



CORE VALUES OF SKETCH

We value and celebrate:

1. PEOPLE

We value and celebrate our diversity, experiences, individual personhood and our right to self-identify, our individual life stories and our individual voices in the telling or retelling of our life stories.

We do believe that we are all inherently equal in value and that there is a common humanity to each of us and seek to relate on that level. We do not allow our differences to keep us from being “for” each other. We relate to each other on the level of what we hold in common: our inherent equality, our need for health and wholeness, for time and space to heal from woundedness for safety, for connection with others, for purpose and meaning in our lives, for a stake in what is important to us, for equal opportunity, for nurtured, grounded and respected spiritual lives, and for Love.

2. CREATIVITY, the ARTS and the ART-MAKING PROCESS

We believe strongly in human creative capacity to perceive, receive and communicate information, thoughts and feelings, to solve problems, to make individual and social change and to mobilize communities.

We believe the Arts are a viable way of interacting, communicating and bringing people together in collaboration and problem solving. The Arts are a way to record history, experiences, values and learning. The Arts provide leisure, rest and joy to people’s moments.

We believe that the Art-making *process* is significant in and of itself regardless of the outcome or product. The art making process can invigorate healthy and whole living by stimulating imagination and lateral thinking. It can inspire people to study technique and learn how to make art as a career or it can provide a practical metaphor to identify and enhance other skills such as life and job readiness, communication, literacy, group dynamics, problem-solving, and lateral and logical thinking.

The process is therapeutic and challenging and from it we can learn that we have choices, power and ability to affect one another and to express valuable ideas and opinions. Art making can engage people in community by offering ways for them to speak into or affect culture in the broader community context.

We value collaboration in art making and attempt to bring people and communities together in the collaborative process. This reduces our individual isolation and enables us to cross cultural barriers.

3. The POWER of MAKING NARRATIVE

Everyone has a story. The power of claiming “authorship” of your life is necessary to healing. For youth who may have experienced trauma or who have had their childhood and adolescent development interfered with, having the tools with which to “re-write” their personal stories is essential in grieving loss and moving through the disruption of that interference, in restoring a sense of self and being empowered to effect their own future.

Using narrative offers us a way to speak into one another’s process and assess skills. We can use metaphors to bring about awareness and address situations that cannot easily be articulated in everyday language. Each of us is in a position to teach one another and creating narrative offers us a way to do just that.

Narrative can also be an effective way to communicate to the broader public and participate in the community effecting and inspiring social change.

We believe that Sketch in itself is a narrative or metaphor inviting youth to a feast set in their honour offering them a menu of nurturing and challenging tools with which to build inner strength, skills and hope for the future. It also exists as a reminder to the broader community that street-involved and homeless youth are important creative culture makers.

4. YOUTH PARTICIPATION and YOUTH LEADERSHIP

We believe that young people participating at Sketch are taking risks to be vulnerable in our midst, to express themselves safely and to assess and build their skills. We commit to honouring that risk and do not impose our interpretations on anyone’s creative work so as to provide an analysis of who they are. We do not presume to be therapists but rather creative animators encouraging the creative discovery process and facilitators in the skill building process.

The young people who participate at Sketch are necessary to the ongoing creative development of Sketch. They have an expertise and resilience that can help us navigate our way through creating programs affected by the challenges of being homeless or street-involved. We want to ensure their involvement in the development process by seeking and recording feedback and by creating opportunities for youth to participate in evaluation of Sketch and its programs. All feedback is given careful consideration.

As part of healthy development youth need opportunities to develop and exert their leadership potential amongst their peers and in community and in initiatives that affect them. We believe youth need opportunities to develop program ideas and contribute them to the annual program planning process as well as opportunities to hold positions of leadership in the delivery of programs. We believe youth need opportunities to be involved in the governance and decision-making at Sketch in safe and responsible ways. This will also keep Sketch relevant and organizationally healthy.

5. COMMUNITY

We believe that each of us has a valuable role in both our immediate community (those with whom we are attached to through our daily lives, work, the streets, our race, our gender, our sexuality, etc.) and the broader community (those with whom we do not always associate ourselves; where there is no obvious likeness or connection). We commit to creating opportunities for people to gather in community, building bridges and breaking down obstacles in order for us to learn from each other.

We believe that as we create community amongst ourselves it means that we recognize our interdependence on and need for each other. All the parts together make a whole so to speak. In effect Sketch can only be cared for well by a group of people who operate as an interdependent community.

6. QUALITY OF EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION IN OUR WORK

We desire and commit to working with integrity; clear and accountable organizational structure; sound accounting of funds; sound planning, evaluation and record keeping; professional work ethics and conduct; creativity, resourcefulness and problem solving; drawing on experience and expertise in the community; honesty and humility in recognition that we are not the answer to everything.

We recognize that we all have unique learning styles. We commit to trying many angles in viewing a situation or a programming idea, experimenting and evaluating often to give information to our development process, both organizationally and individually.

We believe that Sketch is accountable to its supporting financial community to see that dollars are used wisely and that we are active ambassadors of their desire to serve street-involved and homeless youth in this unique way.

7. A HEALTHY and POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

We believe a healthy and positive work environment involves strong communication; cooperation; responsibility to one another; and team support and relevant training. We desire to empower individuals to work in his/her skill area. We believe in expedient and thorough response to crisis and make efforts to resolve internal conflicts quickly. We recognize the importance of building team unity to better serve participants at Sketch.

We believe that a healthy workplace is committed to practicing safety and environmental responsibility; that individuals need time back and appropriate vacations, sick days and supervision to support them in their work; and that Sketch needs to have clear and accessible policies and procedures to support its work.

We believe that healthy communication means accessible information and shared learning; consistent record keeping; and clear opportunities to offer feedback and ideas to one another.

We encourage working with an attitude of celebration, joy and gratitude. We encourage practising our work with humility, lack of possessiveness, teachability, grace to allow mistakes to happen and new discoveries to be made, patience, and a desire for justice.

If given power and responsibility over certain areas of programming or people we take up leadership with humility and commitment. We believe in leadership that initiates and helps to facilitate or guide process and one that shares power. Not one that is patronizing, disempowering or works in isolation.

8. THE STORY OF SKETCH

We value the founding philosophy that is rooted in the Christian faith and community and the initial motivation behind the creative pursuit of building Sketch. We recognize the importance of revisiting the founding roots and motivation for guidance and grounding to our work. These core values are themselves informed by the founding philosophy and the core motivation for starting Sketch both of which are rooted in the Christian faith, as well as years of practice and learning obtained working in the arts with people who are street-involved and homeless. (*see Founding Philosophy attached*) This founding philosophy permeates every aspect of the work and direction of Sketch.

We recognize and value the Christian faith community that has supported this work so thoughtfully and carefully in the beginning, throughout its development and still is active in its support today. We recognize and value that individuals and communities with no connection to Christianity have supported and made significant and profound contributions to Sketch in its development.

Sketch is truly a community arts initiative in that it is a work-in-progress affected by what each person brings to it and its attempt to be responsive to the community it serves with a commitment to authenticity, high quality and creative programming for youth.

Sketch is a living, ongoing and evolving story. Each person involved is a part of making history. All of our work here is done in a spirit of gratitude.