

# 2023

## Annual Report 2023-2024

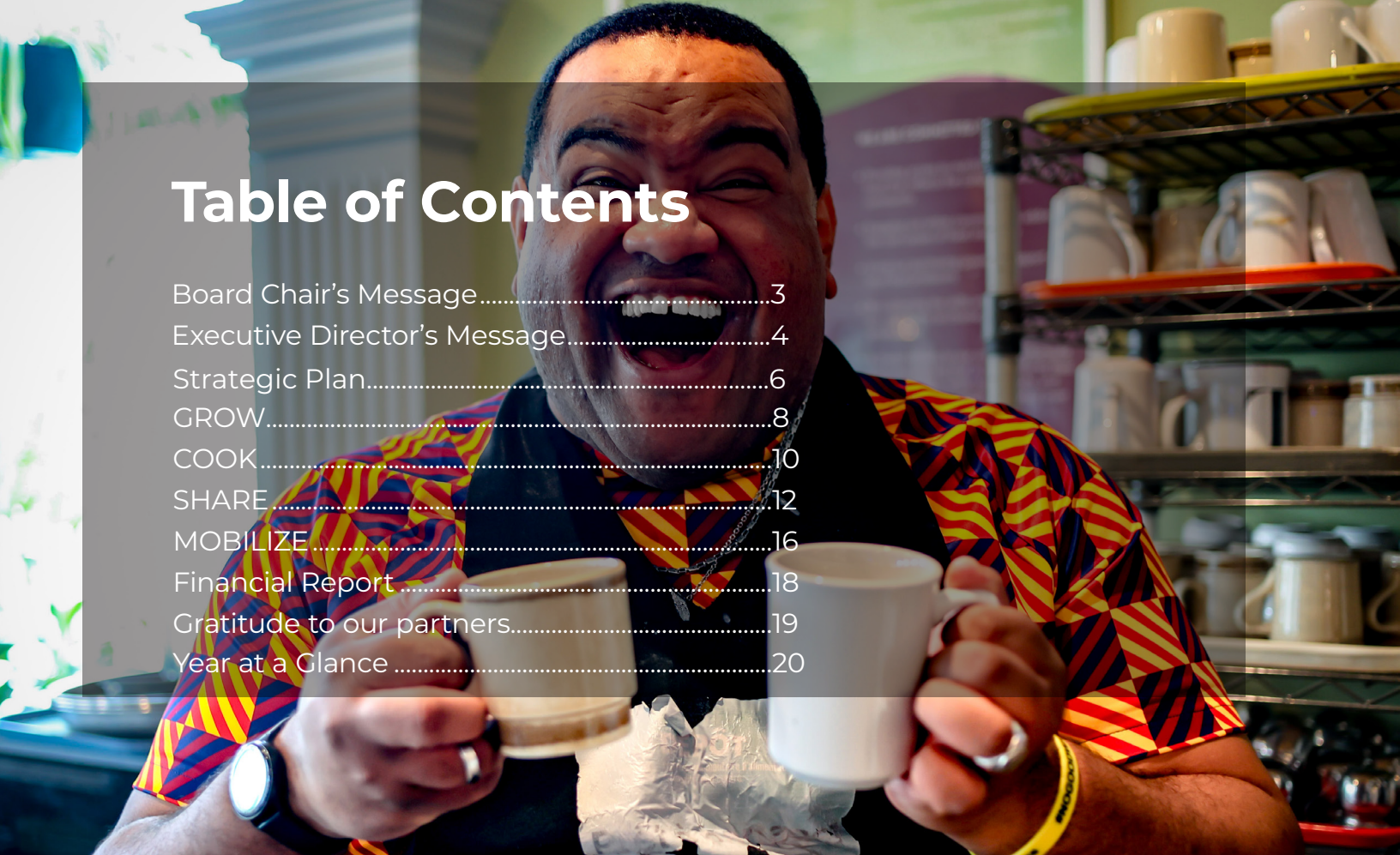
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LE  
THE



**DEPÔT**

centre communautaire d'alimentation  
community food centre



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## Mission

At The Depot, nutritious and delicious food fuels solidarity. Our community programs bring people together to grow, cook, share, and mobilize to end food insecurity.

## Vision

A thriving and connected community where nourishing food is accessible and realized as a basic human right.

## Values

### Social Justice & Solidarity

We stand shoulder to shoulder with community members and partners, working alongside people experiencing poverty and food insecurity, with the common goal of improving all our lives as we work towards social justice.

### Openness

We invite all members of the community to share and exchange their knowledge, ideas and resources to create a mutually beneficial cycles of learning.

### Equity

We continuously strive to identify and dismantle the barriers to access, participation and opportunity throughout our organization and beyond.

### Dignity & Respect

We embody respect by upholding spaces and services that are dignified, safe and inclusive.

