



Mustard seed street church / meal service



#food #social service #Edmonton

“Here serves real meat.”

**“You like this? It’ll run right through me.
I need something more substantial.”**

The lineup starts well before dinner. People chat in clumps, with some making short trips to the hot chocolate cart, bringing back cups for others. When people are allowed to enter, they are counted. (There is a second sitting). Upon entering, diners are greeted by staff and handed a tray. We wind our way around the corner and down a step to a row of tables with serving trays - volunteers are on one side, diners on the other. As we walk by, volunteers offer friendly greetings and offer a scoop from each dish, sometimes offering a bit more. There is always dessert. The food is different every evening.

After the last seating, people may stay on until 10PM. People sit and chat, stare at their phones, or stare into space. The women’s washroom is a hub of activity with women doing their hair and makeup. At the end of the night, they self-organize a cleanup, wiping down mirrors and countertops, swishing out sinks.

On Wednesday there is Karaoke after dinner, hosted by a member who signs people up and manages the list - a rotating role. The crowd is at times brought to tears because the heart-string-strumming lyrics about loss and suffering feel too real.



Mustard seed street church / meal service

#Food
#social service
#charity

Service user perspectives

Crowd

Who uses it

- Folks with low income; housed, living rough or in shelters.
- Men, women, couples, the odd family with young children (a frequent diner's family from out of town dropped in)
- Profiled people: Al, Ann, Crazy, Jenn, Yvonne, Monique, Leroy

Who avoids using it

No one we met

Opinions

"Here serves real meat."

"You like this? It'll run right through me. I need something more substantial."

"People are using on the poorly lit side of the building, but I prefer them to be there, where others can check on them." staff

Service Offer

Location:

10635 96 St NW
Edmonton
AB T5H 2J4
Canada

Hours:

Mon-Fri: 7:00pm - 8:00pm
Sat: 5:00pm - 6:00pm

Service offer:

Free meals, served and prepared by volunteers. The building stays open longer, The Mustard Seed also provides other services.



Opportunities

Family reunions.

What if staff could work with members to facilitate family reunions over dinner? To help members keep in touch with their networks and disrupt the shame that prevents so many from doing so?

Brew pub.

What if interested members could brew and drink their own beer, to promote a feeling of normalcy and social inclusion on a Friday night?

McDonald's



#food #business #late night #Edmonton

Reviews (2) 

“It’s heartbreaking the stories of these individuals. But, for my staff, its relentless, from when we open the door to when we close.” - Joe (manager)

Saturday, 2nd Dec 2018, 8:30pm-11:00pm

The hockey is on. Two gentlemen are nursing a cold \$1 coffee. A young couple is sharing french fries, and they are seemingly enjoying their high. A middle age gentleman looks after his cart full of possessions, lost in his own thoughts. At the tables in-between are a shifting cast of families with young children, teenagers clamoring for a milkshake after a movie, and single folks stopping for food after a late night of work. A twenty-something male engages in conversation with the young couple. They politely ask for a burger. They are curious too: where does he work?

Could there be a job for them? Such is the inclusive ebb & flow of McDonald's on a Saturday night. On this night - perhaps unlike others - there is no aggressive behaviour, no active panhandling, no requests from staff to homeless patrons to leave. Instead, the space feels lively and welcoming. And all rather normal and natural. Until closing time. Then it's clear that there is no where else for many of the homeless patrons to go. No other space with this mix of food, company, and normalcy. Some head to a shelter. Some to a campsite. Others start walking the dark streets.

Service user perspectives

Crowd

Who uses it

- Workers, families, shelter users and precariously housed folks
- Profiled people: Albert

Who avoids using it

No one we met

Opinions

2 reviews:

Offering ●●●●●●

Service

Safety ●●●●○

Vibe ●●●●●●

"The \$1 coffee is a good deal"

"This is the pretty good McDonald's."

