

# Food for Life Get Togethers

## Small Grants

### 2019



*'It certainly brightened the day for the older generation. The younger generation have experienced meeting new people and experiencing those with dementia.'*

***Get Togethers Leader***

*'Watching all ages interact. The food. It was super to have such a lovely topic for our meet up.'*

***Get Togethers Participant***

The small grants programme funded through Food For Life aimed To bring generations in communities together through healthy & nutritional food that makes people feel good.

## Food For Life Get Togethers Funding

Food for Life provided funding for 18, £150 small grants which were awarded to projects in Belfast, Newry Mourne & Down & Fermanagh & Omagh council areas. Due to level of interest received, LGNI funded an additional 18 Get Togethers with funding from Public Health Agency and the Big Lottery Community Fund.

Between November 2019 and January 2020, 36 Intergenerational Get Together events took place, involving **over 1,000** participants! The ages of those taking part in the Get Togethers spanned from pre-nursery school to 80+ years old. With the largest numbers being school age children and the 65 + years, which is often typical of intergenerational activity.



A range of organisations received funding including:

- Care homes
- Sheltered housing
- Primary schools
- Post primary schools
- Youth groups
- Colleges
- Nurseries & playgroups
- Sports clubs

All the events centred around food and being close to Christmas many had a festive feel, including a number of Christmas Dinners with carols and dancing. Several of the events had a reminiscence aspect talking about Christmas past, which the children enjoyed. Participants were involved in a variety of activities including crafting and making decorations. Some lucky groups even had a visit from Santa!

## Impact to Participants

Participants reported that from taking part they had opportunities to chat with people of different ages, making them feel more connected to their community. Some shared that they felt supported to eat food that is food for them.



Participants found the events **enjoyable and beneficial**:

*‘Good for elderly to get out and talk to people and reminisce.’*

*‘Need to use different avenues to reach elders. More aware of their needs and insecurities.’*

*‘Realised it is important to establish contacts with our local young people and through school events like this it’s a perfect opportunity for the groups to come together. The older community enjoyed something extra to their event and the children were pleased to showcase their talents.’*

*‘That different generations can have great fun together, and make friendships that span the generations.’*

*‘The need for lonely people to join with others, especially the elderly.’*

Opportunities were created to **socialise** locally:

*‘They enjoyed seeing the young people and some of the older group had their grandchildren in the choir. They enjoyed chatting to the children. There was a real Christmas spirit about the venue and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere the children brought to the room.’*

*‘Helped people get out to meet people of their own age and different ages and to talk about the past.’*

**Connections** made between people who may not have connected otherwise:

*‘As Ladies Group has only opened it was a great way for new people to learn about the project. It was also an important experience for both ages, as we rarely come together to talk and learn new skills such as cooking workshops lead by each group.’*

*'It was good to have new faces & to provide opportunities to work with students.'*

*'It certainly brightened the day for the older generation. The younger generation have experienced meeting new people and experiencing those with dementia.'*

*'Solid foundation for trust based relationships.'*

*'Real relationships built.'*

The events offered opportunities for **learning and personal development:**

*'Enjoying good food, sharing experiences and feeling valued.'*

*'A great social evening that involved good food, great company and an opportunity to make good friends.'*

*'Understanding between different age groups and the youth feeling more comfortable around the older generation.'*

*'Interacting with people outside of their own peers. Hearing and seeing what supported residential is like. Independent living skills- cooking and budgeting. Personal Development - communication/ listening. For some doing something different.'*

*'Cooking is a great way to bring a community together, to talk about important issues and how much support there is available for these community projects.'*

*'How good it is to have youthful energy and viewpoints in centre.'*

*'That all children have different background and family set ups, some children were initially scared of the older people but soon came around and both ages seem to be enjoying the interaction.'*

The majority of groups had never held an intergenerational activity before but enjoyed it so much they **plan to do more**.

