

Food Hubs are making a big difference in Retford schools

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Ordsall Food Hub Staff BFIN members

Bassetlaw Food Insecurity Network (BFIN), which is a project being led by Bassetlaw Community and Voluntary Service, is making a big impact at Retford schools by helping local families with the rising cost of living.

Rhubarb Farm, a BFIN member, is making a real difference in Retford with the new “Food Hubs” that you may have seen popping up at local schools.

There are currently seven Food Hubs in Retford and surrounding villages, each of which allows families and the local community to buy a bag of food for just £3. The food available ranges from meat, vegetables, fruit, sauces, sandwiches, tins, bread, pasta and much more and it is all food that would have been thrown away if food hubs like this didn't exist. National charity FareShare collect food from supermarkets that is nearing end of life to then work with charities such as Rhubarb Farm to make sure it is used up in the best possible way.

The food hub at Ordsall Primary School, which has been running since 8th September, is making a huge difference to nearby residents and the school children.

Karen Hepworth, Enrichment Co-ordinator at the school said;

“The Food Hub is a great way for us to help parents holistically. We have experienced them opening up and talking to us about their cost of living issues. Some of our parents have been in tears about buying food and paying fuel bills so we are determined to keep providing this additional support for as long as it is needed.

We have also been getting to know parents through informal chats and conversations as they come for food, which has been an unexpected positive outcome.

The Food Hub is also putting us at the centre of the community. We have opened our gates to the wider community and are providing support to all people of Ordsall. We hope we can help as many people as possible.

Both Rhubarb Farm and the Bassetlaw Food Insecurity Network have been really supportive. Rhubarb Farm provided excellent support during our first 6 weeks, giving us the confidence to be able to become an independent food hub once this supported ended. The model is completely seamless and works well making it a very smooth and easy process.

Thank you so much for setting up this project, it is helping so many people”.

The Ordsall Primary School Food Hub takes place every Thursday at 3pm.

In the New Year, Ordsall Primary School are also hosting Weight Management sessions, led by ABL Health, from Monday 9th January, 4.30pm-6pm.

The classes will be open to the whole community and will be suitable for all abilities, as they will included a seated exercise. They will then be followed by nutritional support and advice.

All are welcome and there is no charge for the sessions.

Booking is essential, so please contact Karen Hepworth directly to book a space: 01777 702852

Another Retford area Food Hub, located at Rampton Primary School, is also thrilled with the provision, with Headteacher Helen Roberts saying;

“The BFIN team have been amazing - I really mean that! They have changed the lives of so many people and this should be recognised at the very highest level”.

The food hub at Rampton Primary takes place every Tuesday at 2.30pm.

Stephanie Henry, BFIN Co-ordinator added;

“We have enjoyed working with both schools to support them in setting up their Food Hubs. They are both forward-thinking schools and have seen the value of investing in the wider community. Melanie Richardson, Food Champion, at Rhubarb Farm, has done a fabulous job in ensuring the overall success of supporting the Food Hubs in their early stages. It has enabled us to create strong working relationships, which we are positive will continue. Karen and Helen, and all the other schools in Retford, are all a pleasure to work with”.

The current food hubs in the Retford area are currently located at Mattersey Primary School, Rampton Primary School, Misterton Primary School, Ordsall Primary School, Tuxford Academy, Carr Hill Primary School and Hallcroft Primary School. All of these hubs, with the exception of Hallcroft, are open to the whole community as well as parents at the schools.

Over the Christmas period, whilst the schools are closed, the BFIN have also made arrangements for some holiday hubs to take place at The Grove in Retford on Friday 23rd December and Friday 30th December, both at 1pm.

For more information about food hubs across bassetlaw please visit www.bcvs.org.uk/foodhubs