

November 2, 2023

Dana Cupples, Administrator
Olivet Baptist Church
613 Queens Avenue
New Westminster BC V3M 1L1

Dear Dana,

On behalf of the GVFB I want to thank you for your partnership and that of Olivet Church in our weekly food distribution. After extensive review and with the ongoing challenges the location presents for our team, the GVFB has concluded that it is operationally necessary to stop our weekly food distribution on Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 pm at Olivet Church, effective February 15, 2024.

After an exhaustive search that spanned two Mayors and city councils, and seven possible sites, we could not find another suitable location in New Westminster. This decision was difficult to make and came as the result of several critical operational challenges:

1. All the food we bring has to be unloaded by hand as we are unable to use a forklift due to the restricted space we have in the laneway to park, and the lack of a loading bay. Similarly, everything has to be reloaded onto the truck by hand at the end of distribution. This slows down our set up and breakdown procedures, increases the chances of injuries to our team, and it is much more strenuous physically compared to our other locations.
2. Because we are restricted to the amount of food and supplies we can bring on one truck (considering both the manual load/unload and laneway parking restrictions), we cannot accommodate our full weekly menus including the many donated “add on” items we receive from our industry donors; these items are usually farm fresh produce, but also consist of dairy and meat items. Due to this restriction, our New West clients are receiving less food, which creates an inequity of experience across our sites. We recently had a client contact us to share her disappointment with the available product at Olivet Church. Fortunately, she was able to visit us at our Burnaby location and get the additional add-ons which included 3 types of fruits and vegetables in abundance, and vegan protein shakes.
3. We do not pay rent to operate our other single-day distribution site, and it’s not an operational precedent we are prepared to set.

To compensate for this change, we will be adding additional distribution hours in our Burnaby warehouse, located only 4 Skytrain stops away. More information regarding this change will be provided to you and our clients closer to the closure date, when the additional hours are finalized.

We will distribute from the Church into February 2024, with the last day being Wednesday, February 14th. Warehouse week is the following week, and then as of the week of February 26th we will be encouraging clients to visit our Burnaby location; as mentioned above, clients will receive more food given our ability to offer an often-unlimited amount of donated, add-on menu items directly from the warehouse.

We will begin communicating this change to our clients in December and continue through February. We will also provide them with information on how to get to our Burnaby warehouse, as well as about other GVFB-supplied community agencies providing food in New West. We will give you copies of all this information to share with any GVFB clients/parishioners who inquire outside of the hours we are onsite on Wednesdays.

We want to sincerely thank Olivet Church for its partnership through the years,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia Boulter". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Cynthia" and last name "Boulter" clearly legible.

Cynthia Boulter
Chief Operating Officer