*"We have commenced a weekly Friday pot luck community lunch."*

*"The groups plan to meet up over 6 more dates to explore exercise, healthy eating and growing your own food."*

*"Cooking is a great way to bring a community together, to talk about important issues."*

*'Next event will involve more chat and conversation over the event so young and old can find out more about each other. We will consider a coffee morning with a cookery element in it.'*

*'Discussing the benefit of healthy eating, difference in the variety of diet.'*

*'Workshops on sharing our faith, IT kills, Arts & crafts, cookery & knitting'  
'We plan to run this night again but on a larger scale. I was surprised at the interest it raised. We are now collecting memories, memorabilia and stories for the next night.'*

## **Summary of Activities**

Funding returns were received for 33 out of the 36 get together events. Below is a summary of the activities that took place:

### **Food for Life Get Togethers Funded Projects**

#### **Ballinamallard PTFA**

We had 2 groups in our project - the year 7 children in Ballinamallard Primary School and senior citizens from the 'Friday Club'. Both groups sat together to eat a Christmas dinner that they had, had input into choosing and enjoyed playing games together. The children then led the group by singing Christmas songs.

#### **Ballymartin GAC**

This event was advertised through word of mouth and advertised through the in club and local pub. The project was providing hot food in our local club with the theme of memories, where participants could come along and bring something to the gathering (mostly photos and newspaper cuttings) which sparked conversation and stories over the course of the evening. We didn't get the turn out that we had expected, it was a particularly cold wet evening and this may have been the cause, also it was our first time to run such an event and people may not have been sure what to expect. A table free for photos to be placed and set up tables for food and tea. The older people quickly got into conversation with each other and the younger people seemed to sit together for the first part. The photos were used a 'mixer', the older generation were able to point out the younger generations relatives which led to conversations re football, the old school, times gone past. Conversations spread out to things like "my granda has this at home, but he didn't come tonight", "my mummy has photos of that person" etc. The

night was really enjoyed but it was clear by the end that it was only the start of the project. The people who were there asked for another night as they felt that there was people missing who would have enjoyed it, there were people missing who had lots of information that could be shared. We came up with the idea that before the next arranged night we would gather photos and memorabilia and display it that people could follow a time line, as a result of this there is a team of older and younger volunteers working together on making this night a success and there is even discussion around using the information gathered to put together a memories book. The night wasn't as successful as we thought it would be in terms of numbers, however I feel that the event was a fantastic success giving the outcomes that it has prompted.

### **Bradley Manor Garden Project**

At our Food for Life Get Together Bradley Manor Garden residents got together with the children from Holy Cross PS School and we also brought in Bill Love, owner of Stupid Priced Plants. He did a talk on various garden techniques and together we planted garlic, onions, herbs, flowers and fruit trees in our community/residents garden at Bradley Manor. We all enjoyed learning and planting and are now planning regular Get Togethers in Spring time to plant some more vegetables and share crops.

### **Carnagat CA**

For our project we chose the theme of Christmas past. We invited members of our older people's group and our junior & youth groups to come along and talk about Christmas and how they celebrate it. Our older people shared their memories and stories of Christmas for them as children. Our older people expressed how wonderful the event was and how they enjoyed their trip down memory lane. They also enjoyed getting to know some of the young people there and the children participating got great insight into the true meaning of Christmas and how people had very little money but were still able to make the best out of the situation and enjoyed a commercial free and stress free Christmas. We hope to build on this event and are already planning a bowling trip made up of teams with young and old together.

### **Coughlin Community Association Christmas Lunch**

We provided a Christmas lunch for people of all ages. The meat & stuffing was professionally cooked by The Charm Inn, Carrickmore. The vegetables and cocktail sausages were cooked on site. The soup, soda bread & trifle were made

by committee members. Drinks were fresh water and squash. Christmas carols played quietly in the background. A fun, family Christmas quiz was distributed around the tables to provide a talking point. Some new friendships were formed. Young people circulated and introduced themselves. A drawing of Santa on his sleigh was available for the younger children to colour in. Santa arrived before everyone went home and distributed chocolates. The people who took part were local people. We targeted the lonely, recently bereaved and those who do not usually leave their homes. The food was served by committee & volunteers and there were some surprises seeing some of them out of their comfort zones. The young children attending were accompanied by their parents/grandparents and in one case there were four generations. It proved a great learning experience for the committee and a really worthwhile effort.

