandoned, all of the equipment was left to rot. The excellent costumed tour guides made the Cannery come alive for us with their stories of the cannery and the workers. Without the tours, we might have left the Cannery thinking it was just a big building with a lot of old machinery.

Davie, Florida, wrote a review Jun. 2019





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[gulfofgeorgiacannery.org](http://gulfofgeorgiacannery.org)