

LOOKING BACK ON 2023



plateful café

OUR FIRST EVENTFUL YEAR!

Plateful Café was set up in December 2022 by Iolanda Chirico with the mission to empower refugees to obtain mainstream employment in the catering industry and to enrich local communities by offering a taste of their diverse cuisines, cultures, and art. Plateful is a refugee-led charity and refugees and asylum-seekers are represented at all levels of our charity from the board, to paid cooks and volunteers.

From December to February we continued to offer outside catering including events, workshops and also birthday parties whilst looking for premises for the café.

Our first community dinner was a sold out Valentine's dinner at Goldsmiths College Union in February featuring okra stew with vermicelli rice, warbat, hibiscus tea and fruit cocktails; it was a great event also with Goldsmiths

College choir live performance. We officially became a charity in April and started to receive grants from May onwards for our start up costs.



WE STARTED TO MAKE OUR OWN PRODUCTS IN JULY!



We opened to the public on the 7th of September offering breakfast, lunch, hot and cold drinks from Thursday to Saturday 9.30-3pm.

The menu dishes featured mainly dishes from Syria such as Chicken Shawarma, Chicken Mandi for lunch and traditional full English breakfast and Shashouka eggs for breakfast.

On average monthly sales are around £1600 with the top sales being hot drinks. We continue to build the venue as a place to eat and drink not just for the local residents but for Lewisham as a whole. We are reassured by the fact that all our customers like our food as proven by the 5 star reviews on our Google Business.

IN JUNE WE HELPED CATER FOR A JEWELLERY WORKSHOP!



Peabody Housing Association approached us at the beginning of the year to offer the café space at Parkside Community Centre in SE10 8FY. We were thrilled about the opportunity as the venue has a good kitchen and also an airy and spacious front of house which sits 24 people.

The location is good as it is in the middle of a new housing development with a potential customer base of 8000 people. We recruited a Kitchen Manager in June and started training a group of 7 female cooks from Syria and Iran from July to September. The training included: Level 2 Hygiene and Allergens Courses and hands on practical training in working in a commercial kitchen and cooking menu dishes.

The training is ongoing and after 3 months of opening we are still refining the menu dishes following customers feedback, reviewing/changing menu and also offering training in barista and front of the house.

Our pilot trial at Parkside Community Centre will end in May and we are awaiting the details of the tender.

In 2024 we are planning to continue offering regular pop-ups at the Star of Greenwich pub and are exploring other café opportunities including Cockpit Art Studios.

Plateful Café continues to be volunteer-run as the only paid staff are the cooks and the Kitchen Manager and without the efforts of a dedicated and hard-working volunteer-team we would not exist. Volunteers are our lifeblood and we can't thank them enough for their support.

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We are very grateful to our funders who believed in us in our first year. We are immensely grateful to: Awards for All, London Catalyst, Postcode Community Trust, Swan Mountain Trust, Lee Charity.



IRANIAN COMMUNITY DINNER NIGHT OCTOBER



In November and December we ran two sold-out Community Dinners featuring Iranian dishes and in this year we are planning to start a Plateful Club where local supporters will be offered the opportunity to purchase dinners in advance.



YALDA CELEBRATION DECEMBER