### **Cozy Corner Playgroup**

The children, Granny's grandads and other family members came together to make a healthy snack of lots of different fruits. They created a fruit Hedgehog. The children got to taste lots of different fruits which some had never had before. The group was together for 2 hours and they got to mingle and chat together. Everyone really enjoyed it and the feedback was good.

### **Footprint's Women's Centre**

Footprint's Women's Centre brought together different groups at the Centre for lunch and singing on Tuesday 26th Nov 2019. The groups were: our senior Citizens Group, our 50plus group, our Daycare Children, our Mother & Toddler group, The Next Step Group and Syrian Women's group. Food was prepared by Food Services staff: lasagne, salad & garlic potatoes followed by apple pie & custard using apples from Footprint's Women's Centre Food Garden. Syrian women cooked a variety of Middle Eastern food at home and brought to share at the lunch. Volunteers set the tables and served food. As the food was being served the adults sang nursery rhymes to the children and the children sang songs they had learnt in daycare. There was much laughter and chat and high five's and hugs were exchanged between the women and children. When the children returned to daycare, the women had coffee and chatted about their memories with their own children, their own childhood street games. This was a very successful day and [project name] has followed up with a weekly Community Lunch.

### **Health Living Centre Newhill Bake Off**

The Health Living Centre Newhill decided to organise an event between a number of our service users, many of whom are middle aged women, and a group of young people who are part of the Upper Springfield Development Trust is where the youth groups meet so, as it has kitchen facilities, we thought we should carry out the event there. We had a preliminary discussion and we felt that each group could learn from the other. Older people would learn what young people know about food preparation and cooking and what foods they like as well as their knowledge of healthy food. Young people then would learn from the older group about how to prepare and cook a meal from scratch and everything involved in that. There was a clear view that there would be an emphasis on healthy food and we would show that this can be just as enjoyable as other less healthy options. Our shopping list included ingredients for pizza, chicken curry, salad and fresh fruit dipped in melted chocolate. The meals were duly prepared and the group all sat down around the table and thoroughly enjoyed clearing their plates. We had great craic over the meal and everyone thought it was one of the best evenings they'd had in a long time. To round things off, the young people were very helpful in washing up and leaving everything neat, clean and tidy. A very good time was had by all.

### **Inverary Fold & Ashfield boy school**

We had ice breakers with the kids, activity bingo then we did crafting painted Christmas tea lights and made paper chains. When crafting was complete we all shared a meal - sweet & sour chicken, chicken curry and potato chicken sweetcorn pie with rice, potato wedges and garlic bread. Followed by Eton mess, fresh fruit pavlova fresh cream and ice cream. Then Davy the exercise expert did chair exercises with tenants and kids. We then finished with playing darts with the kids added a bit of competition. Kids really enjoyed it.

### **Kikeel Community Association Celebration Lunch**

Kikeel Community Association Celebration Lunch had a celebration/Christmas lunch in the [venue] on the 5th December 2019, the group consisted of older people aged from 50-92. 18 people attended, 16 female, 2 male. The lunch was served by young people. [Project name] have already booked a lunch in the [venue] in February as the food and service was excellent. Kikeel Community Association Celebration Lunch members had an excellent day and commented that it was one of the best lunches they have had out.

### **Lisnaskea Guide Association**



We held an evening to bring together the members of Lisnaskea Brownies and Lisnaskea [name] Mother's Union. The Brownies and their leaders made pasta Bolognese, garlic bread, fresh fruit salad and ice cream for dinner. Lisnaskea Guide Association delivered a workshop where everyone made a lovely Christmas decoration. A great evening was enjoyed by everyone.

### **Mercy College & Maples Primary**

We hosted a Christmas party between the Maples & Mercy Primary volunteers. We compiled a shopping list, went shopping with the residents preparing food & the primary children helping to heat & serve. Our choir provided music & entertainment. We chatted: ate & got to know each other a little better. We even had a dance or two! We have decided to meet again with the residents - this time working on First Aid & then at another date when we will prepare, cook and enjoy healthy pizza. We will celebrate in June with a summer barbeque.