Service Offer

Location:

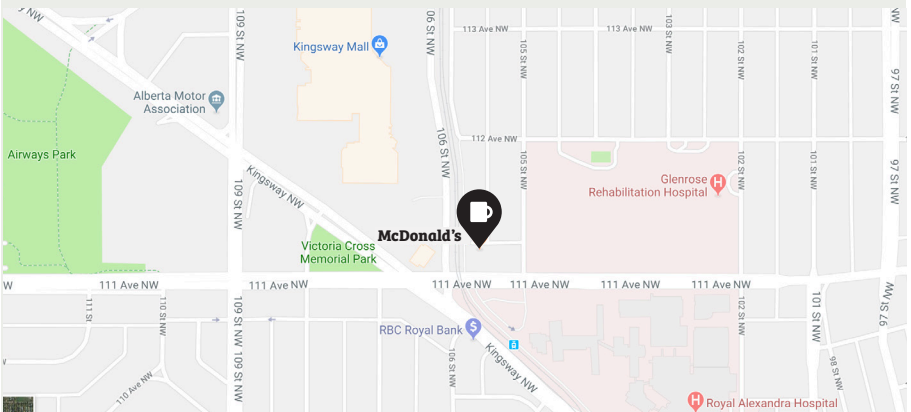
v10520 111 Ave NW
Edmonton (AL)
Canada

Hours:

Mon-Sun, 24h/day

Service offer:

One of a dozen of McDonalds hamburger restaurants in Edmonton. Sells burgers, fries, shakes, but also coffee and breakfast, 24 hours per day.



Opportunities

Staff training.

Joe, the manager, is conflicted. He's reached for de-escalation training and hosts a monthly coffee with local police. "I wish I knew how to help... But we are a business...."

Network Building.

What if peer workers were stationed in McDonald's to buy coffees, engage in conversation, redirect to kosher panhandling spots, and de-escalate situations?

Small jobs.

What if local business associations had programs to contribute to keeping the streets clean & respectable, and in exchange people received local services?

* Boyle McCauley Health Centre / waiting room



#health #addiction #social service #community health centre #Edmonton

“This is bullshit, I’ve been waiting for 3 hours, I was just 15 minutes late for my appointment”

“The doctors are helpful because they are professionals”

Wednesday, 6 Dec 2017, 10:15am-1:30pm.

It's noon, the waiting area is nearly full. Men and women, of all ages, seated on plastic chairs, are waiting for their appointments – urine tests, methadone dosage reviews, and to see doctors for ailments and chronic health issues. Other folks, using winter coats as blankets, seem to be at the clinic to keep warm and pass the time, or for business. Single cigarettes are sold for \$2 a smoke. Valium, and other prescription drugs are exchanged. A cardboard box on the reception counter has a sign “free”. From time to time people rummage through the socks offered there.

A woman occupies the bathroom. She's not shooting up, the black light inhibits a person from seeing their veins. She's trying to wash her hair with anti-lice shampoo. Nurses and administrators busily walk around, coming into the waiting area only rarely.

Such is the ebb & flow of the Boyle McCauley Health Centre on a weekday afternoon. Although there seems to be little interaction between staff and folks spending time there, it's clear that there is an agreement that people can use this space to just “be”.



Boyle McCauley Health Centre / waiting room

#Health
#addiction
#non-profit

Service user perspectives

Crowd

Who uses it

Street involved adults, seniors, all local people from the neighbourhood.
Profiled people: Dwayn, Nicki

Who avoids using it

No one we met

Opinions

“The doctors are helpful because they are professionals”

“This is bullshit, I’ve been waiting for 3 hours, I was just 15 minutes late for my appointment”.

“I’m here pretty much every day. It’s where I go”

Service Offer

Location:

10628 96 St NW
Edmonton
AB T5H 2J2
Canada

Hours:

Mon-Thu: 8am-8pm
Fri: 8am-4:30pm
Sat: 9am-noon

Service offer:

Interdisciplinary, team based, integrated, comprehensive, and person-centred primary health care for vulnerable complex needs Edmontonians.



Opportunities

Spaces & Places.

