

Late Night Recreation Report



The Youth-Friendly North Shore initiative is led by the District of North Vancouver in collaboration with the City of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, Squamish Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

The initiative is funded by Public Safety Canada through the Building Safer Communities Fund and supported by the North Vancouver RCMP.

Prepared by Bunyaad Public Affairs for the Youth-Friendly North Shore initiative.



Public Safety
Canada

Sécurité publique
Canada



Skwxwú7mesh
Úxwumixw
Squamish Nation



Tsleil-Waututh Nation
PEOPLE OF THE INLET



We respectfully acknowledge the original Peoples of the lands and waters that situate and surround us wherever we work. We honour the səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), on whose territories we work, play and live. We extend our gratitude and raise up their ongoing relationship with land they have stewarded since time immemorial. As well, we recognize Métis Nation BC, Inuit and urban Indigenous Peoples who have deeply rooted relationships with the land we all call home.

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Introduction

The 2024 Youth-Friendly North Shore (YFNS) [Youth Services Evaluation](#) identified a strong foundation of youth programming across the North Shore, including the availability of a wide range of services that promote positive youth development and resilience. However, the evaluation also identified a clear service gap in the availability of late-night, youth-focused drop-in spaces. No youth spaces are open past 8:00 p.m. from Sunday to Wednesday, and none operate past 10:00 p.m. on any day of the week. This presents an opportunity to pilot a coordinated late-night series offering low-barrier recreational activities.

The 2022 YFNS Evidence Review (pg. 20) and [BSCF Stakeholder Engagement Report](#) indicate that the availability of structured, supervised recreational activities during after-school hours can function as a protective factor against youth involvement in crime and gangs by supporting the development of prosocial behaviours. Late-night activities, such as “Midnight Basketball,” can reduce risk exposure by providing safe environments, positive peer engagement and access to trusted adults in the community, fostering a sense of belonging and an alternative to negative influences.

The objective was to pilot a coordinated series of late-evening recreation events across different North Shore neighbourhoods and assess the feasibility of delivering this model on an ongoing basis. The pilot was designed to test cross-organizational collaboration under a collective YFNS banner, with shared promotion and coordinated scheduling to increase awareness and reach across the North Shore.

Both youth and stakeholders recognized a lack of low-barrier, after-hours activities. The 2024 evaluation of youth services showed a clear service gap in the availability of late-night, youth-focused drop-in spaces. In response, YFNS convened a working group with six key organizations to coordinate and implement a pilot series of late-night recreation activities between December 2025 and March 2026. The pilot aimed to assess operational feasibility, youth uptake, inter-agency coordination and community response.

The pilot’s duration was too short to fully build trust and awareness. A common theme noted by staff was the need for regular, ongoing events so that youth know to expect them, watch for them and bring friends to future sessions.

This pilot faced constraints that must be considered as part of its evaluation. A four-month duration is insufficient for establishing the necessary community trust and program awareness amongst youth. Building these foundational elements requires sustained and consistent effort. For youth who may be facing multiple risks, ongoing program consistency – alongside activity variety – is essential for successful engagement and long-term retention.

Pilot: the spot.

A series of twelve late-night recreation events was piloted across the North Shore between December 6, 2025, and March 14, 2026 ([see Appendix 1 for details](#)). The series was intentionally titled “the spot.” to reflect youth vernacular for a go-to gathering place. This branding moved away from traditional “programming” labels to frame the series as a relatable, ever-changing destination. Recognizing that youth move across the North Shore, the events occurred in different neighbourhoods offering youth the opportunity to attend events geographically close to them. The events were designed to provide safe, inclusive and high-engagement spaces for youth during weekend and late-evening hours. Activities ranged from competitive basketball tournaments to musical “jam sessions,” identity-focused celebrations like the “Pride Pajama Party” and meal-focused events like the “Festive Holiday Dinner.”

Marketing Strategy and Products

The marketing strategy centered on a unified brand identity to ensure consistency and cross-organizational recognition, specifically tailored to the digital and aesthetic preferences of North Shore youth (ages 12–18).

Unified Branding – “the spot.”