### **Mountfield Community Association Christmas Event**

Our group organised and planned a Christmas event for the young and old in our community. We decorated a room in the hall, put up a tree and then had a festive lunch, which was cooked by committee members. This was enjoyed by everyone and in a friendly warm atmosphere. We played board games after dinner and sang a few Christmas carols. We may make this an annual event as it was very successful and have received positive feedback about the event.

### **South Eastern College Golden Memories**

A Level Health & Social care students from [name] set up a social activity centre for people who are lonely and isolated in our community.

### **St Tierney's**

Pupils working in school with our link groups to prepare and decorate Christmas cakes. We then visited [name] to celebrate with the day visitors and residents and shared seasonal food, our Christmas cakes, stories about Christmas then and now and sang songs. It was an extremely worthwhile experience for all involved.

### **Wee Chicks - Wee & Wise**

We decided to host an Afternoon Tea Party to celebrate the end of our six week project. Firstly, we designed invitations and gave them to everyone. The older people were delighted with their invitation and couldn't wait to 'dress to impress'

for the event. In the run up to the event, the intergenerational group designed all of the decorations for the Afternoon Tea Party including name tags, bunting, placemats, paper flowers and vases.

Photos of the six week project were displayed to decorate the room. This was brilliant as everyone was proud of their decorations and could show them off to all attending the event. We sourced locally baked bread, cream buns and cakes from a local, family run bakery and used a local fruit and vegetable shop to purchase fruit for the fruit displays. We decided to do fruit displays as Hedgehogs and a giant Peacock. This was a brilliant talking point for the event which brought people together and made them want to eat all the fruit! We had a volunteer musician who played a wide variety of songs to suit the entire group and have a good sing along. Some children also brought along their instruments and we even had some Irish dancing! At the end, we had previously decided to enter Linking Generation's competition 'Sing a song for Santa' which we had been practicing for therefore, we recorded this video and got a lovely group photo.

### **LGNI Funded Get Togethers**

#### **Jellie Tots – KWC- Ladybirds**

We had a Christmas party/lunch for children under 4 and the residents of the local care home. Most suffer from dementia or Alzheimer's. Children arrived and took part in some signing for the residents, jingle bells was very popular with all. They then handed out gift bags which included things like shower gel, hand creams, soaps and sponges. Residents seemed quite overwhelmed by these and continually told us it was too much but when we explained it was from the children they were a bit more accepting. Residents also gave children candy canes, this step seemed to break the ice so everyone took some time to mingle. We then provided a hot buffet lunch for residents and children including pizza, sausage roils, quiche and a variety of cold nibbles such as sandwiches and scones. As it was a party there was also some treats available. Dietary requirements had been previously discussed and catered for including vegetarian and diary free. After lunch children and residents pulled some crackers and had a little dance to some Christmas music. We had some assistance from our young person's group as well with a couple of volunteers on the day meet the care home staff had a much derived break during the event

## **Include Youth**

A combined 14 people- residents at Cook Court, Clanmil in Newtownards, alongside a group of young people from Include Youth, Give and Take met over three sessions. Getting to know one another with a walk down memory lane, cooking and eating together a meal and then going out together to get something to eat while reflecting upon the experience. All involved really enjoyed the overall project and were sad when it came to an end with a desire expressed to do future work together. The residents in Cook Court learned about what it is like to be a vegan as 2 of the young people were vegan and were interested in finding out more about what it meant to be vegan. Everyone discussed that being healthy doesn't necessarily mean more expense or hassle and all enjoyed the connections and conversations across the generations that wouldn't normally work together. There was definitely no shortage of craic!

## **St Joseph's Grammar School**

We launched our Connecting Generations project by hosting a Christmas dinner party as a hook to get participants on board. This involved contacting local clubs/parishes to advertise the event as well as through our own staff, students and feeder schools. I canvassed support with our Deputy Head Girl to recruit student participants. It was an amazing event. I think it will be annual

## **Tobertinys' Community playgroup**

We held 2 different brunch mornings, one with the children's' grandparents and one with the local senior citizens group. We all had brunch together, followed by story time, songs and a few light exercises. The 2 mornings were a joy for all involved.

