



**Saskatoon
Open Door
Society**

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September 24, 2018

His Worship Charlie Clark
Mayor of Saskatoon
Saskatoon City Hall
222 - 3rd Avenue North
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

Dear Sir,

RE: The Saskatoon Farmers' Market

The Saskatoon Farmers' Market (SFM) is one of our city's unique sales venues. Being conveniently located and reasonably priced, it provides the perfect combination of conditions for small business/startup owners to get a foothold and test the Saskatoon market.

The Saskatoon Open Door Society is a non-profit organization that was established in 1980 as a centre to welcome and assist refugees and immigrants moving to Saskatoon. Our mission is to assist newcomers to Canada to become participating members of an inclusive and diverse community and country. Furthermore, our vision sees Saskatoon as a diverse and inclusive community where newcomers fully participate in its economic, social, intellectual and cultural life.

We have introduced three clients from the Open Door Society's employment program to the SFM, all of them Syrian refugees. The SFM's affordable rates enabled us to sponsor their participation and we encouraged them to start out as market vendors. Working with them, we came to understand the requirements for selling food and the culture of markets in Saskatoon, which are quite different from those in our clients' countries of origin. Our three Syrian clients are now independent vendors who are mentoring others! They have made money! They have sold first-rate Syrian foods and products in the space, which has excellent traffic because of its convenient location. They intend to continue at the SFM during the coming months and put together a business plan for a full-time restaurant there. Networking and making connections have given them pride and confidence, as well as helping them to develop their business. This is a truly positive experience for these families.

We were planning to host a pop-up restaurant in the SFM's kitchen one weekend per month throughout the winter and to continue this collaboration, once the lease is settled, from May forward. This aspect of our program is on hold until the future of the SFM has been decided.

We support the SFM as the best tenant in this facility. We believe that the SFM is a hub of diversity and a place that facilitates integration into Canadian culture.

With thanks for your attention,

Ali Abukar, Executive Director
Saskatoon Open Door Society



Welcoming. Connecting. *Belonging.*