

For Immediate Release

220 B.C. charities are distributing produce, meats, and dairy directly from grocers to people with food insecurity in schools and in our communities as demand grows

FoodMesh program matching perishable food to those in need hits 3.5 million meals donated from IGA and Fresh St. Market stores in B.C.

April 23, 2024, hən̓qəmin̓əm̓ and Skwxwú7mesh traditional territory / Burnaby, B.C. – More than 220 charities are distributing healthy fresh food to people facing food insecurity including school children through [FoodMesh](#) with [Georgia Main Food Group](#)'s IGA and Fresh St. Market stores donating 3.5 million meals since the partnership started in 2020.

“I’m beyond proud of our store management teams for their diligence going department by department to ensure surplus healthy foods like fruit and vegetables are not being thrown out and wasted and that we can quickly and efficiently get these foods directly to people who need it,” said Gary Sorenson, President and Chief Operating Officer, Georgia Main Food Group. “We have more than 220 charities who are distributing food to people in British Columbia thanks to this important part of our store’s food operations and our partnership with FoodMesh.”

The food donations consist of a wide variety of quality fresh produce, dairy, meat, seafood, and bakery items.

“More than half of the food produced in Canada goes to waste. These staggering statistics highlights the deep flaws in Canada’s food system. However, in this landscape, Georgia Main has never wavered from its commitment to reducing food waste across its stores,” said Jessica Regan, CEO and Co-Founder of FoodMesh. “The benefits of Georgia Main’s work extends beyond providing hunger-relief organizations with a regular supply of nutritious food donations. In keeping its unsold food out of waste streams, Georgia Main has also averted over five million KG of CO2e emissions from entering the atmosphere. We are extremely proud of this partnership and hope other retailers take note of the example they are setting for the industry.”

A variety of local charities including food banks in Metro Vancouver, the Okanagan, the Sunshine Coast, and other regions of B.C. pick up and distribute the stores’ food donations. Also, many grassroots community organizations such as the Immigrant Link Centre Society and CityReach Care Society, are involved in the important collection and distribution.

[Immigrant Link Centre Society](#) (ILCS) picks up healthy loads from Fresh St. Market and IGA stores in Metro Vancouver five days every week. In the beginning, ILCS delivered food once a week to the families of 30 students attending the English as a Second Language (ESL) training program at Vanier Centre in Coquitlam. With its food recovery partners they have now grown to 25 locations with nutritious food delivered seven days a week to more than 3500 people per month.

Give food a second chance

[CityReach Care Society](#) serves people living in Vancouver, the Downtown Eastside, Tri-Cities and Surrey Guilford and Whalley. Many families are recommended by teachers and are part of a broad school food network of 50 schools. According to its most recent Impact Report, CityReach Care Society along with its food partners distributed 47,000 fresh food hampers in 2023.

FOOD GROUP

Photo: Tom Truchan, Director, Health & Food Safety, Sustainability & Logistics, Georgia Main Food Group, volunteers and sees first-hand CityReach Care Society operations and some of the schools who will receive a colourful array of produce collected from IGA and Fresh St. Market stores.



“I’ve had the honour of working together with so many charities over the past four years and learning the heartwarming stories of the people we are helping,” said Tom Truchan, Director, Health & Food Safety, Sustainability & Logistics, Georgia Main Food Group. “It really does take a massive village to help combat food insecurity including people who are donating personally to food banks to the volunteers who sort food and to necessary programs like FoodMesh and the grocers who support them. Everyone can feel good about surplus foods not being wasted, staying out of the landfill and helping those in need.”



About FoodMesh

Mesh Exchange (dba FoodMesh) is a Vancouver-based Certified B Corporation, dedicated to reducing unnecessary food waste and feeding more. It provides digital solutions that unite all elements of the food supply chain to help organizations quickly and easily divert their surplus food to the people in our communities who need it most. Learn more at foodmesh.ca.

About Georgia Main Food Group (GMFG) Started in 1903 at Georgia and Main streets in Vancouver, GMFG is a 120-year-old iconic British Columbia-based Louie family owned and operated company with deep roots in the province's grocery industry. GMFG is the parent company of seven Fresh St. Market stores and 22 IGA stores in B.C. and recently opened its first Asian grocery store - Meiga Supermarket in Port Moody. For more information please visit: <https://www.georgiamain.com/>

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