



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AS SUMMER APPROACHES, YNCU SUPPORTS CANADIAN BUSINESSES THROUGH ITS
“SHOP YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD SUMMER BOX”**

Featured in the Summer Box, Ontario’s small businesses rally together to offer summer survival tips as the pandemic weighs on.



KITCHENER, ON | JUNE 21, 2021 — Globally, many businesses have experienced a drop in revenue as a result of COVID-19, creating gaps in the economies of various countries, including Canada. As small businesses [make up 98% of all employer businesses](#), they remain a large and important sector of the Canadian economy.

For Christina Hopeson, General Manager at [Toboggan Brewing Company](#) in London, their business was one of the many hit by the pandemic.

“Our restaurant capacity is about 150 seated guests plus 100 more on the patio. It's always been a fun, busy place. Moving to not being able to have in-house guests has been a hard pill to swallow for our staff and guests alike,” she says.

As summer begins and while Canadian entrepreneurs continue to grapple with the effects of the pandemic, exploring other ways to keep their businesses afloat, Your Neighbourhood Credit Union (YNCU) is providing additional support to business owners by putting its weight behind their products with its “Shop Your Neighbourhood Summer Box”.

“I absolutely love that YNCU does this Summer Box,” says Brianne Lavallee, Owner of [Bathtub Bakery](#) in Brantford. “Knowing that they are supporting local businesses, and helping to get their names out to even more people is incredible. Everything for me has been word of mouth, so even if one new person knows I exist from these Neighbourhood boxes then it has been beneficial to my business.”

Each Summer Box comprises products made, produced or made available through Canadian businesses, and is part of YNCU's efforts to provide relief for business owners in Ontario, while encouraging members of the community to shop local. The Summer Box contains a wide range of summer fun items including a BBQ paddle, bug spray, summer wooden art, BBQ sauce, a DIY dream catcher, chocolate chip cookies, Cajun mix, black raspberry balsamic vinegar, peach pie tea and steeper, mini donuts and other sought-after items.

“Small business owners have been one of the hardest-hit populations by the effects of the pandemic,” says Archie Bonifacio, YNCU's Chief Member Experience Officer. “As an organization, we continue to seek ways to provide relief to individuals and businesses in the locations where we operate. We believe that we are only successful when the individuals and businesses we serve are too.”

The featured business owners are offering advice to other Ontario-based entrepreneurs worried about the impact of continued restrictions this summer.

“My advice for a small business owner who may be struggling through this pandemic would be to focus on cutting all unnecessary expenses, and ensure that your day-to-day operations remain profitable,” says Chris Poeta, CEO of [bottleworx](#) in Guelph. “We currently don't know when this pandemic will end, or when business will go back to normal. Getting caught in serious debt, as we're all able to get back into a position to run our businesses in a normal way, can be quite catastrophic. Focusing on any online aspect of the business is definitely something I would strongly suggest, even if things were to go back to normal tomorrow.”

Finding new ways to engage her customers has been important for Allison Mistakidis, Co-Owner of [Whiskeyjack Boutique](#). Remaining active on social media, sending out emails, promoting small gifts that bring joy to others over a distance and giving out sweet treats from a local baker are just a few ways they have stayed in touch with their customers.

Toboggan's Hopeson also suggests doing your research—applying for grants, loans and subsidies—and keeping in touch with staff members who are laid off so they know they're appreciated and will have a spot as you reopen.

As a community focused organization, YNCU is proud to be an award-winning credit union, receiving multiple awards over the past few months for the launch of its Shop Your Neighbourhood platform. The awards include the Ontario Credit Union Foundation's [Outstanding Achievement Award](#), as well as the Canadian Credit Union Association's National Credit Union Award for [Excellence in Digital Marketing](#). YNCU hopes this Summer Box, the second of its kind since the holiday box offered in December of 2020, is just one more way small businesses can connect with new customers.

"We are positive about the impact this would have on our small businesses in the province," says Gord Harrison, YNCU's CEO. "Even though we have purchased and are promoting a limited number of items from the business, we are hopeful that this will increase visibility for their products and support the growth of local economies in the long run."

With just 100 units available for sale, each Summer Box's content value is \$210 and will be sold for \$100 to anyone within Ontario, while supplies last. Order your box today and explore the Shop Your Neighbourhood platform at www.shopyourneighbourhood.com/summerbox.

As Ontario's reopening continues, YNCU has revisited its branch hours to better serve its members during the summer. Please visit yncu.com for more details.

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ABOUT YNCU

With 18 branches, and a network of surcharge-free ATMs, Ontarians can bank close to home across southwestern and northern Ontario. At \$2 billion+ in assets under administration and 53,000 members strong (and growing!), YNCU is one of the largest credit unions in Ontario. As a community-based organization, not only do YNCU's partnerships and investments make a difference, its employees live and work in the communities they serve. YNCU's foundation is built on connectedness to the communities where it operates. Yearly the organization sets aside a minimum of 1% of the pre-tax profit earned by the credit union in the previous fiscal year to be used for charitable organizations and associations that share its focus on improving our communities. Together with its members, employees and community partners, YNCU is helping to make life better in the places Ontarians live, work, learn and play!

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