

The Hope Centre Slow Cooker Project
& Cre8 Community Cooking Sessions
Final Report 07/02/21

Period: 01/10/21 – 17/12/21

Scope and Aims.

The Slow Cooker Project was put together due to households that were being supported during the pandemic needing additional support and education to engage them in being able to cook meals from scratch, using ingredients they would receive from the Cre8 Surplus Food Grocery along with the social aspect and getting back to basics on nutrition – educating people on different nutrition topics per week as well as two plant-based recipes – one they cook on the day and a slow cooker recipe to take home.

The project is run alongside the Cre8 Community Cooking sessions – aiming to provide a space for individuals to come and learn new skills and ideas for cooking with produce from the Surplus Grocery, as well as provide a safe social space for isolated individuals.

Results to Date

	Targets	Actuals
Number of sessions	12	11
Number of volunteers engaged	5	5
Number of unique participants engaged	10	11
Number of beneficiaries (number of people in households benefitting from the food prepared)	30	33

Comments / Feedback

“This is a fantastic project, and I am begging you to run something like this up on the Hurdsfield Estate for some of the local people who can’t easily travel across town. A wonderful idea to bring people together around food.” – Comment from local Councillor

“Thank you so much it was really good and such a versatile recipe can use with anything not just pasta. Can’t wait for next week x x” – Comment from participant

Waiting List

Current waiting list is 8 people, and we hope to engage these people in the final half of the project.

Challenges

During initial planning meetings, the Hope Centre Slow Cooker project would be managed by the Hope Centre Manager e.g. risk assessments, ingredients (in addition to the Grocery supplies), volunteers etc. Unfortunately, due to staff changes at the Hope Centre, this hasn’t happened. The Hope Centre volunteers have continued to support each week which has been fantastic, and to enable the project to continue Cre8 has covered the tasks agreed at the start of the joint project.

Conclusion

The Slow Cooker Project has been a complete success, both in a health, nutritional and educational sense, but also in a social sense. The majority of participants have said that they initially signed up to ‘get out of the house’ and ‘meet people’. The project has provided this, combating social isolation. It has also provided people a skill for life in regard to cooking from scratch and utilising food cupboard staples that they receive when they come to the Surplus Grocery, that they didn’t know what to do with before (lentils, butterbeans, chickpeas, quinoa etc)

The people who have attended, have thrown themselves into learning how to cook from scratch – plant-based, trying a range of grains, lentils, beans, legumes, and vegetables that they have or haven’t tried or heard of before, creating colourful, healthy, nutritious meals from scratch which have been batch cooked – stopping food waste from happening, helping our fragile climate, and helping with the attendees health and wellbeing.

It is important to note that down to the success and the need for such a project like The Slow Cooker Project, that I have had interest / meetings with The Green in the Corner – Cllr Sarah Bennett-Wake, Cllr Chris Wilcock, and Andrea at The Core too along with Emerging Futures. We are looking to launch these projects in March / April, Covid-dependant.

People have not just learnt a skill in cooking from scratch but are being educated about the fundamentals on nutrition, the climate and not forgetting the social aspect too.

Recommendations

I believe the Slow Cooker Project should be continued to be funded as:

1. We have a waiting list
2. People are learning an invaluable life skill in cooking from scratch
3. Evidence-based nutrition education

4. Social aspect is so important for our health and mental wellbeing
5. There isn't another project like it in Cheshire East
6. I would like to put the project on Eventbrite and reach out to more people – it's so important!

Kym Smith. Nutritional Project Lead

Date – 07/02/22

K Wardle – Cre8 Project Grow Coordinator