

# Volunteer morning at Manna inc – April 2013



Lolo in charge



Kevin on carrots



Mardi with her weapon of choice



Bev helps out, too



Paul peeling

"In attendance were Loretta and Kevin (the only ones on time!), Paul, Sophie, Rebecca, one of our very generous printers, and Mardi, who came to the second grant assessment evening last year. Lolo is in charge of these mornings with blow-in volunteers and wasted no time in putting us to work.

We were given the task of preparing over one hundred!!! serves of cottage pie to be frozen and also six trays of the Fruit and Chocolate Slice that Manna hand out to schools with their breakfast program.



Rebecca keeps on smiling

Paul and Rebecca peeled potatoes for nearly four hours solid! They were offered other jobs but since it needed doing (and it's only for one morning!) they soldiered on valiantly. Kevin got the onions to chop and shed a few tears over that... Loretta had other veg to prepare: they stick in as many as they can to give the recipients as healthy a meal as possible, so there were capsicums, carrots, peas, sweetcorn and even fresh herbs. Then Kevin got the much more

rewarding job of creating the mince and did a fabulous job - Lolo made us all taste it to make sure it was good enough! Loretta was in charge of boiling and mashing the potatoes although she called in Kevin to help with the industrial sized masher that required the pot being placed on the floor to enable them to reach all the way in. Then Loretta had the job of serving the mince, topped with 'restaurant quality' mash into plastic take-away containers - all set to be handed out as a complete meal.



Kevin mixes in healthy veggies

Meanwhile, Mardi and Sophie were assigned to the slice. Lolo put out all the ingredients: 18 slabs of butter, a very large tub of chopped dates, another of sultanas, three tins of cocoa, 36 eggs and a mountain of biscuits that had to be crushed by hand with rolling pins - a very fine channel for all the repressed frustration! She gave them three trays and they thought they'd done well to finish those... But the fact that only 6 of us turned up and she'd been expecting 12 didn't seem to change anything and Lolo had plans for 6 trays so 6 trays were made - the last one being finished in record time as the 12:30 clock-off time approached.



Loretta mashing

While we were there Manna founders, Bev and John Lowe came by, having just been at a school where some kids had raised money for Manna by having a Crazy Sock day where they could wear the socks as long as they brought in another pair (of regular socks) in the same size to give away. Bev and John then went off to pick up this week's share of the 1 tonne of free fruit and veg supplied fresh to them every month. Once they'd returned and it was unloaded, the fridge was bulging at the seams. After spending a long time chatting with us and sharing the wonderful success stories of Manna while we sweated over the food, Bev was off to buy 400 pairs of shoes... as Rebecca said, "Imelda Marcos, eat your heart out!". Not sure Imelda would have been interested in the small sized trainers that Bev had her eye on.

So we worked hard; Rebecca says that next time she'll bring her own peeler, Paul is not interested in eating potatoes for a while, Sophie and Mardi had a complete upper body work out, Kevin will have no tears left to shed for at least a week and Loretta has learnt a whole new, speedy way to peel carrots (and not to worry so much about little black bits on the potato!)

Lolo was fabulous - very organised in a relaxed way, a great laugh to work with, friendly and generous - much like everyone else working for Manna. She does the shopping, the planning, the organising, the handing out, she visits schools, she hunts for bargains in the supermarkets and adjusts meals to suit what supplies they have, she washes up, she cooks, she mops the floor... and she has a family of her own, too.

As Bev said, they get volunteers from all walks of life - from ex-homeless people to judges - and they make the most of them. Today, we made the most of our chance to give something back and to learn more about the inspirational work of Manna inc. We would all heartily recommend it to everyone and, conveniently, there is an opportunity coming up very soon: the next volunteer day is set for Wed 8th May from 8:30 til 12:30...!



Just SOME of what we made...