

PRESS RELEASE**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Building on Hawthorne Food & Drink’s legacy as it sets to close the end of March.

The Social Enterprise Restaurant has been a training ground for over 250 job-seekers.

Toronto, February 25, 2020 – Hawthorne Food & Drink will be closing its doors on March 31, 2020. Throughout March, the downtown Toronto social enterprise restaurant will be celebrating the achievements accomplished since its creation in 2012.

The Hospitality Workers Training Center (HWTC), a non-profit organization, established Hawthorne Food & Drink to provide high-quality training and career development programs for job-seekers experiencing barriers to employment. Since then, over 300 trainees were exposed to real-life, free, hands-on training for entry-level jobs in the hospitality industry. “We are proud to have been so successful at the social purpose objectives of Hawthorne Food & Drink,” comments, Mandie Abrams, Executive Director of the Hospitality Workers Training Centre, after sharing that 75% of graduates gained employment. She is referring to entry-level prep cooks, restaurant servers, and dishwashers. Training program participants included: newcomers looking to navigate Toronto’s job market, persons experiencing disabilities needing assistance to connect with

employers, NEET Youth (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and persons out of work for a while looking for another chance.

Abrams adds, “Not only have we successfully helped people gain employment but running the restaurant has enabled us to develop quality programs that address labour shortages in Toronto’s Hospitality Industry.” Hawthorne Food & Drink contributed to the community in ways beyond training, including championing local food and local vendors, participating in community fundraising and awareness events. For example, as a Mealshare partner, Hawthorne Food & Drink donated over 8000 meals to support homeless youth. The restaurant also worked closely with several organizations and formed notable partnerships with Oceanwise, The Culinary Tourism Alliance, The St. Lawrence Market Neighborhood BIA, and Transparent Kitchen.

Building upon the legacy of Hawthorne Food and Drink, HWTC will continue to deliver in-demand training and programming in different locations. The organization constantly explores opportunities and, with an innovative approach, plans to undertake new initiatives to improve outcomes for vulnerable job-seekers.

The organization is grateful to loyal customers, talented staff, and generous supporters like United Way (Toronto Enterprise Fund), local foundations, provincial and federal funders, and RBC Capital Markets, who, among others, have supported the restaurant and training programs.

About Hospitality Workers Training Centre

The Hospitality Workers Training Centre [HWTC] is a non-profit organization working in Toronto's hospitality and foodservice industries. Based on a sector-focused workforce development approach, HWTC provides free of cost training to new entrants and upskill training to existing workers for employment and career development. Our goal is to strengthen the workforce of our city's hospitality industry by connecting people in need of employment to job opportunities – through high-quality training and strong partnerships with the industry. For more information, please visit <http://hospitalitytrainingcentre.com/>

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