



Press Kit 2018



i. Background to St Cuthbert's Centre

For nearly 30 years, St Cuthbert's Centre has operated as a drop-in community centre for marginalised and vulnerable people for more than 25 years. Among its guests, approximately 60% are rough sleepers or homeless and over 50% have some degree of mental health issue, substance misuse issue or both (dual diagnosis). Many face social stigma and discrimination and live in a state of poverty and insecurity.

St Cuthbert's operates under the mission 'proving the community cares', promoting dignity, community and wellbeing. The Charity provides supportive and therapeutic services such as counselling, advice, information, a mental health service, shower and laundry facilities, teas and coffees, free clothing and other items for all who attend. The Centre also has a wide-ranging activity programme including reading, make and mend classes, nutrition workshops, computer skills and CV building sessions.

ii. Background to partnership with Food for Soul and the Launch of Refettorio Felix

In June 2017 Refettorio Felix was launched in collaboration with Food For Soul, a non-profit organisation founded by world-renowned chef Massimo Bottura that fights food waste in support of social inclusion. It has created a new model of community kitchens in Italy, Rio de Janeiro, London and most recently Paris.

Each unique project shares the common themes of:

- 1/using surplus food
- 2/working with designers to renovate underused spaces and create engaging community spaces
- 3/ serving high quality and nutritious dishes to vulnerable people.

As part of the initial phase of the project, Food for Soul and St Cuthbert's partnered with London the London Food Month festival and sourced funding to transform the Centre into an inspiring and inviting community dining room complete with a state-of-the art new professional kitchen. The pro bono renovation by StudioIlse design studio challenged the stereotypical image of a soup kitchen to create an inclusive communal space that brings dignity back to the table, welcoming diners to a space they can really feel at home.

Refettorio Felix – How it works

The meal service is entirely dependent on surplus supplies delivered by UK-based charity The Felix Project who source and re-distribute fresh produce from various producers and supermarkets that would otherwise be wasted. that is too often thrown away due to aesthetic reasons/misunderstanding about 'used-by dating'. Each day the menu changes depending on what surplus produce Refettorio Felix receives.

The three-course lunch is served Monday to Friday from 12.30pm at a supplemented price of £2.50 for a three-course meal for those that have the means to pay or free for the homeless and rough sleepers. On 'Guest Chef' days, the meal is free.

Sustainability is an important part of the design; doing away with plastic cutlery, cups and paper napkins for proper tableware and cloth napkins, this for example helps to ensure we are limiting paper and plastic waste. The style of the lunch service is also designed to facilitate social inclusion - serving lunch to the tables by volunteers which initiates social interaction, and helps create relationships and

communities. The guests sit down and enjoy their meal together, stimulating conversation and exchange.

Guest Chefs

Over the course of the 6 week launch period in June, the Refettorio invited more than 30 guest chefs came to cook for its guests, each one apply their skills and knowledge in order to use the surplus ingredients in a new and innovative way, to create delicious restaurant style meals and deliver a real sense of hospitality. These included: Michel Roux Jr, Monica Galetti, Jason Atherton, Brett Graham, Daniel Boulud, Alain Ducasse, Clare Smyth and many more.

Refettorio Felix @ St Cuthbert's now has an ongoing program of guest chefs who visit and prepare lunch service, some regularly, some more as a one-off event.

Testimonials from volunteers

"The smile on people's face – they do feel this is their home!"

- Alkis Tsikardonis, volunteer

"Good cause, great people and great to see the chefs creativity with food waste"

- Angela Anson, dining room volunteer

"[He] came in and welled up in tears from shear joy. Tis is the reason I love giving back; bringing a smile and happiness to people's faces!"

- Neerali Tailor, regular dining room volunteer

"An incredibly humbling and uplifting experience"

- Sandy Bernstein, dining room volunteer

Testimonials from guests

*"I've been pretty solitary the last ten years. Here, I've met people, got to know diners that previously were just faces. People have opened up more, and seem more conversational and outgoing. It really has created a buzz and **sense of community spirit**. People see each other afterwards and talk about the food." Guest, Anonymous*

*"When I lost my job, I was so embarrassed to come here, you wouldn't believe. When you are on your uppers, and **someone comes and serves you food, it's good for the soul**. Having napkins, having proper knives and forks, it makes you feel like you're somebody. It gives you hope for the future."*

Guest, anonymous

“Since I started coming I eat healthy food and do not go hungry. It is a great idea and needs to be supported.” - EJ, Guest

“The lunch service infers a respect, the sense of being treated as equals. Like an ability for people even in difficult situations to behave like humans” - JB, Guest

Visibility

Refettorio Felix has received much media coverage since its launch, including:

The Guardian: “Massimo Bottura and his global movement to feed the hungry”

https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/may/21/massimo-bottura-feed-the-hungry-food-for-soul?CMP=tw_t_a-environment_b-gdneco

The Independent: “Celebrity chefs are turning food thrown away by supermarkets into meals for homeless Londoners”

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/angela-hartnett-michel-roux-jr-cooking-meals-for-homeless-londoners-felix-project-earls-court-a7815356.html>

Conde Nast Traveller: “Now, UK’s top 30 chefs will turn ‘waste’ into wow”

<https://www.cntraveller.in/story/now-uks-top-30-chefs-will-turn-waste-wow/>

London Evening Standard: “Massimo Bottura serves first lunch at community kitchen for Food Month”

<http://www.standard.co.uk/goingout/restaurants/massimo-bottura-serves-first-lunch-at-community-kitchen-for-food-month-a3556931.html>

Multimedia resources

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OFYFEh-XE0>

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Social Media

Twitter: [@refettoriefelix](https://twitter.com/refettoriefelix)

Instagram: [@refettoriefelix](https://www.instagram.com/refettoriefelix)

Facebook: [Refettorio Felix](https://www.facebook.com/RefettorioFelix)