All events were marketed under the common banner “the spot.” positioning the series as public, free, drop-in spaces. Central to this branding was the catchphrase “meet me at the spot.” — a relatable call to action that framed the program as an ever-changing destination. While the physical location changed with each event, moving across different venues and municipalities, the consistent “the spot.” identity allowed youth to recognize the familiar series without the “institutional” feel often associated with specific government or non-profit organizations naming on marketing products.

The use of lowercase letters for “the spot.” is a deliberate linguistic choice. According to Jobe (2025), Gen Z and Gen Alpha increasingly view capital letters as “stern,” “abrupt,” or overly formal. By using lowercase, the program signals an informal, peer-to-peer conversational tone. This “low-friction” branding makes the space feel approachable rather than authoritative (Gatollari, 2024).

Event-specific posters

Each organization was provided with a set of event-specific posters ([see Appendix 2.2](#)) to promote the event using their networks and social media. The visual strategy employs “sticker culture” and purposeful ambiguity to mimic how youth customize digital spaces. By prioritizing 8-bit pixel art and “mood-based” content over dense information, the branding aligns with Gen Z’s preference for “niche-ification” (Spotify, 2024). This “anti-design” approach builds curiosity and reduces the “ad-fatigue” typically associated with high-gloss corporate marketing (Keung, 2024).

Centralized Event Information

A dedicated [Eventbrite Collection](#) served as the primary information portal ([see Appendix 2.3 for samples](#)). The aim of setting up an external series was to provide all information related to “the spot.” events in one centralized location. As highlighted in the 2024 YFNS [Youth Services Evaluation Instrument and Guide](#) and the 2025 YFNS Youth Online Trends and Website Audit, this approach directly addressed the regional lack of an updated, centralized youth services directory. To further reduce barriers to entry, each event was clearly designated as a “drop-in,” removing the need for formal registration.

Distribution

Email campaign: Digital engagement trended upward throughout the pilot, with increasing open and click-through rates demonstrating a rise in stakeholder awareness and regional buy-in ([see Appendix 2.4 for full performance metrics](#)).

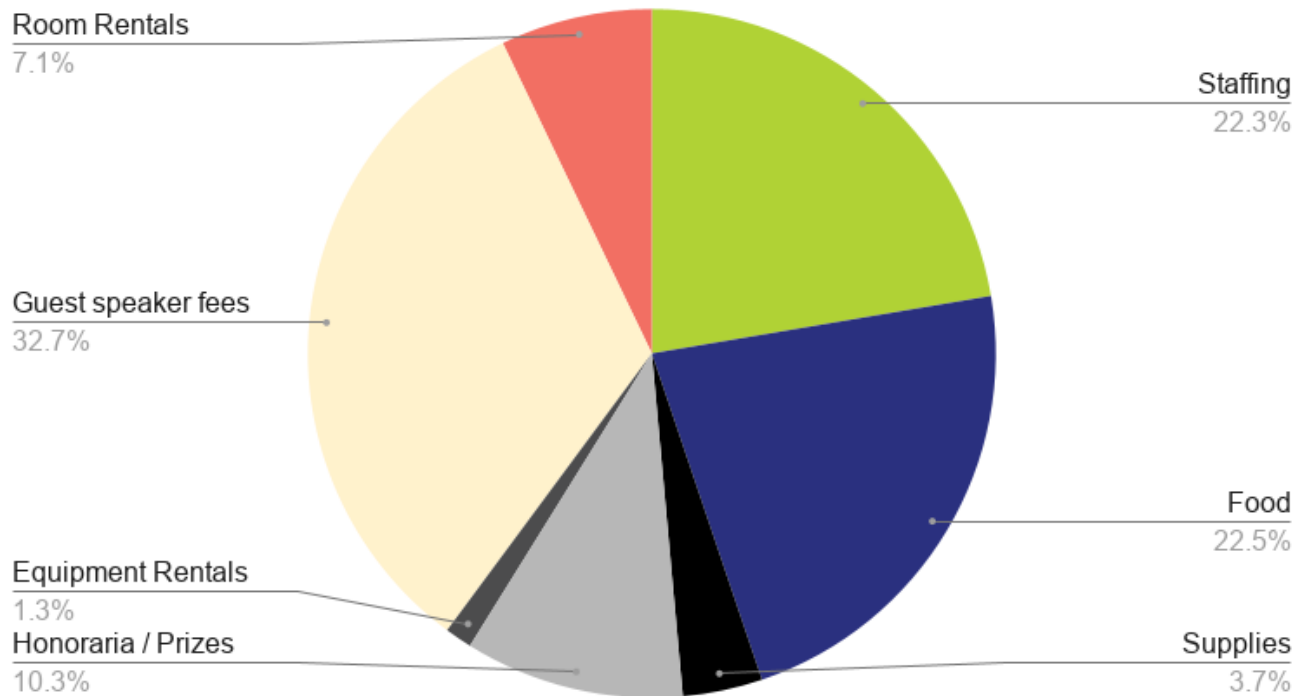
Community Outreach: Posters featuring “the spot.” were displayed in select community spaces with high youth traffic. Host organizations amplified this reach through their own distribution networks. Images of the posters and a map of locations are available in [Appendix 2.5](#).

