

Catering partnership aims to promote intergenerational engagement

3 years ago



Catering service provider Caterplus has linked up with Taylor Shaw and Edwards & Blake, specialist caterers in the education sector, to identify and connect local schools and retirement living communities to enable children and residents to collaborate in joint activities and experiences.

In an initial trial, links were created between seven schools and retirement communities – which were geographically close to each other – to celebrate the Coronation in May. Children in schools, where Taylor Shaw or Edwards & Blake provide the catering, created bookmarks, placemats and bunting to celebrate the Coronation which were then shared with residents living in retirement communities where Caterplus provides food services. Postcards were exchanged between the children and the residents with the latter sharing their memories of the previous Coronation or other Royal events over the years.

Elior UK's education and care and retirement living businesses were motivated to create these positive links by the many benefits that have been associated with intergenerational relationships such as: reducing loneliness; building social connections; increasing understanding of shared experiences; reducing ageism and boosting mental wellbeing and self-confidence for all those involved.

Twelve children from Dobcroft Junior School in Sheffield visited residents at Windsor House, a local retirement living community, to share memories about the recent Coronation and previous Royal events and to discuss a typical day at school. Plans are now underway for further activities in September to share experiences of returning to school and memories from the summer holidays, to sing carols and decorate cakes at Christmas and to celebrate World Book Day.

Ann, a resident present at the visit, commented: "It was a wonderful tonic and has done the power of good

for me and many of my fellow residents and we look forward to future visits."

Nancy, a year 6 pupil at Dobcroft Junior School added: "It was a great experience to listen to the views of the elderly residents and their memories of Queen Elizabeth's Coronation and how it compared to King Charles' Coronation."

Dobcroft Junior School teacher Claire Field said: "The children and staff of Dobcroft Junior School are very proud to be part of this intergenerational project and the children who visited Windsor House thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to share their experiences. We hope this is the beginning of a strong relationship between the two organisations."

Due to the initial success of the trial, there are now plans to identify more schools and retirement living communities that can be connected for future activities that are planned for the rest of the year.