

Magazine article: Rainbow Junk-tion at All Hallows Church

If you'd wandered down to Regent's Terrace, Hyde Park, in the middle of lockdown, you might have been surprised by sounds of live music and laughter, and the intoxicating aromas of pepper tikka masala and Italian roasted fennel. The Rainbow Junk-tion café at All Hallows church has been busier than ever during these last few months. Emily Carrigan, the fabulous café manager, was quick to adapt the 'junk-food' café into a 'give-as-you-feel' hot-food-takeaway and shop to ensure no-one in their community went hungry.

All Hallows church (soon to be joining the Headingley Team of St Michael's and St Chad's, and already informally with us) is situated in one of the most deprived areas of Leeds. The Rainbow Junk-tion café has been operating out of All Hallows for 6 years, turning food that would otherwise be heading for landfill into gourmet meals for hungry locals. The café is open to everyone, whether you've the means to pay for your meal or not. Emily says "All Hallows have been amazingly supportive, giving up their worship space to store food, volunteering, and donating to keep things running through this crisis."

The café relies on a team of committed volunteers and generous donations from supporters. The scale of the operation is astonishing and reflects the recent Covid-related growth in food poverty:

- April - 1861 plates of food given out
- May - 2834 plates of food and 492 food parcels
- June - 3283 plates of food and 682 food parcels
- July - 3017 plates of food and 708 food parcels

Emily is no stranger to crisis situations. Before taking on the café manager role at Rainbow Junk-tion she spent 9 months volunteering in the Calais refugee camp, and loves the diversity of the people she works with at the café, including a number of refugee volunteers who bring their own authentic Syrian, Trinidadian and Kashmiri recipes to enliven the café menu.

The motivation for Emily and all the volunteers comes from seeing the real difference the café makes to the people it serves, from large families of nine, to single people living in isolation or on the street. Its objectives are to fight food waste, fight food poverty, and create a community hub. Emily says, "the café is often described as a 'life-line'. The space is open to all, it has a fantastic community vibe, and people can come and stay for lunch or for longer". A comment on the café's facebook page captures the essence::

"I like because there are very help to me the food are beautiful to eat if it was not there I would been hungry all week big thank you today"

The next big challenge for Emily and her team is to maintain the support they've been giving once the council stop supplementing with food parcels from the end of September. If you'd like to help them through this difficult next phase you can donate at <http://rainbowjunktion.org.uk/donate-to-rainbow-junktion> or by direct transfer to their bank:

Bank: CAF Bank Account name: Rainbow Junktion
Account number: 00031454 Sort Code: 40-52-40

You can also donate clean tupperware with matching lids (for takeaways) and dry food items, especially those on the wishlist. Keep up to date with the fantastic work they are doing on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/rainbowjunktion/>

Rev Hannah Lievesley