### Care

With empathy, we create a culture of care, engaging with and supporting our community, while caring for ourselves and each other by setting and upholding healthy boundaries.



# Board Chair’s Message

In 2023, The Depot broke many of its records, as demand for our services skyrocketed. The distribution of emergency food baskets at our Marché Depot increased significantly, **from 10,000 in 2022 to close to 20,000 baskets in 2023**. This is not unique to The Depot: when 1 in 5 Canadians are experiencing food insecurity, and it is organizations like The Depot that provide the safety net.

Our Marché Depot is a vital resource in the community. Through the growing demand, we maintained our commitment to providing nutritious fresh food and staple whole foods to those in need.

In 2023 alone, we distributed over **730,000 lbs of food** to community members experiencing food insecurity, over a third of which was fresh fruits and veggies. At the Resto Depot, our drop-in community meal program, we provided more than **43,000 meals** in 2023, an increase of 35% from last year.

Throughout this huge increase in demand, our team has worked tirelessly to evolve and adapt our programs to meet the needs of our community.

The Depot is so much more than a food bank and meal program. We are a **community food centre** offering holistic programs across our four pillars: **grow, cook, share, and mobilize**.

While we continue to address the growing issue of food insecurity in our community, we understand the critical role of supporting health and building community, particularly in low-income communities disproportionately affected by poverty and food insecurity. That is why we offered **68 cooking workshops** that build food literacy and have a robust **urban agriculture program**, allowing participants to come together in green space and grow food.

Participants’ feedback in our annual program survey, completed last November, underscores the positive impact of our work: **98% of Marché Depot participants stated that The Depot provides them with an important healthy food source; 69% reported increased consumption of fruits and vegetables** due to participating in The Depot’s programs.

Over the past year, we’ve met the rising demand and embarked on strategic planning. Through this process, we have clearly defined our vision: **a thriving and connected community where nourishing food is accessible and realized as a basic human right**.

As President of the board, I am grateful for the leadership at The Depot, guiding us with purpose and vision, and the steadfast support and engagement of our team, many donors, volunteers, and partners as we continue to work towards this vision together.

## Our Board

Peter Guay, Chair

Susan Kessler, Vice-Chair

Janet Burtch, Secretary

Carolyn Della Rosa, Treasurer

Bernicy Fong

Peter Riddell

Philippe Arnold

Rachel H. Renaud

Ronald Rudin

Quynh Vu

## Land Acknowledgement

As an organization located in Tiohtià:ke (Montreal), The Depot recognizes that it is working on unceded aboriginal territory.

Read our land acknowledgment on our website  
<https://depotmtl.org/en/our-landacknowledgement/>

  
Peter Guay

# Executive Director's Message

The Depot has grown significantly in direct response to increasing demand over the past several years. I am proud of our innovation, agility, and responsiveness, as we seized opportunities and pivoted as needs changed.

Now, as demand continues to increase, while funding, particularly government funding, is not following the demand, we must make careful decisions as to how to move forward, maintaining our adaptability, while ensuring that we are proactive.

That is why we launched a **strategic planning process** this year. Our new strategic plan (see pages 6-7) provides The Depot with clarity, focus, and direction. It gives us a framework to prioritize and refine our programs, balancing forward-thinking with current realities. It is the result of a year of reflection with the team and board, as well as input from the community.

Our strategic plan has two major shifts. First, we will invest more energy into mobilizing our community to **advocate** for progressive social policy at all levels of government. **We know that food insecurity is a direct result of poverty.** As such, we need policies that provide more financial security to Canadians. While the charitable sector and philanthropy have an important role to play, we must ramp up the pressure on all levels of governments. After almost 40 years of service to the community, The Depot is poised to mobilize for systematic change alongside partners and community members who share our vision.

The second shift is more emphasis on **equity**. Mobilizing to influence public policy in Canada necessitates broad community involvement. The Depot already engages diverse stakeholders, from service recipients to volunteers, donors, partner organizations, and schools. Moving forward, we'll introduce a sliding scale payment model for participation across programs. Our objectives include ensuring accessibility for those who need it most, a greater sense of agency, and dignity, enabling individuals to contribute what they can while receiving what they need—be it a meal, belonging, or community and purpose. We also aim to generate revenue with this model, supporting the financial stability of the organization.

Each section in this Annual Report highlights how we are already achieving the impact areas we have identified as priorities for The Depot in our strategic plan. We will continue to build on this work with greater focus in the coming years.

It's time for us to **push beyond the status quo** and chart a course toward a more **resilient and engaged community**. Your ongoing support is invaluable as we navigate this pivotal moment, striving for a future where everyone in our communities can thrive.

