



PLANET ORGANIC

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N E W S R E L E A S E

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DREAM THAT BEGAN IN EDMONTON GROWS EVEN BIGGER

EDMONTON – Fifteen years ago, Diane Shaskin had a dream.

She was standing in a long line at the checkout of a large grocery store, under the dreary glare of fluorescent lights, thinking there had to be a better way to shop.

She dreamt of a store where there was healthy, nutritious food in warm and welcoming surroundings. Where you would enjoy the experience of choosing good food for your family. Little did she know then that the dream that started in Edmonton would expand to a group of homegrown organic grocery stores across Canada known as Planet Organic Markets.

And now, the store where the remarkable Planet Organic Markets story began celebrates a major expansion as its flagship Edmonton South location opens its doors on 20,000 square feet of shopping space. Every department has expanded, and an additional 20,000 square feet of office space is housed in the same building, which is Planet Organic Markets' Canadian headquarters.



“Our first store in Edmonton was the inspiration for everything that followed,” said Diane Shaskin, Co-Founder of Planet Organic Markets, which now has 10 stores in B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Nova Scotia. “We couldn’t have asked for a better city to launch our stores, or for a better reception from the wonderful people who live here.”

Diane, who is originally from Lethbridge, grew up with good food on the table. Her Ukrainian heritage meant there were always plenty of homemade soups, stews, preserves, pickles – and perogies – in the kitchen. She is passionate and dedicated to providing healthy, organic food to the community.

“I remember the first time I brought home a flat of organic cherries for my Dad,” she recalls. “He said they tasted just like the ones he ate while he was growing up near the Black Sea.”

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Diane's vision is to make organic food available and approachable. "We didn't even have widespread use of pesticides until after World War II. Everyone ate lots of foods that were produced locally and without chemicals – it wasn't anything unusual."

From the beginning, Planet Organic Markets has stuck to its commitment of supporting organic and local. The expanded store will have lots of tempting new foods, such as organic rotisserie chicken, handmade organic sushi and fresh pizza.

The first store Diane and her husband Mark opened in 1993 in the heart of Old Strathcona in Edmonton was known as the Terra Natural Food Market. It operated until 2002, then changed its name to Planet Organic Markets and moved to its current location. Diane laughs that in their youthful exuberance they moved the store "over the weekend," and were open for business on Monday morning. "People were lined up to get in," she recalls. "We have had such an amazing reception from this city right from 'day one'."

On Saturday, May 30, both Edmonton store locations at 7917 104th Street and 12120 Jasper Avenue will have celebratory Open Houses all day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. featuring fresh strawberries dipped in chocolate (all ingredients are organic, naturally). All of Edmonton is invited to come and check out the new surroundings, and raise a glass with Diane Shaskin, her husband and co-founder Mark Craft, and young son Alexandre, who will be on hand to welcome and thank their local customers.

Diane's food philosophy is simple: "Food has to nourish your spirit and bring pleasure to your life."

Earlier this year, *Corporate Knights* magazine ranked Planet Organic Markets number one in Canada in its Green Grocer survey. Planet Organic achieved an overall "A" grade and outranked all national grocery chains for their excellent track record in stocking a wide variety of organic, fair-trade, and environmentally-friendly products, as well as integrating consumer education and sustainability into its operations.

For more information on Planet Organic Markets, please go to www.planetorganic.ca

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