



Ihdzí'

The First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun's
Indigenous Food Sovereignty Hub

2020 AIP \$485,000 WINNER



DÀYĚ YÉSÓOTS' ENINDHÄN, DÀKHWÄTS'ENÈ'IN YŪ IHDZÍ'
Northern Tutchone: We are happy to see you, Ihdzí'

The Arctic Inspiration Prize is the largest annual prize in Canada. It inspires, enables, and celebrates the achievements of the people of the North, recognizing diverse teams with innovative projects in the fields of education; health and wellbeing; culture, arts and language; science and traditional knowledge; climate change; food security; and the economy.

Nominator: Albert Drapeau
Executive Director, Yukon First Nation Chamber of Commerce

Team: Sonny Gray, Owner and CEO, North Star Agriculture (Team Leader), Andrijana Djokic, Christopher Burn, Colin Asselstine, Dennis Peter, Teresa Samson

This report was compiled and created by the Qatalyst Research Group, with the help of Katie Johnson, the project team, and AIP.





CREATING THE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY HUB

“Ihdzí’ (pronounced ID-T’SEH) is the word for “heart” in Northern Tutchone, and our intention is for it to be just that – the heart of the community. A place where community members and visitors may gather to socialize, eat, learn, or simply come to a place that is warm and welcoming.”

Na-Cho Nyäk Dun Development Corporation

The goal of Ihdzí’ was to plan, design, and build a multi-building food processing facility that would provide jobs in trades (to build the facility), and provide space for training and developing skills as it pertains to food sovereignty.

The project had to pivot somewhat due to the Covid-19 pandemic and rising costs, and focused on transforming a previously leased restaurant building into a multifaceted community space.

The Na-Cho Nyäk Dun Development Corporation (NNDDC) agreed to lease a space for the project as a 2-year pilot. During this pilot period, NNDDC will ensure the facility is operating and maintained at current levels.





A SHARED KITCHEN

Leading up to their grand opening, Ihdzi' (in partnership with Yukon College) held several Kitchen Helper Program Pop-up Dinners that allowed community members to order delicious meals and get a taste of what was to come from this new community hub.

With their shared-kitchen model, Ihdzi' will provide equitable access to a commercial-grade kitchen to several food businesses. The introduction of a shared kitchen space within the community will promote traditional values of sharing with others, cooking and eating nutritious food.

The 4 core principles of Doolí (Northern Tutchone traditional law) are caring, sharing, respect, and teaching, and serve as key guidance for the development and governance of this project.





A GRAND OPENING





CO-CREATION AND OPERATION OF THE IHDZÍ' FOOD HUB

The food hub at Ihdzí' is designed as a phased-approach project to be informed and inspired by the community at each stage. For example:

- In partnership with Yukon University- May Campus, Ihdzi Coordinator has been hired and is responsible for communication and day to day operation (purchasing supplies, preparing the place).
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- FNNND community members and NNDDC employees (the Ihdzí' Coordinator, Community Solutions Catalyst, Food Researcher, and Chief Reinvestment Officer) play key roles in planning, designing, and developing community training, workshops, and mentorship programs.
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- The Community Advisory Group work to generate ideas of new programs desired and needed.





SUPPORTING INDIGINOUS FOOD SOVERNITY BY BUILDING CAPACITY FOR TRADITIONAL FOOD PRODUCTION

A core part of the vision for Ihdzi' is to support and empower FNNND community members' cultural food practices, including local cultivation and food preparation that incorporates healthy, land-based, and traditional ingredients

A Makerspace for Cooks - community cooks and members of the community will be able to book the space for an evening and do a pop-up restaurant using local healthy ingredients and traditional cooking techniques.

The Culinary Program run by Yukon University will focus on food production, processing, preparation, and micro-business development.





REDUCING BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTHY AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT FOODS

The shared kitchen model and the food programming will contribute to the development of micro food-related businesses (food production, processing, and pop-up restaurants that offer more diverse and traditional food options).

Communal infrastructure provides low-barrier access to a creative and supported space for individuals interested in the foodservice industry.

Additionally, by creating this space, Ihdzi' aims to reconnect people with the journey of their food, rebuilding their relationships and rediscovering the cultural significance of communal food preparation and sharing.





A GATHERING SPACE FOR COMMUNITY

Ihdzi' aims to be the "heart" of Mayo as a place where food actors and other creatives, service providers, teachers, and students within the community may eat, learn, gather, and where all are welcome. The space and programming allow individuals to connect with each other in a safe and comfortable space.



"YukonU, Mayo Campus has been more than a partner in this initiative, they've been a collaborative visionary. The success of the Ihdzi' Ihle Ts' e Sewing Programs have provided energy to increase the program offerings, led by YukonU, to foster ongoing growth, learning, and connection with culture. Focused at uplifting Traditional Knowledge and entrepreneurial and general skills and knowledge, programming will be community-informed and adaptive to the evolving needs of Mayo. At its heart, Ihdzi's program calendar will always be rooted in fostering ideas of wellness and belonging."

From <https://nationtalk.ca/story/introducing-ihdzi>





PLANNED PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

The space will be used for other activities and events as needed and desired by community members. For example:

- Low-barrier, accessible community activities coordinated by users and community members, such as Sip and Sew, beading circles, kids' games, movie nights, traditional story-telling, etc. will attract a wide cross-section of the community members.
- Skill development workshops will focus on programming for building skills across a wide range of areas including painting, website creation, hide-tanning, entrepreneurship, etc.
- Events bring will help promote the space to a wider audience and lead to new and regular users and creative activities in the future.
- Weekly pop-up cafe is a fee-for-service pop-up cafe where a third-party concession can produce and sell food and drinks in the space.





FUTURE PLANS AND ASPIRATIONS

Hopes for the shared kitchen include encouraging food producers to sell a variety of foods to the community that would otherwise be unavailable, and to share the burden of food service. Creating a safe, comfortable, and accessible space will help to bring back the cultural importance of sharing food in a kitchen and help individuals connect with their community.

