

Rescuing good food from landfill

“Why should we let perfectly good food go to landfill when there are people who need it?”

This is the question Kayleigh Simons-Smith asks herself.

Ms Simons-Smith is the Queenstown branch manager for KiwiHarvest, a food rescue charity that collects good food before it goes to waste and delivers it to those in need.

“Food insecurity around New Zealand is a real problem – even here in our district which from the outside has a reputation for being affluent. For many, the fact that some of our district’s families are struggling with food security will come as a shock,” she said.

KiwiHarvest has been working in Queenstown with support from QLDC since 2018, rescuing good food from supermarkets and wholesalers that would otherwise be destined for landfill. Last year it rescued more than 80,000kg of food locally.

Once the food is collected, KiwiHarvest delivers it to community groups and charities including Mana Tāhuna Charitable Trust, Happiness House and Whakatipu Youth Trust.

And there’s another major benefit to rescuing food – and that’s environmental.

“Food that is disposed of incorrectly doesn’t break down properly and creates harmful greenhouse gases as well as filling up our landfills unnecessarily. So the benefit of rescuing food is two-fold for me: we can reduce our carbon emissions from landfill, and we can help whānau in need. It’s a win-win,” said Ms Simons-Smith.

More recently the Queenstown team has branched out into collecting food from cafés and bakeries.

Using funds from Council’s Waste Minimisation Community Fund they bought an e-bike from ChargeAbout Queenstown and a trailer from

Christchurch to help with their food collection.

“It’s the perfect size for getting around the CBD’s small streets and we’re stoked to have received support from the fund to help make this happen.”

A team of volunteers help with the food collection, pedalling around town three times a week. The food is from the previous day which cafés were unable to sell but is still good to eat.

Those currently signed up to the project are Queenstown Signs Café, Yonder, Bespoke Kitchen, Starbucks Queenstown, Taste and Savour, Exchange, Vudu Larder and Queenstown Bakery.

If you’re interested in volunteering, run a café that would like to donate food, or simply want to learn more contact Ms Simons-Smith on Queenstown@kiwiharvest.org.nz or 021 385246.

 kiwiharvest.org.nz

 [@KiwiHarvest](https://www.facebook.com/KiwiHarvest)





Yonder staff participating in KiwiHarvest's food rescue mission.



Kayleigh Simons-Smith on the new e-bike and trailer used for collecting food around Queenstown CBD.



Kayleigh Simons-Smith (right) rescuing food from The Exchange to deliver to charities supporting families in Queenstown Lakes.

GRANTS TO ZERO IN ON WASTE

Do you also have a clever idea for cutting waste in the Queenstown Lakes District?

Just like KiwiHarvest, we can help make it a reality with up to \$120,000 to distribute in the next financial year.

The Waste Minimisation Community Fund is open to community groups, businesses, iwi / Māori organisations, educational institutions, and other community-based organisations operating in the district. We're particularly interested in initiatives that address gaps in existing programmes, create new opportunities to minimise waste, and encourage community participation.

Applications to the latest round close on 29 April 2022. For more info head to www.qldc.govt.nz/wmcf or email zerowaste@qldc.govt.nz with any questions.



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