



Many families struggle with food insecurity. Thursday, August 12th marked the official ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new Leamington Regional Food Hub, an exciting initiative working to combat food insecurity right in our backyard. The Food Hub was the inspiration of Vern Toews, a long-time resident, greenhouse farmer, and initial chair of OGVG. Leamington, the greenhouse capital of North America, is an ideal location for this organization that rescues unmarketable vegetables to reduce food waste and get healthy food to those in need. The UHC-Hub of Opportunities spearheaded the project and with their new facility, will ship over 4 million pounds of produce each year to people in need.

Community volunteers take donated produce from local farmers, sort, package, and send it off to local food banks, northern and rural communities, and food programs like the UHC's (Unemployed Help Centre's) Farm to Food soup program. OGVG and our members want to congratulate the Leamington Food Hub, its organizers, and all the wonderful volunteers on this exciting new operation. We are committed to supporting the amazing work being done.

If you didn't have an opportunity to attend the grand-opening ceremony, you can see coverage of the event from CTV Windsor, and take a closer look at the new Leamington Food HUB here: <https://windsor.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=2259351>



Leamington Regional FoodHub

An innovative food assistance program by UHC-Hub of Opportunities

Our Story

The LRFH is a warehouse storage space located close to farmers & food producers in the Leamington area, where the majority of food is recovered. It is 16,000 square feet & is currently used to store food rescued by UHC's Plentiful Harvest Food Rescue program.

Additionally, it offers dry storage, a drive-in cooler as well as a fully covered loading dock, forklift, and driver to assist with loading and unloading trucks. There are two sorting lines used to wash, package, and prepare produce to distribute and/or make meals & an industrial blast chiller/freezer to safely preserve food to be sent to other communities.

DID YOU KNOW?

The LRFH helps to address two industry problems: food recovery & food insecurity. By recovering millions of pounds of produce going to waste each year due to spoilage, it will instead feed hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who do not have access to healthy, nutritional food.



"The incredible vision for the LRFH came from the incomparable Vern Toews. Without his innovation as well as the involvement of Sterling Ridge Group, his partnership with Mike Turnbull, and the team at UHC, the work being done at this facility would not be possible."

- June Muir, CEO UHC-Hub of Opportunities

Dedicated Targets:

- 1.75 million pounds of food recovered
- 33,653 pounds of food redistributed
- 4 million pounds of fresh produce recovered annually & enhanced food security
- 175,000 fresh food baskets prepared & distributed
- 4.3 million people who experience food insecurity are supported annually throughout Ontario & in remote Indigenous communities



86
farmers & growers who contribute produce to the LRFH through direct & indirect relationships



2
processing lines enable us to sort fresh produce & place it into hampers. Some of the produce will also be frozen to make soup for distribution



greenhouses & growers will save both time & money as the location of the LRFH makes pickups & drop-offs faster. Community deliveries will also be more efficient

THE BIG PICTURE

The object of the project is to increase the amount of food that is recovered & distributed to organizations in the Windsor and Essex County area, as well as Ontarians and Northern rural and remote Indigenous communities that experience food insecurity. It will also increase the preservation of recovered perishable food by freezing it to ensure that more food gets to people & communities.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

Many building upgrades were made to bring the LRFH up to industry, and health & safety standards. Lighting upgrades and retrofits within the warehouse will help prevent workplace incidents by increasing the visibility of moving machinery for staff & volunteers.

Concrete floors in the warehouse & cold storage areas were sealed according to procedures for the processing and handling of food.



Walls & ceilings were also painted to bring the warehouse space up to standards for handling and storage of food. Safety lines & markings were added to certain working areas of the warehouse in order to help delineate safe walkways for staff & volunteers. These markings create separate pathways on which heavy machinery can safely be transported and operated.

Having the LRFH allows UHC to complement our existing food-based programming that falls within the same vein of activity. With our established Plentiful Harvest Food Rescue program, our food rescue manager is able to handle the logistics of recovering additional produce.

Collaborative Programming

Our Farm to Food soup program, run in collaboration with Feed Ontario & Food Banks Canada, benefits from the additional recovered produce taken in at the LRFH, allowing for even more soup to be prepared, frozen and distributed to those who are food insecure across the province. Three separate entities with one common goal.

VALUED FUNDERS

Leamington Donors & Volunteers



The Leamington Regional Food Hub
451 Talbot Rd. W., Leamington ON, N8H 4H7

Interested in donating or getting involved? Contact us today!

519.944.4900
www.uhc.ca

THE ADVENTURES OF Lady Bug

365 DAYS - YEAR -

CALENDAR

Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers harvest tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers 365 days a year!

If some product can't be sold, our farms find ways to connect with various charitable organizations that rescue food and distribute it to food banks all across Ontario, millions of pounds of produce from our farms each year make it to those in need, helping everyone have access to fresh nutritious vegetables.

MAP OF ONTARIO CANADA

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