



Bumpin Bakery

Bump Out Hunger

Non-Profit Organization
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Bumpin's thanksgiving lunch, graciously hosted by The Door is Open on Oct. 21, 2018, was a great success, made possible only by the incredible mind of a caring individual named Herb. I chatted with Herb, hoping to gain the perspective of a First Nations who has lived in BC his whole life, but ended up with a pocket full of insights, and a myriad of mindsets everyone should consider before they exploit the life gifted to them.

Herb hopped around BC before landing in Vancouver 21 years ago, where he has remained. His adolescent years were spent gliding across foster homes, which taught him one sobering lesson: not everybody is loving. The government desired to forcefully assimilate First Nations children by tossing them into unwilling Canadian homes, which resulted in a hostile and cold atmosphere for Herb, one where his culture was disrespected and shunned.



"Herb inspired our youth volunteers with his initiative and giving spirit"

Herb's early familial situation reflected the political stance Canada maintained regarding First Nations, as he grew up. This country refused to appreciate the amazing variety of First Nation cultures, stemming from the smaller communities of different dialects and customs that made up a wonderfully diverse larger tribal nation. Many Canadians turned away from the effort needed to understand and appreciate the First Nations varying cultures, preferring to dominate over this rich community of knowledge and tradition by crushing their individuality and enforcing a Canadian way of life. The government viewed uniformity as the only option, a complete disrespect of the treaty First Nations tried to respect honestly by initially accepting and displaying commitment in understanding Canadian culture. The Canadian government showed their backs to First Nations, severing all established and possible bonds with these people who had a right to their land, freedom and voice. All First Nation rights disappeared; their cultures, dialects and people suffered greatly.

This is where Herb generously told me that he accepted and welcomed my presence and everybody else's on this land owned by his ancestors, gesturing around him to the variety of lunch guests and bustling Bumpin' volunteers. This touched my heart, but his words after made me realize just how far-reaching and time-crossing the government's initial, and mostly unresolved, treatment of First Nations really is. He told me, with a longing smile and

distant gaze, that even though we're all welcome, he "need[s] his home". He doesn't even feel like he belongs on the land his family has a right to, that First Nations still live scattered and oppressed while the government remains silent, in fear of the repercussions recognition of their wrongdoings will bring upon their heads.

Herb does not lament over the fact he has no place he can truly call home, though. He continually forges his own sense of belonging by giving back to the community and caring for others as much as his resources allow him. His passion is endless when it comes to feeding those with empty stomachs, hoping any penny he spares for those in need will spur others, whether they were the people who received his kindness or people who witnessed it, to



"Herb and his girlfriend Sarah"

spare their own change in making whatever difference they can in this weighted world. He is a powerful advocate for the domino effect, knowing the contagious power of a smile and helping hand. He told me that, even though his penny is comparably almost worthless compared to the amount of money and resources being used toward the poverty crisis, he wants to be a part of the movement, genuinely caring for the people surrounding him everyday.

He also realizes the desire to outstretch giving hands toward the community is dwindling in some organizations. The church he used to volunteer at, which would regularly offer free food to those in need, lost it's selfless, caring atmosphere; their motivation to improve the dispossessed community dissipating while their once pure, honest focus of giving back became blurry. This encouraged him to take action and pick up their slack, which is where the idea for a thanksgiving meal came into play. With authentic generosity, he wanted to use a portion of the settlement cheque he was to receive from the government to give gratitude to the community of people who enrich his life, and there was no better way to do that then through a thanksgiving meal that would exemplify the gravity of simply giving. This led me to ask him what he wanted to give thanks for the most, to which he naturally responded with "life". He told me that even though his life has been riddled with bumps and setbacks, he never forgets that Jesus has given him this opportunity to live, work and care for others, reminding himself everyday why he is on this earth. He gestured to the Bumpin' volunteers, The Door is Open staff, and organizers of the event at this point, expressing how grateful he is that they were still able to carry out his vision for the meal through donations and volunteers, even when his settlement cheque was delayed. He laughed and told me he also appreciated being able to control most aspects of the event as the boss,

even though he wasn't able to contribute anything money-wise. It was his bright idea and charitable, loving soul that made this meal his contribution to society.



The last thing I asked Herb was what he wanted all the guests and volunteers to take away from this meal. He told me, most importantly, he wanted everybody to understand the significance of caring, and how even a small, selfless gesture can enlighten the recipient in unimaginable ways. He continued to explain by bringing back the concept of the domino effect: if all 350+ guests each make another person smile through a caring act, and those people make others smile, imagine the branching, lasting effect one meal could have on society?

Thank you, Herb, for your wonderful perspective on life.

By: Keeley Aliya

Thank you to the following organizations for making the event possible!

The Door is Open

The Vancouver College Community

Rennie Vancouver