Thank you for standing with us,



Tasha Lackman



## The Team

### Full Time

Alejandra Perez  
Caitlin Hayward  
Cassandra Belliveau  
Catherine Gilbert  
Christine Sayegh  
Dahlia ChanTang  
Daniel Roy  
Houda Kerkadi  
James Barrington  
Jennifer Brennan  
Jennifer Moran  
Jonathan Kourakos  
Julie Kourakos  
Kim Fox  
Kristen Perry  
Marguerite Kinpack  
Marie-Lise Chicoine  
Melanie Romer  
Monica Ayluardo



Natalie Berghuis  
 Nicolas Braesch  
 Patrick Melillo  
 Rachel Schleifer  
 Renate Betts  
 Sebastian Britton  
 Tasha Lackman

**Part Time / Seasonal**

Brenda Boucher  
 Camille Nepveu  
 Chloé Fecamp  
 Cristina Cugliandro  
 Ghazal Hajzargarbash  
 Hamidou Maiga  
 Hannah Mills  
 Hébert Chaitanya  
 Hilary King  
 Inès Djeddou  
 Julia Genberg

Kate Feldman  
 Leonor Ayluardo  
 Mak Ékoué  
 Nicolas Holzmann  
 Oumy Caron-Mondestin  
 Paula Gruber  
 Rebecca Loadenthal  
 Sheryl Shore

**Worked with us in 2023**

Abdoukarime Diallo  
 Adja Dia  
 Annie McLaughlin  
 Camelia Melillo  
 Em Bellinger  
 Gabriel Robert  
 Hailey Roop  
 Joey Moore  
 Kailey Qin  
 Karima Dajani  
 Kris Orlando

Lydia Robb  
 Lawin Pascua  
 Morgan Dubé  
 Rachel Takasaki  
 Randrianarivelo Nirinasoa  
 Shamara Mcleod  
 Sophie Tsoy  
 Tabinda Mirza  
 Thomas Liu  
 Tyler Haughton  
 Yanni Bouziotas

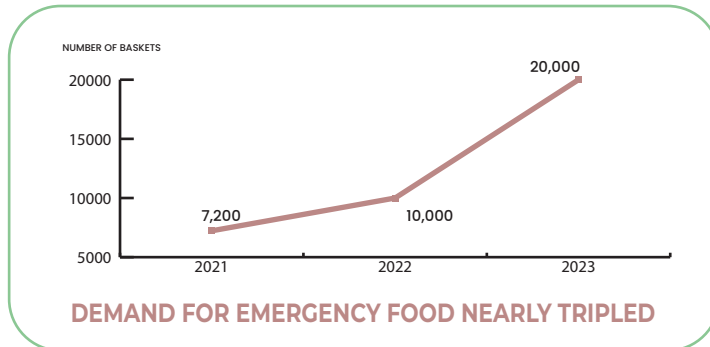
Thank you to our **20 interns** for your time and energy during the year

# FOOD FUELS SOLIDARITY: STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

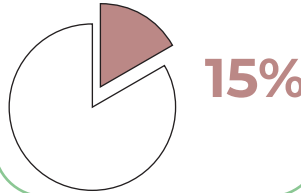
## THE ISSUE

**At The Depot, demand for emergency food support has nearly tripled over the past two years.** We have reached capacity as an organization with our current service model and resources. This is driving us to get laser-focused on the impacts we can have as an organization, and to make difficult decisions.

This is a systemic issue.



**1.2 MILLION = 15%**  
In 2023, in Quebec, just over 1.2 million people lived with food insecurity, comprising 15% of the province's population.



**Not everyone is impacted equally**

Systemic discrimination drives inequities:

**33%** of Indigenous peoples and  
**24%** of racialized people

in Quebec experience food insecurity.

## VISION

**A THRIVING AND CONNECTED COMMUNITY WHERE  
NOURISHING FOOD IS ACCESSIBLE AND REALIZED AS A  
BASIC HUMAN RIGHT.**

## APPROACH

### HEALTHY FOOD

We prioritize offering fresh, culturally relevant, and nutrient-dense foods in all of our programs, recognizing the vital role of nutrition in promoting health and well-being.

### EQUITY

We need to expand our capacity. One way we will do this is to introduce a sliding scale payment model, recognizing that there is a spectrum of need. This will allow more people to get involved, get what they need and give what they can, meeting people where they are.

### ANTI-OPPRESSION

Through our anti-oppression commitments, we strive to dismantle systemic barriers, connect community members, share resources and advocate for access to healthy food.

## TOOLS FOR CHANGE

### STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

Invest in partnership and collaboration to best serve the community and to amplify voices and anti-poverty advocacy.

### INVEST IN OUR TEAM

Prioritize the well-being of our team and equip ourselves with the tools to achieve our vision.

### DIVERSIFY REVENUE

Create self-generated revenue that is sustainable, while increasing pressure on governments to support food insecurity, and fostering our relationships with donors.

### DEVELOP OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Optimize our spaces and points of service to best serve and mobilize the community.

