

Businesses flourishing at Uptown's 7th Street Public Market

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If you haven't been to the 7th Street Public Market lately, you may have quite a bit of catching up to do on your next visit. In the last year, the Market has become one of Charlotte's top destinations for discovering Charlotte through unique local foods, food artisans and a bustling place to be with others.

The mission of the 7th Street Public Market, presented by Carolinas Healthcare System, is to celebrate the food culture of the Carolinas and to promote local and regional farms, food artisans, and

entrepreneurs. Staying true to that mission, the Market plays a vital role in this community for making the connection between local food, the diverse culture of our community, education and the importance of healthy living.

The Market, which opened in 2012, is at full capacity. Fifteen businesses operate seven days a week to bring the best in local and regional food options to customers. These owner-operated businesses offer a variety of unique, high quality products. As of today,

the Market businesses employ nearly 100 people and do direct business with more than 45 North Carolina food-related businesses representing 30 counties.

The 7th Street Public Market has also become the heartbeat of health and wellness in Charlotte. Each small business is hand-picked because they offer fresh, local food with Carolina flavor to thousands of customers each year. Our loyal, long-standing business owners work tirelessly to ensure that Market customers are more than satisfied when they visit. These entrepreneurs are often complemented by seasonal vendors who bring in food products and produce directly from nearby farms. The result is a holistic Market unique to Charlotte's Uptown that offers a variety of choices every day of the week, every month of the year.

Of course, health and wellness is not based on food alone. The 7th Street Public Market has become a key element of the system for visitors, residents and Uptown employees who visit every month, thanks to support from presenting sponsor Carolinas Healthcare System and founding sponsor Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. From hosting a Charlotte B-cycle station outside its doors to promote healthy transportation, to offering educational classes, cooking demonstrations, health screenings and special events, the Market is a vital part of Charlotte's system of health and wellness.

The 7th Street Public Market was designed to be a small business incubator – a place where entrepreneurs could jump start their business models with fewer hurdles. Several of our businesses, including Not Just Coffee, Pure Pizza and Small Keys, have expanded to other locations. Others have chosen to remain in one location and thrive in the Market.

It is hard to miss the spirit of entrepreneurship, innovation and community at the 7th Street Public Market. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why it was featured in the New York Times "36 Hours in Charlotte" travel article last year. Be sure to stop by soon to experience one of our City's best places. You won't regret it.