Investment

Financial allocations were prioritized to ensure low-barrier access for youth, as well as adequate staffing and resources for the pilot. Each organization proposed an event budget, which was approved in November 2025.

The average cost of an event was **\$1250 (ranging from \$332.99 to \$4331.50)**. Room rental costs were frequently provided in-kind. A breakdown of these costs is shown below:

Total Cost Breakdown by Category



Observed Impact

“Overall, the tournament increased youth engagement, expanded outreach to new teens, reinforced positive peer interaction, and strengthened awareness of ongoing Youth Centre programming within the community.”- Org 3

“Youth entered feeling reserved and shy, but left with confidence and an increased sense of belonging... The instructor was phenomenal and created a safe space.” – Org 1

“Most youth [gained] the confidence to sing and dance to their favorite tunes, make new friends and show off their vocal skills.” – Org 2

Reaching Youth

The series successfully engaged 247 youth across the North Shore, averaging 22 participants per event. Several organizations reported reaching youth from outside their typical service areas.

Most events attracted youth who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+. Organizations reported that participants belonged to several priority or risk groups, including:

- Newcomers to Canada and youth who speak languages other than English
- Socially isolated or anxious youth
- Youth experiencing mental health challenges
- Youth experiencing food and/or housing insecurity
- Youth experiencing substance use challenges

To the best of our knowledge, the events were not attended by youth who identify as Indigenous, have disabilities or are refugees.

“By creating a developmentally appropriate space within the broader event, staff ensured these younger participants felt included, supported and set up for success.” – Org 3

“Through this event, staff connected with 24 new youth who had not previously accessed the Youth Centre. Representing a meaningful expansion of outreach beyond the regular attendee group.” – Org 3

“Many youth were first-time attendees and expressed interest in returning.” – Org 4

Impact on Youth Development

Qualitative feedback from host organizations aligned with key elements within a Positive Youth Development framework: Confidence, Connection and Belonging, Competencies, and Character.

1. Confidence

Across participating organizations, staff reported observable increases in youth confidence. Facilitators noted positive shifts in body language, participation levels and a greater willingness to engage socially during individual events; in some cases, youth demonstrated sustained engagement that extended beyond the pilot activities.

At one event, a participant who arrived shy and reserved displayed significantly greater confidence by the end of the evening and subsequently began attending additional programming at the host organization. Staff attributed this shift to the intentional creation of a psychologically safe environment and skilled facilitation.

Similarly, structured but low-pressure activities, such as karaoke, encouraged youth to step outside their comfort zones. Many participants who were initially hesitant eventually chose to sing, dance and engage publicly with peers, indicating increased self-assurance within a supportive environment.

This suggests that intentionally designed late-night recreational spaces can function as confidence-building environments, particularly when facilitated by staff who model encouragement and inclusive participation.

