

Rooted in Community: Creative Ways to Eliminating Waste

Ontario Food Collaborative – 5th Annual Symposium

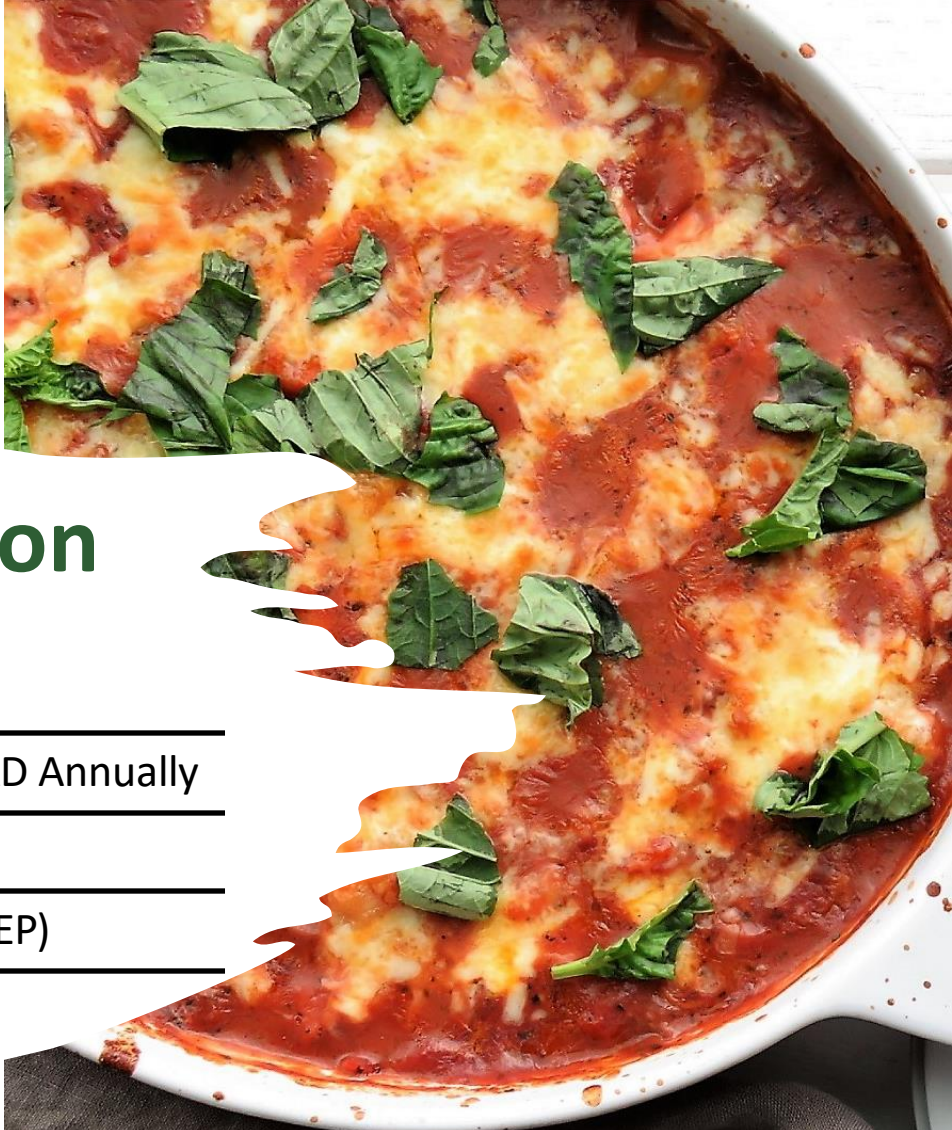
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Co-Founder

Local Urban Bites Inc.





Why this Conversation Matters?

58% of Canadian food is wasted – \$49B CAD Annually

2.3M tonnes avoidable household waste

Food waste = 8–10% global emissions (UNEP)

1 in 7 Canadians face food insecurity



My Work and Perspective in the Meal Kit Industry

Entrepreneurship: Co-founder of **Local Urban Bites**, a sustainability-driven meal-kit company

Community work: Partnerships with local food groups, farms, wholesalers, schools... and during the pandemic, hospitals

My work sits at the intersection of:
food systems, circular economy, climate action,
leadership, and community wellbeing.

