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For Immediate Release

## STUDENT OFFERS \$500 TO HELP CHANGE SCHOOL FOOD FOR THE BETTER

**Cambridge, Nova Scotia** – Eleven-year old Kieran O’Neill is putting his money where his mouth is, literally, and he’s inviting all of his school-mates to enjoy the reward! On February 28th this Central Kings student is spending \$500 to sample tasty, healthy foods for his entire school of 650 students.

Kieran O’Neill’s short film, [School Food](#), was the winning film of the 2018 [Food & Film Challenge](#) as part of the Devour! Food and Film Festival. The film illustrated that the food options available at a typical Nova Scotian school cafeteria are neither nutritious nor particularly tasty. As the winner of the challenge, Kieran was awarded \$500 to support a healthy eating program in his school or community. He decided to invest it in changing one of the main concerns brought up in his film – “where are the vegetables?”

Former restaurateur and local food advocate Jenny Osburn is helping to drive Kieran’s effort at Central Kings. “As a community we need to come together to support the shift to serve real food in schools. It’s within our reach and there is so much at stake,” Osburn says.

“I’m really looking forward to ordering lunch more often, Kieran O’Neill says. I think a salad bar is a really good idea! This is going to be a big change for my school, I’m glad that the prize money is going to be used for it,” commented O’Neill.

“It’s a misconception that kids won’t eat healthy foods like those featured on a salad bar. It’s the adults who think kids won’t eat these offerings, and lunches in schools reflect this mindset,” says Margo Riebe-Butt, executive director at Nourish Nova Scotia. “Not only do kids enjoy nutritious foods, they are starting to speak up about wanting better food in school—and we need to listen,” Riebe-Butt says.

Around the province there are a number of pilot lunch programs underway. Community members, students and school staff are rallying around the concept of good food in schools to better fuel students for their learning day. “Unfortunately, these programs rely on a patchwork of funding and a lot of parental and volunteer support. This is one of the reasons Nourish Nova Scotia has joined the call for a [National School Food Program](#) to ensure schools can provide good food to all kids consistently,” Riebe-Butt says.

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Nourish Nova Scotia is a registered charity and the provincial partner for school-based healthy eating programs—providing support, leadership, advocacy and education. Nourish believes that if you teach kids to eat real food early on they will be great eaters throughout life, and that good food = good thinking. Nourish receives core funding from the Province of NS along with private and corporate donations to fulfill its mandate.

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