What if there were different kinds of spaces for homeless and vulnerable populations to spend time in? Spaces where they don't feel marginalized, homeless etc.

Curious conversationalist.

What if there was a greeter who brokered folks hanging around to supports, mental health, housing, etc? And had conversations with them about their aspirations?



#drop-in #social service #non-profit #Edmonton

“I don't like the look of that, I'm going to the Mustard Seed to see what they have”

Saturday, 2nd Dec 2017, 12:30pm

This afternoon the Co-op is busy. There doesn't seem to be a free corner upstairs. People are asleep in the hallways, dozing off on chairs against a wall. In the main drop-in the noise levels are high, drowning out the sound of the movie playing on the TV. The air is thick with bodies. People are milling around the big front doors, smoking cigarettes, chatting with friends, looking through their bags and carts and their camps out front. People sit at large round tables.

Groups of men playing cards, some folks are eating off paper plates, others are asleep -heads rested on tables. An arts and crafts program is taking place at one of the side tables. Lunch is being served in the far corner.

Staff smile and chat and help people with what they need. They wear bright blue vests, and armed with walkie talkies and gloves, they're quick to respond to incidents, violence and threats to people's safety.



Boyle Street community services Co-Op / drop-in

#Drop-in
#social service
#non-profit

Service user perspectives

Crowd

Who uses it

- Street-involved adults, especially long time adults sleeping rough
- Indigenous folks, men and women (generally a bit older)
- Folks with active addictions.
- Profiled people: Albert, AI

Who avoids using it

Brandon: "This place is just too crazy"
Jenn: "It attracts a darker sort"
[interpretation: shadier, more dangerous]

Opinions

"I don't like the look of that, I'm going to the Mustard Seed to see what they have"

"I don't really go there, I don't like the kinds of people"

"Everybody there knows me!" (Norbert)

Service Offer

Location:

10116 105 Ave NW
Edmonton
AB T5H 0K2
Canada

Hours:

Summer (May 1 - Oct 31):
Mon to Fri, 9am - 4:30pm
Winter (Nov 1 - Apr 30):
Mon to Sun, 6am-9pm

Service offer:

Safe, welcoming and comfortable space to visit and access a variety of services, incl. meals, recreation, and support.



Opportunities

Staff training.

Joe, the manager, is conflicted. He's reached for de-escalation training and hosts a monthly coffee with local police. "I wish I knew how to help... But we are a business...."

Network Building.

What if peer workers were stationed in McDonald's to buy coffees, engage in conversation, redirect to kosher panhandling spots, and de-escalate situations?

Small jobs.

What if local business associations had programs to contribute to keeping the streets clean & respectable, and in exchange people received local services?



Bissell Centre / Employment & Casual Labour Services



#work #social service #Edmonton

“It’s harder in the winter, these are labour jobs, and there aren’t as many in the winter months”

Tuesday, 5 Dec 2017, 7am.

It's still dark outside, and bitterly cold. A woman at the front door ushers people up a staircase. In the big room 30 people are seated on rows of chairs, like a doctor's waiting room. It's all men, except for 2 women. One of the women is on the computer checking Facebook. A table has an offering of bread, breakfast toppings, muffins and coffee. A woman sits at a desk, giving numbers to folks when they arrive and allocating the work as it gets called in. The work is mostly for day labourers. Most people arrive around 6:30am. If and when their number is called they are given a kit – work gloves, a map

and address of where to go, and a packed lunch. They will be paid in cash at the end of the work day. By 8:30am only a handful of the people have left for work. People linger after the hour for allocation is over. It's warm and they enjoy chatting with their friends and drinking coffee. Many clients are regulars, coming every day for weeks, months and for some years.

Such is the ebb and flow of the centre. People are quiet as they sit, chat, read the newspaper. When they move on, clients often head to another service “they are still serving breakfast at the Mustard Seed.”