## **Tirgan Community Association Ltd**

We had 30 participants and a nutritionist, we made tea, soda bread, banana loaf, biscuits etc. Nutritionist talked about lack of fresh fruit years ago and compared with what is available now. Although the older generation had more fresh veg they grew themselves years ago. They would like more of these evenings as the topic of discussion ranged from ghost stories to education.

### **Kilcronaghan Community Association**

We invited the local primary school choir to sing Christmas carols at our weekly cookery demonstration. There were 34 children singing and 22 regular participants. The choir sang as everyone arrived and then a soloist entertained everyone just before the event started. The children were fascinated by the demonstration and everyone was able to tuck into the seasonal food at the end of the session. Before the children left, they finished the event with more carols for our enjoyment. This event turned out to be a very successful and special morning with everyone feeling very festive. The children were delighted to be asked and we fully intend to hold follow up events throughout the year.

### **Railway Lodge Care Home**

Great night at Stevenson's Youth Centre with the residents of Railway Lodge Care Home. A lot of chatting and interaction was great. During dinner they played music and we chatted and had a great laugh. The youth then did a lot of dance routines. The young people had provided a blow up Santa's grotto and one dressed up as Santa. Residents enjoyed visiting Santa in the grotto. Residents enjoyed getting out of the care home to go in taxis to visit the young peoples' setting. Both ages loved talking about Christmas past and present. We are all looking forward to meeting again in the next few weeks

### **Apple Blossom Baby Basics**

We met and did introductions. Committee Secretary distributed handbooks, guidance notes. Discussion took place. Brownies served and enjoyed refreshments and interacted with older members. Brownies visited stock rooms. Demonstration of prepping a Moses basket/bath for recipients following guidance notes in the handbooks. Photos taken at the event. Brownies reconvened another night to prep the materials and facecloths for sewing up as we ran out of time in November night

### **Good Morning Ballymena**

We had the young children from Broughshane Primary School attend our Christmas lunch and they entertained us with their dance and then they had some lunch. We had a caricature person in and they got their portraits done. They had a really great time.

### **Oakmont Lodge Care Home, Bangor**

Good relationships formed, real enjoyment. A great success. Good hopes for the future.

### **Disabled and Friends Association**

I organised transport, supervised the health and safety of the elderly, sick and disabled. Provided entertainment, music, dancing. People First provided us with a delicious Christmas lunch, enjoyed by everyone and served by seven 16-18 year olds.

### **Clonmore YC and ladies Group**

Met for a night of fun and joint celebration. As ladies group is newly established, our young people worked alongside the ladies to show the benefits of community work. Both groups taught each other how to bake different recipes such as veg soup, mince pies and cookies before we shared our food together with some music a Christmas wreath making. This was an amazing opportunity for both groups to learn more about their community and how we can all work together to improve it for all. We are looking forward to being able to expand work in the community and are currently working on joint groups to allow us to tackle rural isolation and loneliness felt by all groups.

### **Ballymagroarty Hazelbank Community**

We organised an IG evening with Holyrood house as host and invited YP from Ardoyne YC, which is across the road from the scheme. Residents from the sheltered scheme and Youth club members came to the event. It was organised by a youth leader and a tenant support officer from NB Housing. A buffet was provided followed by a table quiz. The Young people joined groups of residents as five teams were formed for the quiz, which was really good fun. We had several prizes for first second and third teams. The youth club are now running a Christmas event for the residents on Monday 16th December.

### **NB Housing Holyrood Sheltered**

The young people of the area sent invitations to older people, including their grandparents, to an afternoon tea at the movies. The older people assisted in preparing the food at the youth club kitchen. Then everyone ate while viewing Christmas movies and played 'charades'. They enjoyed it so much they want to do it again.

### **Older People North West.**

This was a simple beginning together of young health and care students & participants of the social centre. We started with a shared meal & placed students at different table to chat with their fellow diners. We discovered a great granddaughter/great granny connection. Students joined group of reading friends & considered if social care was going to be their career

### **St Comgall's PS Bangor**

We met and discussed Christmas in the past, told stories. We talked about favourite foods. As a group we planned a Christmas party including our favourite food. We then sang Christmas carols and songs. It was a wonderful experience