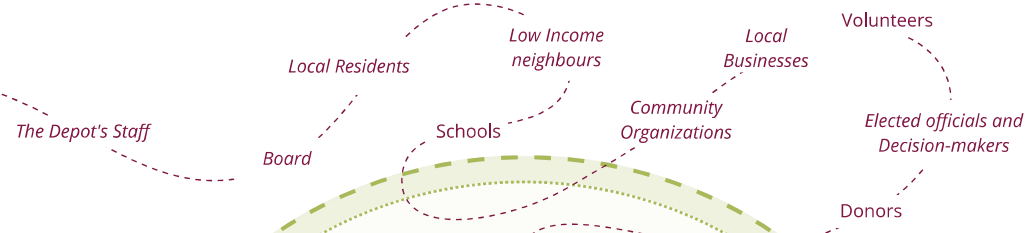
**Vision**

A thriving and connected community where nourishing food is accessible and realized as a basic human right.

**Mission**

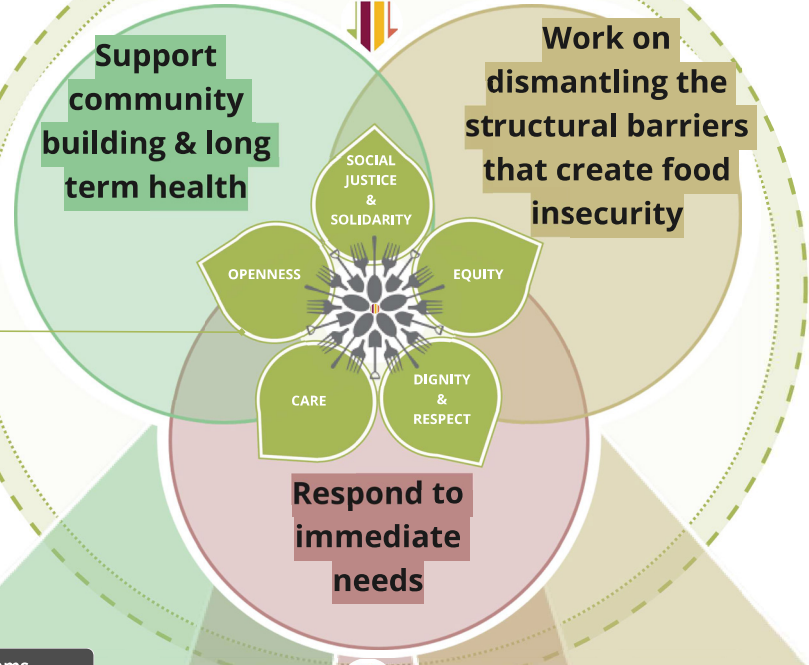
At The Depot, nutritious and delicious food fuels solidarity.  
Our community programs bring people together to grow, cook, share, and mobilize to end food insecurity.

**Who**



Our work is underpinned by our Anti-Oppression Commitments, our Healthy Food Policy and our values

- Anti-Oppression Commitments
- Healthy Food Policy
- Values



**Community programs**  
With **food** as our central tool of engagement:

<p><b>Grow</b></p> <p>Reconnects participants with growing food as a way to increase food security, food literacy, health and community agency in cultivating a local food system</p>	<p><b>Cook</b></p> <p>Offers hands on food literacy activities which cultivate food knowledge, skills and confidence as well as community connections</p>	<p><b>Share</b></p> <p>Supports access to whole, fresh, local and culturally appropriate foods for our community members in ways which prioritize equity, choice, dignity, and health</p>	<p><b>Mobilize</b></p> <p>Engages residents to influence long-term policy changes that reduce poverty, while addressing immediate symptoms of poverty and working to increase community wellbeing</p>
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**Impact Areas**

**Outcomes**

**Support community building & long term health**

- Increased **knowledge** about food, food systems and financial disparities and their effects on community health
- Increased **wellbeing** and **health** of community members
- Strengthened **community networks** and **sense of belonging**
- Deepened spirit and practice of reciprocity** across The Depot

**Respond to immediate needs**

- Increased **access** to whole, fresh and local foods across the neighbourhood
- Increased **affordability**: food is priced and subsidized according to individual financial situations
- Reduced **stigma** in accessing food support
- Increased **agency** for low income community members to voice their needs and contribute to The Depot programs
- Increased **capacity** of participants to navigate community resources

**Work on the structural barriers that create food insecurity**

- Strengthen partnerships to build **local food systems**
- Increased **engagement of participants** towards progressive policy change to address poverty and food security
- The Depot is part of **strong coalitions** working for change and takes a leadership role

**Long Term Outcomes**

- Strengthened personal and community **agency**
- Increased **food security** and **resiliency**
- Accessible **local food systems**
- Healthier** community members
- Amplified **dignity** and **agency**
- Reduced poverty** and barriers to income equality

# GROW

## Collective Gardens

Involving **126 gardeners in 2023**, our 6 Collective Gardens located throughout NDG unite individuals in gardening together and sharing the harvest. By (re)establishing connections with growing food, these gardens bolster food security and food literacy while fostering community engagement in nurturing a local food ecosystem. Our collective gardens serve as accessible hubs for learning and exchanging insights on ecological food production. They support access to fresh local produce and inclusive green spaces, ultimately bolstering our community's physical, social, and mental well-being through food, camaraderie, and environmental stewardship.

