

VANCOUVER CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

2026 Sponsor Report

Prepared and Presented by
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About the *Festival*



The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival (VCBF) is a community arts and multicultural festival focused on bringing communities together through sharing the culture of the cherry blossom or "hanami" - the Japanese word for enjoying cherry blossoms with family and friends.

Our goals are:
1) To create community connections and attract visitors by building bridges through arts, culture and heritage activities and education;
2) To collaborate with passionate volunteers and community partners to create innovative arts and cultural programming to showcase local talent;
3) To bring awareness to how we can be good environmental stewards and:
4) To provide experiences that encourage healthy practices for physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Our festival features multiple large and small events spread over 3 weeks with three anchor weekends. The first weekend includes The Big Picnic and Blossoms After Dark at David Lam Park, the next features the Blossom Block Party and the final weekend includes the two day event, Sakura Days Japan Fair at VanDusen Botanical Gardens.

Other events include Pop-Up events in partnership with Business Improvement Associations, cherry blossom themed workshops, Haiku Invitational and Exhibition, Tree Talks & Walks and Bike the Blossoms.

As a charitable non-profit society, the Festival is dedicated to bringing people together in meaningful and lasting ways. “There is no stranger under the cherry tree.”

Attendance at a Glance

The Big Picnic (March 28-29)	15,000 Saturday	8,000 Sunday
Blossoms After Dark (March 27-28)	20,000 Friday	20,000 Saturday
Blossom Block Party (April 4)	7,500	
Sakura Days Japan Fair (April 11-12)	10,571	
Tree Talks & Walks	328 (Throughout VCBF Season)	400 (at Sakura Days Japan Fair)
Blossoms By Boat	20	
Workshops (4 workshops)	60	
Cherry Blossom Run	100	
Bike the Blossoms	65	
Total	***82,044 Attendees***	



The Big Picnic

March 28 & 29 // David Lam Park



23K Total Attendees Sat & Sun

The Big Picnic returned on March 28–29, 2026 at David Lam Park, transforming Vancouver's Yaletown neighbourhood into a stunning gathering space beneath 100 blooming Akebono cherry trees, honouring Dr. David Lam's legacy and the spirit of friendship the Festival was built on. Attendees enjoyed live performances on the Cherry Jam Stage, interactive arts workshops, pre-order picnic experiences from premium partners Fairmont Hotel Vancouver and MINAMI restaurant, and a licensed Blossom Lounge Bar featuring local performers.

"It was perfect, I love it, it was my second time, and I enjoyed the picnic ...the scones were amazing! And the volunteers have a big heart!"





The Big Picnic Highlights



Blossom Run
100 Attendees

The inaugural Blossom Run, co-hosted with The Right Shoe, brought 100 runners through a scenic 7KM seawall route beneath Vancouver's cherry blossoms. Demand far exceeded capacity, with **500+ participants waitlisted**, and the Festival is committed to growing this event significantly in 2027 to meet the overwhelming community enthusiasm.



Pet Parade
139 RSVPs

A highlight of the weekend was the inaugural Pet Parade on Sunday, March 29 — inviting guests to dress up their pets in spring outfits and stroll beneath the blossoms, creating a joyful, shareable moment that resonated strongly with attendees and generated enthusiastic feedback in the post-event survey.



"I LOVED being part of the Pet Parade with my dog!!! Please continue to do this amazing event. The Pet Parade was an awesome event — I don't think I've smiled that much in years."

