

GUSSIE'S SUPER KITCHEN, CHESTERFIELD

A warm, welcoming family is how one volunteer describes Chesterfield's hottest community eating experience.

Gussie's Kitchen was set up in April 2016 and is based in St Augustine's Church in Chesterfield.

It runs every Tuesday from 4pm to 6pm and feeds on average 55 people each week.

Gussie's is one of six Super Kitchens that have been set up in Derbyshire so far and they aim to provide a friendly, social space for communities to come together and enjoy a tasty, low cost meal and meet new people.

All the ingredients for the meals are provided by FareShare East Midlands and is surplus food from super markets, producers and manufacturers that would otherwise go to waste.

So far Gussie's, in the first 31 weeks, have served around 1,700 meals and received over 5.8 tonnes of food from FareShare.

Kelly, aged 28, is one of the volunteers at Gussies. It has helped her make new friends, socialise and also improved her anxiety levels.

After losing her dad when she was just 19, Kelly lost confidence and has struggled with depression and anxiety. However volunteering has helped her start to build herself back up again.

She said: "Gussie's has helped me with my confidence and anxiety issues and I have become more involved over the months.

"I was quite quiet and reserved when I started volunteering but I now contribute ideas and give my views."

The mum of two has been helping out since the beginning and says it is a great scheme that brings the community together.

She said: "It is a nice, warm and welcoming environment. You will get to meet different people and the food is amazing, home cooked and for the contribution very good value."

Kelly says that Gussie's is a friendly family who are equal, non-judgmental and supportive to each other'

She is passionate about the super kitchen scheme and looks forward to helping out each week.

She often thinks of recipe ideas, activities and how the project can develop as well as attending the regular volunteer meetings.

Kelly says that volunteering has been very beneficial for her and encourages other people to help out too.

She said: "It's been a great opportunity for me to self-help - you should give it a go as you never know how much you may enjoy it."

Gussie's is just one of the Super Kitchens that have been set up with funding from Feeding Derbyshire.

This is a countywide project aimed at finding sustainable solutions to food poverty and surplus food as well as helping to feed people struggling with low incomes, debt and benefit delays.

It was launched in July 2015 with £528,550 funding from us and works in partnership with a range of agencies.

The project covers a wide range of food related initiatives including supporting local food banks and creating social eating 'Super Kitchens' in each Derbyshire borough and district.

It funds schemes such as school breakfast clubs, holiday schemes and a mobile Super Kitchen food truck.

Another key part of the programme was developing a surplus FareShare food depot to provide low cost food to community groups and food banks.

Find out more at www.derbyshire.gov.uk/feedingderbyshire



*Kelly helps out with social eating at Gussie's Kitchen.
Photograph courtesy of Jason Ametrine.*