

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/news/132209422/havelock-soup-run-souper-popular-with-isolated-residents>

Havelock Soup Run souper popular with isolated residents

Andy Brew 05:00, Jun 07 2023



ANTHONY PHELPS/STUFF

The Havelock Charity Shop Soup Run is a team effort with driver Dave Farrant, left, soup chef Glenda Davies, centre and Four Square Havelock's owner Christine Fisk, who provides all the bread rolls free of charge.

"The Soup Run saved me," says Havelock woman Lesley Dianne Commette.

"I don't know how they heard about me, but all of a sudden, they offered me soup every Friday, and I just absolutely took to it."

Commette has been getting soup, bread rolls and desserts delivered once a week by the Soup Run, a free service organised by the Havelock Charity Shop to support isolated or vulnerable residents.

“It’s a meal I don’t have to cook myself, it’s something I look forward to, and I like the girls who deliver it because they’re kind and cheerful – they take care of everyone,” Commette said.



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Lesley Commette is full of praise for the good folk behind the soup run, declaring them “saints”.

Commette lived alone, about 5km out of town, and suddenly found herself isolated after a stroke forced her to give up driving.

The Soup Run was set up seven months ago, and was growing so rapidly, the volunteers were now moving into new premises, for more room to cater to their ever-expanding client base.

Soup Run soup maker Glenda Davies said the new space would become a community lounge, with a kitchen and dining area.

“We can bring some of our soup recipients there that want to come away from their homes, and get a little bit of company,” she said.

Dave Farrant, volunteer Soup Run delivery driver and Elder Care worker at the town’s Anglican Church, said the number of people they visited had risen threefold in a few short months.

But then, the team offered a lot more than just a hot meal, he said.



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The Havelock Charity Shop, left, is expanding into the big blue building next door, right, with a new kitchen and lounge, and room for social events.

“We’ve been surprised how it’s taken off. We were only going to do it for the winter but then as we’ve grown, they asked us if we’d carry it on, so it took off, from about 10 to 35, and there’s probably a lot more that we don’t know about yet.

“A lot of the people we go to are on their own, so when we take them the soup, we’ll sit down and talk to them and spend half an hour or so. So that’s really good – social connection is really important,” he said.

As with Commette’s situation, Davies said it was usually residents in the Havelock township that recommended people to the service.

The referrals were often from neighbours, nurses or friends and family, she said.

“We don’t have a criteria as such for the soup run, it is open to anybody who needs it – the elderly, fresh out of hospital, someone who’s had an accident – anybody that we see has a need for some form of social contact with.”

To make sure the weekly soup batch was suitable for all, soup chef Davies said the broths were invariably vegetable, and would change from week to week using what seasonal produce was available.

The vegetables were grown in the town’s community garden, donated by local residents, and collected by members of the Havelock Lions Club, while the bread rolls were provided free of charge by the local Four Square.

The Marlborough District Council had also donated large Thermos flasks for each soup recipient.

Davies said that due to the Soup Run's popularity, the group hoped to expand its range of services, and take the Soup Run further afield to nearby areas.

On a recent Soup Run, they were joined by a team of volunteer firefighters from Blenheim, who visited every soup recipient's home to fit new smoke alarms free of charge, over a chat and cup of tea.

Davies, picking up the phone to arrange a hairdresser to visit Commette's rural homestead, said there were many ways to support their isolated clients.

"It's different needs for different people, and it's quite widespread what we can do, if we know somebody needs something."

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