BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY'RE AT: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

By JILLIAN SCOTT, B.A.

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The social enterprise ethos of prioritizing people over profits seems to align closely with disability-based organizations and their sister businesses created to provide vocational training and meaningful activity for clients. Rather than create a workplace tailored to a singular disability group, 541 Eatery & Exchange located in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada aims to deliver on the restaurant's mandate to 'welcome everyone around the table' by fostering a work environment, culture and practices that are attuned to the needs of a diverse population of disabled people as one group among a broader community of paid employees and volunteers.

Through an ethnographic case study and interviews a detailed picture of the successes and limitations of this model emerges as the café balances the demands of addressing food insecurity in a socially and economically challenged neighbourhood while simultaneously providing opportunities to develop new capacities, foster new forms of social encounter and work experience for its paid staff and volunteers. As demonstrated by the restaurant, organizing a business around the collective goal of placing people first and meeting them where they're at – geographically, but also in terms of their physical, mental, and emotional state on the given day – can create a space of care, dignity, and authentic human connection within which to work while addressing the needs of its community members.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research Problem and Rationale

The introduction of public policy and legislation to eliminate discrimination in the workplace has failed to deliver inclusive environments and equal participation in the workforce for disabled Ontarians. Despite the provincial enactment of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in 2005, unemployment and underemployment of disabled people persists as revealed in the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability. Produced by Statistics Canada, survey results showed that within the cohort aged 25 to 64 between 39% to 59% (depending on the severity of disability) of disabled people were employed (Morris, Fawcett, Brisebois, & Hughes, 2018). When compared to the 80% employment rate of non-disabled people (ibid.), it quickly becomes clear we need new solutions or must further invest in existing ones to significantly increase participation in the workforce for disabled Ontarians.

Many conventional, capitalist businesses and organizations engage in activities that will generate profit and so do not willingly revamp their spaces, policies and practices to maximize inclusivity and diversity. The state may engage in anti-discrimination and inclusive practice, funding and legislation creation if there is enough political will generated by constituent demand which sadly is not often the case. The social economy[1],

[1] The terms alternative economy, social economy, third sector and diverse economies appear interchangeably in the economic geography and community economic development literature that informs this thesis. 'Social economy' and 'diverse economies' will be the terminology predominantly used.

however, encompasses economic activities, such as the provision of goods and services that are often complex and costly to deliver (e.g. meaningful work opportunities for people with disabilities, awareness raising around social injustices or protection of the environment). Social enterprises can be viewed as a form of place-based response to a community need or goal (Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, 2018). They are also a place of work operated by paid staff, volunteers, or a combination thereof. Social enterprises, in part because of their core mandate to prioritize people over profits, may be more motivated to critically examine their policies and practices which could result in spaces of respect and inclusion for disabled workers unseen in other sectors.

A variety of social enterprises exist provincially that are either designed with disabled workers[2] (paid or voluntary) in mind (Krupa, Howell-Moneta, Lysaght, & Kirsh, 2016) (Lysaght, Krupa, & Bouchard, 2018) or that adapt their workspaces and tasks as the need arises. Existing research has focused disproportionately on disability-specific workplaces. While these sites create meaningful work opportunities, some authors have cautioned that they may operate as places of social exclusion, as they effectively create segregated work environments and limit interaction with non-disabled peers and community members (Bates-Harris, 2012). Less attention has been paid to enterprises that engage both disabled and non-disabled community members, and what this broader engagement might mean for how people understand disability and productivity. Understanding more about the

[2] Throughout the thesis the term 'worker' is used to represent both paid staff members and volunteers.

day-to-day operation of such social enterprises can provide useful insight into their capacity to challenge the injustice and social exclusion that disabled people confront.

1.2 Central Research Question and Objectives

Research Question

To what degree does the social economy offer meaningful work opportunities to disabled people?

Objectives

1. Ascertain if there limits to inclusion of disabled people within social enterprises.
2. Identify which approaches successfully remove limits to inclusion of disabled people within social enterprises.

A case study of the social enterprise 541 Eatery and Exchange in Hamilton, Ontario was selected as an intriguing example of a small, socially-minded business that is not purpose-built for disabled workers but endeavours to create a relational community of respect and inclusion. By way of participant observation as a volunteer and worker interviews the researcher gathered insight into how the restaurant staff and volunteers incorporated difference and disability into the work environment. Over the six-month study period the researcher learned what the workplace looked like in terms of the day-to-day operations and worker-to-worker interactions. Findings elucidated how respect and inclusion was fostered in the workplace which provided the foundation on which people of various abilities contributed to their community in meaningful ways.

1.3 Approaching Disability

Language and identity are intertwined in that the words used to describe individuals should be self-chosen. Throughout the study, disability-related terminology used by disabled participants (which varied greatly) was mirrored by the researcher once offered. The term 'disabled people' is used in the thesis to encompass the variety of terminology encountered and reflect the collective experience of disablement faced by this population within society (McColl, 2019).

At the same time, it is important to note that disability is not automatically part of the way in which people understand themselves and their identities. Many people who have disabilities object to being identified by, or having a diagnosis attached to their identity, whether they have been formally diagnosed or not. In part, this is a reaction against the oppressive medical model of disability that lingers on and is evidenced in the continued discrimination and attitudinal barriers faced by disabled people. For this reason, the research question and objectives listed above have not artificially categorized people into separate disability groupings out of respect, but also to subtly challenge assumptions about the historical and cultural creation of the categories themselves. Also, issues of disclosure of a disability in the workplace are understood to be risky for some disabled people who may fear discrimination or other negative consequences from management and co-workers (Brewster, Duncan, Emira, & Clifford, 2017). Special care to avoid assumptions around who may or may not be disabled or identify as disabled was taken by the researcher despite her stated interest in answering the disability-centric research

question and objectives. As examples, (1) field note data described different ways of being and working rather than disability labels unless explicitly stated to the researcher, and (2) workers were never asked if they were disabled, rather individuals chose to disclose disabilities or not over the course of the study period.

1.4 Organization of Thesis Chapters

The thesis contains six chapters. Subsequent to this introduction, Chapter Two provides a review of literature relevant to disability, inclusive workplaces and social enterprises. The works discussed include Gibson-Graham's framing of diverse economies, the state of mainstream employment and disabled people, and finishes with literature on social enterprises as alternative work settings. Next, Chapter Three covers the methodology used by the researcher which covers the rationale for choosing a case study, description of the participant observer and interview methods utilized, which measures were taken to ensure validation and reliability of the data, ethical considerations, reciprocity, and how the analysis was performed. Chapter Four: Context introduces the reader to the study site's social atmosphere and physical environment while providing a snapshot of Barton Village in which it is located. Having grounded the study in its setting, the data collected is analyzed in Chapter Five which is categorized thusly: building relational space; how volunteers were incorporated into the work model used; the volunteers' own thoughts and feelings about working at the restaurant; the demands and rewards of working as a staff member; and sustainability at the organizational level. The thesis comes to a close with Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion which summarizes key findings from the

analysis, highlights connections to the selected literature, and offers 541-inspired arguments about inclusive social enterprises as spaces that frame disability as one of the many differences embodied in their workers, followed by the limitations of the study and potential future directions the research could take.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

To best understand the context in which social enterprises that are inclusive of disabled workers operate, select academic literature from the fields of economic geography, disability geography and community development provide the theoretical underpinnings for the case study findings and overall conclusions. To begin, an in-depth discussion of Gibson-Graham's theoretical framing of diverse economies will situate alternative economic forms (such as social enterprises) within the broader economy and provide an explanation of their potential benefit to communities. While not explicitly about disabled people, this work resonates with disability studies scholarship on the exclusionary nature of 'mainstream' employment. Next, the current state of employment for disabled people in mainstream work environments will be outlined before moving on to a description of social enterprises as alternative workplaces.

2.2 Rethinking Work: Gibson-Graham's Diverse Economies

An ontological reframing of the social economy outlined by J. K. Gibson-Graham[3] provides a hopeful take, full of possibility. The mainstream capitalist economy primarily serves those in positions of power, with the political and financial clout to harness this

[3] J.K Gibson-Graham is the pen name of Katherine Gibson and the late Julie Graham. The grammar used will reflect the geographers' pen name as plural.

global system for the express purpose of accruing ever more profit. This overarching international system appears inescapable and a fait accompli, making individual influence or dissent seem quaint or naïve with little to no chance for change. This thesis will question such a fatalist perspective, while investigating the work of economic geographers J.K. Gibson-Graham. Key concepts from their work, such as a geography of ubiquity and local development of community economies, will be essential to this thesis.

Gibson-Graham's work challenges the notion that the economy is a homogeneously capitalist and unapproachable system beyond the reach or influence of most individuals (Gibson-Graham, 2006). For the majority who cannot access the levers of the economy, due to lack of political and/or financial means to be granted such national or international sway, we are but alienated consumers and workers relegated to these roles – or so goes the conventional thinking. Gibson- Graham question this framing by pointing out there are alternative and anti-capitalist economic activities all around us (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Examples abound, such as donating, bartering, "freecycling" (giving away unwanted items with online coordination), volunteerism, community supported agriculture, social enterprises, cooperatives, and resource sharing (e.g. bike share programs and tool libraries) (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). While capitalism relies on the unending pursuit of more, the above examples clearly indicate there is something else happening in our communities that seems to fall outside our conventional picture of the economy – something far more hopeful and positive. Gibson-Graham refer to this economic activity as community-based alternative economies or diverse economies (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013).

To be clear, they do not disagree that the capitalist economy still operates and represents the bulk of the world's economic activity (ibid.). However, they state that spaces carved out for alternative economic activities, often at the community or local level, are also running parallel to the larger capitalist economy. Those engaged with these activities are provided valuable opportunities for dissent and a reimagining of the economic system (ibid.). They suggest that community-based economic endeavors can create an empowering place for members to address local issues and utilize ethical decision-making which results in repercussions beyond those immediately concerned (ibid.). Unlike the end goal to accrue more capital for the fortunate and powerful few to the detriment of social and environmental stability, diverse economic activities can be undertaken to foster resilient people and environments with dividends potentially paid to future generations (ibid.). In this way economies at the local level can reflect the values and ethics of the people that play a direct role in their creation and continuing function (ibid.).

Bringing the concept of economy down to a more manageable and tangible context – the community – gives the individual the chance to see how their actions and decisions are interrelated with how the economy operates (ibid.). It is simple to see how slight adjustments, even within the consumer role, can align with one's ethics or not. For example, groceries bought at a food cooperative instead of a national chain store might align with a personal ideal of fairness: that surplus value should be shared amongst workers and not be funneled to a small elite group of wealthy CEOs or shareholders. In these small ways, individuals begin to feel they have a say in shaping the economy by way of their purchasing power (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). Rather than

an overwhelming and distant entity, alternative forms of small-scale economies are more approachable and understandable, where individuals can see the people and projects their dollars support.

Our economy is not just made up of consumers though. Gibson-Graham also address paid and unpaid work. They count workers engaged in all types of work as true participants in the economy (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). Flexibility in the types of contributions is more inclusive of the broad range of activities we know can support stable community economies, or indeed impair economic health when lacking (ibid.).

The notion of alternative economic development also aligns with the current zeitgeist of an anti- capitalist, less-is-more-sentiment, focusing on quality of life rather than quantity of possessions and wealth. One need only take a cursory look around their own community or online to tap into the discussion of how to live a better life by shifting priorities away from working harder (in the traditional paid work sense) in order to accumulate more stuff. (See Appendix A for an article excerpt typifying this cultural mood from The Guardian entitled “From Freecycling to Fairphones: 24 Ways to Lead an Anti-capitalist Life in a Capitalist World”). In this way, Gibson- Graham have written not just a theoretical re-imagining of the economy, but articulate a less understood and highly relevant economic reality.

2.2.1 Geography of Ubiquity

Using lessons learned by second-wave feminists of the 1960s and 1970s, Gibson-Graham explain how global change is possible without formal networks or coordination by international organizations (Gibson-Graham, 2006). As second-wave feminists created local groups and strategies to further their goals and raise consciousness, widespread meaningful improvements in the level of equality in women's lives were realized (ibid.). These relatively small-scale efforts covered much of the globe without relying on top-down international coordination to challenge patriarchy (ibid.). Linked by a desire for change and loosely defined political ideals (and a lot of hard work) women were able to raise concerns about the status of women in many parts of the world by acting locally and devising place-based strategies to address problems in their own communities (ibid.). Elevating the status of women and raising the issue of women's rights simultaneously, in multiple locations, made the movement ubiquitous around the world which, in part, added to its legitimacy as more than an anomalous fringe group in isolation and therefore easily ignored (ibid.). The power of local efforts informally unified by a common vision or values inspired Gibson-Graham's writing on the potential change available to correct unacceptable and hostile systems: in this case, the capitalist economy. They use the successes of the feminist movement as proof of the power of communities to dictate their own terms on which they will interact with the economy. This is done by altering it to suit their own values, and engaging in meaningful exchange with others whether by paid work, as consumers and sellers, or via the alternative ways described previously (ibid.). This requires a fundamental reorientation of how we envision the economy and our

relationship to it. This outlook is essentially hopeful and intended to invigorate community action to, as Gibson- Graham state it, "take back the economy" (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). Putting it into the hands of individuals empowers people to express their values and ethical concerns for their world (ibid.). Potential outcomes from disrupting the narrative could be seen today and/or continue into the future by building an economy that operates on basic fairness and respect for people and the environment (ibid.).

2.2.2 Overdetermination

Fundamental to Gibson-Graham's argument is philosopher Louis Pierre Althusser's idea of overdetermination (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Althusser's work is interpreted by Gibson-Graham to mean the essential impossibility of specifically defining any one form of existence (ibid.). The key element is that any one thing or identity, for example, is so socially complex in its construction and attached meanings that it defies being succinctly labelled or pinned down (ibid). Rather than reliance on simplified cause and effect relationships used to explain how the economy works, overdetermination can be used to extend our recognition to include the vast number of influencing factors and relations of which it is comprised (ibid).

What does overdetermination have to do with local economies? Gibson-Graham take an optimistic reading of this idea and apply it to the power of local economies (Gibson-Graham, 2006). They borrow the concept of overdetermination to provide a logic for taking even small steps toward changing a larger whole, namely the conventional shape

and ideological basis of the economy (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). If everything determines everything else, then nothing is out of reach or impenetrable, including global processes and structures on which the economy rests. In this way, individuals acting from personal ethics at the community level not only ease inner tension created by engaging in behaviours that do not align with their values (as a worker or consumer, for example), but also do impact the broader economy (ibid.) Actions could take a range of forms from consumer choices between fair trade or conventional goods, or campaigning for fair pay and worker benefits, to name just two examples. This impact could also exceed the immediate time and place originally intended in unpredictable ways due to our highly complex network of social relations (ibid.). As an example, implementing standardized and truly inclusive hiring practices in the public sector for the City of Hamilton could have farther reach than the initial goal of removing employment barriers in the hiring process for the city's workers. It may well become a model of inclusion and social responsibility for other sectors within the city limits, or extend beyond the geographical region at a future point. Gibson-Graham make the case for the utility of small steps to improve the local economy based on their belief in the possibility of constructive change for people and the planet in unexpected, impactful and dynamic ways (ibid). They note numerous actions community members engage in locally, which create a ripple effect within the broader economy. An example is the organization of consumer watchdog groups and individual demands for corporations to act in accordance with sustainable practices (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). From this emerged formal corporate social responsibility reporting to the public that is

now commonplace, holding businesses to minimum standards of behaviour toward their workers and the communities in which they operate (ibid.).

2.2.3 Space and Time in Diverse Economies for Disabled People

Gibson-Graham do not focus their work on people with disabilities, but they do prescribe inclusion of differences reflective of the community as necessary to place-based community development (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). They describe communities as heterogeneous and requiring a diversity of economic forms and participants to create sustainable, resilient, and productive economies (ibid.). Tailoring solutions to the unique qualities of the given context is paramount to place-based strategies that invite all members of the community to contribute their particular talents and time in flexible ways, finding accommodating solutions to varying needs or ways of working (ibid.).