“The activities created space for new youth to bond with staff and with peers who had attended past events... The night ended with a 30-minute dance party where youth were not only dancing but jumping and singing along with reckless abandon.”
– Org 5

“[...] we were able to see youth build strong connections with one another and encourage them to join future events.” – Org 2

“[...] youth tend to feel at ease right away, knowing they already share a common identity or allyship with others in the room. The opportunity to dress up provided easy conversation starters.” – Org 4

2. Connection and belonging

All organizations reported strengthened peer relationships and an enhanced sense of belonging among participants. These outcomes were evidenced by sustained engagement during and beyond scheduled program times, positive peer interactions and increased access to youth-serving spaces. Many organizations noted that socially anxious or isolated youth showed visible transformation; by the end of an event, these participants had often developed new peer connections and expressed a desire to return for future programming.

Organizations reported that youth frequently remained beyond the official end time to continue playing and socializing. Staff connected with numerous first-time participants who had not previously accessed their spaces or services, indicating successful outreach beyond the regular participant base.

Identity-affirming events for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth strengthened belonging for those navigating intersectional identities. Activities such as icebreakers, crafts, karaoke and a closing dance celebration fostered immediate comfort, peer bonding and visible expressions of joy. Low-barrier formats—including pajama-themed trampoline activities, journaling stations and a hot chocolate bar—further created an environment for relaxed interaction and new friendships.

The design and facilitation of events prioritized emotional safety, inclusivity and relational care. Staff intentionally created welcoming spaces that validated youth identities and experiences.

Facilitators joined activities, modeled enthusiasm and provided encouragement, reinforcing a culture of support. The emphasis on shared meals, collective celebration and accessible formats fostered environments where youth felt seen and valued.

Collectively, host feedback demonstrated that late-night recreational programming can increase access to safe spaces, expand outreach to new participants and strengthen peer and community connections.

“The entire evening was a celebration of queer and trans identity... facilitators joining in and role-modeling enthusiastic support created a genuine sense of queer and trans joy.” – Org 4

“Throughout the event, youth demonstrated strong sportsmanship by calling their own fouls and resolving minor disagreements respectfully.” – Org 3

“[...] the icebreakers and low barrier craft activities helped set the tone for creativity and connection.” – Org 4

“These events allow for increased self-efficacy, self-worth and confidence for the participants.” – Org 5

3. Competencies

The events provided structured opportunities for youth to develop social, emotional and interpersonal skills. Competencies observed by host organizations included conflict resolution, communication, teamwork and self-expression.

During competitive programming, the focus shifted from staff-led mediation to youth-led accountability. Participants took ownership of the game’s integrity by managing their own play and addressing disputes through peer-to-peer dialogue rather than looking to adults for intervention. These behaviors reflect growth in self-regulation, collaborative problem-solving and accountability.

Beyond athletics, creative programming such as karaoke, crafts and dance provided a platform for social risk-taking. By engaging in these expressive activities, youth practiced public speaking and performance confidence while building rapport with peers outside of their immediate social circles. As a result, the pilot demonstrated that recreational settings—when intentionally facilitated—effectively bridge the gap between play and meaningful skill-building.

“The competitive format generated significant excitement, and many participants asked when the next tournament would take place.” – Org 1

“What could have been a discouraging experience due to age and skill differences was intentionally reshaped into an opportunity for continued and meaningful engagement.” – Org 1

“Youth performed music of their countries of origin, along with their peers from both similar and different cultural backgrounds.” – Org 2

“The instructor was phenomenal and had the ability to really connect with the youth and create a safe space.” – Org 3

4. Character

Character development was evident through demonstrated respect, integrity and responsible participation. In competitive contexts, youth modeled fairness and mutual respect by resolving disputes collaboratively rather than relying solely on staff intervention. This shift toward peer-led resolution indicates a growing sense of social responsibility and personal integrity.

Positive peer reinforcement and encouragement were consistently observed across age groups. Staff intentionally designed activities to bridge age and skill gaps, ensuring that differences in ability became opportunities for mentorship rather than sources of discouragement. This approach fostered an environment where character was built through inclusive play and mutual support.

Facilitators modeled inclusive behaviour, which was mirrored by participants. Whether through sportsmanship on the court or authenticity in identity-affirming spaces, youth were encouraged to express themselves openly. Furthermore, the programming supported cross-cultural connection, as youth interacted with peers from diverse backgrounds, countries of origin and religions, contributing to a culture of celebration and mutual respect.

