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## **FEEDING THE 5000: BEHIND THE SCENES**

### **How this Calgary chef pulled off a luncheon for 5000 with a \$380 budget**

Local Chef Andrew Hewson teamed up with LeftOvers Calgary, the Calgary Regional Partnership and the Recycling Council of Alberta to host an event called Feeding the 5000, bringing awareness to food waste. Originating in London, England, Feeding the 5000 has been hosted in cities around the globe with the goal of serving 5000 people lunch with perfectly edible food that has been rejected by the food service industry, primarily because of its looks.

To pull off such an event is no small feat. There is no lack of food waste, so sourcing the ingredients for the meal was the easy part. Chef Hewson, an instructor at SAIT, used his local culinary connections to rescue food deemed unusable by growers, grocers and restaurants. These ingredients include oddly shaped peppers, potatoes with sprouts and items like bread and dairy that are nearing their expiry dates – all of which would have ended up in the garbage.

The main challenge on Chef Hewson's mind was finding a venue to prepare and cook a meal being served to 5000 Calgarians at Olympic Plaza. When imagining how to pull this event off, Chef Hewson thought of the many restaurants surrounding the plaza, none of which had a large enough kitchen. Luckily, just a half block away from Olympic Plaza sits the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre (CTCC), equipped with a production kitchen capable of serving thousands. "It was like hitting a gold mine, this place is the best case scenario for the event" said Chef Hewson about the CTCC. The event team is able to receive, prepare and cook for 5000 just steps from Olympic Plaza where they will be serving the lunch.

When Chef approached the CTCC team, they knew it was a perfect collaboration. As a cornerstone of the community the CTCC is always looking for ways to support and connect Calgarians.

Local collaboration is what made this event possible. With the CTCC opening their kitchen doors, the organizers had a place to cook, mash and whip their concept into a luncheon for 5000. A team of volunteers from SAIT, Joey's Restaurant Group, Ethnicity Catering and the Hyatt Regency worked together in the CTCC's kitchen to sort, wash, chop and cook the rescued food – turning it into a fresh, locally sourced and zero-waste lunch. With the help of local volunteers and donations, the food for 5000 people cost a total of \$380.00 – which went towards spices, herbs and oils.

Keep a look out for other CTCC community engagement in the future!