In the 2013 book "Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities" co-authored by J. K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy, a case study outlines an alternative work experience of Josef, a man with mental ill-health (see Appendix B for an outline of Josef's typical work day). Rather than working for pay, Josef contributes to society through other forms of work while tending to his emotional, creative and intellectual needs (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). His day is divided into a variety of work types including caring for his children, volunteering, self-provisioning (growing his own food), swapping labour with others, and receiving in-kind payment for services (ibid.). Though Josef's experience is not framed as representative of

a person with a disability, there are interesting facets of his day that may be recognizable to people with a disability. Particularly notable is the strategic piecing together of multiple pursuits during the day that allow for a flexible, self-pacing schedule with frequent opportunities for breaks. Having been locked out of formal work for pay, Josef exemplifies the clever application of skills to survive and provide for his family while also making use of alternative work arrangements, allowing him to maintain personal balance and contribute more over the long term (ibid.). Josef is also enmeshed in his community. These connections not only serve him, but are evidently quite valuable to the sustainability and health of his neighbourhood (ibid.). The authors point out that by Josef tending to his responsibilities and individual goals, he actually contributes greatly to a number of community members' well-being and capacity building (ibid.). Gifts to the the community are not well captured by conventional notions of productivity and work in the economy. However, as a social creation, an ethical economy could and should include all members of society to the maximum of their abilities and recognize varying forms of labour.

While not explicitly about disability, Gibson-Graham's work resonates with scholarship from geography and disability studies on the ways in which the mainstream capitalist economy works to exclude people with disabilities. In geography, Gleeson's (1999) analysis shows that the development of industrial capitalism was based on temporal and spatial logics of work that operated according to able-bodied norms. This created a lasting 'disabling division of labour' that excluded many disabled people from paid work. In disability studies, Kafer (2013) argues that time is experienced differently by people with

disabilities, or in her phrasing, time experienced by "disabled bodies and minds". She references multiple definitions of 'crip time' including the following: a flexible standard for punctuality; the extra time needed to arrive or accomplish something; or how long things take based on particular minds and bodies (ibid.). It is clear to see how the rigid, Western, 40-hour work week, where punctuality and narrowly defined productivity are prized, clashes with the unpredictability of crip time. Additionally, periodic changes in physical and/or mental health status can affect an employer's view of a worker's stability and reliability to consistently perform duties and meet deadlines (ibid.). This can create barriers to entry into the workforce while also hindering employees' advancement and the number of opportunities available to them once in the workplace. The undue amount of pressure on employees to "bend disabled bodies and minds to meet the clock" can also incur serious stress-related consequences that alter one's ability to perform to their maximum ability, not to mention a physical, social, and emotional toll in the long run (ibid.). As a result, disabled workers may even be fired or decide to quit inflexible jobs, in order to seek more accommodating workplaces, reduce their workload to part-time hours, or remove themselves from the paid work world altogether (ibid.). The earlier description of Josef's unpaid work day is just such an example (Appendix A) (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). Gleeson's and Kafer's arguments related to space and time illuminate the conflicts inherent in workplaces which are not designed around employees with disabilities. Alternatives to profit-driven, capitalistic structures that include social goals such as equity, justice, and respect for consumers and workers are desperately needed as a result.

2.2.4 The Appeal of Gibson-Graham's Theory to Community Activists

Gibson-Graham's work provides an empowering vision of local economic systems that are both shaped by and respond to people's inputs – that of the elite, average, and underprivileged – without discrimination or weighting influence of one group over another (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson-Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). They deliver the message that individuals can actually do something, and effect change for the betterment of all. This is a very appealing and invigorating message that runs counter to the image of international flows of capital controlled by elite interests in the broader economy - a kind of passive victimhood for the majority of non-elites. There is a comfort offered by the message that individuals still have the power to carve out more equitable spaces within which to go about their everyday lives. In sum, they provide an encouraging cheer of "We can do it!".

A second powerful message from Gibson-Graham is, "Actually, we're already doing it!". They provide numerous examples of familiar alternative economic activities that we regularly engage in. As mentioned previously, these can come in a variety of forms, whether based on monetary or non-monetary exchanges of goods, services, skills and/or time (ibid.). Even seemingly short amounts of time dedicated to a simple activity like picking up garbage is useful to the community. As an example, this small act reduces pollution in our nearby waterways and decreases the potential risks to wildlife, thus making our environment more resilient to other threats. Such a brief gift of time and energy may provide only a spiritual or emotional return, but still falls under the definition

of economic activity as labour is performed (ibid.). Other examples of alternative economic relations are not new inventions but have existed over time and predate capitalism (e.g. the barter system) (ibid.). We continue to use these economic forms because they have a simplicity and directness that makes them both easy and useful to us. Importantly, Gibson-Graham also tell us there is not an entirely new system or international organization needed (ibid.). The creation of which would be a massive endeavor involving incredible amounts of organization and effort. Conveniently, we already know how to create anti-capitalist spaces because we have been doing it throughout history (ibid.). The additional point they make though is once we recognize the value of these practices we need to invest in them further if we want to increase the pace and amount of change possible (ibid.). Good news like this is an easy sell to be sure – we already know how to create change, and are busy doing it.

2.3 Disabled People and Mainstream Employment

Gibson-Graham (and the work of people like Gleeson and Kafer) provide a useful conceptual framework to consider empirical research on the experiences of disabled people in both

'mainstream' employment and alternative forms of work. Despite public policy efforts, disabled people continue to face barriers and discrimination in the labour market. Recent data from the Canadian Survey on Disability indicates that fifty-nine percent of disabled people aged 25 to 64 were working, compared to eighty percent of non-disabled adults in the same age bracket (Morris, Fawcett, Brisebois, & Hughes, 2018). As the severity of disability increases so too does the rate of unemployment with Statistics Canada reporting

only a 39% employment rate for those with very severe disability (ibid.). Significantly, two-fifths of those disabled adults who were not employed (close to 650,000 people) were deemed to have the 'potential to work'. Existing research has documented challenges in recruitment, interviewing, training, day-to-day work, promotion, and retention; employment data in Canada and other countries reveal a persistent narrative of un- and underemployment facing disabled people.

Academic literature indicates that disabled people confront numerous barriers in their pursuit of meaningful work. Many of these barriers result from misinformation, lack of knowledge about the law and reasonable accommodation, as well as assumptions about disability on the part of management and coworkers (Darcy, Taylor, & Green, 2016). For some mainstream employers, the notion of an inclusive workplace may be attractive in principle, but the perceived cost of accommodation is often assumed to be a stumbling block. Kuznetsova and Yalcin (2017) indicate employers overestimate the cost of accommodations due to a lack of experience and knowledge which results in prejudicial treatment of disabled job candidates, as well as workers returning to work following serious injury. Darcy, Taylor and Green (2016) point out that in terms of human rights legal complaints, the assumed cost of accommodation – whether to buildings, or for assistive technology and devices – was grossly overestimated and would not meet the definition of "unjustifiable hardship" for many organizations. In some ways, it is understandable that employers are confused about the real cost of accommodations. As Padkapayeva et al. (2017) show through their analysis of published work on cost-

effectiveness of the accommodation options available, there are no clear conclusions or 'best practices' as of yet. Without empirical evidence or clear direction on how to provide useful accommodations, employers are reluctant to take on additional tasks to ensure inclusivity in the workplace. Smaller organizations in particular may have less experience and in-house expertise in developing inclusive environments and practices with little time to coordinate and connect with external expertise and advisors (Mandal & Ose, 2015). However, even large companies report low numbers of accommodations provided, which still suggests a prejudicial avoidance in hiring and retaining workers with disabilities (Kuznetsova & Yalcin, 2017). Krupa, Howell-Moneta, Lysaght, & Kirsh (2016) conducted a willingness-to-hire experiment with human resource staff responsible for reviewing resumes and conducting interviews, gathering impressions of two mock job candidates. From their data several negative attitudes about candidates with mental illness were revealed including confirmation of beliefs around unpredictable behaviour, and that stresses from work could exacerbate mental illness (Krupa, Howell-Moneta, Lysaght, & Kirsh, 2016). An assumed limited capacity to deal with stress was also echoed as a barrier to promotion and leadership opportunities in Brewster, Duncan, Emira and Clifford's research on disabled people's experiences in university workplaces (2017). In addition to perceived costs of accommodation, employers often assume the pace of work will be significantly slower for disabled workers than their non-disabled co-workers, inhibiting overall productivity and resulting in a slower work flow for the organization (Ruhindwa, Randall, & Cartmel, 2016).

Although anti-discrimination/accessibility legislation has been passed in many contexts, the practical significance of such legislation is difficult to discern. In the context of Ontario, Lysaght, Krupa and Bouchard (2018) note that provincial disability legislation (the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* or AODA) prescribes inclusion, but is light on details with few standards by which to measure progress or what shape it should take in work environments (for workers with intellectual or developmental disabilities, for example). As Darcy, Taylor, and Green (2016) suggest, a general understanding of accessible physical environments has yet to be reached, let alone a recognition of the perhaps more nuanced and less visible needs of people with mental ill health, HIV/AIDS, or learning disabilities. Ruhindwa summarized his impressions while working at a disability employment organization commenting that the main challenge in securing sustainable employment for clients remained employer misconceptions and a general lack of awareness about disability issues (Ruhindwa, Randall, & Cartmel, 2016). Clearly, having policy in place to protect people with disabilities from discrimination is not enough to change employers' conceptions of accommodations and the (in)capacity of workers with disabilities.

Enduring assumptions and prejudices about the needs and abilities of disabled workers – and a failure to create concrete employment standards – produce harms on a number of levels including: a loss of opportunity to pursue leadership and promotion, lower incomes and ongoing economic dependence, further stigmatization, social exclusion, damage to self-esteem, and hindering self-actualization (Darcy, Taylor, & Green, 2016; Kalef,

Barrera, & Heymann, 2014; Kim & Williams, 2012; Ruhindwa, Randall, & Cartmel, 2016; Smith, 2019; Wilton, 2006). Confronting these enduring barriers creates additional stress for workers and job seekers, not least with respect to the question of when and if to disclose a disability/disabilities (Brewster, Duncan, Emira, & Clifford, 2017; Kim & Williams, 2012; Krupa, Howell-Moneta, Lysaght, & Kirsh, 2016). Kim and Williams (2012) show that even recent university graduates with disabilities, new to the job market, are preoccupied with concerns about disclosure during the application and interview process for fear of discrimination and rejection. The university staff and faculty interviewed by Brewster, Duncan, Emira and Clifford (2017) noted there was very little benefit to disclosing disability, with many seeing the prejudice of colleagues and management as "severely limiting career progression". While both groups could appreciate the theoretical benefits of disclosure, the risk was perceived as too high for many to choose this path (Brewster, Duncan, Emira, & Clifford, 2017; Kim & Williams, 2012).

Where employment is hard to find and labour market outcomes are uncertain, disabled people may weigh the advantages of seeking work (earnings, social interaction, and status as a worker, for example) against the risk of decreased or lost monthly social assistance payments (Evans & Wilton, 2019; Lysaght, Townsend, & Orser, 1994; Wilton, 2006). The decision resulting from these factors may be to self-limit the amount one works or not work at all despite the desire and ability to do more (Evans & Wilton, 2019; Lysaght, Krupa, & Bouchard, 2018; Lysaght, Townsend, & Orser, 1994).

2.4 Alternative Employment Settings: Social Enterprises

Social enterprises have been lauded as a partial solution to unemployment and underemployment of disabled people through their capacity to create more inclusive workplaces (Evans & Wilton, 2019; Lysaght, Krupa, & Bouchard, 2018). Social enterprises represent one part of a broader social economy encompassing a diversity of organizations such as cooperatives, foundations, and not-for-profit organizations; the commonality between them is that their creation and function serves a social mandate (Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, 2018). Essentially, such organizations prioritize people over profits. Various types of social enterprises in Canada are designed around and/or welcome (paid or voluntary) workers with disabilities (Krupa, Howell-Moneta, Lysaght, & Kirsh, 2016; Lysaght, Krupa, & Bouchard, 2018). With a commitment to principles such as social responsibility, diversity, and community engagement, they may be uniquely positioned to partly redress disabled people's exclusion from the workplace. Importantly, such organizations may also be well positioned to adopt a 'holistic understanding' of the role of work within the life of a person with a disability (Lysaght, Townsend and Orser, 1994). From this perspective, consideration of the obligations and routines of an individual's daily and weekly schedule in its entirety can be used to make strategic adjustments to the work day, labour processes and work environment (Lysaght, Townsend, & Orser, 1994). Flexibility, experimentation, and creativity when cleverly utilized allow for a solution that makes sense in the broader context of workers' lives.

Existing research suggests that workers engaged in social enterprise employment note a

particular pride in their labour which contributes something useful back to the community and local economy (Evans & Wilton, 2019; Kalef, Barrera, & Heymann, 2014; Lysaght, Krupa, & Bouchard, 2018; Smith, 2019). The training and experience provided by social enterprises are valuable to workers in the form of new technical and social skills, enhanced self-esteem, and self-confidence. Enterprises that effectively and thoughtfully include disabled workers also demonstrate what anti-oppressive and inclusive workplaces can look like, providing valuable models from which like-minded organizations and businesses can benefit (Kalef, Barrera, & Heymann, 2014). For example, Joshua Evans and Robert Wilton's interviews with management staff and workers with mental ill-health at social enterprises reveals the nature of workplaces that operate outside the capitalist economy (Evans & Wilton, 2019). They describe them as something between mainstream and therapeutic workplaces with employees describing them as being "like a real world job" (ibid.). Participants expressed the importance to their mental health to have a work routine like a "normal" person in society, just with flexibility, understanding and supports in place (ibid.). Comments from employees captured an appreciation for a job they could handle that did not cause undue stress by demanding more than they could give (ibid.). Management staff also expected and adjusted for absences or changes in coverage as a regular part of business practice and without pressuring employees to return before they were able (ibid.). The overall impression given by the disabled employees was one of relief at having the opportunity to engage in work without the pressures to conform to an oppressive standard of productivity. The authors state that, more broadly, social enterprises, in their expectation of heterogeneity, and their worker-focused design,

challenge the binaries of sick/well and unproductive/productive (ibid.). Their assertion that social enterprises present alternative possibilities for social and economic identities is very much in the spirit of Gibson-Graham's economic possibilities for social change (Evans & Wilton, 2019; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson- Graham, Cameron, & Healy, 2013). For disabled workers that move on to other volunteer or paid employment opportunities, having first-hand experience of accommodations and adaptations that served them well in the past may also be well positioned to transfer this knowledge and articulate their needs at a new workplace.

At the same time, social enterprises do not resolve all workplace issues for all disabled workers. There is good evidence that many social enterprises for disabled persons eschew a therapy-centered sheltered workshop model in favour of meaningful work opportunities (Lysaght, Krupa, & Bouchard, 2018) (Smith, 2019). However, disability-specific social enterprises might also operate as separate or segregated work environments that do little to challenge the broader exclusion of disabled people from mainstream social and economic settings (Bates-Harris, 2012). Social enterprises designed around the needs and skills of specific disability groups may be superior to that of a mainstream workplace in terms of accessibility and accommodations provided, but there are also social trade offs. While questions of inclusion and belonging are complex (Hall, 2004; Lysaght, Petner-Arrey, Howell-Moneta & Cobigo, 2017; Morrison, Woodbury, Johnston, & Longhurst, 2020), segregated or separate workplaces may limit opportunities to develop new

capacities through interactions with diverse others, hinder disabled workers' formation of extended social networks and greatly reduce their visibility as productive members of their community.

