

## Artists in Communities Community Centre Profile

This Community Centre Profile will serve as a description for artists to use in developing a project framework specific to the Community Centre.



Questions concerning this profile can be directed to:

Name of Centre: **RayCam Cooperative Centre**

Address: 920 East Hastings, Vancouver

Contact Person: Irwin Oostindie

For further information refer to our website:

<http://raycam.com/about>

<http://raycam-renew.ca>

<https://www.instagram.com/raycamcentre>

### Neighbourhood Description:

On the eastern edge of the Downtown Eastside, RayCam Cooperative Centre has been providing support, services, and a place for East Side families since 1976.

For more than forty years, RayCam has been serving the DTES and some of our city's most vulnerable populations. Over 20,000 people live in the area, more than half are low income, dependent on welfare support, pensions, charitable and/or social services. Immediately near our centre is situated one of the city's largest public housing projects, Stamp's Place, from which RayCam emerged following an action by local mothers to block the CN Rail line to demand a pedestrian bridge be built over the tracks. RayCam's DNA has working class community needs at the centre, and with a massive rate of gentrification sweeping East Hastings, RayCam's neighbourhood survival requires bottom-up social mix accountable to longterm residents. With many new condos being built on surrounding streets, these next few years mark one of the most important periods in our history.

Ray-Cam is one of Vancouver's highest membership, most frequently used community centres — a welcoming, family-oriented, safe space, with recreation and programming for people of all income levels, including youth, seniors, new immigrants, and indigenous residents. Hundreds of volunteers take an active role in decision-making and staffing, along with program and service delivery for approximately 5,000 members. The core of our service area is from Clark Drive (on the east) to Hawks (on the west), from Prior Street at Strathcona Park, north past Hastings to

Burrard Inlet. RayCam faces a global port operation, and a soon-to-be-doubled CN Rail line serving the Port.

The Ray-Cam site is was formally dedicated to the community in perpetuity by original site owner Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. It is now retained by BC Housing. The facilities are jointly managed by RayCam and the City of Vancouver under the Park Board. Through recent local area planning and rezoning, RayCam's aging two-story site is now developable at 6.0 FSR and up to twelve storeys.

The RayCam Renew program represents four years of visioning and productive collaboration between our RayCam Renew team and stakeholders including community, staff, partners, and professional consultants.

A renewed Ray-Cam envisions a neighbourhood centre with services and housing to meet the needs of the local population. A fully inclusive multi-generational community, with social and rental housing affordable for local residents. Expanded recreational, child care, seniors, local health and youth programs. Facilities for partner organizations, NGO's, and local startup enterprises; and potential leasable space for local serving businesses.

The entire process of planning and building a new neighbourhood hub for East Hastings involves residents ourselves in the process. In an era where messaging and communications has sometimes taken over from genuine consultation and empowerment, RayCam is committed to capacity building of its members in building our future.

Training all residents, including our youth is a key pillar in the process as we recognize that teenagers living around RayCam will experience this design phase and massive construction project throughout the anticipated 6-8 years. With a major RayCam Renew project and a nearby St. Paul's hospital being built these are great experiential learning and employment opportunities. Our neighbourhood must be bold to look to the future and imagine and build utopias, where too often dystopias fall low-income families facing displacement.

### **Community Interests & Issues**

1. In the spirit of "Nothing About Us Without Us!" community engagement is a cornerstone for RayCam. This includes understanding all aspects of our expanded neighbourhood hub project from urban planning, community development, project management, housing policy, childcare, seniors, youth, community health, communications, placemaking, architecture, communication design, industrial design, landscape architecture, engineering, virtual reality, Internet of Things, community data rights, green energy, and so much more.
2. We recognize there are many cultural practices that connect to design and innovation away from the classical arts and traditional community arts disciplines. RayCam wishes to invite artists who are comfortable with engaged practices, knowledgeable and capable of working in a working class and ethnically diverse neighbourhood, and can work well as an engaged artist, creative technologist, or placemaker in a fast-paced and highly-skilled team. We believe community arts need not be limited to stereotypes of chalk art and murals, and encourage artists with contemporary, digital, and experimental practices to connect.

3. Throughout 2019, RayCam has delivered a Placemaking workshop series and is inspired to have our members engage and apply their skills with local public space animation and urban design.
4. In the Fall 2019, and possibly into 2020 with this partnership, RayCam is inviting design residencies that connect design to everyday life, or to big-picture thinking. Are you a designer? Up for a challenge?
5. Housing continues to be an extreme need for many of our community members, some who face homelessness, precarious living conditions, risk of evictions, or bug infestations. An artist or collective who's practice involves housing policy development or advocacy is welcome.
6. Creative pop-up shops can provide sites for low-barrier micro-enterprise studios for local resident artists often toiling away at home. An engaged arts practice or curating function can be a collaborative project that brings our local artists into the public through a temporary studio pop-up space.
7. Community members imagine a radio station operating out of RayCam and serving the diverse Indigenous, African, new refugee, European, and other populations. Sound, music production, podcasting, and creative documentary making is a great vehicle for individual's and neighbourhood expression.
8. Our friends over at the Regent Park Film Festival (in Toronto) inspire us because they train youth and local residents in film making, but what is also cool is their massive outdoor film screening series. Festivals and public events can be a great way to connect an artist-in-residence with local communities.
9. RayCam focuses a great deal on the everyday lives of children, youth, seniors and families, and believes creative expression can be a liberating and positive force in people's lives. Does your practice empower participants? Imagine a resilient future?