Overall, the YFNS Late Night Rec pilot demonstrated that intentionally structured, low-barrier and after-hours recreational initiatives support positive youth development across multiple domains while improving access to safe and supportive community spaces. The events contributed to increased youth confidence, expanded outreach to first-time attendees and strengthened peer relationships across different ages and schools. Through this pilot, youth demonstrated measurable growth in conflict resolution, communication and teamwork skills while modeling positive character traits such as fairness and respect.

Areas for Improvement

Feedback from participating organizations and youth identified several implementation considerations to strengthen future iterations of the program.

Pilot Duration and Visibility

The pilot timeline was too brief to build sustained awareness, trust and participation. Relationship-building and consistent visibility through promotions require a longer runway. Regularly scheduled events under a recognizable banner were recommended to establish predictability, allowing youth to anticipate upcoming dates and invite peers.

Scheduling and Continuity

Inconsistency in event frequency and a lack of continuity were cited as primary barriers to building sustained attendance. Additionally, uncoordinated promotional efforts resulted in overlapping event dates, which confused participants and divided the potential audience.

Accessibility

Five common barriers to access are appropriateness, acceptability, availability, affordability and approachability. The pilot series offered many different types of activities to reach youth from different backgrounds and with diverse interests, addressing appropriateness and acceptability. However, we noted an absence of youth who identify as Indigenous, refugees or persons with disabilities, suggesting room for improvement with regards to these populations.

Availability and accommodation means offering programs at the times and locations most accessible to youth. Informal feedback highlighted several challenges in this area, including:

- **Timing:** Some youth suggested starting events earlier in the evening to accommodate curfews, limited night-time transportation and safety concerns. Host organizations cited competing after-school commitments during the winter holiday period.
- **Venue:** Youth were less likely to attend events at school sites, preferring non-school environments after the academic week ends.

Affordability was largely addressed by keeping events free of charge, although some youth may have incurred transportation costs. A multi-faceted marketing approach was designed to address approachability, i.e. how youth access program information. As noted elsewhere, continued marketing efforts will build the long-term awareness and trust needed to further improve approachability.

Partnerships and Resource Sustainability

Organizations emphasized the importance of strengthening local partnerships for in-kind contributions from businesses to support prizes and event incentives. Additionally, expanding collaboration with agencies that specifically serve 2SLGBTQIA+ youth was identified as a way to enhance program reach, resource sustainability and targeted inclusion.

Recommendations

“It doesn’t matter who the service provider is, that’s doing the program, providing that service, the youth don’t care [about that]... The youth just wants to know who’s gonna be there, what they’re doing. So let’s make it easier for them.”

Members of the late night working group recognized the merits of collaboration and cross-promotion.

Based on the post-event discussions, we suggest that:

- The District of North Vancouver connects with the other two municipalities to explore using the North Shore Youth Services Directory or another mechanism for centralized communication of low-barrier youth events across the North Shore
- Organizations hosting late-night events cross-promote each other’s events to reach more youth. Consider continued use of “the spot” or other youth-friendly branding over a longer duration to create familiarity among youth.
- The City and District of North Vancouver and North Vancouver Recreation & Culture work together to ensure late evening low barrier programming is available in different neighbourhoods for youth in North Vancouver.
- The working group continues to meet periodically to coordinate planning signature late night events to ensure that youth aged 12-18 have access to at least one late-night event per month between October to March. This could include pooling resources to support sustainability of these events.
- The organizations engage youth in planning these late night events to ensure the events reflect the needs and diverse interests of youth in the community.

Acknowledgements

We thank the following organizations for participating in this pilot:

- Capilano Community Services Society
- City of North Vancouver
- District of North Vancouver
- District of West Vancouver
- Lynn Valley Services Society
- North Shore Neighbourhood House
- North Vancouver Recreation and Culture
- Parkgate Community Services Society
- Squamish Nation
- Tsleil-Waututh Nation

