

Project Title: The Plate Club
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Project Theme: Inventory, Materials, and Stipends

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Project Overview

The Plate Club was started as a McGill Club but has since become a SSMU service. The club has been in existence since 2007 and it continues to attract new members each year. Our mandate is to reduce waste in the SSMU cafeteria and at events held by groups at McGill with the ultimate goal of promoting sustainability and awareness. We accomplish this by offering reusable dishware, in the cafeteria and to groups holding events, to be used instead of disposable dishware that are typically paper or Styrofoam. In the cafeteria, students leave their McGill ID in exchange for using our dishes; the ID is returned when they give our dishes back. For events, clubs pick up dishes from our office in the SSMU building, leaving a deposit to be given back upon returning the dishes.

The Plate Club has been enormously successful in reducing the use of disposable dishes. During 2011-12 year, we reduced 2964 plates and bowls, 5204 cups, and 5089 utensils in events alone. In the 2012-13 year, we expanded and added new inventory. Wine glasses and ceramic mugs were in high demand because of coffee houses and wine and cheese events. We observed an empirical increase in rentals to 6791 plates and bowls, 8255 mugs and wine glasses, and 8018 utensils! The Plate Club hopes to continue reducing waste on campus at a greater and greater rate.

Eligibility

The Plate Club plays an integral role in promoting sustainability on campus; providing a reliable and sensible way to reduce waste to students, faculty and staff. We manage a form of waste that is ubiquitous with university life (disposable dishes), creating a solution to the problem of take-out waste that an individual alone could not undertake. Our daily presence in the cafeteria over lunch time is a gentle and positive reminder to consider the waste created by disposable containers and the importance of waste management. One of the things we hear our users say repeatedly is "I like this service- it just makes sense!" Many users have come to rely on our service, often remarking on the necessity of using disposable containers when our lunch service is over. The Plate Club clearly encourages people to think about disposable dishes in a negative light while offering a pleasant alternative.

Providing reusable dishware to events around McGill has given an avenue to all groups at McGill to be sustainable. While large events often create huge amounts of waste through disposable dishes, The Plate Club has offered a practical way around this problem by allowing groups to indirectly share dishware. Groups using The Plate Club save money; demonstrating to them one of the many indirect positive effects of sustainability. As groups around campus come to see The Plate Club as a common resource, campus events become more sustainable, both practically and culturally. So far, one of our biggest rentals this year was for the Relay for Life in which they were able to narrow down all the waste from the event of hundreds of people to just 4 garbage bags!

Aside from expanding our inventory, it is necessary for us to have funding to re-stock our inventory. Specifically, clubs that use our service are required to pay a deposit that they will receive back in full given that they do not lose any inventory, return inventory late, or return dirty inventory. We tend to be more lenient in these fees because we want our service to be accessible to clubs, and high fees would discourage clubs from using us to have sustainable

events. Therefore The Plate Club subsidizes the cost of lost items to keep fees to a minimum. For example, clubs would be charged \$2.00 for a missing plate that would cost \$5.00 to replace. This was not a huge problem in previous years when we received SSMU funding, however, as circumstances explained later, we are currently operating at a loss with an inability to replace lost inventory. This is where the Sustainability Project Fund can help.

Timeframe/Milestones

One of the key milestones is the restocking and expansion of our inventory. We first contact our supplier for cost estimates before going pick up the inventory. We then count the new supplies and incorporate them into our existing database in order to keep track of our entire inventory. Currently, we are capable of servicing a limited amount of rental requests at a time due to our limited inventory. This limit is especially noticeable with rentals for large events. For example, the McGill African Association recently took out over 200 wine glasses, tumblers, cutlery, 180 bowls, and 80 plates. That one club itself took a large chunk of our inventory and restricted our rental capabilities until they were returned. In this vein we hope to increase the number of events we can service at any given time. The result of our inventory expansion can be verified since we track the usage of our items over a weekly, monthly, semester, and yearly basis. Our inventory is available for use to the entire McGill community, hence being able to replenish and increase our inventory will benefit all those that uses our rental service. In particular, we hope to purchase glasses that Gert's will be using during events; helping to contribute to a culture of sustainability in new areas on campus.

