

[Maritime company participates in a new twist on team fundraising](#)



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A Maritime company is partnering with local basketball teams in a fundraising project that is mutually beneficial.

Real Food Connections is a New Brunswick company that sells food kits; boxes of organic local produce and meats. They've partnered with Fredericton area YMCA basketball teams to sell their kits as part of a new fundraising program.

“We did chocolate bars when we were in school and we did it because we did it every year,” says Courtney Steeves of Real Food Connections. “We just came up with this idea, thinking, if we're raising money for the community, then we could do something that injects money back into the community anyway, so people feel good. They're going to buy groceries anyway, might as well buy local, fresh, seasonal groceries.”

The teams made money, the distributor made money and local farmers like Cedric MacLeod made money. MacLeod says he and the other producers may have also found new customers.

“We'll get a flush of people ordering our product on line and paying through PayPal, doing the packages, or coming up here to Real Food Connections, which means they're also seeing all these other products on board,” says MacLeod. “So, from a farmer's perspective, from an industry perspective, it helps us, but it helps the industry as a whole as well.”

The provincial government is part of the effort as well, hoping it changes the way people think about fundraising.

“We saw this opportunity to look at the fundraising and what kind of messages it sends when we're fundraising using chocolate bars from outside the province, usually money is going outside the province and thought this is part of creating an environment that is sending that message around wellness, that we're promoting healthy foods,” says Marlien McKay, New Brunswick Department of Health and Inclusive Communities.

Eryn Craft of the Fredericton YMCA says they are proud of the message their fundraiser sends.

“It is about locally grown foods, supporting local farmers, and healthy choices and options for players and parents,” says Craft.

In the program’s first run, 30 Maritime producers were featured in the sale of almost \$12,000 worth of goods.

“Within that, we calculated that \$8,000 is going directly to farmers,” says Steeves.

The success of the pilot run means the made in the Maritimes fundraising program will see at least a second run.