## Community Gardens

Operated in partnership with the Ville de Montréal, our Community Garden program provides residents access to individual garden plots. In 2023, we operated 5 gardens in NDG and Côte-des-Neiges, offering **319 garden plots**. Participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to grow their own veggies and herbs and benefit from our knowledgeable coordinator's guidance in sustainable agriculture.

## Ça Pousse!

Ça Pousse! workshops are held in school classrooms across NDG. They offer students experiential learning opportunities connected to the curriculum, fostering collaboration and connection. Discussions during these workshops delve into food justice, food security, the food cycle, agriculture as shared knowledge, waste management, and the importance of soil in urban settings, and **cultivating agency**. This year we offered 56 Ça Pousse! workshops in 4 NDG schools, developed and animated 3 school gardens, and engaged community members during the summer when schools are closed.

"Through my experience at The Depot, I not only gained access to fresh food and community kitchens workshops but also found a sense of belonging and the confidence to participate in various programs. **The potluck at the garden felt like a family gathering, where I could truly be myself.** The support and encouragement from The Depot team empowered me to ask for help and explore new opportunities like volunteering and field trips. I'm immensely grateful for their kindness and understanding."

-Collective Gardener





**126** collective gardeners

**\$29,058**  
of food grown in the  
collective gardens

Impact Area: Support Community Building & Long-Term Health

**69%**  
of participants report  
feeling healthier as a  
result of participations in  
the garden programs

**82%**  
report making or deepening  
community connections  
and friendships

# COOK

## Community Kitchens


The Community Kitchen programs use food to **bring together community members to learn, share, prepare, and eat fresh and nutritious meals**. The programming is wide-reaching, with specific programs targeting young families, youth aging out of care, new arrivals, or folks experiencing isolation. Through engaging activities, we promote food literacy and recipe sharing, giving agency to participants to adopt healthier eating habits with confidence. Additionally, this program is a gateway to other support services offered by The Depot. In 2023, we offered 68 workshops, up 39% from 2022.

## Boîte à Lunch

Through hands-on programs, Boîte à Lunch is dedicated to providing primary and secondary school-aged youth with essential cooking and nutrition skills and an understanding of food systems. Through Boîte à Lunch NDG, we increase access to nutritious food for **kids in schools that rate 8/10 to 10/10 on the poverty index**. Our team of facilitators works to **encourage families to cook together, embrace cultural diversity, foster critical consumer habits, and bolster community engagement**. In 2023, we held 107 workshops in NDG and supported 5 partner organizations in holding an additional 317 workshops in other neighborhoods, reaching 528 kids. With Boîte à Lunch NDG summer camp activities, we reached an additional 594 youth.

**"I learned that although Canada is cold, its people are warm and kind. During this activity, people from different countries came together as a community around food - our shared language."**

- Community Animator for our Recipies Together program



**73%**  
**of parents say their child has tried new foods at home since starting Boîte à Lunch**



**38%**  
of adult Community  
Kitchens participants  
also access emergency  
food support

Impact Area: Support Community Building & Long- Term Health

**94%**  
of participants discovered  
new foods and recipes  
during the Recipes Together  
workshops

**87%**  
of parents say their child knows  
how to make healthy food  
choices after participating to  
Boîte à Lunch.

# SHARE

## Marché Depot

The Marché Depot is **our emergency food distribution program, where people can choose free fruit, vegetables, and nourishing staples** that best suit them in a welcoming and dignified space. This year, we undertook renovations to make the Marché more accessible and to accommodate the increasing demand, ensuring more people can comfortably navigate the space. As a part of our commitment to promoting food literacy, we also introduced a **“Veggie of the Month.”** This inspires participants to learn about nutritional value of vegetables and offers some easy recipes, encouraging healthy eating habits and fostering a greater appreciation for fresh produce.

## Good Food Markets

The Good Food Markets serve as **an access point for fresh, locally-sourced fruits and vegetables in underserved areas of NDG**, aiming to alleviate food insecurity while fostering community connections and knowledge exchange. Our focus on supporting small Quebec producers strengthens local supply chains and promotes a more just and sustainable food system. **This year, we implemented a new sliding scale pricing system** featuring a higher solidarity price and a lower community price, ensuring access for those with limited financial means, while welcoming those who could pay more. This new pricing system generated \$10,000 of income, which we reinvested into the cost of running these highly subsidized markets. We served an average of 267 clients weekly at three locations and sold 80,000 lbs of produce during the season.