Another consideration is the degree of financial independence and stability a social enterprise has which can effect the nature of the work and impact the disabled worker's experience. Social enterprises – while aiming to provide work opportunities for people with disabilities and/or to address other social inequities – are themselves often vulnerable to pressures from both the state and market economies (Buhariwala, Wilton & Evans, 2015). Organizations must determine whether to risk dependency on donations and/or income from the goods and services produced, or whether to rely on state funding (in part or fully). Financial autonomy allows for more flexibility in terms of making decisions such as how work will be performed, who is eligible to work or volunteer, and what are the expected levels of productivity (Smith, 2019). Reliance on state funding may offer financial stability, but can also lead to new challenges and deliverables (such as timely reporting, statistics collection, and reapplication processes) that can take time away from the original social mission of the enterprise (Lysaght, Krupa, & Bouchard, 2018) (Parr, 2000). Creeping professionalization driven by state expectations may also be an unwelcome intrusion felt by participants in the enterprise and can create discomfort (Parr, 2000). Funder requirements could result in excluding those with severe disabilities who cannot perform according to the required pace, schedule, or intensity (Lysaght, Krupa, & Bouchard, 2018). With funding agreements that are outcome contingent, some

level of power is given over to the state whether subtle or overt (Parr, 2000). Social enterprises, in order to survive, must make difficult decisions about how to best balance their social mandate against the reality of a competitive marketplace. These decisions directly inform the nature of the work environment and experiences of their disabled workers.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A case study was selected as a fitting approach to engage with the 541 community to gain in-depth knowledge of the intricacies of inclusive workplaces. Focussing on one site, within its particular context, provided the opportunity to collect detailed and nuanced data made possible by accessing multiple sources of information: namely through observation and interviews with 541's workers. As work was performed within this real life setting, insights were gleaned about the nature of fostering social inclusion of disabled people and offering meaningful work opportunities applicable in other contexts as well.

3.2 Rationale for Case Study Selection

541 explicitly aims to welcome a diverse body of workers from within and beyond the Barton Village neighbourhood. Within this wide-ranging focus on diversity there is an attentiveness to the needs and capacities of people with disabilities but this is typically framed in terms of making the restaurant work for everyone rather than as an issue of disability-specific workplace accommodation. As such, the restaurant offered a useful case study to explore strategies developed to create an inclusive work environment for paid and volunteer workers. Many of the findings from the analysis may be reproducible or adapted for use in other social enterprises and conventional workplaces.

3.3 Rigorous Methodology Applied Throughout the Study

As described by Stratford and Bradshaw, research design must be undertaken in a thoughtful manner in order for qualitative research methods to produce meaningful results and withstand scrutiny (2016). The Lincoln and Guba criteria for rigour championed by Baxter and Eyles (1997) in their paper on qualitative methods of social geographers outlined the four key concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were applied to this researcher's data collection and analysis.

3.3.1 Credibility

By spending a considerable amount of time at the site of interest, and working alongside colleagues performing similar duties, the details of the workplace experience became evident to the researcher through concerted observation. Overhearing and engaging in conversations with fellow staff members also provided insight into the challenges and pleasures associated with the workplace while gathering insider observations of the workplace culture and social relations which were recorded and reflected upon in field notes. Researcher assumptions about the worker experience were also checked with the use of audio recorded open-ended interview questions allowing for a variety of workers to express their individual points of view in their own words. Through this combination of research methods, the researcher aimed to capture and convey experiences that ring true to the workers themselves and serve as an accurate portrayal of the workers on-site.

3.3.2 Transferability

While a case study may at first seem to have limited generalizability beyond its own unique dynamic inherent to the people and place concerned, there are some aspects that can be applied elsewhere. By creating months of thick descriptions of the 541 workplace, readers may identify details and traits characteristic of other social enterprises, common traits of inclusive social spaces, recognize the challenges of working in a disabling environment, or begin to invent and adopt best practices in their own workplaces based on the experiences articulated in the study. The carefully described logic of the conclusions presented also allows audiences to understand and apply similar lines of thinking to their own contexts. In these less direct ways, a case study such as this does exhibit some transferability.

3.3.3 Dependability

Keeping research errors to an absolute minimum is a multifaceted endeavour. Interviews were audio recorded rather than relying on the notetaking ability and accuracy of the researcher. Field notes were made after each trip to the café while recall was still reliable. To control for "idiosyncrasies" the researcher brought analysis and interpretation of the study data for review to her supervisor during regular meetings as a critical part of the process. Ultimately, the graduate research committee also provides an important auditing function in the production of the research as well.

3.3.4 Confirmability

In order to reduce the influence of researcher bias and motivations on the research, self-reflexive analysis documentation throughout the study was kept. Field notes with dated entries created a history of the data collection process as well as her own responses and evolution of thinking over the span of the research project. Regular review of these documents ensured lapses in logic were identified and created the opportunity for course correction.

3.4 Data Collection

The study engaged with two qualitative research methods – participant observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews (refer to appendices C, D and E for interview schedules) to gather data on 541 as a workplace for the period between July 2019 and December 2019. In total, 115 hours were spent conducting participant observation on-site by the researcher in the 'front of house' environment, primarily in a serving capacity behind the counter (91 hours over 24 shifts) as well as in the 'back of house' or kitchen area as a dishwasher (24 hours over 8 shifts). Volunteering in both halves of the restaurant allowed for observation of and interaction with a variety of workers and customers while attaining a deeper understanding of the demands on the worker that exceeded what an interview alone could provide. Extensive field notes recorded how the day-to-day interactions and operations of 541 foster inclusion in their workplace. To ensure researcher transparency, a countertop sign was displayed with a photo and brief description of the researcher's purpose during their shifts directed at both co-workers and

the public. The researcher was also introduced to the paid workers during a staff meeting and continued to identify their dual role, volunteer and researcher, upon introduction to each person they worked with thereafter. Co-workers who expressed discomfort with being "observed" or similar sentiments were not written about and any previous notes concerning them were deleted. Unique identifiers, including names, were not recorded in field notes or interview transcripts.

Interviews were conducted over the research period with two administrators, four direct managers, and five volunteers.[4] A final wrap-up interview included two earlier participants for a total of 12 interviews. Only two interviewees opted to have their interview offsite though the option was presented to all eleven. All interviews were audio recorded with permission of the interviewees and the audio files were deleted upon the completion of the anonymized transcripts. The purpose of the interviews was primarily to tease out and articulate the reasoning behind observed interactions and behaviours with questions tailored to the interviewees role and duties. After working alongside staff and volunteers the researcher selected interviewees by carefully considering what was learned about their co-workers and in an attempt to cover a spectrum of experiences where possible within a manageable sample size (e.g. differences in the amount of history with 541, kinds of abilities and roles, personal background).

[4] As an acknowledgement of the time and knowledge shared with the researcher, a donation of $30.00 to the 541 button jar was made on behalf of interview participants for each interview conducted.

Taking a participant observer approach coupled with the luxury of time to develop relationships with co-workers proved invaluable for interview subject selection and follow-up. Spending time working together before arranging interviews with the majority of interviewees provided the time to get to know enough about one another to make informed decisions about which interviewees could potentially add to the diversity of experience the researcher was hoping to gather. Time onsite afterward also gave participants additional time to process and debrief the interview experience which led to further sharing of insights and requests to alter interview responses in some cases (which was honoured). Had the research included a more passive approach or relied solely on interviews the breadth of experiences would likely have been severely limited to only the most gregarious and enthusiastic participants and not included individuals that required more time to get to know due to personality or disability-related communication differences. These sorts of participant selection factors, understandably, are not included in the standardized ethics approval process but they do arguably have an influence on the quality of research produced and to what degree it is representative of the populations studied.

3.5 Special Ethical Considerations

McMaster University's research ethics process walks researchers through a number of considerations that pertain to interacting with people one will encounter onsite before granting clearance to do so. However, it quickly became clear once the researcher began her work onsite that there were numerous additional ethical considerations that were not

included in the research ethics board's parameters. These new considerations to contend with stemmed from the inclusivity of the organization and the ease with which difference was accommodated.

To illustrate, age and disability were non-issues and often not a discussion topic unless offered by a co-worker. This became a challenge in terms of deciphering who it would be appropriate to include in the field notes and who it would not. On several occasions the researcher had to go back through content from the weeks previous to delete notes upon realizing a worker was under the age of 18 or that they were unclear about who the researcher was and her role at the restaurant. It was a matter of constant vigilance as the researcher interacted with coworkers and ascertained whether they understood and recalled this information based on the interaction and subtle indicators. Some workers onsite experienced issues related to memory or difficulty learning new information. This was not always easily identifiable or relayed to the researcher and depended greatly on her previous experience and knowledge of invisible disabilities with which to make these judgements. As a result, only participants who seemed to clearly recall who the researcher was and her dual role appeared in the field notes for the given shift.

3.6 Reciprocity

Borrowing from ideals embedded in participant action research, an offer to partner with 541 on a project was extended. The rationale for such a project was to rebalance the largely one-way flow of knowledge and accrued experience from the research subjects to

the researcher (Kindon, 2016). The project goal and terms were envisioned as a collaborative project, however, after discussion with the executive director, contribution to 541's newsletter was determined to be the most helpful at that point. The article topic was suggested by the executive director and was submitted (Appendix F). The labour performed as a volunteer also served as a way to give back to 541 in appreciation for allowing the researcher access to the site and its community.

3.7 Analysis

Analysis began with the researcher and her supervisor conducting a preliminary read through of transcripts to determine codes relating to the character of the workplace and the motivations and experiences of paid staff and volunteers. Once consensus was reached, the researcher undertook a more detailed coding of transcripts and field notes. This analysis of the interview content and field note data is presented in later chapters beginning with a description of the study site in Chapter Four: Context to orient the reader to the social and physical space. Following this, Chapter Five: Analysis covers the five key themes that emerged from the study of 541 – building relational space, how volunteers are incorporated into the workplace model, the volunteers' view of their work experience, the demands and rewards associated with the work of the staff members, and the challenges of sustaining the enterprise at the organizational level.

Chapter Four: Context

4.1 Overview of Study Site: Barton Village, Code Red and 541 Site Selection

Those spearheading the 541 Eatery & Exchange were deliberate in their choice of location. A small group of members from Compass Point Bible Church were driven to create the restaurant by the grave picture painted of Barton Village in northeast Downtown Hamilton, Ontario, Canada published in the 2010 Code Red report[5]. Code Red identified Barton Village as one of the most economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city resulting in severe poverty, low educational level attainment and earning potential, and ultimately, among the worst health outcomes (Buist, Johnston, & DeLuca, 2013). The Code Red project detailed the changes on Barton Street East in 2013 by describing the once vibrant downtown artery of the 1960s populated with small businesses and frequented by blue collar workers of the industrial employers within walking distance (Buist, Johnston, & DeLuca, 2013). Workers lived with their families and shopped within Barton Village for decades (ibid.). As deindustrialization and suburbanization processes occurred in the area, dramatic decline became evident along Barton Street as many businesses were no longer viable with the exodus of working class families (ibid). Today the street is characterized by vacant lots and two- and three-storey buildings in disrepair, interspersed with commercial spaces half-heartedly converted into low-quality tenement housing (ibid). A reputation for high amounts of illegal activity

[5] Code Red and is an ongoing collaborative project with the newspaper The Hamilton Spectator and McMaster University describing discrepancies in the social determinants of health found amongst Hamilton's neighbourhoods by combining the fields of journalism and health geography.

such as theft, vandalism, violence, sex work and use of street drugs has resulted in a heavily policed part of the downtown (ibid). Unhoused people sleeping on Barton and side streets, as well as sex workers are commonly visible along this section of Barton. The alleyway running behind 541's block of buildings had at one point been part of a city alley rejuvenation project to reclaim such public spaces but has also more recently been used as a location for its "gritty" urban backdrop for film productions.

However, Barton Village has received some attention for its relatively affordable property values and has been acknowledged as on the cusp of the current wave of gentrification approaching from central downtown. A handful of small trendy shops and cafés have opened amongst the second hand shops, convenience stores, vacant storefronts and tenement housing. Originally selected by restaurant founders Compass Point Bible Church as the ideal location to provide a much needed family restaurant for the neighbourhood's residents and to alleviate the impact of living in a food desert, a staff member at 541 describes what they now see as their role in the gentrification process,

> "This was one of the areas with the poorest social determinants of health and health outcomes. So it was a natural part of Barton Street to target. Since we've opened, Barton Street has certainly ... it's coming, the gentrification thing is coming, but mainly from the West. It hasn't quite got to our bit yet, but it'll come. I'd like to think that we're at least, if we manage to stay open and stay here, that it would be a place that reminds people that there are folks that are invisible to many of us, that will still be here. That will still need help." (Interviewee 9)

The restaurant's location was originally selected to increase access to affordable healthy food for Barton Village residents in need, and it seems they envision their role to continue

as such, even as gentrification takes root and new, wealthier residents and business owners arrive in the future.

Providing access to affordable healthy food was the route chosen by the restaurant's founders to address food insecurity in Barton Village, with explicit emphasis on partnering with their neighbours rather than one-way service delivery (such as a food bank or soup kitchen). This aim is achieved in part by catering to a socially and economically diverse group of customers, with those paying full price helping to subsidize others who cannot. The restaurant uses a "button jar system" where patrons who cannot afford the full price of a meal can take the corresponding number of buttons (each button is worth the equivalent to $1.00 to cover the cost of their meal up to $5.00 per day per person). The optional pay-it-forward system creates three ways customers make purchases – to make a donation to the button system while paying full price for their meal, to make use of the button system to cover all or part of the price of their meal, or to neither contribute nor use the button system when paying for their meal.

4.2 Physical Space

Figure 1. Exterior of 541 Barton Street East (Bell, 2018)

Originally the Bank of British North America in 1907 the ground floor of the 541 Barton property and basement was leased by the restaurant (McCallum Sather, n.d.). On the corner of Barton Street East and Westinghouse Avenue the building has retained much of the original façade and interior features despite its multiple incarnations over time. The space is divided into front of house/dining area for customers facing out onto Barton and back of house containing the main kitchen space, break room and small office (ibid.).

The front of house is bright and airy with white painted brick walls, high ceilings, and large

windows which flood the space with natural light throughout the day. The dining area seats approximately 50 people at a mix of seating and tables including an oversized, centrally positioned harvest table for one large group or smaller groupings and individuals to share[6]. Handwritten chalkboard menus hang behind a long wooden counter and a rotating exhibit of local artists' work is displayed around the dining area. The renovated restaurant feels much the same as a pricey hipster coffee shop with its high quality menu items and authentic features original to the building.

[6] The communal sharing of the 12-seater table throughout the day, while practical, also serves as a symbolic reminder of the café's mission to "create a community of belonging around the table".

Figure 2. Dining area of 541 Eatery and Exchange (This Must Be the Place, 2014)

Figure 3. Part of front of house work area (e.g. ordering, payment, drink preparation) (Lowson, 2016)

The back of house is a collection of smaller, white, functional rooms dominated by the various cooking and food preparation spaces and amenities such as cold storage, open shelving loaded with supplies and equipment, professional grade cooking appliances, stainless steel work surfaces, and grills. The break room (which can be used as secondary storage of supplies and workspace) and office both open off of the kitchen.

The basement has a locked access point from the dining room and is a partially finished space used as storage and secondary programming/meeting space for 541 or small

community groups. The basement has additional worker lockers and bike storage as well. While the main floor is wheelchair/mobility aid accessible, the basement has not been designed or renovated to incorporate accessible features.

In terms of physical accessibility features, the back of house washroom and work areas were not designed with accessibility for a diverse group of workers in mind. For example, the office and kitchen have narrow pathways, and fixed height storage, appliances, and work surfaces. The seating layout in the break room is adjustable if needed. The physical layout of the dining area is more open for those using wheelchairs and mobility devices to easily navigate. Staff pointed out that there are still improvements possible to customer spaces such as the height of the drink bar (approximately five feet) which limit customer independence.