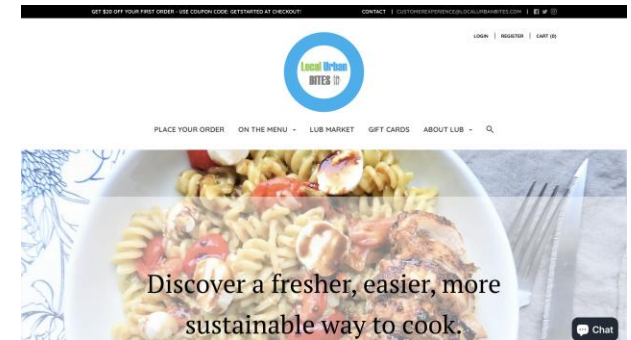
I am also:

- An educator (University of Waterloo, Royal Roads University, Camosun College),
- Non-Profit Co-founder (QChat Support Association),
- PhD Researcher with the Municipal Net Zero Action Research Partnership, and
- Associate Director, Planning and Implementation (Royal Roads University)



Local Urban Bites Overview

- Located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island
- Established in **2015**
- Unique selling proposition
 - Focus on sustainability
 - Reusable packaging and cold packs
 - Just-in-time ordering and delivery
 - Locally employed employees



Rethinking Convenience

Traditional meal kits provide convenience, but:

- Use **high volumes of single-use plastic**
- Rely on centralized supply chains
- Ship long distances
- Generate packaging waste far beyond household grocery norms

At Local Urban Bites, we began with a question:

How do we keep the convenience but eliminate the waste and climate burden?



How We Reduce Waste

Reduction-first
design (EPA Waste
Hierarchy)

Compostable
materials (Zero
Waste Canada)

Whole vegetables
= less spoilage

Reusable totes &
cold packs
(sanitized weekly)



Circular Economy Principles (Ellen MacArthur Foundation)



Design out

Design out waste



Keep

Keep products/materials in use



Regenerate

Regenerate natural systems



Community Wellbeing & Food Systems



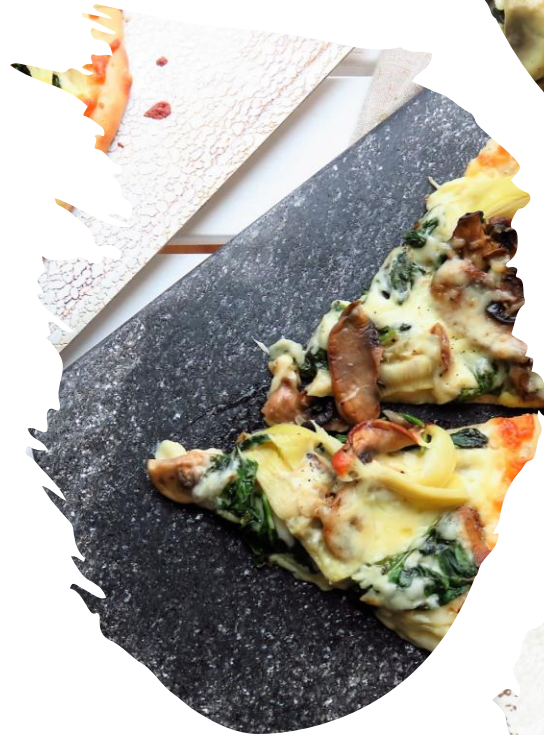
Stronger local economies



Lower emissions



Community connection & food literacy



Food Waste as a Community Asset



Compost for
regenerative
farms



Local green
jobs



Climate
mitigation



Household
waste
reduction
(BCCDC)



Scaling Pathways



Municipal
circular
partnerships



Campus meal
kits



Corporate ESG-
aligned meal
programs



Policies
supporting
reuse and
compostables



Key Takeaways

- ✓ Food waste is a climate issue
- ✓ Local systems = resilience
- ✓ Reduction > recycling
- ✓ Community-led circularity works



**Thank
you!**