“I already liked this market several years ago. It became even more helpful when my spouse suddenly lost his job this summer. **I switched from solidarity to community price without hesitation.** Thanks. I’ll pay back the community in the future.”

—Good Food Market participant.





# 3,152

unique households  
stopped for  
emergency  
groceries, a total of

# 20,000

baskets  
over 12 months

(up **50%** from 2022)



Impact Area: Respond to Immediate Needs

## 69%

of participants indicated  
**they eat more fruits and  
vegetables because** of the  
Marché Dépôt.

## 82%

said their family **consumed  
more fruits and vegetables**  
thanks to the Good Food  
Markets.

# SHARE

## Resto Depot

**Delicious meals are made four times per week using ingredients available at the Marché Depot, inspiring people to cook at home.** Participants gather at the Resto to break isolation and break bread in a supportive *and* welcoming environment. To accommodate the increasing number of participants, we hired an assistant coordinator and introduced communal tables that foster connections among individuals who would otherwise dine alone. In 2023 the **Resto Depot served 42,327 meals - a 35% increase from the year before** and more than ever served in the history of The Depot. The Resto Depot welcomed five guest chefs sharing traditional recipes from their home countries. The guest chef's cultures are celebrated, and their recipes become a part of the Resto's recipe bank and are shared widely with participants.


## Healthy Snacks

The Healthy Snacks program operates year-round, supplying nutritious snacks to local community centers, schools, and summer camps where children often arrive hungry. **This year, some partners told us that the snacks we were providing weren't enough to alleviate the hunger experienced by the kids. To respond to this growing need, we expanded the program to include full meal kits** containing all the ingredients necessary for children to prepare complete meals. This expansion enriches our offerings and enhances support for the community, ensuring that children's food literacy increases and that they receive the nourishment they need to thrive.

**"The best thing you've done at the Resto is adding communal tables.** When you are sitting at the same table, it's like you are in your own kitchen. I've always met such kind people."

- Resto Dépôt Participant

**41,445**  
snacks provided to  
kids in after-school  
programs

A man with a beard and curly hair, wearing a dark baseball cap and a dark apron over a t-shirt, is focused on his work in a kitchen. He is leaning over a stainless steel tray. In the background, other people are visible, including a woman in a red patterned shirt and another person in a grey shirt, all appearing to be in a busy kitchen environment.

**98%**  
of Marché  
Depot  
participants  
consider The  
Dépôt to be  
an essential  
source of  
healthy food

# MOBILIZE

## Social Justice Group

The Social Justice Group aims to combat despair and drive meaningful social change. The dedication of the Social Justice Group members, and their **emphasis on joy, hope, and a collective vision for a better future**, is inspiring. This year, the group hosted **35 meetings**, featuring advocacy-themed movie nights and presentations by speakers, including elected officials and leaders from partner organizations. Activities included letter-writing campaigns and postcard signings for policy changes.

## Individual Support and Referrals

At The Depot, we address diverse needs beyond food security, emphasizing holistic support. The Depot offers support and referrals for individuals in crisis, fostering a comfortable environment conducive to open dialogue, distinct from more formal settings. **We receive an average of 70 requests for referrals and other resources per week.** We work with over 20 community partners responding to needs for services ranging from low-cost housing to additional food support.

## Volunteers

**Our volunteers enable The Depot to run many of its programs and are essential members of our team.** At the same time, volunteering with The Depot provides community members of all backgrounds with a sense of purpose and belonging. Our volunteers include newcomers, marginalized groups, isolated seniors, youth and other community members who are committed to service. Through roles like table service at the Resto, food preparation in the kitchen, support of participants in the Marché, and translation, our Volunteer program fosters skill development and community engagement, reflecting our commitment to inclusivity and openness.

"I am at my limit for a lot of things but you and the Social Justice Group (and The Depot too) have given me the resources to keep going, and even to have a little bit of hope. **It's been a very long time since I've felt like I had a place somewhere or anyone I could turn to for anything.** I'm not giving up specifically because of you all."