4.3 Social Characteristics of the Space

While the research focused on staff and volunteer experiences, it is helpful to have a general sense of who frequented the restaurant as customers to understand the environment and resulting demands on workers. Conceptualized as a space to welcome both marginalized people and not, the restaurant is an informal space of interaction, "[w]here people can share with one another and everyone has a place around the table." (541 Eatery and Exchange, 2015). On a daily basis there are patrons from Barton Village as well as those who travel from a greater distance to support its social mission and enjoy the food. Most of the patrons using the button system toward the cost of their meals come

from the immediate area either as permanent residents or temporary residents of the homeless shelters nearby. The long queue that forms every morning outside the front doors before the 8AM opening is largely comprised of these two groups.

Throughout the day a mix of locals and visitors to the neighbourhood inhabit the restaurant with the busiest times for staff and volunteers occurring during the breakfast and lunch rushes as customers wait to place and receive their orders to eat in or take out. Some of the volunteers and staff are local residents with many also coming from other parts of the city. A portion of these local volunteers are patrons that make use of the button system and choose to give back to 541 for various reasons.

In order to partner with the community in a meaningful way and reflect the diversity of the surrounding population, there is a marked effort to reduce barriers to volunteering for local residents and marginalized people. As a result, some volunteers are welcomed that would likely experience discrimination in other workplaces or volunteer opportunities such as teens without work experience, seniors, people with disabilities, people with criminal records, and people without secondary or post-secondary education. As well, 541 acknowledge the time gifted by its unpaid workers to the restaurant, particularly those experiencing periodic or long-term food insecurity, by offering the equivalent of $7.00 food and drink in exchange for shifts worked.

The customers and workers that animate 541's spaces provide most of the ambient noise typically found in a restaurant or coffee shop accompanied by occasional background music and its characteristic kitchen and drink preparation sounds. However, typical social norms are occasionally broken with overly loud individuals or aggressive verbal outbursts between patrons. Disruptions to the sense of safety in the restaurant were not tolerated resulting in staff quickly and calmly intervening, inviting the patrons involved to either adjust their behaviour or leave. Far more common though is the cheerful banter of workers, conversation amongst patrons, and friendly interaction between workers and customers creating a loud and lively atmosphere.

4.4 Workers and Their Roles

Throughout the thesis the term 'worker' is used to describe both volunteers and paid staff. Paid staff includes those performing in executive director, volunteer coordinator, youth outreach worker, front of house manager, line cook, program chef and kitchen manager roles. Back of house volunteers are primarily supervised by the program chef as they perform food preparation, baking and dishwashing tasks. Front of house managers oversee volunteers working in cash, cash support, coffee and tea server, and runner[7] roles[8]. The program chef and front of house managers work alongside their volunteers frequently supporting or stepping in to assist volunteers with a task, training an additional task, or performing tasks their crew are unable to do given the collection of abilities and

[7] Runners bring orders to in-house diners or to those picking up take out orders as well as tidy and clean up the dining area.
[8] There is great variety in the types of work performed by volunteers summarized here. In-depth discussion on the flexible nature of work and tasks according to ability follows in Chapter 5: Analysis.

experience on each given shift. Front of house managers are also responsible for maintaining the peaceful environment of the dining area and enforcing customer rules (e.g. no fighting, swearing) and respond to emergency situations as needed. Back of house staff serve as back up for these situations if required.

Though there is a hierarchy of sorts between the paid and unpaid workers onsite, efforts to minimize social distance were a regular part of the work day. It was not unusual to see the executive director pitching in to bus tables when the restaurant was busy, or have an experienced volunteer taking orders while a front of house manager emptied recycling bins, or the program chef labouring over dishes while volunteers handled food preparation tasks. In general, the paid staff members oversaw the volunteers, dealt with any issues that arose (with the workers and customers) and filled in gaps to keep the restaurant running day-to-day. Due to the flexible nature of roles and tasks, it was not always evident to the public entering the space as a customer who was paid or unpaid as the chain of command and decision-making was subtle to the outside observer.

Chapter Five: Analysis

5.1 Building Relational Space

Considerable time during a shift was invested in building relationships between the people who work in the restaurant. The paid staff described strategies for creating new connections and deepening existing ones in answer to questions about their approach as simply "spending time with people" and "meeting them where they're at". However, from observations during the onsite research period there appeared to be key components to developing and maintaining attunement with people inhabiting the space.

5.1.1 Expecting, Welcoming and Respecting Difference

During shifts a marked attention to welcoming people and showing genuine curiosity about co-workers was consistently shown. Staff often initiated conversation and shared life events which was reciprocated by volunteers and possibly hastened the pace of connection. Similar interests and pastimes were often pointed out by staff to foster casual ties between workers well. Staff made a point of including new volunteers in conversations by filling in previously shared details and asking questions to gently encourage participation. Facilitating casual conversations among old and new volunteers created an easy-going atmosphere in which to work and learn. This approach to supervisor-employee interaction may appear to be simple friendliness or social graces, but it had the additional benefit of creating a baseline comfort with shift members on which to build social skills and establish a nonthreatening environment for volunteers to ask

questions. For volunteers that showed signs of not wanting to talk or stress interacting, staff members would typically give some time and space and try a short exchange later in the shift while informally checking in. There was a range in the level of sociability exhibited by volunteers, yet staff and many of the other volunteers seemed to adjust and accept this with ease as a nonissue and without comment.

Staff also played a role in modelling authentic interest and acceptance of diverse opinions, traits and qualities by respectfully listening to co-workers and customers - even when relayed in a less than tactful or abrasive manner. The examples noted were numerous including time and attention given to complaints or criticism about people or the restaurant itself, even in the hectic and fast-paced lunch rush, with a fitting acknowledgement or follow up question to gather more information and zero in on the crux of the problem. Complicated complaints or problems were sometimes deferred to a less busy moment if possible to dedicate undivided attention. Feedback was regularly discussed and some changes were implemented during the research period as a result (e.g. switch to recyclable cup lids and inclusion of correct personal pronouns on worker name tags).

Many volunteers displayed a similar interest and respect for the diversity present and were possibly emulating the approach modelled by staff as evidenced by similar turns of phrase and tone reminiscent of staff members. For example, multiple staff and volunteers spontaneously described a particular disabled volunteer to the researcher once learning

the topic of this study. Each person explained who the volunteer was accompanied with a smile. They enthused how "joyful" the volunteer was, that they were "so lovely and filled with joy everyday" and how their presence "brings joy" to a shift (Field notes July 19; September 11; July 29). The identifier of 'joyful' had clearly spread among the staff and volunteers as it was offered repeatedly as a descriptor. Interestingly, the nature of the volunteer's disability was never mentioned and was perhaps less relevant as a topic of discussion. Only a warm appreciation for the person was expressed which may signal a respect for standout positive traits workers had recognized and discussed amongst themselves. While it was clear the volunteer sprang to mind as an example of a co-worker with a disability, this difference was not remarkable enough to mention in comparison to what the volunteer contributed to their shift which through worker consensus in this case was 'joy'.

Diversity in worker preferences and abilities were the norm and expected. Staff looked for opportunities for new and long-term volunteers of varying abilities and interests. One manager shared the thinking behind this as,

> "Any way that people can enter in, we try and make that possible. We try to keep an eye out for those tasks and work where people can participate. We have plenty of room for folks who are not traditionally thought of and we want to make spaces for and are inclusive to them. [They] are my joy. Bring those folks in because they're often very capable. You just need to find the right task." (Interviewee 1)

While inclusion of marginalized people and difference was frequently mentioned during interviews, staff and volunteers momentarily struggled to identify their coworkers using the lens of disability when asked. One of the managers explained,

> "There's not a big difference in my mind about working with a volunteer with a disability and one without because it's always do what you feel capable doing and then have them do that. In my mind it's just kind of all the same. Just what you're comfortable doing is fine." (Interviewee 10)

Only when pushed did interviewees describe tasks that a disabled co-worker might struggle with and would quickly and enthusiastically outline how they worked around this and in what ways the individual contributed as an integral part of the team. Often detailed descriptions of the co-worker's personality, quirks, and positive traits were further offered which indicated a deep knowledge of, appreciation for, and connection with their shift mate. The uniform dissatisfaction expressed with identifying co-workers by disability speaks to a culture of respect for individual workers while emphasizing what each person brought to the restaurant.

5.1.2 Worker-centred supervision and support

The restaurant staff train and support approximately 150 volunteers over the course of a year who typically outnumber paid staff during opening hours. Volunteers are invited into the fold to contribute according to their interests, abilities and preferred schedule whenever possible. The volunteer coordinator matches tasks to the person rather than the opposite, which is then fine tuned with input from staff. A manager describes establishing work expectations the following way:

> "It's kind of just about you meet them where they're at. You figure out what they're comfortable doing and then work with them that way. It's not like you say, 'This is what is expected of you as a volunteer'. You just meet them where they're at and that's fine." (Interviewee 10)

The volunteer coordinator and managing staff were sensitive to how overwhelming the busy restaurant environment can be for new workers and start with simple tasks, careful not to ask for more than the volunteer is able to give. Throughout shifts managers unobtrusively observe both new and long term volunteers' social-emotional states deciding in the moment when to step in to assist and when to foster independence. It was pointed out that social-emotional states, cognitive load management and physical ability are not necessarily static so expectations and the kind of support needed week to week, or even throughout a shift, can change. Staff described continual adjustments to accommodate their work crew as an expected part of any shift. One such accommodation made possible by 'planned redundancy' was explained in this way by a staff member:

> "We found that a lot of people who struggle with anxiety or depression - we started being more careful about when we schedule those people. So trying to avoid like the lunch rush, or telling them like, 'Hey, like if you start feeling overwhelmed you can just come have your break during the lunch rush and that's okay.' I found that mood disorder accommodations are fairly simple for us at least. Because we do have other staff and other volunteers, it's okay for someone to take a break whenever they need one but that might be more difficult for a regular café where it's like no, each person actually does need to be on all the time because there's only two of you or only one of you." (Interviewee 2)

Creating shift schedules was described as quite complex with thought given to a number of factors such as balancing skill sets, planning around some expected unreliability/absences, creating amenable combinations of personalities, granting requests for friends to work together, pairing natural mentors with mentees, and matching volunteers to tasks they were observed to most enjoy doing. Capitalizing on existing relationships and creating scenarios to expand volunteers' experience were mentioned as goals by managers and the volunteer coordinator. For example, pairing a disabled kitchen

volunteer to teach a new teenaged volunteer a food preparation task is a novel experience for both while passively creating the foundation for a co-worker relationship. The volunteer coordinator created schedules in conjunction with managers that were tailored to the needs and goals of their volunteers where possible which could evolve over time as more was learned about their crew members. In this way, the volunteer coordinator and managers accommodated and supported both practical skill development and the social goals of their volunteers.

Also notable was the tone and language used by staff when interacting with volunteers which minimized hierarchical distance and subtly elucidated preferences of each team member. As a task arose volunteers were asked if they would like to do said task or perhaps learn how if it was new to them. A conversation-based, democratic approach to division of the work was used as one manager highlighted,

> "When bossing people around at the front of house [laughs], I try to phrase everything like a question instead of, 'Hey, this needs to be done.' I'll usually say, 'Would anyone like to do this thing?' Often it's a job that I'm happy to do myself if no one feels up to it. We let volunteers lead because some days, with certain people, we do know that they have health problems or whatever. Some days they're not feeling up to doing much and that's fine." (Interviewee 10)

Repetition for those that need it is delivered by staff with the same calm delivery each time which for some volunteers can be multiple times in a shift. Questions and requests for reminders were encouraged and staff were quick to thank their crew for what they contributed regardless of the amount of support given.

5.1.3 Caring for Each Other

The multitude of ways care was expressed in the 541 space both observed and reported in interviews were uncommonly frequent and compassionate. While staff was particularly alert to local customers in need of support this concern extended to volunteers and fellow staff members as well. Common practice and characteristic of the culture created at 541 was checking in with others. Sharing personal struggles and requests for help were regular occurrences amongst workers and volunteers. Staff reported they are 'very real' with each other which allowed for mutual problem solving like taking on additional shifts to give a staff mate a needed reprieve from the demanding work environment. This sharing of personal details was also exhibited by volunteers. For example, one volunteer described an allegiance developed over the hours worked together and the comfortable atmosphere in the kitchen workspace where authentic discussion of "what ails you" can naturally occur (Interviewee 8). They continued on to describe their evolving relationships in this manner:

> "I feel like 541 has a very unique space where we do have a lot of downtime and there's a lot of different people here. You meet a lot of different people and you sort of want to keep up with like how's so-and-so doing. Just seeing everyone every single week and this is part of your family, part of your team. So you just go in and see how's this person doing. Are they still doing okay?" (Interviewee 8)

In part, because of the diversity found on any given shift, previously unknown resources and experiences can then be offered to support a co-worker tapping into multiple social networks and bolstering resiliency. When the need for time off was stated (e.g. calling in sick) the response was an encouragement to take care of oneself without an accompanying undertone of guilt or pressure. This was described by a volunteer this way:

> "You call in and they're like, 'No big deal. Take care of you.' I don't think I've ever called in and they were like, 'Oh man, we really needed you. That sort of sucks.' (Interviewee 8)

If volunteers were repeatedly absent without contacting the restaurant, staff would try to connect to inquire how they were doing and then discuss their level of interest in continuing or adjusting their hours. A staff member outlined the approach taken to negotiate the return of a volunteer in this manner:

> "Yeah, I think when people come back from being MIA they often are very apologetic and I think we try to communicate it's okay. These things happen and it's often not in our control. Like it's very okay. And then we kind of reassess like, 'Alright. Do you feel like you're ready to sign up for a shift? Do you want to be on our relief volunteer list where you can just as you feel like you're able to sign up for things?" (Interviewee 2)

The ever changing needs of the staff and volunteers expressed openly allowed those capable in the moment to offer support and assistance. Staff decreased the social risk of being honest and vulnerable with co-workers by modelling it as common practice and decreased the stigma and judgement individuals may feel in seeking help whether for 'personal' or 'work' challenges, replacing this with a humane and collaborative approach to work. This was perhaps the most used and most effective strategy the restaurant employed for handling the dynamic demands of operating the restaurant while simultaneously caring for its workers.

5.2 How Volunteers Were Incorporated into the Model

Volunteers made up a large percentage of the restaurant's workforce. 541 volunteers' experience and perspectives of the work model observed by and relayed to the researcher

are summarized within this chapter. Through analysis of field note data and volunteer interview statements, several themes emerged that characterized the strengths and challenges found within the model which fell broadly into two categories: 1) training and supervision, and 2) accommodation and flexibility.

5.2.1 Training and Supervision

In speaking with others onsite it seemed many volunteers had an initial tour and reviewed the volunteer manual, which outlines basic rules and information, prior to starting their work. The researcher's experience in regard to training was not similar to that of other volunteers in this case. It is not clear why this might be, but there was no orientation to the restaurant, nor was the researcher given the volunteer manual. Upon later review, the volunteer manual is clear, concise and written in simple English. While the manual contains basic rules and necessary terminology, the vast majority of training takes place during regular hours of operation through demonstration and hands on learning.

Some volunteers are also community members that offer to help out when at the restaurant, often button users, who may never be formally scheduled or go through extensive 'training' as such to perform tasks such as bussing tables and serving. As regular members of the restaurant's own community, this subset of volunteers are well known to the staff who oversee the work done and accept or decline offers depending on if it would be helpful at the time.

