

## *Mind The Bar Foundation*

2019/2020 Director's Report

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Mind The Bar Foundation began simply as a personal Facebook post that grew into a conversation about the mental health, substance abuse, and workplace harassment within the hospitality industry. At the heart of these conversations a purpose grew to create positive change in the way the hospitality industry took care of itself, individually, and as a whole. In July 2018 the founding members of Mind The Bar presented their mission to a full room of friends, loved ones, and colleagues and shortly thereafter in September 2018 Mind The Bar became a legally registered non-profit organization. An organization that within its Constitution aimed to; provide resources and information surrounding mental health and workplace harassment, to reduce the stigma about discussing these topics, and to ultimately try and change the hospitality industry's relationship with them. Mind The Bar continues to make great strides, thanks in large part to it being welcomed by the hospitality industry not only in its city of origin, Vancouver, but across Canada. Today, nearly 2 years onward, the Foundation has seen growth in everything from its membership to demand for services as well as the ongoing generosity in both donations and support.



"We have to change the perception of the industry - and we need to change the reality of the industry."

- Christina Cottell

## MEMBERSHIP

Mind The Bar started with only 10 members but this past year its membership has increased dramatically and now stands at over 150 strong and still growing. As this number continues to climb so too does the hope that the organization will be capable of accomplishing even greater things and making greater changes within the industry. At the end of the day, Mind The Bar is, and always will be, a volunteer organization that operates solely on the goodwill and selflessness of others to achieve its goals, goals that will be far more difficult to achieve without the dedication of those involved.



## NATIONAL EXPANSION

As it stands Mind The Bar membership has already expanded beyond the provincial boundaries of British Columbia with active membership currently participating across Canada. One of the primary goals of the Foundation for the immediate future is to become better organized in other provinces and territories by expanding the organization within other Canadian cities or regions, beginning in 2020 with the creation of the Vancouver Island and Okanagan Mind The Bar branches respectively. Once these are successfully created, the next phase is to see expansion within Alberta, Ontario, and possibly more!

"Mind The Bar will continue to strive to help where and how it can. But it can only do this with your help because [...] it is only as strong as the selfless participation of its members"

- Shoel Davidson

## FUNDRAISERS

Every dollar donated to Mind The Bar Foundation goes directly towards maintaining the organization and its goals of establishing resources, education, and support services to help those in the hospitality industry. Since the very beginning, Mind The Bar Foundation has been a fortunate recipient of the remarkable generosity of both its members and the hospitality industry as a whole. From the many thoughtful personal donations it has received over the years to the momentous win at Tahona Society's Collective Spirit Competition in 2018 where Mind The Bar was proudly represented by founding members Alex Black and Makenzie Chilton. They competed against 12 other teams from around the world and won the grand prize donation of \$50,000 from Pernod Ricard that furthered awareness of the mental health crisis within the hospitality industry as well as catapulted the Foundation into the spotlight on a global level.



"There's nothing sexy about things like suicide, depression, or addiction. It says so much [for a company] to forgo the risks to their image and plunge into partnership with [Mind The Bar] to help fight a monumental battle in our industry."

- Alex Black



This past year saw Mind The Bar continue to be the recipient of numerous fundraisers such as; the inaugural Kitchen-aide event which, with the help of Kitchen-Aide co-founder and Mind The Bar founding member, Doug Stephen, successfully raised over \$15,000 towards the Foundation, Original Joe's in Alberta generating over \$6,000 during their 'Carving For A Cause' event, as well as the inaugural Shift Change event hosted by Tacofino and Les Madames BC both raising over \$2500 each. With many more planned for this and next year including BCHF's Hospitality Hustle and Chef's Table Society's Cook's Camp, Mind The Bar can continue to assist even more people in more places and get them the help and support they need.



## COLLABORATIONS

Mind The Bar has also been proud to collaborate with other companies such as Russell Brewing who successfully raised almost \$7000 in funds from the sales of their 'Mind The Bar Low-Proof Table Beer' across British Columbia and Alberta. An incredible achievement to further one of the Foundation's goals of increasing the availability and support of quality zero or low-proof bar and beverage products throughout bars and restaurants. Mind The Bar is presently in conversation with a number of breweries, distilleries, and distributors about upcoming collaborative products across British Columbia as well as in Alberta and Ontario.



## EVENTS

This past year Mind The Bar was proud to present and participate in a series of events such as Tacofino's 'Shift Change', Blueprint's 'The Build' as well as the Foundation's very own 'MTB Talks' that addresses specific topics affecting the hospitality industry's well-being in a safe and supportive environment. There is a lot to be excited about with many more events planned both in Vancouver and elsewhere in the coming year including ones focusing on depression and anxiety, substance abuse and misuse, and financial well-being.



