



SAULT STE. MARIE'S ONTARIO WILD CHOSEN AS SEPTEMBER FEATURE BUSINESS FOR RETURN OF SHOP YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

YNCU will reimburse Ontario Wild's shipping costs throughout the month of September

SAULT STE. MARIE, ON | SEPT. 6, 2022 - Sault Ste. Marie business [Ontario Wild](#) has been chosen as the first business to receive a month of reimbursed shipping costs from YNCU's Shop Your Neighbourhood program.

Shop Your Neighbourhood originally launched as a virtual shopping experience in 2020 to help businesses struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, the program will offer reimbursed shipping costs to three different local Ontario businesses in September, October and November.

Ontario Wild has a storefront and online store, offering dehydrated pet treats, pet food, and enrichment toys. Co-owners Nicole Findlay and Alex Benzin said the store prides itself in supporting local farmers and sourcing most products from Ontario.

"We probably have the largest variety of single ingredient treats in North America," Findlay said.

Findlay and Benzin started Ontario Wild in 2017 as a raw dog food company and the store has expanded steadily since then, now offering treats and health supplements. Ontario Wild has moved into larger retail spaces since opening to keep up with increased stock and demand.

"Our mission is to keep pets healthy, but we're also supporting sustainable farming practices in Ontario," Findlay said. "A lot of our products would end up being wasted or sent to the landfill."

Findlay said their store faced increased costs during the pandemic, mainly due to supply chain issues for many of their key products. They also struggled to maintain staffing levels.

The company is focused on reducing its environmental footprint, and using recyclable or compostable packaging. Customers can purchase glass containers for supplements, which are easy to recycle and can be used again for future refills.

“We’re very excited to be able to support Ontario Wild, a company dedicated to improving their community and supporting others in their neighbourhood,” said Kirstin Dias, Director of Marketing at YNCU. “We hope providing free shipping for the month of September will help Ontario Wild continue to grow and expand into the future.”

Findlay said free shipping in September will allow Ontario Wild to expand their business outside of Northern Ontario, since high shipping costs can deter shoppers from other areas, especially if they’re only making a small order.

“It will be extremely beneficial to help our products reach new customers,” she said. “Everyone shopping online has the challenge of not seeing the quality of a product in hand. Shipping small orders without having to pay shipping can result in lifetime customers. They’ll see the quality of our products and make larger purchases down the road.”

Findlay added partnering with YNCU allowed for a personal touch that isn’t always possible when working with larger financial institutions.

YNCU will reimburse Ontario Wild for shipping costs in September. New businesses will be featured in October and November. To learn more visit www.yncu.com/syn.

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ABOUT YNCU

With 17 branches and a network of surcharge-free ATMs, Ontarians can access financial services 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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