Further to this point of training taking a variety of forms and degrees, for scheduled volunteers, there does not appear to be a set order of steps or prescribed progressions volunteers are taken through by the supervising staff members. The approach taken varied according to a number of factors such as the preferences and judgement of the particular supervisor, how much time the supervisor has to directly train (depending on how many other demands they must tend to during the shift), and if there are other competent volunteers who can take on some of the training. The researcher reflected after observing the variable training experiences of volunteers in her field notes. One such entry was the following:

> "Quite a variation in orientation training between the managers. Even which duties are urgent and which are not. Large benefit to volunteers to work with different mangers but also dizzying to get the hang of for some if changing expectations." (September 26)

Through exposure over time to different ways of doing the task, modelled and presented by staff and volunteer coworkers, one's overall knowledge and capacity was built. Assumptions of knowledge or information retention were avoided by staff prefacing invitations to do a particular task by first asking questions such as "Has anyone shown you how to …?" or "Have you been shown where [item] is?" Questions and asking for reminders were encouraged during training and well into many volunteers' tenure at the restaurant to clarify or recall earlier instruction. Requests for help were frequent and expected which reduced the pressure on volunteers to perfectly perform while learning on the job. One volunteer stated,

> "Like when I said I don't know what I'm doing they said, 'That's okay. No one does for a long time'. … And to this day, like even on this shift, I'll say to [manager], 'I don't know what I'm doing'. [Laughs] '[Manager], help!' But

> because it's easy to ask for help you don't feel shame or anything so it's good." (Interviewee 4)

Training opportunities naturally arose as staff identified tasks to be done. There were a number of these that were fundamental parts of every shift – serving coffee and tea, for example – that most front of house volunteers receive training to do. However, this is not always the case as some front of house volunteers do not serve coffee and tea due to reasons of preference, or it does not fall within their abilities to do so.

Training and support for some volunteers was an on-going feature of the shift depending on the worker's ability to retain and master skills as well as their expressed interest and drive to learn additional tasks. For a minority of volunteers that required permanent on-going support to carry out their tasks, this could be provided by staff, fellow volunteers or a support worker (arranged independently of 541).

Supervisory responsibility fell to the paid staff and was observed to include service and technical performance. While comments and feedback were sometimes offered by experienced volunteers, the ultimate say on what met the standard of conduct, service, and quality of work was that of the staff performing the supervisor role such as the front of house managers and program chef.

In general, the supervision style was quite relaxed as staff worked alongside the volunteers, often interacting in a friendly manner without making their ongoing

evaluation obvious. Over the course of the fieldwork very few corrective interactions with volunteers were observed and most often these took the form of a pleasantly toned reminder. Typically, staff corrected mistakes themselves, particularly if the error was minor such as misplacing an item or forgetting to bring cutlery to a table, rather than track down who made the error and bring it to their attention. For those wanting direct feedback the onus was on the individual to request it. The management style and easy-going supervisors were noted as contributing to a comfortable work environment for a number of volunteers.

Due to the nature of overseeing a busy restaurant with a range of patron and co-worker needs there were occasions when supervisors' attention was not on their volunteer crew. In the case of emergencies or the urgent need of a patron, for example, supervisors could be pulled away from the work area for prolonged periods of time as they were engrossed in the situation at hand. In these situations, volunteers continued on with their tasks independently, helped one another, or waited for the supervisor's return to ask questions or get support if needed. Occasionally though volunteers were left to their own devices. For example, a kitchen volunteer decided to "wing" a recipe while their supervisor was occupied in another part of the restaurant for an extended period rather than wait for instructions (Field note August 1). When shorthanded one shift a front of house volunteer charged with the cleaning jobs at closing looked distressed and complained, "I just wish I knew what I was doing." (Field note August 29) In the overall operation of the restaurant these instances were few and arguably inconsequential however it is noteworthy that the

supervision approach is not without flaw. With simultaneous demands on staff during opening hours it would be unrealistic to expect full attention at all times on multiple volunteers.

5.2.2 Accommodation and Flexibility

Instances of formal disability accommodation were not mentioned by volunteers during the research period or in interviews. Rather, volunteers described the overall flexible nature of the division of labour that could be easily adapted to their and/or co-worker's needs and abilities. This was made possible, in part, by scheduling an abundance of volunteers with a mix of abilities and experience whenever possible. One volunteer contrasted this with their experience in other work environments the following way:

> "I find just the amount of staff here insane… Not that I think they're being gratuitous or anything but when they send emails saying things like, "We need help on Monday" most Mondays, when I can, I come in and help but there's still four or five of us standing around talking. [Laughs] No one is angry that they're here so there's not a problem but I'm like 'This is amazing'. For me and my position for the past five years it has been like, 'You need to cut more hours.' 'Cut more labour.' 'More effectiveness, less labour.' As someone who's been in the workforce for the last decade or so, coming here where there's so much staff, so much flexibility and everything, it's nice." (Interviewee 4)

What could be seen as excess workers when compared to the staffing of a similar sized conventional restaurant provided a cushion for managers if there were volunteers to train or support. It also allowed for operation to continue smoothly when some volunteers called in sick or didn't show up which could be for a variety of reasons (short notice paid work opportunities, periodic mental or physical ill health were common for a number of the restaurant's volunteers, for example) (Interviewee 2). This also alleviated pressure on

individual volunteers whose absenteeism in other settings would have serious consequences as Interviewee 4 pointed out.

> "I do have my own personal struggles and I would feel a lot less guilty calling in or emailing and just saying, 'Hey man, tomorrow's not going to happen.' 'It's just not my day.' [Laughs] So you could do that here volunteering because it's not the same as at work where they're like, 'Well, who's going to manage the store for eight hours?'"

The overstaffing may be inefficient in the usual business sense but the practice allowed those who were inconsistent to contribute their labour when able as well as prioritize their own fundamental needs and wellbeing.

The restaurant also discovered that officially scheduling volunteers with psychiatric disabilities could be counterproductive for some and lead to feeling badly if they were not well enough to make their shift. Staff created a workaround for this particular subset of volunteers that removed the pressure of commitment but still encouraged the participation of these important members of the crew. A staff member explained,

> "I think a lot of times we found that that adds an element of pressure to show up that they actually become less consistent than if they just asked every time they're in, 'Hey, do you need help?' We have our unofficial morning volunteers of folks who come in every day to get their button breakfast and coffee who very consistently help with serving, and dishes, and cleaning up. … Yeah so we have a really good little crew of people who help out occasionally but very consistently. And then it's like, 'Hey, you're not having a good day today? You're not letting anyone down because no one actually had you committed to doing this.'" (Interviewee 2)

The flexibility of the model to accommodate more than one route to volunteering makes use of community members' labour while respecting the fact that not everyone's abilities are entirely stable. Unpredictability in the crew members added complexity for the staff to

manage but also provided more options of who could be called on to help out on the mornings when it was really needed.

The acceptance of one's limitations and helping one another are important features of 541's model. In terms of physical accommodations, adjustments such as additional breaks, switching from a standing job to seated one, or assistance carrying heavy items were regularly arranged for volunteers (Interviewees 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11). Interviewees stated they were comfortable asking for assistance and shared anecdotes such as,

> "Like last week I came in and my back and foot was sore and I couldn't carry the dishes in. So I talked to one of the girls and said, 'Listen, I'll clean dishes but can you carry them back?' That's a good way too. We don't discriminate against those things and we work together. That I like." (Interviewee 7)

Of course there were limits that were difficult to overcome, particularly to the physical layout of the restaurant workspaces. The areas behind the front counter, kitchen work surfaces and equipment were either fixed in place or could not be moved for lack of alternate options in the current design of the restaurant. Interviewee 8 pointed out that these limitations do not affect all disabled people or even in the same way. They explained,

> "I feel like any of the psychiatric disabilities, intellectual disabilities, chronic illness, most of those ones we can accommodate for just through clear communication. Some of the physical things maybe we can accommodate for but it might be a little more difficult. It might be having to move them to the [break] room to do the work where the tables are bigger for those that need a little bit more space and help them by preparing tasks preemptively prior to them getting here. So if their task is to make cookies, to have all the ingredients set out so they're not having to walk around the whole kitchen looking for things if you're visually impaired. … The height of counters, yeah. Even me, I have difficulty with the height of the counters too. This building is made for somebody that's

> 6'5" or something. [Researcher laughs] So there's obviously some room for improvement there. Those are things that mostly it's more of the structure and not things that we can't overcome with interpersonal skills."

While obstacles to complete accommodation proved difficult to overcome, the restaurant implemented effective strategies where they could by taking the social demands of the space into consideration. For instance, much of the pressure and stress of busy periods in the restaurant is removed for volunteers who could become overwhelmed by crowds in the dining room and the faster pace of service by encouraging them to take breaks during these times. Again, this is made possible by scheduling 'extra' volunteers that can cover breaks, and don't mind the lunch rush. In contrast, volunteers that need continuous social interaction or get off track when alone are strategically paired or placed into a co-worker group that will complement and support their interactive work style. Suitability of placement feedback like this was passed on by observant staff members or the worker themselves to the volunteer coordinator.

While much effort was put into balancing the needs of the volunteers against the shifts available, sometimes the perfect fit was not possible. For example, 541's summer teen leadership camp meant a short term influx of young people working in the kitchen and front of house as part of their daily schedule. This proved incompatible with some of the disabled workers' needs. The coordinator could not find a solution and shared the feedback from the disabled volunteers' side of the situation.

> "There's a tension because the teens are brand-new and need a lot of support and so do our people with disabilities sometimes. There's only so much support to go around and it's something I'm thinking through. I've probably had like three

> volunteers who have brain injuries or intellectual disabilities who are here every week I kind of told about this, and they and their parent or caregiver said like, 'No, we'll keep coming during the summer. It'll be great.' But then after having like two shifts with the teens around are like, 'They actually find this very stressful. They're going to take the summer off.'" (Interviewee 2)

In this instance the restaurant could not arrive at a solution that would accommodate both groups and made the decision to continue on with the camp for the current year while regretfully acknowledging the disruption and negative impact this could have on their disabled volunteers, families and caregivers. In this case the desire to accommodate the needs of all volunteers did not overcome the constraints (in terms of amount of space and support available) in which the restaurant operates.

Lastly, 541's flexible approach was exemplified in their expectations around productivity and pace which benefits all volunteers, but certainly volunteers with disabilities. It was observed that the most frequent response to a slower pace was no direct response at all as workers were not told to hurry up or rushed in any way. Staff and volunteers adapted to the pace of work being done by allowing the worker to focus on their task and would simply take care of the other tasks to be done at the moment. Occasionally if the task was time sensitive or someone was new to the task co-workers offered to do the task together (e.g. cleaning and putting away the many dishes from the front and back of house at closing). It was very rare for work to be interrupted with unsolicited feedback regarding pace but if it was, it was done in a gentle and friendly manner in the form of a suggestion rather than critique. One volunteer describes the laid back approach to volunteer productivity.

> "[Staff member] was like, 'Don't let anyone ever tell you that you're cutting too slowly. You do it at your own pace.' So we've never been pressured to have like a quota. Or you've got to do it. Which is one of the good things about working with people with disabilities and different needs here is that we don't have a specific amount of time we have to do things in. There'll always be someone else to help us. In the end, if we have to leave a task partway through, someone will also come and pick up the rest of the task. Whereas at a real job you've got to get it done." (Interviewee 8)

Flexibility and support at the level provided by restaurant workers, while wonderful for most, could also create unintended consequences for volunteers planning to secure paid work from their experience. One interviewee pointed out that the incredibly helpful and understanding nature of co-workers had the potential to eliminate any challenges (e.g. where self-advocacy and time management skills might be necessary) and thus impede growth by being overly accommodating (Interviewee 8). However, it was also pointed out that workers in consultation with supervisors and the volunteer coordinator were able to contrive opportunities to practice work skills and develop more independence if these were personal goals (Interviewees 2 and 8).

The restaurant's demonstrated respect for different ways of working was woven into its operations. Repeatedly volunteers showed and discussed that, as a group, they brought with them a vast number of abilities and needs that were incorporated into their work crew using creative solutions. Interestingly, "accommodations" as such did not stand out as notable to volunteers when working in an environment where difference was commonplace and adaptations routine.

5.3 Volunteers' Thoughts and Feelings about Working at 541

Volunteers offered personal reflections about how they viewed their time at the restaurant and which thoughts and feelings occurred to them as they characterized their experiences onsite. Their comments fell into the following four themes: feeling seen and valued; a space of social connection; personal gains and therapeutic motivations to volunteer; and inclusion and belonging.

5.3.1 Feeling Seen and Valued

As demonstrated above, 541 explicitly aims to provide meaningful work for a diversity of volunteers with varied needs and capacities. Staff also emphasized the importance of recognizing workers' contributions, making people feel seen and known as valued members of the restaurant's community. Volunteers often recalled this individualized attention and recognition. One such recollection was,

> "When I started to volunteer I was really blown away by how I was received into it because the managers that were working here really cared for me and what I brought to it, which I thought was something that was so cool." (Interviewee 3)

The importance of being recognized was echoed by a number of the volunteers. Many remembered being complimented by a manager for their distinct aptitudes such as conversational ease with customers and speed with kitchen tasks. Volunteers frequently identified their skills and defined their unique role within the team through reference to such feedback. Some described with pride the details of their work and accumulated skills. A disabled volunteer stated, "It made me feel good that day helping someone out." in reference to assisting a new volunteer that was feeling overwhelmed. Incidences such

as this challenge the notion of disabled people being passive recipients of care or services when the same individuals are relied upon and eagerly took on responsibilities and supported their co-workers.

In some cases, managers' efforts to value workers' skills led to new capabilities, with confident volunteers stepping up to guide and help new recruits. For example, a speedy dishwasher who mentioned, "I like when they tell me that I'm the best.", later revealed how confidence in their ability had led them to offer advice to their co-workers. They proudly explained,

> "… I notice that when I come volunteer I help show other people how to do it. Because I see how they do it and it's like, 'You're doing a great job but let me show you a couple tips that'll help you get it through quicker.'" (Interviewee 7)

During orientations, managers also pointed out which volunteers had a lot of experience and/or expertise with certain jobs at the restaurant and encouraged the newer volunteers to ask experienced volunteers for help. This was another way volunteers were seen and valued as they were openly identified as recommended 'go to' workers for their knowledge and abilities.

5.3.2 A Space of Social Connection

Besides the interaction that took place working side by side, volunteers casually engaged with one another during breaks. Every volunteer was offered a meal in return for working their shift which drew a variety of volunteers to a common area (the break room). The social mix of people interacting throughout the work day in this space was quite diverse

resulting in conversations and connections unlikely to spontaneously occur outside the restaurant context. Engaged conversation mates in the break room, including both non-disabled volunteers and those with a wide range of disabilities, chatted as they arrived or left shifts, or during breaks on nearly every shift observed. This casual social engagement over a coffee or meal was an equalizing activity, providing the potential to expand social networks. Due to diversity amongst shift mates, previously unknown resources and experiences were offered to support co-workers who could tap into multiple social networks and bolster resiliency (Interviewee 6, Interviewee 8; Field notes August 8, August 29).

Some volunteers new to the area plainly stated that their decision to participate in 541 was to meet people and learn about the community (Field notes September 27, October 31, November 7). On-going positive social connection with co-workers was reported as a draw for interviewees experiencing isolation in other settings as well. One respondent shared, “The best part is that I can work with people and I can get staff as friends and that.” (Interviewee 6) Over the course of the fieldwork and during interviews, it became evident that some of these interactions had become the starting point for relationships beyond the restaurant context (Interviewees 5, 6, 11). The shared work experience and personal ties to 541 proved beneficial beyond the restaurant context as well when workers encountered one another in unrelated settings. It was explained to the researcher that having already been introduced at the restaurant made some volunteers more likely to interact with coworkers in other settings such as support groups and on the street, leading

them to feel more at home in their community with an increased number of now familiar residents (Interviewees 5, 7).

5.3.3 Personal Gains and Therapeutic Motivations to Volunteer

Despite the exchange of food for volunteering a shift, only one volunteer encountered by the researcher mentioned this as their primary motivation to work at 541 (Field note October 25). Instead, many volunteers linked their work at the restaurant directly to benefits for their own physical and mental health. Retirees enjoyed the regular social interaction and the chance to productively participate in charitable work. A number of volunteers saw the work they engaged in as addressing inequities in the city, which was reported as personally fulfilling and aligning with their own sense of moral duty. More broadly, volunteers enjoyed a number of intangibles received in return for their work including social connection, an opportunity to express one's community values, new confidence in emerging and mastered skills, and positive self-regard based on their abilities.