## COMMITTEES

Many of these events were made possible because of another memorable achievement of the Foundation in the official formation of a number of its central committees such as the Health & Education Committee, Marketing Committee, and Events Committee. These committees have allowed the Mind The Bar to become much better organized and harness the many talents and skill sets its members possess. The next phase will be to expand the scope and numbers of these currently established committees as well as the introduction of new ones such as the Community Committee which will oversee onboarding venues, collaboration with businesses outside the hospitality industry, encourage the availability of quality zero/low-proof bar and beverage programs, and most importantly become the direct line between the Foundation and the many faces that make up our incredible hospitality industry.

## WEBSITE

Mind The Bar also recently took the opportunity to update its website ([www.mindthebar.com](http://www.mindthebar.com)) to include a more simplified and easier to navigate layout, categorized topics and information, and a comprehensive list of resource and support services available in each province and territory across Canada. All of which can be accessed by not just members, but anyone who needs or may be interested in learning more about the Foundation, depression, anxiety, suicide, substance abuse or addiction, and workplace harassment. The goal is to have the website's content updated on a regular basis with more information, links, and resources as they become available.

"I found myself having repeated conversations with my colleagues about the remarkably high levels of addiction, depression and suicide within our community and how the coping mechanisms we had come to collectively install were simply not acceptable anymore."

- Kristi-Leigh Akister

## LIFEWORKS

Perhaps one of the most exciting things to happen for Mind The Bar this past year was the launch of the Morneau Shepell LifeWorks app that is now available to all Mind The Bar members. The LifeWorks app offers everything from 24/7 counselling and support services, financial and well-being assistance services, mental and physical health training resources, HR and legal support for both employees and employers, as well as an international network of in-person resource and support, this truly is a remarkable achievement in being able to help and maintain anyone's well-being wherever they are. Most importantly, because of the generous donations contributed to the Foundation, the annual per-person cost of the app is 100% covered by Mind The Bar. One of the primary goals of the organization in the immediate future is to take greater opportunity to highlight the many functions and capabilities of the app to current and potential future Mind The Bar members so that more people use the app and its resources as part of their daily routine.



"This is a major shift in an industry where we often offer people a beer or a shot when what they need is someone to listen and help."

- Makenzie Chilton

## BIG LEAPS AND SMALL STEPS

2019 was an unforgettable year for Mind The Bar with exponential growth in everything from its membership skyrocketing, the expansion of the Foundation itself with the introduction of its various committees, the many insightful and memorable events held, the awe-inspiring generosity of funds raised through personal donations, collaborations, and fundraisers, and the launch of the LifeWorks wellness system being made available to all members. All this incredible positive momentum came to a grinding halt earlier this year with the Covid-19 pandemic that has been inconceivably difficult on every aspect of the hospitality industry. Businesses have been lost, dreams have been shattered, tens of thousands have lost their jobs and income, many have little certainty of if or when they'll be able to return to work, and even if they do, what 'work' will look like.

But with so many people around the world sadly losing their lives to this horrible virus, this has been a time to reflect on what truly matters and the importance of those in our lives. While this pandemic, and subsequent forced shutdown of the entire hospitality sector has, and continues to be, one of the darkest times in this industry's history, even with so much lost, it has been a reminder of just how strong this industry is when times are tough and how quickly it rises to meet the call when others need help. Benevolent funds have been quickly established, meal programs have been set-up by many local restaurants offering food to those out of work and those risking their lives on the front lines, while Mind The Bar did what it could and established a means of immediate access to the LifeWorks app for anyone who needed it.

These unimaginably hard times have continued to serve as a testament to the incredible inherent sense of community within the hospitality industry and its unbreakable strength of will to overcome, and the readiness of so many to support one another in times of need without hesitation or question. This is what Mind The Bar was built on: that no matter who you are or where you work, this industry is and always will be a family, a family who will be there for one another, through the good times and the bad. As this pandemic continues, and the industry reestablishes itself in the 'new normal' that's to come, Mind The Bar will continue to strive to help where and how it can. But it can only do this with the help of you, its members, because as a volunteer not-for-profit organization, it is only as strong as the participation and selflessness of its people. Together, Mind The Bar cannot not become an integral part of rebuilding the hospitality industry, with your help, it can make it better!

### **SPECIAL THANK YOU**



At this time Mind The Bar Foundation would also like to thank its outgoing Directors, many of whom are also founding members of the organization, for their unforgettable dedication;

- Jessie Crabbe
- Alex Black,
- Makenzie Chilton,
- Brandi England
- Kristi-Leigh Akister
- Joey Donnelly,
- Janna Da Silva, and
- Juno Kim

# Mind The Bar Foundation

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## **2019/2020 Director's Report**

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