

New Matrix Meals—

In June, 2019, New Matrix Meals took another bold step with a new idea for connecting community members through a family meal.

Here are some of the highlights:

“We had 11 kids and 11 adults. My daughter babysat the kids, entertaining them with a variety of games outside and eventually an outdoor movie. We had three people with lived or living experience there, including one who brought her own child. The normalcy of it was so great—just experiencing everyday life, but with people and conversations that break down normal social constructs. For example, sitting across the table from a youth passionately speaking about challenges navigating mental health services, then two minutes later wiping tears from a kid who fell down playing ball outside. Or learning about the tangles of PWD transfers, employment, and the rising cost of food, then watching someone have a parent moment shooing kids away from the ‘adult food.’”

“One of the attendees came from an immigrant experience, where values of hard work and social and economic participation often shape perspectives. After hearing about various challenges with binning and bottle collecting, this attendee offered to exchange phone numbers with one of the people with lived experience in order to establish a regular connection for empty bottle pick-ups. The attendee ended up getting neighbours involved as well, so now a townhouse complex saves up cans and bottles to make things a bit easier for one couple struggling with homelessness.”

“During dessert we shared ‘takeaways’ from the evening or things we wished other people knew when we looked across social divides. Although this conversation was fairly deep and even personal, quite honestly, I thought the wrapping up was even better. Everyone pitched in to help clean up, packed up and distributed leftovers, and joked around while picking up trash outside. The sun had set, the kids were jumping on the trampoline, and we were all just casually mingling, tidying, and relaxing. That was the time the conversation happened where two people exchanged phone numbers that, I believe, ended up making a difference to both of them.”

Interested in watching a clip of a New Matrix Meal in action? Click [here](#) to see a short video produced by the Sto:lo First Nation, Chilliwack.