For those motivated by altruistic ideals, participation in 541's work with the community, whether by directly interacting with customers or toiling behind the scenes, was seen as a worthwhile endeavour in which to dedicate their time and energy. They expressed a sense of obligation to address the obvious need in the area, but, interestingly, were also quick to recognize how their engagement with the community benefitted themselves. Interviewees enthused:

> "I kind of feel good about myself helping people. Like there's a lot of people not doing well down here. It's cool to sit down and chat with them." (Interviewee 5)

> "[I volunteer] because I've come here every day to eat and I wanted to give back to the community…" (Interviewee 7)

> "I feel it's good to give back to the community. … Because they helped us out too. I think that's a good reason to come to 541 now. Help the people who are less fortunate than me." (Interviewee 6)

Participating in 541's efforts, tangibly bettering the community, was a point of pride for a number of volunteers. Unsurprisingly, this sentiment was also expressed by the volunteers that self-identified as button users and/or people with disabilities who, through inclusive practices, had been welcomed and recognized for the skills and abilities they brought as workers.

Additionally, some volunteers incorporated their volunteer schedule into recovery and treatment plans relating to physical injury, mental ill health and/or substance misuse. One volunteer related just how difficult days with little to occupy your mind could be while coping with an addiction stating they prefer to come to the restaurant to work,

> "…to help me stay away from my extracurricular activities, AKA drugs. So I'm hoping that after I do my rehab stint I can come back in more often too, ya know? And that'll help keep me out of trouble and stuff too, right?"

Another volunteer outlined the benefit of committing to shifts in order to avoid isolation during periods of acute mental ill health. They added,

> "…that's why I'm choosing to volunteer because I'm trying to get out there, trying to stay productive, trying to maintain a normal life. … Right now it's a lifeline for me."

5.3.4 Inclusion and Belonging

In speaking with volunteers over the period of study, the researcher was struck by how few complaints or criticisms were heard. This is perhaps unsurprising as this group were largely willing participants by definition. It seems unlikely that volunteers who were uncomfortable at the restaurant or held negative opinions about it would continue to freely participate and so the research gathered is unbalanced in favour of volunteers who had positive regard for it. That being said, volunteers encountered enthused about the sense of community at 541 and how they felt very much a part of the group (or "family" as many worded it) that marked the experience as unique when compared to other places they had worked or volunteered.

As mentioned, the volunteers as a group were rich in diversity (such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender identity, religious beliefs and background, citizenship status, queerness, history with the justice system, education, ability, etc.). The ample amount of time to work together and chat with people outside one's usual social circle was viewed as enriching as stated by a volunteer,

> "I really enjoy the diversity of people that come here and the conversations that we have here are super duper interesting because of that diversity. Because we have students here, and we also have retirees. We have people recovering from substance abuse, and people who live locally here who are looking for experience to get a job. So everyone here has a different thing, different advice." (Interviewee 8)

The inclusion of disabled co-workers specifically was also appreciated by Interviewees 4, 5, 6, and 7. Interviewees 6 and 7 shared that though they liked working with disabled

volunteers that once in a while there had been initial miscommunication or friction. Interviewee 7 divulged that they asked to not be scheduled with a particular volunteer after a negative encounter but after getting to know the person more came to understand their co-worker's behaviour and could work together. This volunteer shared in the following exchange the outlook they felt was necessary to work with crew members that can be challenging.

> Interviewee 7: Open up a bit and work with them and work around the differences.
> Researcher: It takes a little time to get to know how people work, right?
> Interviewee 7: Exactly. Exactly. You think, 'They're just as good as you are. It doesn't matter if they're fast or slow.'

Inviting diverse groups of people to work together in the restaurant provided the setting in which exposure to new ideas and ways of being resulted in profound learning for some volunteers such as those illustrated above. There is the risk of discomfort, negative reactions, or conflict when placing a volunteer in a crew with co-workers they view as different. It is possible that volunteers had indeed left for these reasons and their perspectives could not be captured by the researcher. However, no such instances were observed during the field work other than giving a stressed worker space to deal with some anxious energy (August 30), and the occasional need to dig deep into one's reserves of patience when interacting with a co-worker (September 27, October 24, December 19). One of the volunteers described the rationale for taking the risk in the context of the 541's mission.

> "I don't think we've ever really said no to anyone [who wanted to volunteer]. Maybe in post we've had to say you're not the right fit if something really is not working out. Or we have to pull people aside for a chat to say, 'Hey, there was an incident with another volunteer. This is how we can probably do it better'. So

> having that, some people can say it's a liability, because obviously you sort of poke the bear in terms of we don't know how this person is going to do, but let's try. But that's also what we're about here. We need to give a chance to people who don't get chances." (Interviewee 8)

It is curious how the multitude of differences between the workers at 541 were bridged to the extent that meaningful and caring bonds were formed. One volunteer provided a clue in the following quote.

> "So I feel like here it really has fostered a really good environment where we can be open about our disabilities and our weaknesses and it's really great. I feel like our managers do a really good job here just fostering that. … There's no sense of we can't talk right now because we're working. Which I feel fosters that communication that is required to really understand and work well with somebody with a disability." (Interviewee 8)

It seems staff play a key role in setting norms around respect for and genuine interest in their coworkers. When coupled with extended opportunities to talk and share about one's life a comfort had been created with one another which allowed for bonds to form between a number of crew members. This seemed to be behind the warm and enthusiastic kinship expressed about 541 by its volunteers summarized succinctly by Interviewee 6 in this way, "541, to me, is a family but it's also a beautiful community!"

5.4 Demands and Rewards of Working as a Staff Member

The demands of most of the paid staff positions at 541 are unusually complex and numerous when compared to conventional restaurants. As staff endeavoured to welcome everyone, including patrons and volunteers, they performed two main functions – operating the restaurant and caring for those around them. This chapter summarizes the

many duties staff juggle, the toll this can take on individual workers and the motivations expressed for continuing in these challenging positons.

5.4.1 Additional Demands of the Job – Working with the Public and Fellow Staff

The complex demands of supporting volunteers at 541 have been described in the previous chapters as staff were called on to flexibly respond to a variety of worker needs in a warm and inclusive manner. Alone, this is a difficult role to fulfill, however, staff had two additional groups to serve and support – patrons and fellow staff members.

Patrons that came to the restaurant, if not already aware that it had a social mission and/or that it had volunteer workers, quickly learned so (Interviewee 3). Staff spoke about how this altered the expectations of customers as a result. The customer experience was slightly different in terms of interactions with workers and other patrons as compared with mainstream cafés and restaurants because of the policy of inclusion of marginalized people. A staff member explained,

> "Usually people are understanding that this place is going to be a little bit different, right? It's not uber-efficient like where you're used to going. Most people are fine with that. As someone else said to you, if they're not fine with that then go somewhere else. [Laughs]" (Interviewee 10)

Operating with a different set of social norms and expectations was seen as a plus by some staff members with restaurant and café experience because it led to comparatively less pretention and competition amongst workers which allowed them to focus on preparing and serving food and drinks without unnecessary pressure and negativity in

their work environment (Interviewees 10, 11). However, not all patrons were on board with this alternate experience which periodically elicited complaints with which workers had to contend. Workers relayed,

> "We have people who come and they take longer than anybody else to get the food out. You see them wandering around and think, 'Should I just go see... no, she's good. She found it.' What I'm also watching is if anybody's going to complain they get to deal with me first. They're not going to complain at her." (Interviewee 9)

> "I've also had people come up to me and say, 'This person sitting near me is so smelly that I feel like I can't eat my lunch.' Soooo…? [Laughs] I'm not going to ask them to move if that's what you're hoping. If customers come in and have a complaint about something, and it's not one of our priorities, we just kind of say, 'I'm sorry, but that's just what it's going to be.'"(Interviewee 10)

One of the priorities referred to is creating and maintaining relationships with patrons from the Barton Village neighbourhood. Front of house managers in particular interacted with and got to know locals who used 541's button system and made time to check in with them. Interviewees described the importance of these connections and the kind of supportive relationships they sought to cultivate.

> "It was told to me right from the start, making them feel known is a priority for us as a restaurant. …They said we really encourage you to learn as many names as you can and a little bit about them. Just ask some questions, try and sit down with people, make them feel really welcome. … It's very ingrained into the culture of 541 to make sure everyone feels pretty known." (Interviewee 10)

> "Another thing is we just really want to see people encouraged and loved and supported in wherever that they are. Even if that does mean challenging, that we to do it in a way that is loving and supportive and all that kind of stuff. (Interviewee 3)

In this way, an informal counselling or social work[9] type role was performed albeit without training. The researcher noted the amount of time spent with customers varied greatly from none observed to approximately half an hour depending on the staff member (August 16, September 11, September 26). One staff member explained they judge for themselves if they feel they could offer some assistance through conversation or often just listening.

> "We try to help out with the wellbeing of people. If we have the chance and it's quiet, we can chat with regulars for as long as we want about whatever we feel comfortable with. As far as boundaries with regulars, we make those ourselves." (Interviewee 10)

The researcher did wonder about how staff cope with this role (e.g. exposure to vicarious trauma), even if informal, and the effectiveness of the support given – particularly for those with little to no experience or training in counselling (Field notes September 20, November 20).

Front of house staff also were responsible for policing the dining area and washrooms in regard to upholding basic rules (e.g. no violence, no illegal activities, no swearing) and making sure banned individuals (for not complying and often lasting for a set period of time) did not enter the building. Back of house staff served as backup if the need arose. Front of house staff were also typically the first to respond to medical emergencies (e.g. calling 911) because of their presence in the areas accessible to the general public.

[9] The labels 'counselling' and 'social work' were not spontaneously offered by staff themselves to describe their work with patrons. The researcher used these terms in interviews and onsite when discussing supportive aspects of the role.

Multiple minor infractions (e.g. verbal fights) and few serious incidents (e.g. staff member shoved, drug use in the washrooms) occurred during the course of the study period, to the researcher's knowledge. Generally though, the restaurant was peaceful with few instances that required the staff to step in and re-establish a safe space.

Staff mentioned they relied on each other in a number of ways to manage their roles. The ideas shared around the success of this mutual support were not homogenous though. By far, the majority interviewed had only positive things to say about the bonds and support of the staff such as,

> "One thing is just because we see a lot of heavy things day to day, are doing things that are a little bit hard, the staff has such camaraderie. We all just love each other so much. We hold each other up really well. […] We definitely are more like a family than just coworkers." (Interviewee 10)

As contrast, another staff member's perspective was less rosy.

> "What I hope for 541 is that the staff continually come back to each other and even deeper into our relationships together because I think that's the strength of it. I think that holds us together quite well. When we start nipping at each other is when we fall apart. … I see us in a lot of ways starting to get back to back against each other and just being kind of consumed because there's not much… there's not really the support at like a higher up or the outside to pour in energy, resources, this and that. I feel like we're starting to get back to back with each other and then it's about end. … When we start nipping at each other is when we fall apart. And that is true for any really well run restaurant. It just feels like the wear and tear is pretty great at 541. So I would hope that we would keep the strength of our team together." (Interviewee 1)

Staff offered instances of receiving and giving help to one another such as responding to emergencies together, taking over duties in the short-term to provide a reprieve for an overwhelmed co-worker, and covering additional shifts so coworkers could tend to their

own physical and mental health needs (Field notes August 2, September 19, October 18, October 25, November 14; Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 10, 11). As previously stated, staff reported the sharing of personal struggles (e.g. feeling jaded, feeling anxious, dealing with depression, being emotionally triggered by a patron, etc.) was comfortable to do one-to-one or in larger groupings such as at staff meetings because it had become a regular part of the workplace culture (Interviewees 10, 11). No interviewees said it was an explicit part of their job to check in with their staff mates in terms of health and wellbeing, but it was clearly a responsibility felt by some. One staffer explained their approach and the reciprocity expected as characteristic of 541.

> "Yeah, just often checking in to make sure they're not feeling overwhelmed. And I guess creating that space to start the conversation. That way they don't feel, 'Ah, I feel bad for saying this'. Creating that space where they can say if it's too much or they need less time here or something. […] If that day I have to do double duty, that's okay. It happens. I think the same people would do it for me. Maybe what's special about here is that people here feel that they can disclose that with me and be open about it which also probably doesn't happen in all work places." (Interviewee 11)

As staff checked in with and cared for one another they provided a considerable amount of support which deepened the bonds between them and made it possible for some staff to remain at 541 that might otherwise have left. This created some unpredictability around which staff member would ultimately be working a shift day to day (when compared against the weekly schedule), but possibly resulted in less overturn in the long run. The additional care role meant added responsibilities for those giving support in the short term, adding to their workload, as well as additional time invested in the communication and observation necessary to be attuned and responsive to staff mates' needs.

Necessarily, staff's attention and energy was frequently split between monitoring and responding to patron situations, training and overseeing an ever-changing roster of crew members and supporting fellow staff members. These roles and responsibilities created a challenging work environment where persistent multitasking and immense amounts of energy were invested by 541's staff at no small cost to the individual, as will be discussed.

5.4.2 The Toll of an Inclusive Model on Staff

An inclusive model of work, theoretically, seems necessary for any progressively-minded enterprise. However, the cost of implementing and maintaining inclusive practices is not small. In the case of 541, the brunt of this effort was felt by its paid staff members. As mentioned, managing the many tasks that fell into the dual roles of caring for others and operating the restaurant required multiple skill sets – technical knowledge and exceptional interpersonal skills – along with immense amounts of energy to sustain.

As staff endeavoured to make people entering the space feel welcomed and valued there were very few instances observed of an overt struggle to maintain a warm and friendly demeanor. The clues indicating the effort to maintain this were subtle such as the one described below.

> "[Staffperson's] tone and expression doesn't come across as anything but direct and calm. But there is something in the extra pause before they spoke to [Volunteer], like an extra breath, that I recognize as someone's patience is being tried. A need to recruit your patience before responding." (Field note October 24)

More so there were statements by staff and obvious signs of exhaustion. In the researcher's field notes there was reflection on how tiring a particular shift had felt due to repeated instances of a volunteer's less than polite interactions with the public.

> "Given that I've been noting yesterday and today that the front of house managers seem very tired and burnt out, I can only imagine how having volunteers that need extra supervision, cause tension, and demand patience must be frustrating – the kind of frustrating that could wear on you week after week." (Field note October 18)

Welcoming marginalized people into the space for the most part was uneventful but did have aspects which became a drain on staff and undermined their optimism at times. For example, one staff member admitted,

> "As far as negative things about the job, it is… I can feel it slowly jading me and making me feel like 'What's the point?' [Laughs] A little bit. I'm still hanging onto hope a little bit but it definitely feels sometimes like you're not even making the tiniest dent in all these broken situations. That doesn't mean you don't do it." (Interviewee 10)

Multiple staff members lamented the on-going struggle they saw in the community with addictions and drug use. While drug use was not permitted at the restaurant, the staff had to deal with it nonetheless as they interacted with patrons who were not sober as well as problems centered around the washrooms (e.g. property damage from scorch marks, unsafe disposal of needles and paraphernalia, people passing out and/or overdosing). Not only was the cycle of addiction difficult to witness, but the staff enforced rules which included banning patrons for periods of time knowing they would forego access to the restaurant's safe space (compared to the streets or social groups which may do little to support one seeking sobriety), use of its button system, and caring relationships. At times workarounds were found by speaking with patrons outside and/or allowing another

person to get food for a banned person, however, some staff expressed moments of helplessness to make much impact or remain hopeful of meaningful change given their limited resources (August 16, September 11, September 26, October 18; Interviewee 10). Some staff members wished they could receive training or expand their team to include a social worker with the expertise to assist patrons in crisis and to step in "for when [they] have those scary crisis moments", seeing expense as the only significant barrier but unlikely to be overcome in the near future (Interviewees 10, 11).

