

The Sunshine Café & Catering Co.

A Snap –shot look at the sunshine café

In the summer of 2002, Irwell Valley Housing Association was successful in their bid to secure funds from the national Lottery to start the Sale Estates Healthy Living Network Project. The funding pot of £249,628 from the National Lottery was over a three year period. The purpose of the Healthy Living Network was to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in the area. To achieve this goal several healthy partnerships were set up alongside the Sunshine Café.

The Sunshine café was funded as part of this three year project and was set up in August 2003. The goal of the café was to provide healthy, affordable food choices on the estate. The Café operates as part of a local community centre and is open 9.30-1.30, Monday – Friday due to this arrangement. Twice a month the Café is open on Friday nights offering a 3 course gourmet menu.

The Sunshine Catering Co. was born in March 2004 and aimed to deliver healthy buffets to local businesses around the area, and help sustain the café. We provide a wide range of foods from vegetarian, gluten free to Halal and speciality foods.

Our staffs includes 1 x Food Co-coordinator, 1 x full time Casual Catering Assistants and 1 x admin support who works four hours per week. We all work on temporary or casual contracts to accommodate the business demands.

The Community and Partnerships

The Sunshine café lies in the heart of Sale Estates within the Sale West Community Centre. The café is located about 10 miles from Manchester city Centre, with approximately 6,000 houses on the estate. We have a range of user groups that already use the Community centre: Brownies, disabled groups, PHAB, SAS, Autistic, Line Dancing and Church. The initial set up started with a partnership with the following: South Trafford PCT, Trafford Borough Council, South Trafford College, IVHA, and Sale west Community Association. We have since developed partnerships with other Housing associations and Trusts as well as Food standards Agency where we can assist each other in projects and work together.

Volunteering

Our volunteers play a crucial role in keeping the café open, they assist in the café, buffets and demonstrations. We have worked with over 70 volunteers since we opened and act as a stepping stone for them to go onto further learning, employment and community involvement. Volunteers receive Food Safety training in order to complete their Food Hygiene Certificates and have the opportunity to become a qualified First-aider. Whilst contributing something worthwhile, they are making new friends and getting involved in the community. We organize 6 monthly nights out with the volunteers to thank them for all their hard work.

Dame Sheila Project

The Dame Sheila project started in April 2006. The café applied for and secured funding from the Food Standards agency to do healthy living demonstrations. These demonstrations have taken place around the North West and have been very well received.

Our aim is to provide healthy food demonstrations/Cookery lessons to a diverse range of people. Activities commenced in June 2006 with cooking for the Elderly, Demo's for children 5-10 year olds & 11-16 year olds, smoothies & BBQ for Salford children, Healthy Food Demos at a Manchester Festival 7 Residents Conference, Ready Steady Cook for Autism & PHAB members.

Activities Planned for next Year

In the next 6 months we have planned more sessions with the Special groups within Sale West Community Centre. One will include a 'World Food Festival' evening during the Manchester Food and Drink Festival in October. This was very successful and loads of fun. We are planning on making this an annual event. Plans for the following year include engaging with local schools and starting an 'After School Club' to develop their passion for healthy food & cookery skills, 'Man in the Kitchen' Cookery course, 'Food Co-op' selling fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis, a Summer Bonanza Event' and participating in the Manchester Food & Drink Festival again.

Plans for the café include 'Event Meals and trips out for residents of the community, more luncheon groups using the café & volunteers using the café as a stepping stone to employment & training. We are also focusing on the larger business goals of Irwell Valley Housing association. Trying to modify our service to see how & if we can make an impact on rent arrears, empty properties, and anti-social behaviour. Plans for the catering Co. include developing more businesses to gain sustainability to local businesses with small taster buffets and continued support to Irwell Valley Housing Association. We will continue to do barbeque functions in the summer months, & will be revising our Catering Menu in the New Year.

Dame Sheila Projects to date...

Cooking for the Elderly

Smoothie Demo @Space, Salford – July 06

Kids summer activity programme – August 06

Ready Steady Sprout – August 06

Broughton Festival, Salford 06

IVHA Residents Conference – September 06

The Thursday Club – Autistic children – September 06

The Thursday Club – September 06

PHAB Cookery demos – November 06

Disabled group Demo – February 07