

The Loaded Ladle, 2019-2020 Annual Activity Report

Land Acknowledgement

All the activities of the Loaded Ladle take place on unceded and unsurrendered Mi'kmaq territory. We endeavour in our activities to respect the treaties of this land, and to align our practices with those of the current protectors of Mi'kmaki.

Mission, Vision, Values: "The Loaded Ladle: Food Justice in Action"

Vision:

The Loaded Ladle imagines a food system based on care and solidarity, which opposes injustice.

Mission:

- Direct action to provide student-run food services at Dalhousie and the larger community as an alternative to exploitative capitalist food services.
- Education, action and solidarity about food security, food justice and food sovereignty

Values:

- Anti-capitalist
- Anti-oppression
- Anti-racism
- Meaningful participation by diverse groups of people
- Care, solidarity and community
- Open non-hierarchical decision-making

Organizational Highlights 2019-2020

The Loaded Ladle had a largely successful 2019-2020 school year. Highlights of the year include:

- New Volunteer Coordinator
- Increased kitchen activity
- Increased number of meals served at Studley
- Regular Sexton servings in collaboration with DSUSO, and the Dal Food Bank
- Redesign and delivery of *To the Root* workshop series
- Composting Initiative
- Summer Programming
- Raising staff wages to the living wage as defined by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Continued participation in the ISANS Volunteering In Canada program

Things we wanted to do but haven't yet accomplished include:

- Developing podcasts from our programming workshops
- Accessing the T-Room on Sexton to serve hot meals
- Farm visits

More About the Highlights...

Website

Over the summer of 2019, we revamped and overhauled our website – optimizing it for phone and tablet, consolidating pages, updating its look and feel. Social media management - primarily Facebook and Instagram - is currently assigned as a staff function. We are hoping to engage volunteers in helping manage our main social media platforms in 2020-2021. Increasing volunteer student involvement in organizational administration as well as daily activity is a goal for the coming 2020-2021 year.

Composting

We also initiated a program to compost our own food waste, and that of other student societies like DUGS, DSUSO, the Dal Food Bank, etc. This included constructing custom-designed composting bins located at the DUGS garden on Seymour Street, revamping our practices, and encouraging others to utilize the composters. The winter has not been overly kind to the new compost bed, but by late spring, 2020, our composting program will be operational, and sustainable throughout the year.

Volunteering in the Kitchen

In late summer, we welcomed Sage Beatson as our Volunteer coordinator. Working with Brennus in the kitchen, we have engaged many more volunteers during the current school year. There were very few days when we didn't have the help we needed, and when we did, it was enthusiastic and effective. We had 200 volunteers step into the kitchen this year, but a huge amount of help came from a core group of around 50 repeat volunteers who visited the kitchen approx. 434 times between Sept 5 and March 6.

Along with increased voluntary participation, we have increased our daily meal service. When we began serving four days a week two years ago, we were serving about 120 meals a day. That grew last year to around 150. In the Winter term of 2020, our daily output has grown to meet a demand nearing 200 meals per day – that's 800 meals a week!

Regular Sexton Servings

It has long been a challenge for the Loaded Ladle to establish and sustain a program of regular food service on the Sexton campus. At the same time, given the study schedule of students there, particularly in Engineering, and the culture of fast food and rapid eating in short breaks between work, we have found arguable greater incidence of food insecurity on this campus than is found in the Dalhousie community at-large.

In the fall of 2019, the DSU Sustainability Office – DSUSO – launched *The Breakfast Club*, serving continental breakfast of bagels and toast to Sexton students once or twice a week. The Loaded Ladle was pleased to partner with DSUSO, and to accept the support of the Dalhousie Food Bank, to establish and sustain regular breakfast servings on Sexton.

In the Winter term of 2020, we welcomed Laureyne Rodriguez as Sexton Coordinator, and expanded to three days a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday), adding a hot item like

soup or stew once a week. Our goal for the coming year is to find a sustainable provider for breakfast food and to expand the menu offering to include hot meals. Ideally, we would be able to serve from the T-Room, where we can do limited preparation but expand our servings and have a sit-down space.

Our programming on Sexton has answered specific requests for basic food security workshops- cooking and shopping on a budget, preparing and freezing vegetable for easy meals, and the like.

Renewing our To The Root workshop series

Our annual workshop series, *To The Root*, has evolved over the decade of our existence from a weekend-long workshop early in the school year – partly designed to generate interest and volunteers – to a series of theme-related workshop offered in early fall. The 2019 edition was coordinated by Patsy Ginou and delivered throughout the month of October in a variety of venues and a differing times of day. In past years, programming was performed during the summer months, when a summer employee managed the planning. This year, we are rolling *To The Root* into the activities of our full-time Programming Coordinator and we will offer regular and varied programming about food security, food justice and food sovereignty.