Blossom Block Party

April 4 // Dunsmuir Patio at Bentall Centre

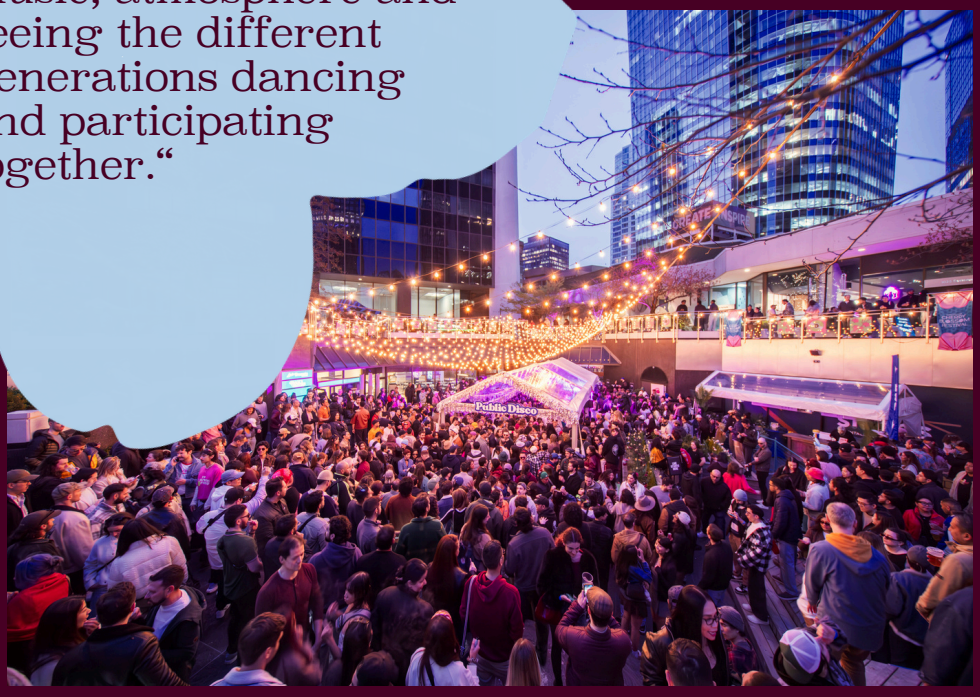


7.5K Attendees

The 2026 Blossom Block Party, presented in partnership with Public Disco, delivered a vibrant full-day activation on April 4 at the Dunsmuir Patio at Bentall Centre, which expanded this year onto a car-free Dunsmuir Street, doubling the event footprint and drawing audiences of all ages to the heart of downtown Vancouver. The event showcased WAX & FLOWER, a vinyl-only all-femme DJ lineup, a live mural by Becky Hill, a local makers market inside FUNK Coffee Bar, and a family-friendly Play Zone, alongside food truck partners.

The Blossom Block Party continues to demonstrate the VCBF's ability to animate public space, grow new audiences, and deliver meaningful community and cultural impact in the heart of the city.

"The Block Party was so much fun! Loved the music, atmosphere and seeing the different generations dancing and participating together."





Sakura Days Japan Fair

April 11 & 12 // VanDusen Botanical Garden

10.5K Attendees



Sakura Days Japan Fair returned for two days on April 11–12, 2026 at the iconic VanDusen Botanical Garden, delivering a fully immersive celebration of Japanese culture to audiences across the weekend. The event featured a rich program of cultural experiences — traditional tea ceremony, taiko drumming, theatre performances, woodworking demonstrations, sake sampling, and Japanese games — alongside a curated marketplace of local Japanese food, craft, and business vendors both indoors and throughout the garden grounds.







"I had an amazing time at the festival with my friends. We tried several new foods, sampled and learned about different types of sake, but my favourite part was the energy I felt from everyone during the closing parade. I loved how many people I saw genuinely smiling and happy all day!"

Supporting Events

March - April





Blossoms by Boat

March - April // 20 Attendees

Festival Founder Linda Poole, in partnership with False Creek Ferries, took attendees on a journey through False Creek, sharing her passion for cherry blossoms and the Festival's 20-year history while discovering cherry trees in bloom along the shoreline.

Tree Talks & Walks

March - April // 700+ Attendees

Tree Talks & Walks offers expert-led guided tours exploring Vancouver's cherry trees, connecting participants with the history, ecology, and cultural significance of the city's trees. Hosted throughout the Festival season and at Sakura Days Japan Fair.





Art Workshops

March - April // 60 Total Attendees

VCBF offered three hands-on arts workshops hosted by local artists: Okiagari Daruma making, acrylic painting, and pottery.

Bike the Blossoms

April 27 // 65 Attendees

A leisurely ride in partnership with Velopalooza, through tunnels of the stunning hot pink Kanzan cherry blossom cultivar in East Vancouver.



Haiku Exhibition

March – April // Various Locations

Step into a world where poetry converges with art in our Haiku Exhibition, featuring a collaborative masterpiece crafted by visual artists inspired by the winning haiku of the previous year. Since 2006, the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival's Haiku Invitational has celebrated global poetic expression, drawing 16,000+ haiku submissions from over 40 countries.

In this exhibition, we proudly showcase winning haiku through commissioned pieces by Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Japanese-Canadian artists. Join us in this unique celebration, where the delicate beauty of words converges with the boundless creativity of artistic expression.





Pop-Up Events

March 31 – April 8
Bill Curtis Square

Witness stunning Gobo light installations along with our 2026 Haiku Exhibition, featuring our 2025 Haiku Invitational's winning haiku brought to life with local Indigenous and Japanese-Canadian artists. In partnership with the Yaletown BIA.

March 31 – April 16
Jim Deva Plaza

Featuring stunning Gobo light installations along with our giant pink conversation benches, to strike conversations between strangers inspired by our festival ethos: "there are no strangers under the cherry tree.". In partnership with the West End BIA.

