

A call to support SFPIRG

By Isaac Louie

I could not be where I am today if it weren't for my involvement with SFPIRG. In all capacities, I have evolved an ethos for community building that I bring with me into my classroom as an intermediate Elementary school teacher. As a board member, I have learned invaluable the kind of patience and determined collaboration that it takes to successfully guide an organization or group. As a discussion group facilitator, I honed skills that helped me get my first job out of university as an anti-violence educator. As a work-study, I had the supreme privilege of working on a pet project while producing a resource that can be widely shared with the public and which is freely available through my union. SFPIRG gave me a space to grow personally and professionally while a student at SFU.

As crowded and as packed as buses get at SFU, the university can feel isolating. SFPIRG was one of the first places I found community and the personal growth I experienced there has given me a platform to pursue my career. I believe the SFSS and students alike should support SFPIRG because SFPIRG supports students. SFPIRG provides current and relevant programming that gives us space to co-build a more just, sustainable world. SFPIRG consistently puts on joint programming with various campus organizations and is an indispensable organ in the campus body.

So often in university we get attached to measurable results: numbers and statistics that can tell us if there is a positive or negative trend. However, the layered benefits of a community space are not so easily picked apart: they are the lifelong friendships forged through balanced discussions; a place to fix your bike free of charge; a centre where you can consider how theory and practice connect; a place of refuge between busy classes and the demands of life; a work environment for students to get hands-on experience; a research hub where students and community can reach symbiosis. At every point of interaction with the community, SFPIRG has lasting positive change and provides an essential bridge between students and their communities.

This is not a political plea to change your mind, but this is a personal invitation to open your hearts. SFPIRG continues to serve students and community with its relevant programming. SFPIRG is a vital organ of our sometimes faceless university because it provides support to students that lectures alone cannot provide. To support SFPIRG is to support a true student-community space.