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38 years experience

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We focus on giving young people in the community confidence to learning new culinary life skills which will enrich their lives in a positive way.

Increase Confidence

Develop Team Skills

Good Nutrition

Follow Instructions

Learn Discipline

Finish a Task

# THE FOOD ACADEMY FUNDED BY THE ARMY COVENANT

Is a unique engagement tool, to engage with those young people, who fail to engage in other more traditional initiatives.

We chose a 'catering course', for two reasons:

1. Discipline is essential pre-requisite, as it involves hot surfaces / liquids, heavy pots and pans and knives.
2. Teamwork is essential when cooking, as is supporting other members in the team, in order to produce a final product.

Often, this is the first time, those two aspects, have impacted directly upon our students' lives – to their advantage.

These young people are generally, though not exclusively, 'non-academic', under-achievers or lack personal confidence. They have never achieved success in their school environment, nor received praise. They are chosen, because they have, or may become 'troublesome'.

The Course consists of 7, weekly 3 hour training sessions, followed by a Banquet as the 8<sup>th</sup> session. Students are chosen by Schools, the Police, Agencies, Partners and Youth Services. The courses, so far, have taken place in local schools, because they have sufficient kitchen and insurance facilities.

A new part of the 'Army Covenant Food Academy Course', will be the involvement of a specific team, of well trained volunteers, to attend every week along with outside agencies, partners, army chefs & commercial organisations, to offer advice, support, encouragement and mentoring.

Session 8 is The Banquet. The culmination of every course. About 50 – 80 local dignitaries and student's families, are invited. This usually includes The Mayor and other local Councillors from the areas in which the students live, teachers, families, perhaps a Senior Police Officer. Guests at this Banquet include:- the Mayor and Mayoress, The High Sheriff of Berkshire, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Constable, the Assistant Chief Constable, the Local Police Superintendent and Chief Inspector along with all the agencies who have participated and supported the event. The students, have to prepare 4 courses, including canapés, starter, main course and desert. At the end, the 'chefs' are introduced to great applause, to be awarded their Certificates and medals, by the Mayor.

As a result of the two courses that have been run in RMWM so far, which in the past have been aimed at 'Challenging' young people, we have turned around the lives of several of those who attended, who afterwards, using this qualification, have applied for and successfully obtained, jobs in the catering industry, mainly with the army, but also, in local restaurants.

In December 2017 a shortened course was held, funded by the Horton & Wraysbury Parish Council and local Faith groups, aimed specifically at the Traveller Community. The course had tailored 'Traveller' 'one pot' menus. It culminated, not in a banquet, but the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony in the centre of Horton Village, with the students providing hot food, for everyone that attended, thus better integrating the traveller community, into the local community.

Another Food Academy, was in the process of being negotiated with Eton College, who were happy to fund it. The College feels it would be really useful, if their students had more interaction on a personal level, with 'local' Windsor students. Another to be held in Churchmead School for 'Challenging' young people, has also been put on hold.

**JEFFREY PICK**

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