Bissell Centre / Employment & Casual Labour Services

#Food
Open 24/7

Service user perspectives

Crowd

Who uses it

- shelter users and precariously housed folks, unemployed.
- profiled people: Al, Brandon

Who avoids using it

No one we met

Opinions

"I spend about 4 hours a day waiting. It's unproductive. Waiting for something to happen"

"There's just too few jobs available. I come every morning to see, if I didn't it would be a wasted opportunity".

Service Offer

Location:

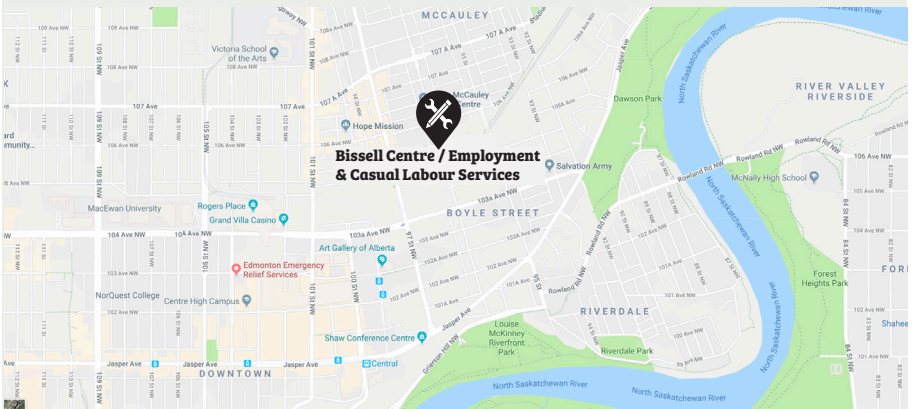
10527 96 Street
Edmonton
AB T5H 2H6
Canada

Hours:

For work allocation:
Mon-Fri: 7am-8am

Service offer:

Bissell Centre provides programs for pre-employment, transition labour, and casual labour. We visited the casual labour service program.



Opportunities

Workshop.

Many of the folks have hard skills. What if they could be productive when waiting? A workshop where they feel safe to be creative and work would increase sense of purpose. They wouldn't just be waiting.

Internal temp agency.

What if folks waiting for day labour work could also have the option to be useful for the service agency? Bissell centre could offer small jobs like snow shoveling or building something to folks waiting.



Ambrose Place

#housing #activities #social services #Edmonton

“I would prefer them to be more respectful. I’m older and I’ve been around the block a bit longer”

Monday 4 Dec 2017, 9am

Tuesday 5 Dec 2017, 2-5pm

Mornings at Ambrose Place start (for interested people) in a beautiful circular room with an intimate smudge ceremony led by Indigenous elders, followed by a hug circle. It sets an intentional tone for Ambrose place; warmth, love, strength, an emphasis on human value and relationship. At 2pm folks are finishing up their meals – fish, broccoli and rice. It’s quiet, except for staff behind the counter, and the buzz of the TV on in the room next door. People hang around by

the front desk. Leaning on their walkers they share cigarettes and go outside. Staff behind the desk answer phones, buzz folks through the front door, ask visitors to sign in and make small talk with residents. Nurses come out from the medical wing at meal to give people pills and small paper cups full of juice. Cleaners move around, in and out of elevators, mops and buckets on hand.

The feel is nursing home. Short conversations focused on immediate needs.



Service user perspectives

Crowd

Who uses it

- Mostly Indigenous men and women with chronic health conditions.
- Folks with active and past addictions
- Folks who used to sleep rough
- Profiled people: Dwayne

Who avoids using it

No one we met

Opinions

2 reviews:

"easier if they just let me live and aren't so bossy"

"they don't need to talk to me so loudly, I can hear them"

"I would prefer them to be more respectful. I'm older and I've been around the block a bit longer".

"More stimulating activities would be great, something to keep the mind going"

Service Offer

Location:

9629 106 Ave NW
Edmonton
AB T5H 0N4
Canada

Hours:

Service offer:

Housing and support services for homeless Indigenous individuals and couples who have not been successfully housed in existing facilities, or who require safe and affordable housing.