Social Impact Survey Results

452 festival attendees responded to our 2026 post-season survey, sharing how festival events shaped their sense of connection, belonging, and community.



93% Felt Welcome at the Festival

94.7% Agree: "Experiences like this contribute to a more welcoming and connected city"

82% Felt More Connected to Others



65.5% Saw Their Identity or Culture Reflected in the Festival

30+ Cultural Backgrounds Represented Among Respondents



"I've been coming to the festival for many years and I'm amazed that it just gets even better all the time. I appreciate the joyous atmosphere, the feeling of welcome to everyone."

"I am really proud that Vancouver is my community with events like this — well done, may we always be the shining light of BC."

"It is so wonderful to see so many people delighting in the natural beauty in our city. Thank you!"

Young and Emerging Artists Program

Now in its second year, the Young and Emerging Artists Program formalized VCBF's 20-year tradition of platforming emerging talent into a structured mentorship opportunity. In 2026, nine artists designed and facilitated original interactive art activations for thousands of festival attendees; developing real skills in budgeting, event planning, crowd facilitation, and public engagement. Select artists were paired with experienced mentors for deeper, hands-on guidance.

2026 Activations: Sakura Card Making · Glow-In-The-Dark Spirograph · Cardboard Embroidery · Bead Pin Making · Tanabata Wishing Tree · Button Making · Lantern Making · Conversation Clouds



By the Numbers

- **9 emerging artists** supported with fees, supplies, and infrastructure
- **8** unique interactive art activations across Festival events
- **2 artists** already booked for public art projects at other Vancouver events this summer



What Artists Said

"The project inspired me to push myself further as an artist and to continue bringing community-focused art to Vancouver. Seeing the enthusiasm reinforced the desire for more opportunities like this."

Artists reported gaining lasting skills in facilitation, materials budgeting, crowd management, and adaptive problem-solving — building a foundation for sustainable creative careers in Vancouver's public arts ecosystem.



What Participants Said

"Some described it as meditative and said they could do it all day."

"A woman with impaired finger dexterity created a beautiful card without any difficulty" — highlighting the program's commitment to accessibility across all ages and abilities.

"Parents particularly enjoyed the opportunity to create art alongside their children, making it a fun and meaningful shared experience."

Marketing Outcomes

Social Media

4.1M
Total Views on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok

26%
Follower Growth on IG, currently at 22.2K

This year, the VCBF reached more people than ever before, generating 4.1 million views across Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok during the festival season. Our Instagram community grew 26% year-over-year, now reaching 22,200 engaged followers, supported by 5 paid influencer partnerships, a network of invited influencers, and 29 pieces of partner content, in addition to organic posts created by festivalgoers.

Email Marketing

330K
Total Emails Sent

64%
Email Subscriber Growth

17.9K
Newsletter Subscribers

Website + Ticketing

195K
Active Website Users from Oct 2025 - April 2026

54K
Tickit (Ticketing Platform) Visitors

Earned Media

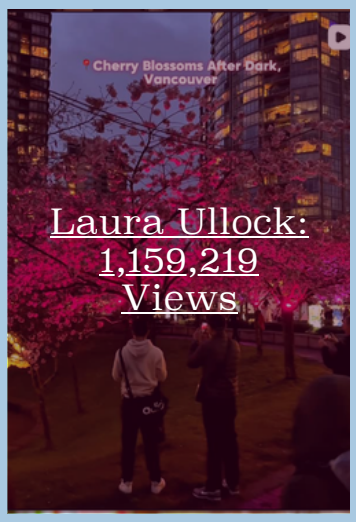
83+
Earned Media Placements

127M+
Estimated Total Media Reach

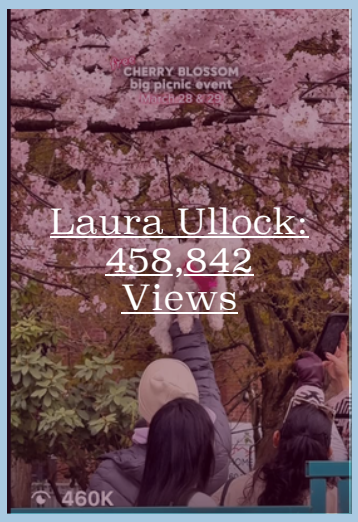
The 2026 Festival generated 83+ earned media placements across television, digital, print, and international wire services, with coverage spanning CBC, CTV, Forbes, Yahoo, Vancouver Sun, MSN, Global Times, Radio-Canada, and Architectural Digest, among others.