- Member of the Social Justice Group

**335**  
volunteers  
contributed a  
total of  
**21,170**  
hours



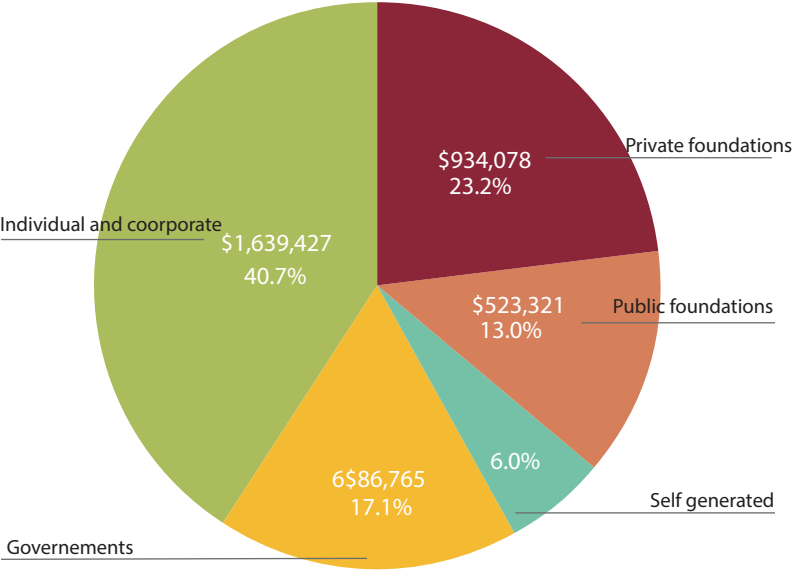
**55%**  
of volunteers  
said they  
learned  
about  
healthy  
eating

Impact Area: Work on the Structural Barriers that Create Food Insecurity

The Social Justice Group successfully advocated alongside our Community Food Centres Canada partners and Disability Without Poverty for the passing into law of Bill C-22, a federal income supplement that moves people with disabilities out of poverty.