Several staff members shared that the demands had at one point become too much to handle either in the short or long term which for some meant taking time off or reducing their hours permanently. A staff member related,

> "I'm working a couple of less days. [Staff member] has just offered, 'I'll work one of your occasional shifts. Just ask.' So [staff member] has worked a couple of extra shifts for me. So has [another staff member]. So I feel very comfortable doing that. I mean, many, so many of our staff members have anxiety and depression [laughs] – which hopefully hasn't resulted from working there – and we're all just very open about that. We're very willing to jump in and help the other person out."

Some staff found the work environment particularly taxing when going through periods of mental ill health which affected them outside of work and necessitated increased time dedicated to self-care. A fairly large staff of part-time workers allowed some flexibility in scheduling to cover co-workers' absences and to keep the restaurant going, if a bit stretched on occasion (Field note October 17).

5.4.3 Motivations for Staff

Certainly there was more to the experience of working at 541 than the rather bleak picture painted in the preceding section. In fact, most staff members only delved into the difficulties of their positions when directly asked but were still willing to share personal struggles with the researcher. Staff were as equally open about what kept them at the restaurant as they had been with their opinions in the previous sections. By way of conversations during shifts and interviews the researcher gathered that the staff felt strong attachments to the restaurant's inclusive community and found their work within it rewarding on a number of levels – socially, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

Staff spoke at length about how much they had learned and grown from working and interacting with the diverse group of people at the restaurant. Staff mentioned that spending time at the restaurant had expanded their world view and understanding of marginalized people (Interviewees 1, 3, 10, 11). Interviewee 1 expressed it this way,

> "I think your understanding and appreciation of the complexity of things just deepens as you get to know folks and see folks. Things are not black and white and people's lives are not black and white. You just see so much. So much good and so much not so good."

Interviewee 3 continued in this vein with an appreciation for the complexity of the group dynamic at the restaurant and the personal development gained by navigating inclusive spaces in the following quote:

> "How do we deal with our differences? How do we have healthy conversations around different ways that people see some situations which I think is really interesting and an important aspect too. … I think that's an important part of thinking about how do people with different abilities, backgrounds, values, beliefs work together in a positive way that challenges, critiques, brings in alignment, the

> values and ethos of the whole place. I know, myself, I've been really challenged on some biases or stereotypes or whatever that I may have had of people in a very healthy way.… which is great. You learn a lot."

Some interviewees made special note of how they had built on communication skills as they adapted to the range of verbal and non-verbal idiosyncrasies of the volunteers (Interviewees 3, 10, 11). Interviewee 10 used an example of a volunteer expressing distress by abruptly and silently leaving the building to illustrate and reflect on their own learning opportunities.

> "I guess also learning different ways that people are saying no if they can't actually verbalize it. That's still like [them] saying no. It's still powerful but just a different way. And that's okay. Yeah, I've just learned so many different ways of interacting with people and the different ways that people interact." (Interviewee 11)

Learning and experimenting with new ways to communicate with patrons and volunteers also provided mental stimulation for staff. Although remaining flexible was certainly tiring for them as they figured out how to tailor training and duties to volunteers, or communicate effectively with patrons on the fly, this presented them with novel problems and situations to engage with in an ever-changing social dynamic. Managers were allowed the freedom to react and use their judgement about how best to proceed with training and how far to push volunteers based on their read of the person, which was another opportunity to refine and apply one's social intelligence in the work context. The unpredictability could therefore be viewed as a pro and con but certainly provided additional facets to the work not seen in a typical café or restaurant which also presented staff with thought-provoking issues to consider.

Among these issues was how best to be of service to the community. Staff framed their work in different ways including addressing economic inequities and social injustices or simply helping others as a good thing to do. Some staff members described their work using a Christian perspective on the concept of service as well (Interviewees 1, 3, 9). Staff indicated they felt the work they did was one way they expressed their own values of acceptance and respect for others which aligned well with the overarching mission of 541. Having a wide swath of community members that embodied diverse abilities and capacities was integral to this vision. Staff members stated,

> "Because we're providing a place where everybody's accepted and the differences are there in the customers, and the differences are there in our volunteers. That's very important, very valuable and very part of our core identity I think." (Interviewee 9)
> "I think we are a sign of something different. Not just business as usual coming to get something. I think we're an indication of a time and a place when all will have an opportunity." (Interviewee 1)

Another motivating factor for staff was the social connections they had developed with patrons which opened the door to offer help and support. Staff noted how rewarding it was to form relationships with the 'regulars' that may or may not seek out friendship and/or assistance from time to time. Interviewee 3 described why they enjoyed helping out the patrons they had created relationships with this way,

> "[It is good] to see healing and growth from situations of hurt. Because building relationships and friendships invites this sort of vulnerability and working through things with people. […] Sometimes what will happen is if there's a conflict situation with someone that happens for a few weeks or something, and then it's resolved, at the end it's always so much better than it was before. Which is also really great to be a part of."

Both onsite and in interviews a satisfaction was described from earning the trust of skeptical regulars or bonding with people that were tougher to get to know which was accompanied by a responsibility felt to live up to the trust placed in them by continuing to be at the restaurant (Field note August 16; Interviewees 3, 10, 11).

As has hopefully become clear by this point, overseeing an army of volunteers was exhausting but also provided a regular and necessary influx of enthusiasm to the paid staff. Staff members acknowledged they wanted to "honour the generosity" of volunteers by making sure they are enjoying their shifts which added the role of host to their regular duties (Interviewees 2 and 10). It was clear though how much staff also appreciated the energy and enthusiasm brought into the restaurant by many of its volunteers. Some staff members included volunteers in the "family" at 541, acknowledging how much they've grown personally from those relationships and took inspiration from the commitment of time, energy, and positivity brought to the restaurant and its mission on a regular basis. One manager explained the two sides of working with volunteers in this way:

> "As much as that feels like pressure sometimes, it's also a really lovely aspect of the job that you're working with people who are volunteering their time. You get to know a lot of really beautiful, generous people that way." (Interviewee 10)

Despite the demands on staff to handle two roles at once, the researcher was told by multiple respondents the work performed was deeply meaningful and worth engaging in on a personal level. As Interviewee 11 summed up,

> "Being here and seeing so many different things, like death, and addiction and also being here for good things like recovery and families, it just feels like my community and also my home. I'm not in the place where I would ever think of

> leaving now. … I think I just fell in love with this place because its whole core is just people and relationship. I have found deep meaning in that. I didn't find that in other restaurants before."

5.5 Sustainability at the Organizational Level

Like many social enterprises, 541's financial sustainability is dependent on a creative mix of funding. Currently, they are a program of Compass Point Bible Church (located in the neighbouring city, Burlington, Ontario) run at arm's length with the guidance of the church's steering committee. The church's financial commitment effectively covered the monthly lease and three staff positions (executive director, youth outreach worker, and volunteer coordinator). The remaining operational costs, including the paid restaurant staff positions, were covered through food and beverage sales, periodic grants, fundraising events, and donations.

Realizing early on that their church needed to draw on experience local to Barton Village, the founders recruited an executive director who works as a reverend in the community and also allowed for the "process of natural experimentation" that has shaped the day-to-day restaurant operations in response to the needs of its neighbourhood. This degree of autonomy granted by the steering committee has proven valuable to the growth of the restauant as the executive director stated, "I think that that has been an unexpected blessing and I think it's allowed us to become the organization that we're becoming today."

Maintenance of the restaurant's social mission guided a number of operational decisions. For example, using a volunteer model, while initially proposed as a cost cutting measure was not truly efficient from a business perspective. The executive director explained,

> "It saves us money, but when we don't get volunteers and we just do things with staff, we're more efficient. But it teaches us to value slowness. It allows us to provide a place for people who wouldn't have employment anywhere, but see this as their place of employment whether they're paid or not."

When faced with the efficiency trade offs of using volunteers, the restaurant decided to proceed knowing they were providing meaningful work experience for marginalized people.

As with many social enterprises, these trade offs between mandate and economic reality come with financial implications which can threaten an organization's long-term sustainability. The choice of inclusion over efficiency was described by one staff member in the following way:

> "… we're very good at making room for people because being a restaurant is not our first, even primary goal. We're good at it because we're willing to sacrifice things. Like in a bad rush, things like efficiency, or pumping through orders. You know, maybe that will be the death of us really. Maybe that in the long run will be small chips at business. People saying 'You weren't fast enough when I was here at lunch'. That's why I think maybe we're just a signpost for a time and then it may have to end."

It was the fundamental dedication to inclusion and serving its community that makes 541 uniquely able to attract and rally support in the form of donations and volunteers. Conversely, this dedication also makes it vulnerable by its reliance on the funding relationship with a church and other donors, which could conceivably change in times of

economic uncertainty or recession. The future of 541 is understandably not guaranteed which staff acknowledge but also underscore that the need for such a place will remain. As gentrification makes it way towards Barton Village it seems likely residents who are already struggling financially will face increasing housing costs which will make the pay-it-forward button system all the more necessary. That being said, if at some point 541 were forced to close, there is hope that it will have provided a powerful example of what is possible when a diverse group of people comes together to respond to community need. Interviewee 1 concluded,

> "If this thing goes, it's in the imagination of folks. It's been a sign."

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion

"I don't think this is the answer to world hunger. I don't know that it will ever do away with food banks because hunger, and social exclusion, and marginalization are multifactorial in their causes and in their solutions. There's no one solution. But I think it maybe fits part of the jigsaw puzzle. I think it's a way of doing things a bit differently which is useful. I think shaking things up is often helpful. Not just for the sake of shaking things up but to say, 'How can we imagine things to be different?'" (Interviewee 9)

6.1 Summary of Findings

From the analysis a number of key findings emerge about the challenges and successes of working within the inclusive model chosen by 541. As a brief reminder to the reader, an orientation to the site in Chapter 4: Context established important features of the restaurant with which to appreciate the points of analysis fully. The social and physical location of Barton Village was selected in large part due to the Code Red report which spurred the 541 founders' invention of a place-based approach to assist residents experiencing poverty and food insecurity within the neighbourhood's food desert. The restaurant's physical and social space was described in the chapter for the reader to visualize workers' surroundings including the material and social characteristics volunteers and paid staff inhabit and interact with during their shifts as they performed in their various positions.

Next the analysis began in earnest using data collected onsite during the six-month research period over which the researcher took on the role of restaurant volunteer in the front of house and back of house work environments. During her time as a participant observer she gained first-hand knowledge of the demands of the work performed while

also observing and inquiring about co-worker experiences. This data was recorded and reflected on in detailed field notes after each shift was completed. In addition to field work, twelve interviews were conducted with workers to gain further insight into the operations as well as decision-making and motivations for their continued involvement in the restaurant community. Semi-structured, long form interviews also allowed participants uninterrupted time to give more fulsome and reflective responses than would normally be possible while busily engaged in their respective tasks. Through analysis in chapter 5 of these two types of data five main categories of findings about the 541 worker experience emerged: building relational space; how volunteers were incorporated into the work model used; the volunteers' own thoughts and feelings about working at the restaurant; the demands and rewards of working as a staff member; and sustainability at the organizational level.

In section 5.1 attention was drawn to how relational space was created in the restaurant environment. Staff welcomed difference and demonstrated respect, curiosity and appreciation for patrons and co-workers which set the bar for behaviour in the space and was picked up by many of the volunteers. Recall how rather than underlining disability-based identifiers or descriptors in the course of conversation, appreciation of exemplary personality traits or skillfulness were far more common amongst co-workers. Supervisors adjusted training and volunteer support to the members of their crew while providing opportunities and scheduling changes to accommodate their wants and needs whenever possible. As well, staff and volunteers enjoyed the caring environment established by

being open about their own struggles or when in need of help which created space for others to similarly share and offer support to one another. Once social risk of vulnerability had been diminished a number of volunteers and staff found they were able to genuinely connect with co-workers.

How volunteers were incorporated into the work crews at 541 was related in section 5.2. Beginning with orientation and training, supervisors established a low-pressure environment where volunteers were not held to strict expectations of performance or perfect recall of instruction. Supervisors gently offered reminders or corrected errors themselves, often inconspicuously observing their crew and stepping in to offer support when needed. Formal accommodations were not identified by volunteers as being particularly relevant where different abilities and ways of working were commonplace and adaptation ordinary. Staff and volunteers pointed out there were some instances when accommodating the needs of all disabled workers was not possible due to the physical design of workspaces or when multiple volunteers requiring a lot of support had to be scheduled at the same time. While the point was made that co-workers could perhaps be too flexible and supportive which could result in lost skill development opportunities such as self-advocacy and time management it was countered that these situations could be arranged if volunteers requested it.

Next we heard from the volunteers themselves in section 5.3 as they shared their thoughts and feelings on what it was like to work at the restaurant. Workers felt seen as members

of the 541 community and recognized for their skills and contributions. For some volunteers it was the social aspect of the experience that they saw as the largest draw with the restaurant providing a friendly setting in which to enjoy meeting new people, learn about others and form new relationships. A number of volunteers expressed the personal satisfaction that came with their work helping others while some thought of the restaurant as part of their own recovery plans from physical injury, mental ill health and/or substance misuse. Many expressed the fondness they had for their coworkers whose differences could also make initial interactions challenging as they learned how to communicate and understand one another. Over time many developed familial-type bonds as they moved from seeing new co-workers as unfamiliar others to trusted crew mates and confidantes working together in the restaurant's atmosphere of non-judgmental belonging.

Section 5.4 presented the dual roles and demands placed on staff. At first glance it seemed curious why restaurant employees would be willing to take on additional social work responsibilities and remain in positions that require them to juggle complex and dynamic needs of patrons, volunteers and fellow staff members. Staff shared the struggles to maintain their energy and hope when faced with difficult, sometimes dire situations of their patrons. As was discussed though, due to the amount of support staff provided each other, personal growth, and inspiration received by the restaurant's community, it was possible to continue, albeit with breaks from the setting or a reduction in hours for some. For the most part staff expressed an appreciation for the rewards that accompanied their

work and echoed the sentiments of volunteers – that they felt at home in the restaurant and highly valued the relationships created within its community.

The analysis was wrapped up with a brief discussion of the sustainability of 541 as an organization in section 5.5. As is the case with many social enterprises, staff were quite aware of the prickly financial realities of running a business while delivering on their mandate: to alleviate food insecurity while simultaneously inviting and accommodating a diverse crew of volunteers to take part. To their credit, they managed to adapt to the needs of the community in a number of ways and keep the restaurant running despite admitted inefficiencies that came with their inclusive volunteer model. Staff were under no illusion that the mix of funding that has sustained them to this point would continue indefinitely. Opinions on the future of 541 were cautious but emphasized that the needs of people in Barton Village were unlikely to disappear making the presence of the restaurant an important example of caring individuals coming together to address the needs of their neighbours, with their neighbours.

6.2 541 and Diverse Economies

As signs of gentrification appear in the vicinity of the restaurant with the arrival of property redevelopers and businesses (e.g. coffee shops and restaurants) that are unaffordable to long-standing residents we are reminded of Gibson-Graham's anti-capitalist economic forms (see Chapter 2: Literature Review), of which 541 is a good example. The reader will recall that community-based economic problem solving can be

an empowering expression of dissent. Members of a social enterprise distill and reflect the values and ethics of the people involved in their creation and continued function.

The small scale of local economies was also described by Gibson-Graham as being easier for people to grasp as a concept which in turn may make it seem approachable in comparison to remote and unwieldy global economic processes. This rings true for volunteers in terms of the obvious and direct rewards volunteers receive in exchange for their labour – pride and satisfaction in helping out neighbours in need and earning a meal for themselves – which sidesteps the passive consumer relationship with restaurants residents are accustomed to and instead invites patron contributions to the wellbeing and resiliency of their neighbours. Rather than trying to affect change at the inaccessible level of the global or national economy, residents can observe and engage in meaningful, caring relationships in the restaurant setting as they invest the time and talents they have to offer.