Opportunities

Living Lab

What if we asked Dwayne and other service users about what stimulates them? And then build and tried out live prototypes for learning and engaging in Ambrose Place?

UforU

What if we brought in experts to provide interest-based content? This could be modeled after UforU, a program with 1-hour learning experiences tested at a downtown Toronto drop-in by InWithForward.



Hope mission / meal service



#food #social services #non-profit #Edmonton

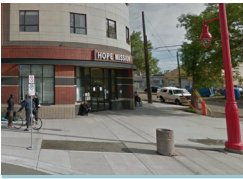
“Can you walk out with me, I’m afraid of a woman I met the other day”

Wednesday 6 Dec 2017, 4:30-6pm

The lineup starts around 4pm. People wait outside, regardless of the temperature, for the doors to open at 5pm. The lineup continues inside the building, snaking around the perimeter of the room until it ends at a food counter. Servers place food on your plate. The choice offered: whether you want it or not. Tables are set up in long rows. Some people seem to know each other and are chatting, but most are bowed over plastic trays concentrating on the food. It's pierogis and sausages for dinner, with raisin buns, cookies and clementines for desert.

A custom of the place: if you don't want to eat something on your tray you put it in the middle of the table. There are lots of clementines in the middle of the table. Some people have a plastic box and fill it with other people's leftovers. There is an abundance of food. The line of people seems never ending. When spots at tables open up, others fill them.

A few staff walk around, moving trays. A commotion erupts outside the front door. A couple of staff go to attend to the situation. People start exiting through the side door to avoid the trouble.



Hope mission / meal service

#food
#social services
#non-profit

Service user perspectives

Crowd

Who uses it

- A variety of folks living more vulnerable lives
- Men, women, couples, even a man with a small baby.
- Profiled people: Al, Ann, Nicki, Brandon

Who avoids using it

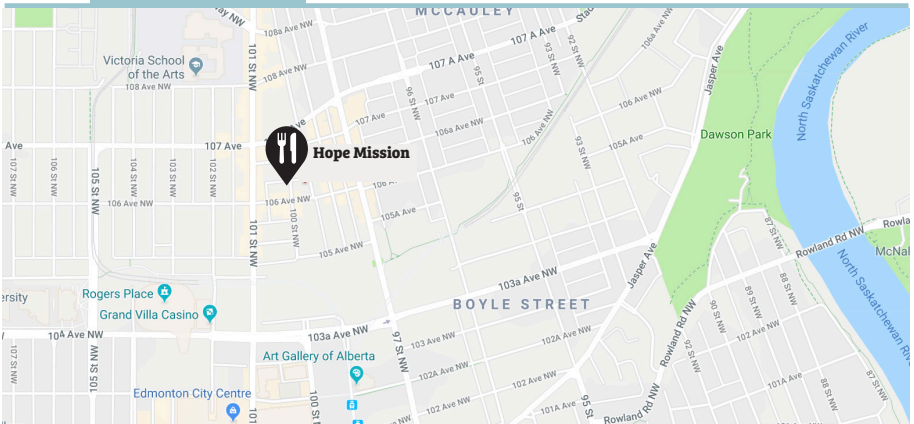
No one we met

Opinions

2 reviews:

- "can you walk out with me, I'm afraid of a woman I met the other day"*
- "It's so hard to get green vegetables. I just wish there were more vegetables."*

Service Offer



Location:

9629 106 Ave NW
Edmonton
AB T5H 0N4
Canada

Hours:

Service offer:

Housing and support services for homeless Indigenous individuals and couples who have not been successfully housed in existing facilities, or who require safe and affordable housing.

Opportunities

Topical dinners

What if service users could choose to sit at a table based on a hobby or interest. They would meet like minded people to share with and talk to during what can otherwise be lonely meals.

Dinner service

What if volunteer service users rotated each night to help staff bring the food to the tables. Service users wouldn't have to line up in quiet single files, but could feel a moment of greater dignity.