**Melton Family Food Project – Melton Mowbray**

**Proposal:**

According to statistics from Leicestershire County Council School Food Support Service, an average of 398 free school meals are provided every day to school children in Melton Mowbray. A need has been identified that the families of these children have to find extra money through the school holidays to pay for the extra meals or else the children and or their parents may go without a healthy hot meal for weeks at a time.

**Aims:**

This proposal aims to bring together the Churches of Melton Mowbray and local communities in order to help support families through the difficult weeks of summer in providing a free hot and healthy meal for struggling families and their children.

With this provision Churches Together (CTEG) can aim to alleviate some of the financial burden of these families as a gift from God and bring them closer to Him through seeing God’s love and generosity.

In addition we hope to build stronger communities locally and more community spirit and cohesion in targeted areas that demonstrate the most deprivation. This will be achieved through bringing families from the same area, living with similar financial and social difficulties together to share an enjoyable experience.

**Challenges:**

People do not usually like to be labelled and the stigma of being in need can be a turn off for people accepting a gift such as this. Therefore, although families will be referred to the service and issued free food vouchers; families from the neighbourhood that come along through word of mouth will be welcomed.

**Taking Action:**

Churches Together will co-ordinate the provision of a hot meal along with some entertainment or an attraction for the children; by making the day about fun, including exercise activities and providing a healthy hot meal families will be supported to live healthy lifestyles but without the cost or stigma.

These activities could include football matches or rounders in the MUGA (Multi Use Games Areas sometimes known as football cages), picnics, creative workshops, interactive cooking demonstrations, free recipe ideas for healthy meals on a budget, sewing lessons, swishing days; all with the focus of helping keep costs low and healthiness high.

**How:**

Each church in Churches Together will work on a rotational basis in order that each takes primary responsibility for one week during the summer. This will be supported by a Lead Coordinator who will oversee all the churches to ensure that, skills and idea sharing is utilised to its fullest. In addition there will be a Support Coordinator who will be there consistently each week to advise, signpost, support and help build relationships in the community.

**Where:**

This project will be piloted on the Fairmead estate as this area has been identified as an area of high deprivation with a long term view to expanding into other deprived areas across Melton. In addition it has facilities at the SureStart centre that could be used for food preparation, indoor activities and networking.

**Finance:**

Each church will take responsibility for the meals and events on their assigned week, allowing each church the flexibility on how to meet this provision. Churches together are working to find local sources of fresh food for cooking e.g. supermarkets and for longer term community gardens.

**When:**

Trends indicate that by next year people in Melton will increasingly need services such as this due to society’s increased financial hardship and the forthcoming changes to the benefit system therefore, plans are in place for this project to be up and running by summer 2014.

**Who:**

With the support of Julie McCarthy, Melton Mowbray’s Community Organiser, CTEG has brought together a steering group for key decision making, in addition to several working groups being developed to progress different aspects of the project in time for the summer.

This proposal was drafted by Julie McCarthy, Melton Mowbray’s’ Senior Community Organiser (Voluntary Action LeicesterShire) with volunteers from Melton Vineyard Church and the Churches Together Food Project Steering group.

<http://www.makelunch.org.uk/home>

<http://vimeo.com/79286299>