6.3 Situating Disability as Difference

The respect shown for different ways of being and different ways of working mark 541 as an unusual workplace. Staff stated working with all volunteers was about "meeting them where they're at". The analysis presented in this thesis shows that this openness to difference creates a workplace in which the ascribed binaries of 'disabled worker' and 'non-disabled worker' become less important.

This has two implications. First, 541 provides a useful illustration of Gibson-Graham's argument that place-based strategies to address local issues must be inclusive of the differences found in the community in order to accrue the diversity of experience and insight of its residents. 541's flexibility around who can participate (e.g. making room for unscheduled volunteers) allows for ongoing interaction with disabled residents who provide comment on how the restaurant is run and what could be improved upon for the sake of the neighbourhood. Along with the needs expressed by patrons this provides feedback essential to meet their social mandate to welcome everyone.

Second, the analysis shows how the restaurant's approach creates an enabling environment for both disabled and non-disabled workers. Rather than relating experiences of pressure to adhere to rigidly defined ableist standards of productivity (as described by Kafer), workers at 541 described flexible and inventive accommodations that made supporting crew members and receiving support entirely common occurrences – whether identified as disabled or not. Notably, workers were not rushed, with a variety of paces deemed acceptable. This is not to say that all needs could be accommodated, but the range of abilities and types of labour performed would greatly outnumber those of mainstream restaurants and cafés. Staff helped volunteers find their niche within the workplace and acknowledged crew members for their particular skills, abilities and traits. A number of volunteers took pride in their role and contribution to the community while also enjoying the relationships they had formed within the 541 'family'. Taking the time to establish relationships made holistic understanding of workers possible, which allowed

for necessary adjustments to tasks and schedules, as suggested by Lysaght, Townsend and Orser (1994), and made the work environment comfortable to be in. This, coupled with the normalized environment of difference and inclusion, may have contributed to 541 being viewed as an attractive place to work for disabled workers.

6.4 Social Inclusion at 541

Both staff and volunteers expressed an appreciation for the diversity of the workers they were able to interact with and from whom they learned so much. With extended opportunities to talk and share life experiences while meeting people outside one's usual social circle, workers received a notably unique experience. As workers incrementally learned about one another and "work[ed] around the differences" during their shifts, respect and new understanding of fellow crew members was cultivated. Biases were challenged and social networks were expanded. Intellectual and social outcomes such as these are severely limited in segregated, homogenous, disability-specific social enterprises with fewer opportunities to encounter diverse others. However, assumptions that so-called 'disability spaces' (such as social enterprises designed for disabled people) or inclusive spaces like 541 can consistently engender feelings of belonging for all disabled people across time has also been called into question (Morrison, Woodbury, Johnston, & Longhurst, 2020). It would seem though, relying on the experiences relayed to the researcher, that social enterprises that welcome the community in its vast diversity provide an enriching environment for many workers and creates an engaging environment where potential interactions and connections can form among residents and visitors.

6.5 Shaping Social Enterprises Through Strategic Hiring

In general, the social economy fills in gaps that neither conventional enterprises (because there is no profit to be had) nor the state (because there is no political will to do so) have addressed. As described by Quarter, Mook and Armstrong (2018), the work social enterprises often undertake is expensive to deliver to their respective communities. With this comes the understanding that these businesses have financially lean periods and uncertainties which can result in a small number of employees performing a large number of tasks. In many cases, social enterprises rely, at least in part, on employee dedication to the social cause being addressed to retain overworked, qualified individuals who could secure less demanding positions elsewhere. This type of work draws people who are socially engaged, non-materialistic and optimistic they can impact the world around them.

When considering 541 it is apparent that the staff exhibit a deep commitment to the restaurant's mandate despite the toll it takes on individuals as evidenced by the solidarity described and the amount of mutual support given. The executive director plays an immense role in determining the social atmosphere created in the restaurant by articulating how the mandate is to be realized by staff, modelling the expected standards for interacting with workers and patrons, and selecting workers that can remain dedicated to the mandate and supportive to their colleagues in the face of frequent challenges. These hiring decisions are crucial as employees must also model and maintain the ideals of the restaurant community's relational character. With different leadership, and therefore different decision-making, the restaurant's atmosphere and operation could substantially

shift, thus creating a vastly different environment and experience for the workers of 541 Eatery and Exchange.

6.6 Limitations

As mentioned, the researcher encountered volunteers that, as the word implies, continued to be involved with 541 by choice. This resulted in participants that, on the whole, had quite positive experiences and comments to share. Missing from the data and analysis are those that discontinued volunteering for a number of possible reasons – among them could be negative experiences and/or failure to have their needs accommodated. These perspectives were not captured and thus the research is skewed toward the experience of whom 541 provides a reasonably good fit in terms of work goals, needs and preferences.

6.7 Future work

A longitudinal study of the site could be undertaken to accrue knowledge of the maintenance of an inclusive workplace in response to the shifting needs of workers and the community. As the organization modifies their work practices in response to economic disturbances (e.g. pandemic-induced economic downturn) useful findings as an example of reconfiguring operations while balancing the social mandate to meet the complex needs of its home community may be found.

Another research possibility could be a comparative study of two or more social enterprises to investigate how inclusive workplace models are interpreted and

implemented in accordance to the needs of their respective communities and/or type of social enterprise.

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Appendix A

The excerpt below is taken from The Guardian and is part of a longer nine-page article. The internet link to the article in its entirety can be located in the bibliography.

From freecycling to Fairphones: 24 ways to lead an anti-capitalist life in a capitalist world

We asked readers for their thoughts on 'non-capitalist living' and were deluged with replies. Here are their ideas for everyday ways to buck the system.

John Harris on 10 Dec 2018 06.00 GMT

As the new Amazon advert goes, can you feel it? Amid the encroaching dark and increasingly foul weather, December is synonymous with stampedes to the supermarket, endless online clicks and the massed roar of delivery lorries – or, to be reductive about it, capitalism at its most joyful and triumphant.

Clearly, though, such things are only part of who we are, even at this time of year. As the American activist Rebecca Solnit puts it in her short but brilliant book Hope in the Dark: "Vast amounts of how we live our everyday lives – our interactions with and commitments to family lives, friendships, avocations, membership in social, spiritual and political organisations – are in essence non-capitalist or even anti- capitalist, full of things we do for free, out of love and on principle."

The internet has made these deeply political activities even more visible. From growing your own food, through refusing to buy a car, on to freecycling and volunteering, there are no end of ways that people quietly reject the imperatives of pounds and profit, and thousands of initiatives and organisations that allow them to do so.

When I asked Guardian readers recently for examples of "everyday things that represent non- capitalist living". I received a deluge of replies, full of very useful advice and an appealing spirit of qualified hope. "I am frequently filled with despair at the way things are going in the world at the moment, and doing this small thing at least makes me feel as though I'm doing something positive," said one participant, which gets to the heart of the idea, and the responses collected here.

Appendix B

Illustrative excerpt taken from *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities* by J. K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy.

JOSEF'S DAY

Josef is a forty-two-year-old who lives outside the mainstream in Australia. As a younger man he dabbled in carpentry but then faced some major health challenges. He married and had a few children. With a mental illness that meant he could no longer find paying jobs, in his mid-thirties he went on a disability pension. He put time into bringing up his kids and getting his life back on track. The family moved to a smaller town where living is cheap. They moved into a rental property that Josef, after negotiation with the owner, was able to renovate using cast-off materials. Through connections at his local church, he started to volunteer his carpentry and other skilled services to families in need in his local community.

These days Josef rises at 7:00 a.m. to make breakfast for his two school-age children. The younger two live with his now separated wife, and he sees them only on weekends. After feeding the kids and animals around the house, it's off to school. During the school year he spends two hours working on the chicken pens and compost system he has constructed at the primary school. Working alongside one of the teachers, he helps instruct the class of students who have been allocated chicken care for that week.

At 11:00 a.m. he meets up with a crew of six other unemployed men in the neighborhood whom he has enrolled into a small volunteer social enterprise called PLAY, which stands for Play, Learning, Activity, Yakka (an Aboriginal term for hard work that is now part of Australian English). The PLAY group head to the house of a single parent with small children where they are constructing a shade arbor over a sand pit in the backyard. On the way they collect shade cloth donated by the local hardware store, timber from a building site whose materials they have permission to recycle, and some salad vegetables from the community garden where some of the members have garden beds. After two hours of work, the group stops for lunch and a rest. Lunch is the salad they have brought and a cake made by the young mother whose yard they are improving. Over lunch Josef counsels some of the younger men about recent upheavals in their lives. Another hour of work and cleanup from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m., and then it's back to the school for Josef.

He picks up his kids and some of their friends and takes them to the local swimming pool for a couple of hours. At 5:00 p.m. he's back home to supervise homework and prepare dinner. By 7:30 p.m. the chores are done, and Josef settles down with his children for an hour of music, reading aloud, and scrapbook making. After they are in bed at 8:30, he puts in two hours of work on the computer, writing a manual for other schools that want to set up integrated systems of chicken raising, compost collection, and water and waste management. From 10:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. he meditates, and then it's bedtime.

Appendix C

Interview Schedule for Volunteers

Note: If the interviewee has shared they have one or more disabilities, the wording of the questions will be adapted to reflect this (i.e. "If you or another volunteer with a disability needed an accommodation…"

Note: Reminder to interviewer to say prior to questions "As we're going through the questions just a reminder that all the names will be changed. Any identifying characteristics will be removed from my notes."

1. When did you start volunteering at 541?
   [Alternate version: It may have been a long time ago now, but do you remember when you started volunteering at 541? Prompt: When was that?]

2. Why did you start volunteering here?

3. Have you continued to volunteer for the same reason(s)?
   [Prompt: Why do you keep volunteering here?]

4. Which position(s) have you covered at 541?
   a. How did you learn the different positions (i.e., was there training or did you learn on the job)?

5. What do you like about volunteering here?

6. Is there anything you would change about your volunteer work at 541?

   [Prompts, if needed, would include examples such as assigned duties, the shift schedule, and if the interviewee would like to work with different or new co-workers incorporating what is known about their work by the interviewer.]

7. The café welcomes all kinds of people as customers. Do you feel like the café also welcomes different kinds of people to volunteer and work as well? Please explain.

8. As you know, I'm working on my master's degree at university. I'm interested in the experiences of workers that have one or more disabilities. When I say disability I'm including a range of possibilities people might experience. Some examples of disabilities could include physical, mobility, intellectual, and psychiatric disabilities, hearing or vision loss, and chronic illness.
   Have you ever volunteered with a co-worker at 541 that, to your knowledge, has a disability?

[If yes] What is/are that/these experience(s) like?
[Prompt: Can you explain what it's like working together?]

9. This next question is asking for your opinion. If you or a co-worker had a disability, how easy do you think would it be to accommodate those needs at the café?

   [Prompt: Are there any parts of the job at the café that would be tough or impossible for someone with a disability to do?]

10. Have you had volunteer experience anywhere else as well?
    [If yes] Can you please describe the volunteer work you've done?
    How did it compare to working here?

11. Are you interested in using this experience to also look for paid work eventually?

12. Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and experiences. Before we finish, is there anything else you think I should know about 541?

Appendix D

Interview Schedule for Staff

As we're going through the questions just a reminder that all the names will be changed.

1. What interested you in working at 541 Eatery and Exchange?

   [How did you first hear about 541?]
   [How long have have you worked here?]

2. Which position(s) have you covered at 541?

3. What did/do you like about working here?

4. Is there anything you would change about your work at 541?

   [For example, assigned duties, the shift schedule, would you have liked to work with different or new co-workers.]

5. The café welcomes all kinds of people as customers. Do you feel like the café also welcomes different kinds of people to volunteer and work as well? Please explain.

   [What are the benefits and challenges of working that way with that approach to welcome as broad a group of volunteers as possible?]

   [Is that approach influenced by the fact that this is a faith-based organization? possible Christian ethos rationale follow up question]

   [Based on what you've observed, what do you think are the benefits of volunteering?]

6. I'm interested in the experiences of workers that have one or more disabilities. When I say disability I'm including a range of possibilities people might experience. Some examples of disabilities could include physical, mobility, intellectual, and psychiatric disabilities, hearing or vision loss, and chronic illness. Have you ever worked with a co-worker at 541 that, to your knowledge, has a disability?

   [If yes] If you are comfortable answering, could you describe that/these experience(s)?

7. Are you aware of a worker who needed an accommodation or adjustment to do his or her tasks at 541 because of a disability?

8. This next question is asking for your opinion. If you or a co-worker had a disability, how easy do you think would it be to accommodate those needs at the café?

   [Are there any parts of the job at the café that would be tough or impossible for someone with a disability to do?]

9. Is there anything else you think I should know about the café?

Appendix E

Interview Schedule for Key Informants

1. I'm curious about the history of 541 Eatery and Exchange and how it came to be here today in it's current form. To start with, who originally had the idea for 541?

2. What was the inspiration for starting a café with a social mission instead of a conventional format to address food security such as a food bank or soup kitchen?

3. From what I've read about 541, the choice to locate in Barton Village was a deliberate one. Can you explain why this community was of interest rather than the other possible communities in Hamilton?

4. How would you describe the relationship of the café with the community?

5. Has this relationship with the community changed over the years?

6. Thinking back to the early days of 541, have you made any adjustments to your approach as you've gained experience in this community since opening?

   [If yes] What are some examples?

7. In terms of governance, could you please describe the role the board has in the operation of 541?

8. What are the criteria for becoming a board member?

9. I'm also interested in the practical side of how the café is run day-to-day. Could you describe how staffing works here?

   [Prompts may include questions about the break down of duties, and/or the number of paid versus volunteer staff.]

10. How easy would it be to make changes to hours or duties, if a worker asked?

11. As you know, I have a research interest in employment and people with disabilities. Just to clarify, when I say disability I'm including a range of possibilities people might experience such as physical, mobility, intellectual, and psychiatric disabilities, hearing or vision loss, and chronic illness as examples. In your work here, do you recall making accommodations for workers with a disability in the past?

[If yes] Can you provide some examples of the type of accommodations?

12. For cafés in general, do you see any practical limits to the kind of accommodations that could realistically be implemented for workers with a disability?

    [If yes] Please describe some examples that come to mind.

    [Prompts, if needed, would include examples such as a worker who uses a mobility aid, or a service dog, has periods of ill health, or experiences dramatic shifts in mood.]

13. Now for 541 specifically, do you see any practical limits to the kind of accommodations that could realistically be implemented for workers with a disability? Please explain your answer.

Appendix F

The following article was written for 541's newsletter by the researcher. The topic for the article of what new volunteers might want to know when they start working was offered by the executive director.

Top 5 things to know when you start volunteering at 541

Be prepared to meet some amazing people
The mix of people that 541 attracts is fascinating. I've had the good fortune to meet interesting customers, staff and volunteers from numerous backgrounds and walks of life. It's this unique group of people that appreciate and support the purpose of 541 that enriches my experience as a volunteer.

Be patient with yourself
There is a lot to learn about 541 – your tasks, where to find things, the programs and events that take place in the café, and the names of your coworkers and regular customers – which takes time to master. The good news is that you are working with staff and volunteers that are ready to support you. Which leads me to the next point…

Help is all around you
Staff and volunteers have helped and supported me as a new volunteer with generosity and kindness. I like to ask a lot questions but I know some people may feel shy to ask for direction or reminders. I would encourage those who may be nervous to ask questions to go for it. The volunteers and managers have so much experience to share and have answered my many questions like it's second nature for them. You couldn't ask for a friendlier group to learn from and support you!

When you feel like taking on a new challenge, let the staff know
Once you get a handle on your regular duties, you might be curious about trying a new task. Asking to try something different or letting your manager know you're ready to learn something new is great feedback for them and creates a new opportunity for you.

Your work is very much appreciated
From the beginning to now five years later, 541 relies on the teamwork of staff and volunteers to continue serving the community great food in a welcoming environment. The time, effort and dedication of volunteers week after week is key. Whether you're cleaning, working in the kitchen, serving customers, or fundraising, your efforts keep this mission in motion. And that is something to be proud of!