

## Change is in the air ahead of Saturday's Farmers' Market opening



By Brock Weir

Jared Simpson is no stranger to farmers' markets.

A seventh generation farmer based in Stouffville, they have been second homes to him since he was a kid. Now, as he works to move the produce grown at Simpson Family Farm, he and his family are returning to Town Park again this Saturday for the opening of the Aurora Farmers' Market.

The Aurora Farmers' Market opens at Town Park this Saturday, May 5 at 8 a.m.

Once again, Simpson Family Farm will be on hand with their locally grown veggies and fruit, which have become a staple for market-going Aurorans over the years.

"I have been to a lot of different markets over the years since I was a kid and there is a good family atmosphere here amongst the vendors and farmers," says Jared. "It is a good vibe and I think that is why we like this market and come back. We're very local to here and it is good for us to be able to connect with some local people from the community so they are able to know about us. We're a seventh generation farm and it is a great opportunity to connect."

Also sharing in this sentiment is Gabriel Schacter.

The local restaurateur's freshly made peameal on a bun sandwiches have been a Market favourite since it's the Aurora Farmers' Market first took shape behind his eponymous Yonge Street café during their early years on Temperance Street.

Some wondered whether Gabriel would be back this year after retiring at the end of 2017 and selling his restaurant, but the people at the Market will always keep him coming back for more, he says.

"It is fun to come here," he says. "It is a meeting place and that is it. It's about the people and I would never stop that! Come on!" Councillor Sandra Humfries, the Farmers' Market's Council liaison agrees that the Aurora Farmers' market is "the heart of our community."

"It has always been a meeting place and it continues to be," she says, noting the hard winter, which went strong through the early days of this Spring, have left people eager to get back to their traditional springtime activities, including meeting up at the Market. "May 5 is our opening day, but we're having an official Grand Opening on May 26. There will be many, many prizes and lots of surprises, some special guests, an amazing band and lots of enjoyable entertainment."

An early surprise which will be evident at this weekend's opening day is a new configuration of vendors.

Instead of lining Wells Street, the Farmers' Market will now be largely contained within Town Park, and increasing the amount of on-street parking for Market patrons.

On select days, the Market will also showcase a new partnership with Niagara College's Canadian Food & Wine Institute, which will soon call the adjacent historic Aurora Armoury home.

On special event days, a chef from the College will be on site demonstrating how to cook certain dishes, complete with recipes to hand out, prepared specifically with fresh produce and other products available at the Market on any given Saturday.

"It will be very exciting," says Councillor Humfries.