The SPF would also help us provide a clean sink area in the SSMU cafeteria for the McGill community. No one is responsible for taking care of the space, yet it is available for all to use, creating a Tragedy of the Commons. At the worst of times, the area is littered with cafeteria trays, the remnants of meals and the sink clogged by food. The remedy for this situation is simple; someone needs to take responsibility for the space. As the Plate Club uses the area on a daily basis, we have a large stake in keeping the area clean. We want to provide signage to direct waste where it belongs and cleaning supplies to keep the area tidy. Often Midnight Kitchen users will use the sink to wash their Tupperware after their lunch; with the supplies we will provide, these people among others will be able to wash their dishes with eco-friendly cleaning products in a sanitary environment. To that end, a part of our SPF application is directed at cleaning supplies in order to keep the sink area in the cafeteria clean and sanitary. The fund would be used for sponges, towels, detergent, and drainage fluid. Our sink and dishwasher is also open to clubs cleaning their rental items for free, hence we require a large amount of detergent. The upkeep of the lunch area will be done on a constant basis throughout the year or as needed.

Inventory expansion is, for the most part, a capital cost. Once the inventory is bought, it can be re-used and rented out over and over given that the Plate Club keeps track and care for it. Our current office space has a limited physical capacity as to how much inventory it can hold, hence we would not necessarily request a large fund for inventory each year. It would largely depend on what inventory is lost through event rentals. Stipends on the other hand is operational, though needed because of the time and effort that our executives spend on the improvement and continuing of Plate Club. Our executives work daily to ensure the lunch and rental service continues to run smoothly and to promote sustainability on campus. A part of the stipend goes

towards a new position we are creating. VP Tech and Data will be in charge of creating a program that would keep track of our existing inventory at any given moment such that we can accurately assess the in and out flow of inventory. This position will also digitize our rental forms which is currently on paper and unorganized. The Plate Club has been operating for 6 years and has established itself within SSMU. By the end of this year, we hope to be institutionalized in SSMU such that our presence is felt at SSMU events consistently (such as 4Floors) and Plate Club would be reminded as an option when clubs book a room for an event.

Our idea of sustainability is catching on, noticeably in the Law faculty where they recently established their own Plate Club in order to service their weekly events. It is understandable that they would not want to carry inventory up the hill every week. In another case, a friend who visited Montreal but goes to school in University of Calgary is now trying to start a Plate Club there. The Plate Club is a sustainable initiative that is realistic and clear in its goals and our friend really liked the idea of it. This just goes to show that even something small like reusable plates is making a difference.

Stakeholders

Since we are a SSMU service, the main stakeholder in the Plate Club is SSMU. In the past, inventory expansion and stipends were funded by SSMU. That funding effectively allowed Plate Club to provide our service to the McGill community at large. However, funding for all the SSMU services were cut when the current SSMU VP Finance discovered the funding for the services came from the surplus of the Campus Life Fund. They determined the funding of SSMU services with this fund was an inappropriate usage of the Campus Life Fund. Services were told in September that we would not be receiving any set funding we expected from SSMU this year. Those services that do not have a fee levy, including Plate Club, were left with zero funding.

In Spring 2014, the Plate Club will apply for a referendum for a fee levy. We have also applied for other sources of funding, such as the funding options available from SSMU: The Green Fund and the Space Fund. We are also currently attempting to establish a connection with SSMU concerning the funding for Plate Club in the future. The Plate Club will not rely on the SPF for its existence; rather, it is a supplement in order for us to continue to exist and improve. This year in particular however, we are reliant on external funding due to SSMU cutting our funding without notice. The Plate Club is also looking into other ways to make money, like Samosa Sales, to offset some of our operating costs (ex. dishwashing detergent).

Our goal is not profit. Rather, the Plate Club is here to provide an alternative to wastefulness and promote an environmentally friendly campus. Money from the Sustainability Projects Fund will allow us to provide the best service possible. Additionally, as a SSMU Service, we represent the organization. This fund will enable us to be excellent ambassadors of the organization that helps us exist year after year. Those who will otherwise be affected by the project is the McGill community. The only complaints from those who use our inventory is that there is not enough of it and that we are unable to service many rentals at a time. We would like to eventually operate to the extent that we do not have to turn down any rental request. There is

no doubt that by increasing our inventory and claiming responsibility for a neglected common area, present and future Plate Club users will be satisfied.

