

Festive cheer at Tynecastle thanks to Big Hearts

It

wasn't all doom and gloom in Gorgie this week. Over 130 people spent Christmas

Day at Tynecastle Stadium where a free and tasty Christmas meal was offered by

Big Hearts, the charity of Heart of Midlothian football club.

Hosted

in the main executive lounge of the stadium, the event provided good food and company to local people who would have otherwise spent Christmas alone, and older people & families in need of some festive cheer.

A

group of 19 volunteer Hearts fans joined in the festivities, using their time to spread some kindness to many who are most vulnerable at this time of the year.

This third free Christmas Day Lunch was part of the 'Festive Friends' initiative from the Scottish Professional Football League Trust, aimed

at creating opportunities to reduce loneliness of older people over the festive season. Big Hearts revealed that 65% of people attending the event were older people living alone or finding themselves without any family around on Christmas Day. This year Big Hearts received once again the support from local partners, including Tesco Edinburgh who donated all the food for the meal and Central Taxis who helped transport guests to and from the Stadium.

Big Hearts Community Trust uses the power of football to create positive social change in the local community surrounding the football stadium. Since 2017, the charity has been delivering an extended support over the festive period to ensure local adults and children facing isolation and food poverty get the help they need.

Ann Budge, Heart of Midlothian FC Chairwoman and Big Hearts Trustee said:
"It is with great pleasure that we once again opened up the Main Stand this Christmas Day to provide lunch for 130 of our older local residents and families who, for a variety of reasons, find themselves alone or vulnerable at this time of year. This is our third Christmas Day initiative, which we run with Big Hearts, our Club charity. It is only possible due to outstanding efforts from all sides of "the Hearts' family". I would like

to thank Big Hearts, the hospitality & catering staff, and the volunteer Hearts fans who have been working to host a fantastic Christmas day at Tynecastle Park for many people in need of festive cheer."

Craig

Wilson, Big Hearts General Manager said:

"Christmas Day can be most challenging for individuals and families facing holiday hunger and social isolation. This year we saw an increase in the number of people joining us at Tynecastle Park, over 130 individuals from various backgrounds. Our 19 volunteers made everyone welcome. We had music, a great setting and good food. We hope this helped our guests feel like they had spent a lovely time with family or friends. We are very grateful for the continued commitment from the Club, Hearts Fans, Big Hearts Supporters and partners across Edinburgh who have worked closely with us to run this third Christmas Day Lunch and create happy memories to hundreds who are most vulnerable over the festive season."

The Big Hearts Community Trust is a registered charity which uses the power of football to change the lives of the most vulnerable in the community. With its main focus being to support individuals and families at risk of social isolation who need help the most, it works closely with the Club, local partners and charities across Edinburgh to identify needs in order to build and deliver targeted programmes of support for these people. If you would like further information about the

excellent work the charity does in the community or if you want to get involved, please the visit the Big Hearts website [here](#).