Top Influencer & Media Collaboration Posts

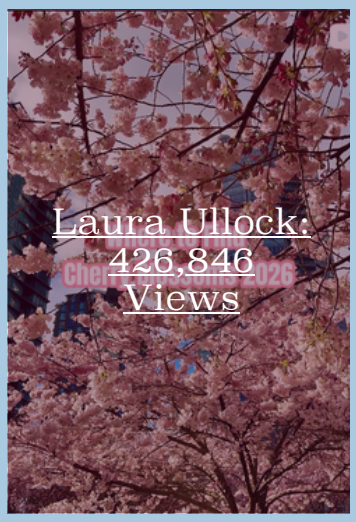
Click on the image to view content.



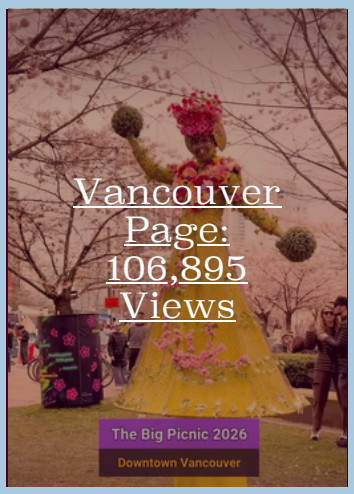
Laura Ullock: 1,159,219 Views



Laura Ullock: 458,842 Views



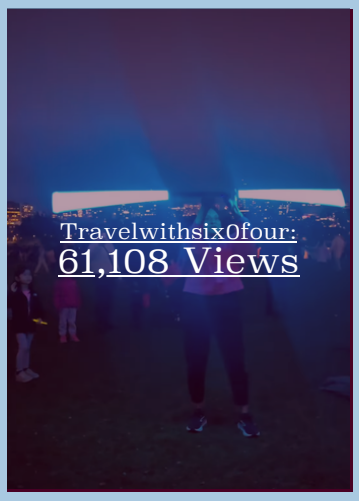
Laura Ullock: 426,846 Views



Vancouver Page: 106,895 Views



Manvir Pangly: 34,471 Views



Travelwithsix0four: 61,108 Views

Top Media Coverage

Click on the image to read the full article.



Architectural Digest: 10 Destinations to See Cherry Blossoms Bloom Beyond Japan



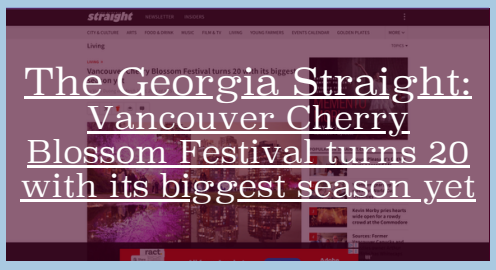
The Tyee: They Cut Down 'Grandpapa'



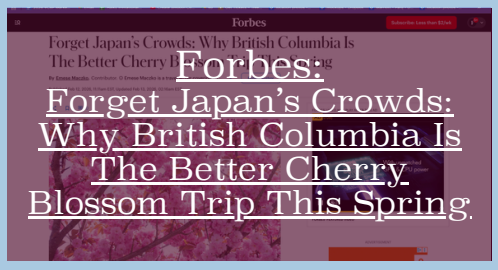
CTV News: First-ever pet parade takes place at Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival



CBC: B.C.'s Lower Mainland celebrates the pink spectacle of cherry blossoms this season



The Georgia Straight: Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival turns 20 with its biggest season yet



Forbes: Forget Japan's Crowds: Why British Columbia Is The Better Cherry Blossom Trip This Spring



CBC On The Coast: Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival returns this week



Radio-Canada: Le Festival des cerisiers en fleurs de Vancouver célèbre ses 20 ans



Daily Hive: Vancouver's magical Cherry Blossom Festival returns with new events for milestone year

A Thank You from Our Team



We celebrated our 20th annual festival in 2026 with our highest levels of attendance yet! Attendees enjoyed a stellar entertainment line-up, more food vendors than ever, interactive art activities, our special VCBF merch, the first annual Cherry Blossom Run and an anthology of 20 years of our Haiku Invitational.

We would like to give special recognition to VCBF Founder, Linda Poole, for her vision, dedication and just plain hard work over the past 21 years.

Our festival has grown significantly in size and scope over the past three years. We have had to create organizational and event infrastructure to meet the attendance demands. This year we implemented new volunteer management software, moved our bookkeeping over to Quickbooks and provided more services and activities at our events. We couldn't scale up our operations without your support. On behalf of our board and staff team, I wish to express our gratitude to all of our sponsors, stakeholders and community partners for their financial and in-kind support in 2026

With record attendance at every event in 2026, thousands of British Columbians and other visitors were able to experience the custom of 'hanami" and connect through arts, culture, food and nature.

We look forward to continuing to grow with you!

Andrea Arnot
Executive Director