

Yk'ers fight hate with food

Project potluck, a movement countering hate with love and pie, makes it up North

by Emelle Peacock
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One by one they showed up to a sunny Somba K'e Civic Plaza Sunday, armed with watermelon, salads, brownies, pizza and red-and-white checkered picnic blankets.

Once assembled, the 20 or so strangers shared a meal and a chat as their children ran around in the grass. This was the Yellowknife iteration of Project Potluck, a movement spreading as far as Alberta, B.C., Colorado and Texas.

Inspired by a Facebook post earlier this month by Calgary-based chef Julie Van Rosendaal, Project Potluck is built on a simple premise.

"A week since the events in

Charlottesville and the killing of Heather Heyer, let's gather in parks and living rooms and backyards and use those garden torches to illuminate conversation and make some real connections," urged Van Rosendaal on Aug. 16.

"To stand up and remind the world – or even just your cul-de-sac – that bigotry and hate are unacceptable, that we won't allow racism to permeate our society, that love wins – and brings pie."

Kyle Thom-

as heard about Julie's post from a friend and decided to plan a Yellowknife version of the event online. Well-known for the bread he sells at the Yellowknife Farmers Market, he said the potluck is meant to bring people

together much the same way breaking a loaf can.

"Bread is supposed to be this shared thing," he said. "You have a loaf of bread amongst a table and everyone kind of shares it and goes from there. And it's through all cultures and throughout time."

Nancy Corral said she was at church earlier in the day and decided to stop by.

"It's good to meet new people," she said about why she was there.

Trevor Sinclair saw the event online Saturday night and decided to bring his family out. A resident of Yellowknife for nine years, he said he believes one event probably won't change the world, but a constant stream of events can connect a community.

"I think we can choose to revel in that kind of stuff as much as we want or we can revel in this kind of stuff," he said, referring to the potluck. "It's up to the individual and we as a family choose to do this sort of stuff."

Project Potluck is the latest response from Yellowknife residents to a violent Unite the Right rally on the weekend of Aug. 12 in Charlottesville, Va., that saw Ku Klux Klan members, white supremacists and neo-Nazis take to the streets in large numbers.

On Thursday at Somba K'e Civic Plaza, close to 100 residents gathered to hold an anti-racism vigil in response to the rally as well.

Thomas said the city of Yellowknife is strong in its diversity and the potluck is meant to celebrate this diversity.

"I think Yellowknife is one of the most unique communities in the world because we're made up of so many diverse peoples and we all coincide within such a small radius," he said.

"We're privileged to be able to have access to different cultures and different foods and different stories and different knowledge."

"Bread is supposed to be this shared thing."

Kyle Thomas



Approximately 20 Yellowknifers, some complete strangers, came together for a community potluck at Somba K'e Civic Plaza on Sunday. The event was inspired by a Facebook post by Calgary-based chef Julie Van Rosendaal, inviting people to host 'peaceful and pluralist potlucks everywhere' in response to recent negative news and events.



Josephine Mersereau is a happy camper with watermelon in hand at a community potluck in Somba K'e Civic Plaza Sunday. About 20 residents came out to the event, bringing with them homemade brownies, cupcakes, salads and a pizza oven that pumped out fresh pizzas. Project Potluck, started by Calgary-based chef Julie Van Rosendaal, has spread as far south as Texas and as far North as the NWT.

Emelle Peacock/NWSL photos