

LIFESTYLE, NEWS

MEET FIRST CITY MEATS

BY [ANTHONY CAMMALLERI](#) | December 8, 2022



HE HAS THE MEATS

Joshua Clark has opened First City Meats animal butcher shop, in Lynn.

(Photo by Spenser Hasak)

LYNN — Meat lovers, your time has come. A whole-animal butcher shop, First City Meats, will open its doors on Washington Street Friday, Dec. 9, offering a variety of locally-sourced pork and beef cut fresh by the owner, and former executive chef at the South End restaurant Masa, Joshua Clark.

Three years ago, Clark, a Lynn resident who spent the last 20 years working in restaurants across New England, decided to follow his wife's advice, and start his own business.

"My wife had kind of encouraged me, she said 'you should do your own thing. If you're always gonna work like you own the place, you should, you know, own the place.' I fought and fought and fought, and then one day, a lightbulb went off," Clark said.

Clark arrived at his decision to open a butcher shop after contemplating different ways in which he could make himself useful in his community. He said that he had served as a butcher in the past, and saw that there was a demand for locally-sourced high quality meat.

"I was just thinking, how do I actually be useful? I've got three kids, I want them to grow up thinking you can't just live someplace, right? You've got to contribute to the community," Clark said. "That's just the intersection of what I'm interested in, what I'm good at, and what the community could benefit from. If those intersected at a bowling alley, I would have opened a bowling alley, but it intersected at a butcher shop."

With financing from North Shore Bank, the Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development (LHAND) and the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC), Clark was able to convert, in a matter of months, the vacant space into a fully-equipped butcher shop.

On Thursday, a day before opening up shop, Clark hauled 1,036 pounds of meat — a 230-pound pig and an 806-pound cow — from a truck to his newly set up shop at 698 Washington St. Clark said that he only purchases animals from New England farms that he's already visited to ensure the highest meat quality possible.

"I'm only going to sell meat from farms I've been to and farmers I've met. That's the whole thing, that's the only thing I'm gonna promise. Because, you know, it's easy to get caught up on grass fed or organic or free range, but those are just words. There have been times where I've met the farmer, and they've said things like 'Oh, they graze on grass this time. But then in the winter, there's no grass and so we supplement with corn,'" Clark said. "It's a lot to ask for the guests to take my word for it, so I'm only going to ever ask them to take my word for it. I'll never have to give a second-degree assurance [of the quality]."

Clark said that since every culture cuts their meat in a different way, he also prides himself on his ability to cut and prepare meat to the preference of any of his customers.

"Lynn's demographics are so – there's no majority here, you know what I mean? Everybody's, you know, 40 percent or less, like as far as how you divide them up. Because of that, I want my specialty to be that I can cut this thing the way people from Brazil like it, and I can cut this other one the way that Argentina likes it, and I can make the sausage the way the Italians like it I can have the lamb the way the Greeks like it," he said.

After business starts taking off, Clark wants to hire a sausage specialist. The ideal candidate, he said, would be a person who "gets up in the morning and thinks about making sausage." In the future, Clark said that he would like to form community programs that educate children and adults on the importance of locally sourcing meat.

"Big picture, and this is probably years off, but I'm trying to change the food system, and I'm trying to change the way people buy what they eat," Clark said. "The best farming practices in Nebraska are kind of negated by keeping the food in a truck for hours and hours."

Clark said that if his business becomes successful enough, he would, some day, like to start a nonprofit to teach children about where their food comes from, and the importance of a healthier, more efficient local food system.

"I want to educate kids about the food system, that's the goal," Clark said. "I'm gonna sell to adults now because they're the ones making purchasing decisions, but I'm trying to change the food system. Right now, I'm trying to pay the bills, but if I can create a program that engages with kids and changes the way they think about food, that'll pay dividends for a lot longer."



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