-Laura Shepherd (she/her), Administrative and Communications Coordinator

Coordinator's Reports

➤ Kitchen Report (Brennus)

Kitchen Report

This year has been full of challenging but fun curveballs and changes we had. We had to leave the kitchen to Chartwell staff for their operations as was requested of us due to their main kitchen being under renovations during the summer. As preparation for the new school year we had to do a major cleanup and buy some new equipment as some of them disappeared over the summer. In September the classes took off to a slow start in terms of the number of volunteers and daily meals with the start of the Fall term, which is usual and expected, but then we saw a constant increase with both volunteers and lineup. Instead of sticking to a routine of standard meals every day, Sage and I brainstormed about different variations for our meals, and even made mayonnaise from aquafaba for our salad dressing or polenta for grain.

Throughout the year, the gradual disappearance of our serving plates have been a constant issue and although we have discussed different approaches to solve the issue, it seems that buying new plates every once in a while is the easiest and most straightforward approach instead of trying to prevent their disappearance.

During the end of the Fall term the dishwasher needed another repair because of its excess soap usage, and upon technicians' visit it became apparent that some of the power cables inside the appliance have frayed badly due to constant stress and will need replacement. I have asked the technician to send us a quote for the repairs, but he is notoriously hard to get a hold of and we still don't have a quote for it despite my repeated reminders to him.

During the Winter term we also discussed a pilot project of inviting guest chefs from culturally different backgrounds to Ladle kitchen. The aim would be to diversify our food servings as well as provide learning opportunities for the volunteers. However as the term progressed and the Covid-19 epidemic grew, we were not able to follow up on the project. We also had to cancel Iron Ladle after the first week as the Dalhousie campus started to close due to Covid-19.

As the Covid-19 epidemic spread around the world, in order to stay as safe as possible while still providing meals we first increased our sanitary practices and eventually decided to close our kitchen to volunteers. The staff wrapped and packaged burritos for the line-up to reduce human food contact to minimum, but we could continue with the burrito servings for less than a week only, as the Dalhousie campus and the SUB decided to close mid-March. At that point we had no choice but to cease our kitchen operations.



- Volunteer Report (Sage)

Recruitment

This year volunteer recruitment strategies were posters, tabling, and signage in the Student Union Building, as well as Ladle through tabling, society fairs, and Dal's O-week. The next most common way to learn about the Ladle is through friends and word-of-mouth, although at least 10 people learned about the Ladle online through social media.

I focussed on following up on leads very quickly, and asked anyone who expressed interest in volunteering to give me their e-mail. Then I would send the Volunteer Intake form that Claudia designed last year, with a welcoming, quick, friendly e-mail. As soon as they filled out the short intake form, I would choose a date within the next week that seemed to match their availability and ask if they would come into the kitchen that day. By giving people a bit of an intro to know that we're friendly and fairly casual, without overwhelming with rules/processes/orientation things to do, I was able to get volunteers into the kitchen even if they are a bit people-shy or commitment-shy.

Work with Partner Organizations

We had lots of great collaborations and relationship-building with other Halifax organizations in 2019/2020.

Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia

We continue to have a positive relationship with ISANS, which we can maintain by staying in touch with Aseel Ali and Delaine Tiniakos-Doran, who are coordinators of the volunteer program there. Part of their trust in us comes from communicating regularly with them, understanding what they expect from a community partner, and being aware of the special needs of their clients. Often newcomer volunteers require some extra support because they have varying levels of English fluency, and finding reliable language volunteers was sometimes a challenge. The volunteers from ISANS this year were enthusiastic and lovely to work with, and they helped us to better serve the community by educating us on cultural diversity and the accessibility needs of newcomers.

Dalhousie Community Groups: SUB Food Bank, DSU Market, NSPIRG, International Student Centre

The DSU market and the food bank were allies on the ground this year, frequently providing donations of produce to the kitchen. We continue to share an office with NSPIRG and do frequent collaborations with them, which is a joy and keeps us close to our values and aware of the wider political atmosphere on campus. We had a number of collaborations with the International Student Centre this year, and look forward to continuing this, especially since many international students face barriers and marginalization that can impact their food security.

Growing Communities

We partnered with Growing Communities for the first time this year, which is a group of Dalhousie administrative staff. As part of their celebration of Munro day, we had a week of volunteering from Dal staff and faculty. The outreach they did was incredible, and the kitchen was crazily packed with people that week. They also collected funds for a special serving featuring more expensive ingredients than what the Ladle can use on a day-to-day basis (for example, tofu, cocoa powder, coconut milk).

