

Dunedin Community Christmas Dinner

The Dunedin Community Christmas Dinner is a free event on Christmas day at Dunedin Town Hall. A full Christmas dinner is provided along with live entertainment.

The Dinner is driven by love and a desire to ensure that everyone is able to share in food and companionship at Christmas.

Standards are high with table service and quality food served in a grand

location decorated and lit to provide a suitable atmosphere. In a typical year 450 guests and 180 volunteers are fed.

Organising volunteers, taking bookings and logistics in December is a considerable effort and our intention is to engage a person able to keep everything running smoothly and maintain the quality we believe our guests deserve.

Key features:

- Table hosts at each table to welcome, guide and support guests
- Table linen to ensure guests feel valued
- Fully decorated Town Hall to create a festive atmosphere
- Professional entertainment
- Quality PA
- Booking is online, by phone or in person at Dunedin Community House.

The vast majority of work is done by volunteers - over 180 of them each year:

- Prepping food
- Cooking food
- Plating food
- Serving dishes
- Hosting tables
- Setting tables
- Welcoming guests
- Cleaning
- Packing up
- Decorating the hall
- Supporting other volunteers
- Washing dishes, putting away dishes, polishing silverware

People attend for many reasons including:

- Being unable to afford Christmas dinner
- Being alone at Christmas
- Being new in Dunedin or New Zealand
- Needing a neutral place to meet
- Having no home
- Wanting to provide for their community
- Seeking to experience a Kiwi Christmas

We ask for feedback each year. Attendees tell us that they appreciate the food, the space and more but above all they appreciate the welcome and friendliness they receive.

The food and drink

This is mixture of donated, discounted and full price ingredients.

It is prepped and cooked in kitchens donated by Compass Catering.

A professional cook is engaged to oversee the food for quality and safety reasons.

Donated food includes the lamb served.

The event is made possible by:

- Enormous volunteer effort
- Donations in kind: the venue, the kitchen, the crockery
- Discounts: the PA, food
- Grants from philanthropic organisations and DCC.
- Money donations from individuals and businesses.

How you can help:

- Organised volunteer teams can undertake specific tasks before and on the day.
- Cash donations, whether general, or for specific costs, are needed.
- Fundraising for the event.
- We would like to offer transport to and from the Dinner but this has proved difficult amongst the other logistics and we would welcome an organisation taking on the task.
- Volunteering.

Who are we?

Around 30 years ago a local church started providing a free dinner from their church, as the event grew they recognised a dedicated team and larger venue was needed. The reins were handed to Acts of Kindness Charitable Trust, the Town Hall became the venue and Dunedin Community House provided support by engaging volunteers and taking bookings.

One of the key personnel, Anne Hardy, passed away in 2023. Dunedin Community House knew that the event

must continue so brought together a team to support her husband and son Grant and Zachariah to deliver the event in 2023.

To ensure the event continues, Acts of Kindness asked Rob Riddell Tigair, Executive Officer of Dunedin Community House (DCH) to take over stewardship of the event from 2024.

Whilst an independent Charitable Trust is set up, the Dinner is being umbrellaed by DCH. DCH is committed to supporting the Christmas Dinner as it has the past decade.

Contact

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