Appendix 1: List of Events

	EVENT NAME	DATE AND TIME	LOCATION	ORGANIZATION
1	Pride Pajama Party	December 6, 2025 7:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	West Vancouver Youth Lounge	West Vancouver Youth Services
2	Live Performance Night – Karaoke	December 12, 2025 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	West Vancouver Youth Lounge	West Vancouver Youth Services
3	Dinner Party – Festive Holiday Dinner + Karaoke	December 13, 2025 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Youth Centre at John Braithwaite Community Centre	North Shore Neighbourhood House
4	Studio L8 Two part session	January 16, 2026 January 23, 2026 8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Lions Gate Community Recreation Centre	Capilano Community Services
5	Live Performance Night - Open Mic, Improv, Karaoke, and Stand Up Comedy	January 23, 2026 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	West Vancouver Youth Hub	West Vancouver Youth Services
6	"Winter Hoopfest" 4-on-4 basketball tournament	January 31, 2026 7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	Parkgate Youth Centre	Parkgate Community Services
7	Dancing Qween	January 31, 2026 7:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	West Vancouver Youth Lounge	West Vancouver Youth Services
8	Saturday Supper + Game Lounge	February 14, 2026 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Youth Centre at John Braithwaite Community Centre	North Shore Neighbourhood House
9	Late Night Youth Jam Session	February 20, 2026 7:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	École Argyle Secondary School, Band Room	Lynn Valley Services Society
10	Pride Plunge	March 7, 2026 7:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	West Vancouver Youth Lounge	West Vancouver Youth Services
11	Youth 3x3 Basketball Tournament	March 14, 2026 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	West Vancouver Rec Centre	West Vancouver Youth Services

Appendix 2: Marketing Efforts

2.1 “the spot.” poster



2.2 Event-specific posters

dancing qween



*a pride themed NYE party for all
2SLGBTQIA+ youth to celebrate the
end of jan with your queer family w/ a
fake NYE countdown!*



sat january 31
7:30 p.m. – 11 p.m.
west van youth hub

winter ^{4-on-4} hoopfest _{tournament}



**free for
13–18 yr olds**

**bring your
friends!**



sat january 31
7 p.m. – 11 p.m.
parkgate community
centre

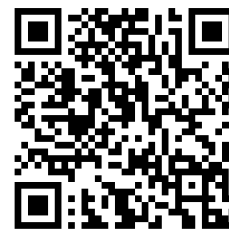
meet me
at the



* late night activities for
youth ages 12–19



spot the at me
meet probably
should you this
read can you if



2.3 Eventbrite

when it all starts to feel like too much.

meet me at the spot.

Collection

the spot.


Youth-Friendly North Shore
23 followers

are you 12-19 y/o? the spot. is your place to chill late night, stay off the radar, and do something actually fun. no pressure, no lectures—just come hang out with friends, meet new ones or do your thing. we've got music, games and free food all night!

Events in this collection

Upcoming (2) Past (10)


Sales Ended



meet me at the spot.

late night youth jam session
Fri, Feb 20 • 7:30 PM
Argyle Secondary School
Free


Sales Ended



meet me at the spot.

saturday supper & game lounge
Sat, Feb 14 • 5:00 PM
John Braithwaite Community Centre
Free


Sales Ended



meet me at the spot.

dancing queen
Sat, Jan 31 • 7:30 PM
Youth Hub | West Vancouver
Free


Sales Ended



meet me at the spot.

winter hoopfest
Sat, Jan 31 • 7:00 PM
Parkgate Community Centre
Free


Sales Ended



meet me at the spot.

studio L8
Fri, Jan 23 • 8:00 PM
Marine Room, Second Floor, Lions Gate Community...
Free


Sales Ended



meet me at the spot.

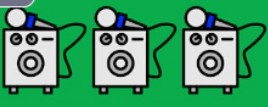
karaoke live performance & stand up night
Fri, Jan 23 • 7:00 PM
Youth Hub | West Vancouver
Free

Sales Ended




meet me at the spot.

Sales Ended



meet me at the spot.

Sales Ended



meet me at the spot.

2.4 Monthly Email Campaign Performance

Month	Total Recipients	Open Rate (%)	Click-Through Rate (%)	Click-to-Open Rate (%)
December 2025	110	38.5	16.5	42.9
January 2026	240	30.3	9.2	30.6
February 2026	250	30.3	9.2	28.2
March 2026	249	24.9	6.8	24.7
Total average	212	31.0	10.43	31.6
Industry average		40	3.30	10.2

Total Recipients: The number of unique organizations reached . This grew over the pilot period to meet organizational changes, increased demand and expanded outreach.

