

Volunteers to host second Christmas party to bring joy to lonely care leavers

November 15, 2023



Volunteers who host an annual Christmas party held to bring young people who grew up in care together are spreading more joy this year – by holding two parties instead of one.

Every year, around 100 16 to 25-year-olds who live independently after leaving the care system are treated to a Christmas meal, presents and entertainment at the event, which takes place each December in Burton.

The party has taken place for the past five years with more people attending each year, prompting organisers to hold a second party in Derby so they can reach more young people.

Those who now live independently after growing up in care homes or with foster parents can find themselves left feeling isolated and this intensifies over the Christmas period when they have no one to celebrate with.

This is where the party comes in as they tuck into a Christmas meal with all the trimmings, make the most of the entertainment with people their own age with similar upbringings and get a hamper filled with treats and essentials to take away with them.

The event is run by volunteers and members of the Derby Freemasons to make sure the young people get a festive celebration.

Malcolm Prentice, group chairman of rail maintenance firm **MTMS** and member of the lodge, said he is looking forward to helping more young people enjoy the Christmas festivities this year.

He said: "Everyone should enjoy Christmas as it is a time of coming together and being with loved ones. For these young people now living on their own, they don't have that which can lead to them feeling very isolated.

"No one should feel alone at Christmas which is why these parties are so important. It is about being part of something and making them feel special. We all like getting a little spoilt at Christmas and these young people are no exception.

"We have been running these parties now for the last five years and it is always a privilege to meet these people and bring them hope and joy. They have been through so much already in their young lives and have now found themselves living alone without family to turn to through no fault of their own.

"Living alone can be tough at any age but for someone so young it can have a deep impact on their mental health. Everyone deserves some fun, especially at Christmas."

The idea for the party came about after suicides in the area from young people who had left the care system were reported around Christmas and it was found that loneliness was one of the reasons behind it.

Now organisers are asking for support to help make Christmas extra special for these teenagers and young people. They are asking for donations which will be put towards providing the meal, entertainment such as a DJ, band or musician and gift hampers for each young person with goodies such as clothes, toiletries and snacks.

Mr Prentice added: "Every penny raised will go towards helping the young people. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported us through the years."

Anyone who would like to make a donation can do so by visiting [Crowdfunding to Help Youngsters from Care at Christmas on JustGiving](#)

Photo credit: MTMS