

Alice's Pantry celebrates grand opening at new address



From left, Alice's Pantry owner Alice Martin, staff members Kayleen Martin, Kirstyn Kyle, Shelly Wadsworth, Brianna McCormack and Arline Peacock welcome guests to the grand opening of the pantry at its new location on Hastings Street North. / SARAH SOBANSKI Staff

By Sarah Sobanski

"What I like to say is our family grew bigger so we had to buy a bigger house," said Alice Martin, owner of Alice's Pantry, at the store's grand opening of its new location May 24.

"It's great. It feels like the community has been incredibly supportive in our move and we had lots of people turn out. It's been fun," she said. "We wouldn't be doing it if it wasn't for that and we have an incredible team."

Alice's new, larger location is on Hastings Street North where Sears used to be. The move comes as Martin's business flourishes, growing with no sign of slowing down.

Martin has been in the community for more than two decades. She moved to Bancroft after living in India - hence her flair for Indian cooking. She worked in retail at Zehrs Deli, also on Bancroft's main street, for the first decade.

After that, Martin went out on her own with Alice's Catering. She did special events but missed retail. So in 2013 she first opened Alice's Pantry, where Bancroft's bulk food store used to be. This old location was on Snow Road.

"When I started the meals it was like I already had a following because I did the catering in the community doing big menus," said Martin attributing this to how she grew so quickly. She still offers hot meals, making recipes she finds online her own or offering favourites people loved from her catering days.

"We try to keep most popular foods in stock at all times," she said noting her lasagnas, cabbage rolls, beef pies, shepherd's pies and sweet and sour meatballs. She also keeps a frozen stock of homemade meals.

As for what's next, Martin said the sky's the limit. She said she won't go bigger than her store at her location for a while.

For her fellow entrepreneurs she said it's all about having a good team behind you.

"That's a huge part of retail in a small town. When you take care of your employees, they'll take care of you," she said.