

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Western NL Food Hub's Grand Opening Celebrates Local Food**

August 31, 2023, Corner Brook, NL - The Western NL Food Hub hosted its Grand Opening this week. The gathering was a celebration of local food and heartfelt thanks to those who have supported the business.

“The Food Hub has been busy since day one of our soft launch,” said Josh Smee, CEO of Food First NL, “but it’s still such a pleasure to see just how much support and enthusiasm the community has for this project and for local food.”

Food First NL first launched the Western NL Food Hub as a single-season pilot project in 2021, with the goal of making local food more accessible. After taking a year to learn from the project’s findings, they reopened the Food Hub’s doors late last month with the aim of building a sustainable long-term social enterprise.

Distribution and logistical support is a longstanding service gap for both producers and customers in the region. The Food Hub is working to fill this gap through its online ordering platform, which is updated weekly with products from local producers. It focuses exclusively on local products. Everything is grown, harvested, and/or processed in the region. Customers can order as many products from as many producers as they want and then pick up their orders at the Food Hub location where they are assembled the day before.

Youth staff will support the Food Hub operations. Food First NL and Choices for Youth are partnering to provide training opportunities for youth in the area and build out the social enterprise sector. A partnership that both organizations feel highlights the importance and possibility of collaboration and working with the community.

“Choices for Youth is thrilled to be offering our paid employment training opportunity to Corner Brook youth again this year,” said Mari-Lynn Taylor, Manager of Education, Employment & Social Enterprise with Choices for Youth. “It is our experience that investing in youth development and providing them with the tools they need to succeed has a positive effect on not only their lives, but on the broader community. Our partnership with Food First NL is a demonstration of cross-sector collaboration and how we can work together to facilitate ongoing learning and innovation. This sustainable initiative showcases a holistic approach to enhancing community well being, and we are very excited to see where the future takes us.”

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While the Western NL Food Hub is settling into the busy harvest season, staff are already looking to the future and expanding their reach. An investment by the Northpine Foundation will support this work and look at making the business both financially and environmentally sustainable.

“The Northpine Foundation is pleased to support this innovative project that is not only enhancing local food systems but empowering local youth and the community,” said Mark Lane, Impact Director — Newfoundland and Labrador with the Northpine Foundation. “This aligns with our commitment to foster collaboration that will bring improvements to all areas of life for communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're proud to invest in the Western NL Food Hub and support them as they build out a successful model that can be scaled across Canada.”

You can sign up to be a Western NL Food Hub customer and learn more on their website www.nlfoodhub.ca and stay connected through their Facebook or Instagram @NLFoodHub

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About Food First NL

Food First NL is a provincial non-profit organization working to advance the right to food in Newfoundland and Labrador. Reach us at www.foodfirstnl.ca, hello@foodfirstnl.ca, or on social media [@foodfirstnl](https://www.instagram.com/foodfirstnl)

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