The faculty and staff who volunteered had an excellent time, and I am hoping that long-term effects of the event will include greater awareness of The Loaded Ladle throughout Dalhousie and greater institutional support of our mission and operations. Growing Communities was very happy, and are hoping to work with us again next year. They could be strong allies to help us to navigate through university bureaucracy.

Volunteer Retention and Appreciation

I had three strategies for retention this year: flexibility, appreciation, and fun. Students are facing significant demands on their time. By being quite flexible in our volunteer scheduling, and by making sure volunteers weren't left to feel guilty if they had to miss a volunteer shift or even a few, I believe we retained many volunteers who otherwise would have left to prioritize more urgent demands. Learning every volunteers name and remembering details about their life, and thanking every person for their help when they left, was important to make volunteers feel appreciated. I also held multiple volunteer appreciation events throughout the year, including a movie night, gingerbread decorating and a video-game playing session. These generally had low attendance, but volunteers who hadn't been able to make it still felt appreciated that the events had happened. Last of all, I worked to keep the mood in the kitchen welcoming and fun, with music, cooking experimentation, snacks and treats, and questions of the day.

Goals for Next Term

In the next term I hope to build a closer relationship between the volunteers and the board members.

Also, much of the change-making that took place in the kitchen this year was educational: meeting other volunteers from different cultural backgrounds; learning about the historical and current struggles of Canada's indigenous peoples; learning about queer folks and queer experience; learning about the corporate catering system at Dalhousie and learning about more sustainable food production. I would love to help some of our student volunteers to start to put that education into action and rally around changing food policy in our community.

➤ **Programming Report (Su Donovaro)**

➤ Financial report (Capp)

OADDED LADLE 2019-2020 ANNUAL FINANCE REPORT & 2020-2021 BUDGET October 29 2020

		2019/2020 REPORT 2020/2021 BUDGET		NOTES	
		2019/2020 ACTUAL	2020/2021 BUDGET		
		DIFFER	ENCE		
Revenue	DSU Student Levies				
	2019/2020 BUDGET				
	Kings Student Levies \$7,750 \$7,731 -\$19 \$7,344			Estimate: 30%	decrease in Summer & Difference from 2019/2020:
	\$5,900 \$6,190 \$290 \$7,964			\$151,478	
	Other \$400 \$400 \$0			\$162,000 \$165,504 \$3,504	5% decrease in Fall/Winter Levies -\$14,025
	Food Boxes Donations \$11,387				Donations \$300 \$383 \$83 \$200 Canada Summer Jobs
	2019/2020 BUDGET				
	2019/2020 ACTUAL				
	Total Revenue \$175,950 \$180,508 \$4,558 \$178,373				

Expenses

Summer Food Boxes (already spent) \$12,798

Food/ Sol Servings / Kitchen supplies / Sexton / Cleaning Supplies

/ Kitchen Repairs & Maintenance / Equipment Purchase /

Transportation of Supplies \$17,750 \$15,578 \$2,172 \$13,500

Staff Wages / Remittances \$145,900 \$128,885 \$17,015 \$120,000

includes April 2020 - March 2021 Office /

Admin / Website / Permits / Insurance (\$1060) \$2,853 \$3,486 -\$633 \$2,360

Outreach / Swag / Volunteer Appreciation / Photocopying \$1,300 \$710 \$590 \$1,000

Visioning / Board Expenses / Meetings / AGM / Trainings /

Conferences / Professional Development - Board \$4,700 \$2,416 \$2,284 \$2,500

Programming / Garden / Compost \$4,250 \$3,072

\$1,178 \$1,500

Donations / Bursaries / Grants \$4,000 \$2,500 \$1,500 \$4,000

Professional Development - Staff \$3,000 \$352 \$2,648

\$3,000

DSU Kitchen Replacement Fund \$5,320 \$4,808 \$512 \$5,320

Total Expenses \$189,073 \$161,807 \$27,266 \$165,978

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REVENUE & EXPENSES \$18,701 \$12,395.00

to be used as a reserve/contingency fund or added to

SUMMARY

TOTAL LOADED LADLE FUNDS at END of 2019/2020 (March 31, 2020)

\$111,604.89

TOTAL PROJECTED SURPLUS FROM 2020/2021

\$12,395.00

TOTAL PROJECTED RESERVE at END of 2020/2021

(MARCH 31, 2021) \$123,999.89

surplus at the end of the year

-end current draft-
28 Feb 2020