Tasks

Type of Tasks	Member In Charge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cleaning the dishwashing area ● Restocking the area with cleaning supplies ● Posting signs for users and volunteers ● Making posters to increase exposure 	VP Sanitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organize volunteers for lunch and office hours ● Teaching volunteers the tasks required for lunch and office hours ● Volunteer Recruitment 	VP Lunch (x2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizing and tracking inventory ● Corresponding with student groups to arrange event rentals ● Purchasing additional inventory and supplies to expand and maintain services 	VP Events (x2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete funding applications ● Liaison with other McGill groups and SSMU ● Volunteer Recruitment ● Organize Plate Club to be a presence at events (ex. 4Floors) 	VP External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a system to better keep track of inventory amount, inventory use, rentals, and finance ● Digitize our existing paper archive to the computer 	VP Tech and Data

Revenue Source	Amount Requested	Confirmed?
Sustainability Project Fund	\$7354.75	No

Additional Information:

This section will explain additional requested supplies that are not explained above

- Computer
 - The computer we currently have is quite old and most office hours volunteers have trouble using it
 - With the addition of a VP Tech to revamp our archive and rental system , we request a newer (but refurbished) computer that is faster and doesn't freeze
- Office Supplies
 - A letter tray is used to sort out our current paper system that is very confusing to sort between rental returns, rentals to be picked up, and rentals that need their deposit back

- o Float money stays in the float to give change for event rentals

References:

http://www.restaurantdishes.net/Melamine_Plates.html

<http://www.futureshop.ca/en-CA/product/hewlett-packard-hp-pavilion-p27-desktop-pc-amd-e-300-500gb-hdd-4gb-ram-windows-8-with-hp-20-led-monitor-bundle-ts-3111-2p-w8es/10266556.aspx?path=84c72457ce81de1cd3a529c5aa75c71den02>

<http://www.canadiantire.ca/en/pdp/ultra-steel-platform-hand-truck-0600503p.html>

Expense Description	Cost per Unit	Quantity	Total
Cleaning supplies for the dishwashing area			
Initial cleaning supplies (Per Semester)	20	2	\$40.00
Swiss Detergent	21.25	3	\$63.75
Swiss rinse solution	34.25	1	\$34.25
Monthly upkeep and restocking (ex. Sponges, Disht)	5	8	\$40.00
Signage			
Signs	1	10	\$10.00
Posters	1	10	\$10.00
Inventory			
Tongs (Ikea)	5	4	\$20.00
3-tier glass platter (Ikea)	12.99	1	\$12.99
28cm serving bowl (Ikea)	9.99	4	\$39.96
36cm serving bowl (Ikea)	14.99	4	\$59.96
Glass carafe (Ikea)	2.49	5	\$12.45
Koncis soup ladle (Ikea)	4	2	\$8.00
Box of spoons (12/box) (Tzanet)	2.9	10	\$29.00
Box of forks (12/box) (Tzanet)	2.9	10	\$29.00
Box of knives (12/box) (Tzanet)	2.9	10	\$29.00
Box of teaspoons (12/box) (Tzanet)	2.9	10	\$29.00
Large flat plate	5	100	\$500.00
Small flat plate	5	100	\$500.00
Stainless steel 16oz 1/2 pint glasses	1.89	100	\$189.00
Rubbermaid plastic bins (S) (Canadian Tire)	6.99	2	\$13.98
Rubbermaid plastic bins (M) (Canadian Tire)	7.89	2	\$15.78
Rubbermaid plastic bins (L) (Canadian Tire)	8.19	2	\$16.38
Coleman Water Jug	28.88	2	\$57.76
Coleman 48 qt Chest Cooler (Home Depot)	24.99	2	\$49.98
Melamine 15.5 Serving Platters (Restaurant Dishes)	4.55	6	\$27.30
Stainless serving spoon	7.99	4	\$31.96
Furniture/Office Supplies			
DOKUMENT Letter Tray (Ikea)	9.99	1	\$9.99
Postage Notes (100 Labels)	3.47	2	\$6.94
Pens (Packs of 24)	10.98	1	\$10.98
Float Money	100	1	\$100.00
Trolley Hand Truck (Canadian Tire)	69.99	1	\$69.99
Computer (Refurbished Desktop from Future Shop)	364.99	1	\$364.99
Stipends			
VP External	1000	1	\$1,000.00
VP Events	1000	2	\$2,000.00
VP Tech	250	1	\$250.00
VP Lunch	500	2	\$1,000.00
VP Sanitations	250	1	\$250.00
Delivery and Inventory Acquisition			
Will use an executive's car for pickup: Gas	50	1	\$50.00
SUBTOTAL			\$6,982

SUBTOTAL (does not require tax)			\$4,500
SUBTOTAL (that would require 15% tax)			\$2,482
TOTAL			\$7,354.75