

Real Junk Food comes to Musselburgh



Loretto Junior School recently organised a feast that they hope will be just the start of an exciting new Real Junk Food venture.

The school handed over duties to Loretto Junior School's Year 6 pupils and helped them plan and deliver a feast fit for royalty.

Loretto Junior School pupils hosted a good number of diners – parents, supporters, keen followers and members of the public.

'The Future of Food' is the June theme for Scotland's Year of Food & Drink. Could this be a template for schools around Scotland to follow, giving those with most at stake hands-on opportunities to challenge the future of our food system?

The Real Junk Food Project was established in 2013 in Edinburgh and is a project between catering professionals and others to radically change the food system. The idea is to intercept food which is perfectly fine but may be 'past its sell by date' for others to use. The project aims to reduce food waste and hopes to have social benefits by liberating people from having to pay a certain sum in exchange for the food.

The pupils – one of whom came up with the idea herself – worked alongside volunteers from The Real Junk Food Project to serve the food on the night. Beforehand, pupils were working to build awareness not only of waste, but all the aspects of food central to The Real Junk Food Project – provenance, preparation, nutrition and, most importantly, community.



A school spokesman said: “The aim of the project is to raise awareness of the issue of food waste, help people to eat and cook better and instigate change towards a more sustainable, efficient and just food system.

“We intercept food that will otherwise go to waste and serve it in creative ways in our pop up cafes across the city. Currently, we are working mainly with small local businesses to source food but we hope soon to collaborate with larger retailers and producers in order to better address the scale of the problem, create more links in the system and feed more people.

“The cafes operate a Pay As You Feel (PAYF) policy, enabling the food poor and those with means to pay for their food to eat together, developing a sense of community and awareness of local food insecurity. We hope this will also encourage a different way of thinking about the value of food as a resource.

“The staff are volunteers and we will provide training opportunities, as well as cooking workshops for a more general

purpose with a focus on avoiding waste and eating responsibly. We anticipate the majority of funds raised will be used to invest training, as well as equipment and operating costs Any surplus will be donated to democratically-selected charities.

“We are developing strong relationships and a network of support from local businesses and community projects. Our primary supporter is the Union of Genius, whose cafe on Forrest Road provides our fortnightly Sunday lunchtime pop-up venue. With evening events planned at The Edinburgh Larder Cafe on Blackfriars Street and Breadshare in Portobello once a month each, we are now able to run a weekly pop-up thanks to the enormous generosity of these three organisations.

“Towards the summer of 2015, we will start running weekday pop-ups in different venues with the aim of attracting and building different communities. We want to establish The Real Junk Food Project as a basis for many food communities, and one greater food community, in Edinburgh; communities with healthy, social, progressive, responsible, active and happy attitudes to food and with ample access to it.)”