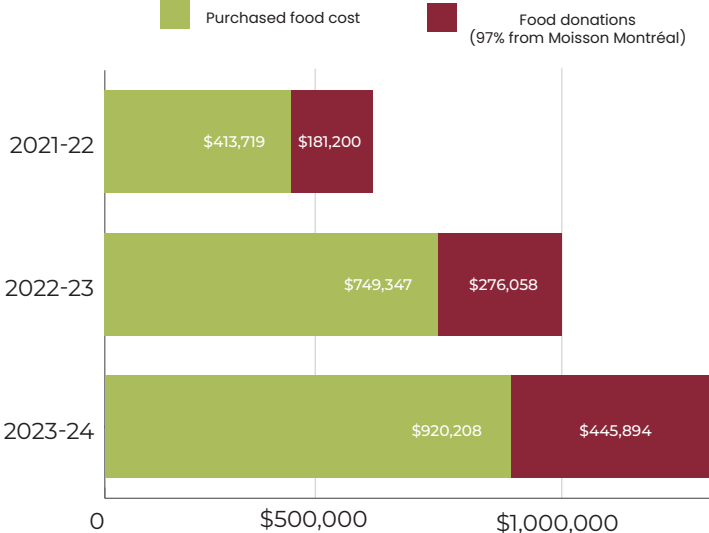
# Financial Report

REVENUE BREAKDOWN

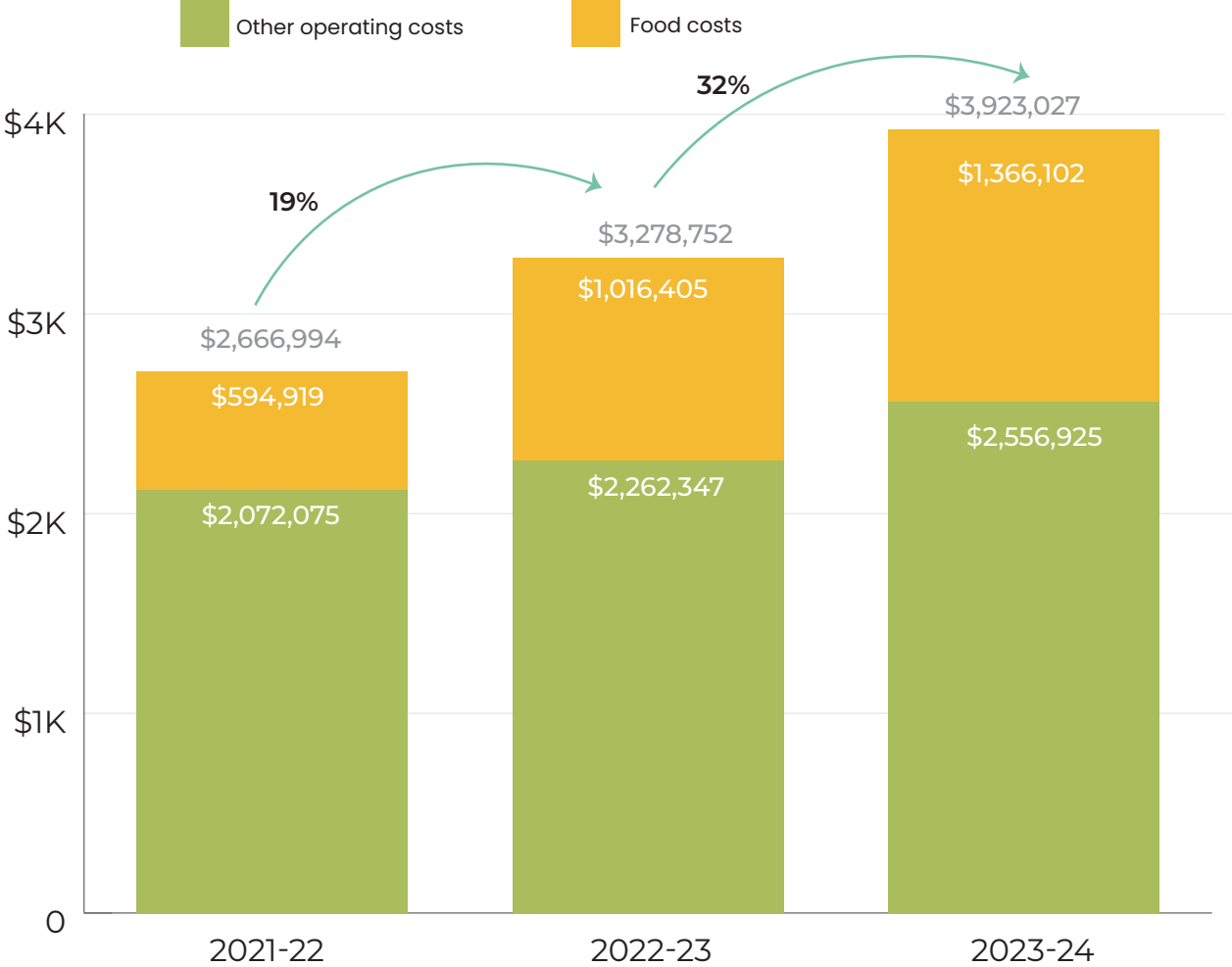


Administrative expenses represent 11.24% of the budget.

FOOD COST TRENDS



BUDGET GROWTH OVER THREE YEARS





# Gratitude to Our Partners

Your support is instrumental in helping The Depot realize our vision of a thriving and connected community where nourishing food is accessible and realized as a basic human right. **Thank you!**

## \$100,000+



## \$50,000+

Azrieli Foundation · Hewitt Foundation · Medavie Foundation · The George Hogg Family Foundation

## \$25,000+

Fondation Choquette-Légault · Fondation Famille Gosselin · Gustav Levinschi Foundation · Marchab Foundation · Power Corporation of Canada · Merle Wertheimer and Sam Hornstein · The Cadillac Fairview Corporation Limited · The Molson Foundation · Trottier Family Foundation · Zeller Family Foundation

## \$10,000+

Aaron & Wally Fish Family Foundation · Colin Hardie · David and Valerie Shannon · Depotium Mini Entrepôt · Ivor Wharf · Kevin Austin · Laurent Ferreira and Leslie Silver · Lindsay Memorial Foundation · Lorne Granofsky · Marie-Hélène Fox · Mar-Kin Foundation · PWL Capital – Peter Guay Team · R. Howard Webster Foundation · Stephen DiTomasso · The Malouf Family Fund at the Foundation of Greater Montreal

## \$5,000+

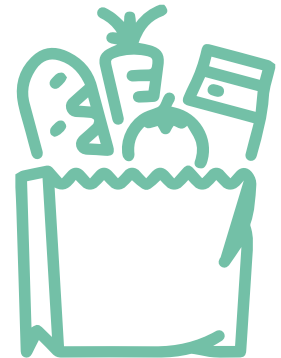
Carol and Jerry Sexter · Chantal Ares · Clarus Foundation · Douglas MacDonald · Gail Jarislowsky · Garry Oberfield · Ian Stronach and Rosemary Mailas · Julie Shugarman and Ilan Gewurz · Kerry and Allan Lanthier · Lactalis Canada · MacDonald Stewart Foundation · Michael McMurray · Milton Lackman · Newall Family Foundation Trust · Peter Wiazowski · Rod Hayes · St. Andrew's Society of Montreal · The Hay Foundation · The Hylcan Foundation

Many thanks to the **1,743 households** whose generous donations totaled an incredible **\$757,036!**

# Year at a Glance



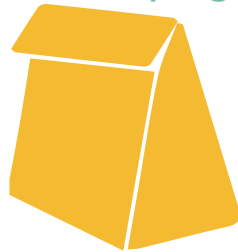
**20,000**  
emergency food baskets provided



**680**

kids and teens participated in the Boîte à Lunch program

**41,500**  
snacks provided in after-school programs



**68**

Community Kitchen Workshops

**4,800**  
visits to our Good Food Markets



**56 Workshops**

in schools with Ça pousse!



**43,300 MEALS**

at the Resto Depot



**335** volunteers contributed a total of



**21,000** hours

**35** Social Justice Group Meetings