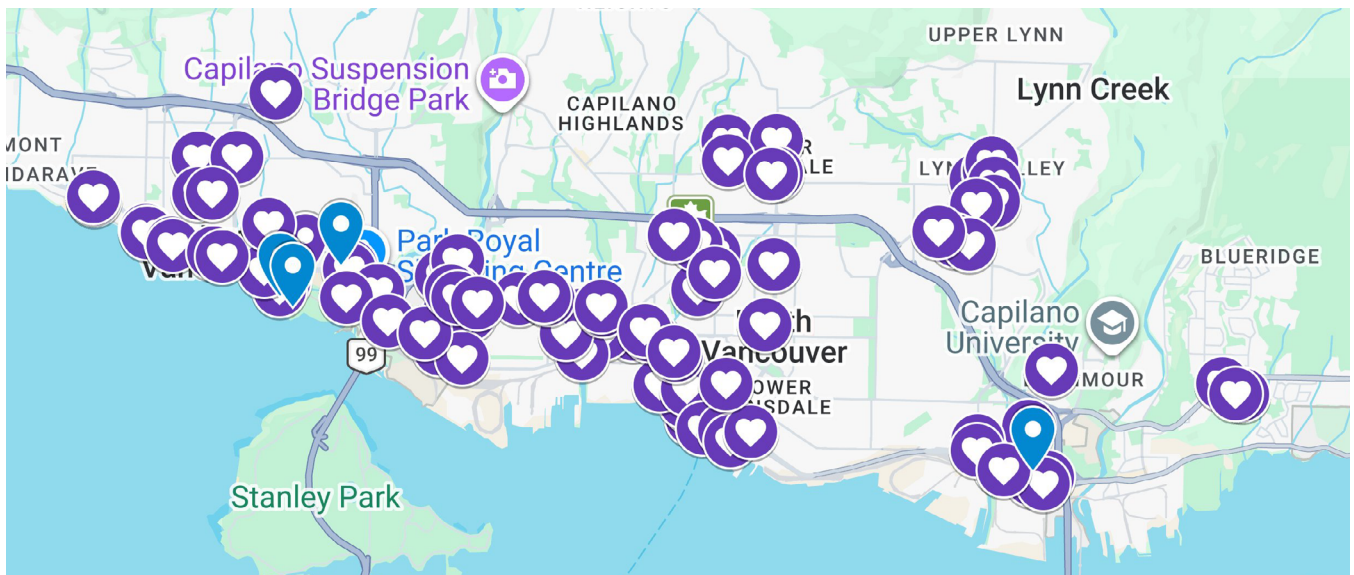
Open Rate (%): The percentage of total recipients who opened the email, measuring our ability to capture the attention of busy professionals.

Click-Through Rate (CTR) (%): The percentage of total recipients who clicked a link, showing the total traffic directed from our entire list to the Eventbrite series.

Click-to-Open Rate (CTOR) (%): The percentage of recipients who opened the email and clicked a link. This measures content quality, proving that once stakeholders saw the information, they found it relevant enough to take action.

Total average vs. Industry average: Digital engagement consistently outpaced nonprofit industry standards, with click-through rates peaking at nearly six times during the launch and maintaining a click-to-open rate that proved the content was highly relevant to the needs of stakeholders.

2.5 Community outreach efforts and map summarizing selected locations in the community where posters were shared



Appendix 3: Summary of costs

	Type of Cost	Description of costs	Total Cost
1	Staffing	Full salaries and wages including MERCs	\$3070.88
2	Food	Meal related costs for participants	\$3092.14
3	Supplies	Any costs associated with event supplies	\$515.34
4	Honoraria / Prizes	Any costs associated participant honoraria & door prizes	\$1417.13
5	Equipment Rentals	Any costs associated with the equipment rentals	\$175.84
6	Guest speaker or facilitator fees	Any costs associated with external or facilitator	\$4500.00
7	Room Rentals	Costs associated with renting a large room or gymnasium for the event	\$981.16
	Total		13,752.49

Appendix 4: References

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