



THE LUNCH CLUB

HEALTHY EATING & NUTRITION

Photo credit: Adactio

DEPARTMENT

School of Nursing

CAMPUS

Point Grey

FUNDING YEAR

2019

ABOUT HWIP

The Healthy Workplace Initiatives Program (HWIP) is an annual fund available to UBC departments and units to support grassroots activities that promote wellbeing in the workplace. The program provides start-up funds and support for health-related, sustainable initiatives.

www.hr.ubc.ca/hwip

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

When Elisabeth and Rana noticed that staff and faculty in the School of Nursing did not always interact or know each other, they wanted to create a natural space for engagement that was low barrier, fun, and optional. They asked, "How do we bring people together?" and thought, "Food brings people together." The new Canada Food Guide had just come out and included a recommendation to eat as a community as a healthy eating habit. From this, the idea for the Lunch Club emerged.

When they sent out a Qualtrics survey to gauge interest among team members, they received enthusiastic feedback from faculty and staff members who agreed that a focus on healthy eating, combined with opportunities for connection and community building over lunch, would be a welcome initiative in the school.

The Lunch Club meets once a month and has hosted potlucks, introduced the new Canada Food Guide, and compiled a collection of recipes to create a cookbook. The monthly "make your own" salad bar is its most popular event, and everyone who joins the Lunch Club receives a branded, reusable salad bowl!

"After we started the Lunch Club, walking through the halls of the school was a very different experience... Having those opportunities to informally connect really changes the feeling of where you are. Just being able to say, "Hey, hi, how are you?" makes a huge difference."

KEY TO SUCCESS

Recognizing that “it can be hard to get people excited about trying something new with people they don’t know, especially if they have to pay for it,” the Lunch Club was designed to be informal, with no expectations, no cost, and low barriers to participation.

Now that there is momentum, people are willing to pitch in money and bring items to keep the monthly salad bars going.

SUSTAINABILITY

While everyone works from home due to Covid-19, the Lunch Club continues to stay connected via lunchtime Zoom gatherings.

Once everyone is back to working on campus, there are plans to continue having monthly Lunch Club gatherings. A newly formed Wellbeing Committee will help the Lunch Club keep their momentum. By sharing food and being strategic, they have figured out how to make the communal salad bar less expensive than any lunch that can be purchased on campus. New members will continue to be welcomed with their very own reusable Lunch Club salad bowl!

“I’ve been at the school for eight years, but there was a series of new faculty and staff that were hired. People that I normally would not have sat down to lunch with, I now know through the Lunch Club.”

VALUABLE OUTCOMES

In a school where there is a culture of skipping lunch or eating at your desk, people have started to use lunch as a time to take a break, eat, and socialize with colleagues.

New faculty and staff have expressed that the Lunch Club has provided an opportunity to feel a part of the school community and meet and interact with staff that they would not normally engage with. Informal connections are being made between staff and faculty and there is a new sense of community that will last beyond the HWIP grant period.

UBC WELLBEING
STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK*
PRIORITY AREAS

Social Connection

Food & Nutrition

wellbeing.ubc.ca/framework

“People are now truly using the lunch as a break.”

ADVICE FOR FUTURE HWIP GRANTEES

1 Have a diverse planning team

“Having both a faculty member and a staff member, in partnership, organizing the initiative has been really key to showing that this is not just for a subset of our community, but that we really want to bring everyone [that works in our school] together.”

2 Align your initiative with your department or unit’s strategic plan

The Lunch Club initiative aligns directly with the “Engagement & Responsiveness” value of the School of Nursing’s Strategic Plan. It helps the school meet its goal of “creating opportunities for community engagement and collaboration with peers and partners to foster and sustain health and a healthy work environment in order to responsively advance people’s wellbeing.”