

## Serving those in need

The Serve is a charitable trust in Hamilton that serves food every night of the week to anyone in need of a hot meal.



In Hamilton we have people experiencing food insecurity, and issues around access to healthy nutritious food.

‘There is an abundance of food outlets selling food that is energy dense and nutrient poor in many of the areas that contain the most widespread socio-economic deprivation’ (Source: Breaking Leftover Bread, Report by Poverty Action Waikato and Anglican Action Waikato)

The Breaking Leftover Bread report also identifies concerns around the impact of malnutrition, inadequate incomes, cost of living, housing prices, and the immense frustration and exhaustion reflected by many who have the least in our communities.

Every night of the year for the past 4 years, The Serve (formerly known as the Hamilton Homeless Trust), has served a hot meal to those who need it. Typically between 45-65 people are served meals each night. People

from many walks of lives come to The Serve for a meal, including students, families, homeless, and the elderly.

What originally started as serving soup and buns in garden place out of concern for the many hungry in Hamilton, has developed into The Serve Trust, who has a vision of ‘Strengthening Community’. Over 100 volunteers are coordinated to cook and serve up meals.

Petrina Toimata (Aunty P), Volunteer Coordinator at The Serve says that they source food and redistribute it to the community.

“We make food accessible to those in the community who need it. We have relationships with many amazing businesses, individuals, and organisations that enable us to access food that might otherwise be thrown out, and redistribute it to our community” says Aunty P.

The Serve volunteers follow a code of conduct, recognising the obligation of The Serve Trust to provide a safe environment. The values that volunteers need to have are identified as: respect, compassion, kindness, equality, and importantly – non-judgement. Each night at the door, people who are ‘Greeters’ meet you and welcome you to The Serve. A Greeter helps to ensure a safe environment for everyone, and no-one under the influence of alcohol or drugs is allowed to enter.

Aunty P says that not judging people is an important aspect of The Serve.

“We treat our community like Kings and Queens. People coming through the doors are someone’s Mum, Dad, daughter, son, brother, sister...we see them, they are people who have hearts, people with stories, people with a voice’ says Aunty P.

The need over the four years has increased, and Aunty P says The Serve also helps to connect members of the community who need it to other services and agencies that provide support.

“At times we have people in need of emergency accommodation, and we generally refer them to the Christian Night Shelter, or a couple of lower price back packers in the city” says Aunty P.

Many social service organisations, and services for those in need close down over the Christmas period. This can be a time when the need for these services is high, as it is a stressful time of the year for many. The Serve keeps operating throughout the Christmas period and on the 25 December, serves a special Christmas meal.

Now based in new premises at 4 Harwood St, meals are offered on week days at 6pm, and in the weekend at 5pm. Doors open 15 minutes prior to serving. All people are welcome. Access to The Serve is via the back of the building, and up the stairs.

The Serve is able to operate due to the kindness of people. If you are interested in supporting The Serve, whether it be through donating food, making a financial contribution, or volunteering your time, contact The Serve by email: [theservetrust@gmail.com](mailto:theservetrust@gmail.com), or [www.facebook.com/theservecommunity](http://www.facebook.com/theservecommunity)