



By Feeding the Needy, Ponopono's Place Gives Food Waste A New Mission

At 5:30 P.M., colorful dishes are on the table: shredded carrots, omelet with green vegetables, and fried fish... Children's bright voices fill the room, "Yum!" "I want more of the fried chicken!"

Ponopono Place's executive director, Kayo Fukino, 62, smiles, and says: "When eating is fun, we cherish life; eating is about sustaining life."

Many mothers have worries about not being able to dedicate time to prepare food for their children, especially mothers who work. At the canteen, they can pay to eat with their kids, and also spend time with other mothers and children.

Fukino hopes that "mothers can soothe their minds by coming here." She is determined to create a place where, through food, people can feel happy and promote mental wellbeing, as well as physical health.

Most dishes use ingredients which would have otherwise gone to waste, known in Japan under the category of "Food Loss."

These ingredients come from a non-profit called Food Bank Kansai (in Higashinada-ku, Kobe). It collects food items nearing their expiration dates, products with broken packaging or which have been left untouched at home, and sends them over to welfare facilities. Through this scheme, which has been operating since 2003, the NPO has been key in supporting single mothers and connecting them to the canteen.

Around 200 tons of foodstuffs are collected annually. The executive director of Food Bank Kansai, Megumi Asaha, 71, said to a Sankei Shimbun reporter that the philosophy is: "No excess, no waste, we use it all up."

Trying to explain the rising support for food-related schemes, Asaha added: "Food is the bread of life. Food creates a sense of security and creates space for people to think about the future."

Another non-profit organization, Giving Tree (Tarumi-ku, Kobe) has set up to help foster parents and children from foster homes. Thanks to the support from Food Bank Kansai, it sends food care packages, called "Furusato Gift," to the children of the institutions.

"Kids from foster homes don't have a real home," said one of the members, Rei Hatakeyama, 28, who herself grew up in one of the institutions. During college, she was envious of her friends receiving food from their families.

Without family support, many institutionalized children continually struggle in life. Not having a healthy diet causes related health issues, which, if not treated, can even prevent them from going to school or work.

Hatakeyama told us, "Through food that feeds livelihoods, I hope I can help people's hearts connect."

The underlying concept is delivering the excess of one person, to someone who needs it. That way, the food acquires a new mission. It connects people and helps them live better.

Source: **By Feeding the Needy, Ponopono's Place Gives Food Waste A New Mission**
<http://japan-forward.com/by-feeding-the-needy-ponoponos-place-gives-food-waste-a-new-mission/>

ロスからギフトへ 広がる「食」の輪

赤はニンジンでつくった千切りの「にんじんしりしり」、黄色と緑は野菜入りの卵焼き、茶色は魚のから揚げ…。午後5時半、兵庫県尼崎市内の子ども食堂に色とりどりのおかずが並んだ。「おいしい」「から揚げ、おかわりしたい」。子どもたちの明るい声が響く。

「食が楽しいと命を大切にできる。食べることは命をつなぐことですから」

運営する社団法人「ポノポノブレイス」の代表、吹野加代さん（62）がほほ笑んだ。

働いているなどの理由で料理や食事にかかる時間がなく、疲れや悩みを抱える母親は多い。食堂では料金を払い、親子で食事をとることで、他の母親と話したり、子供同士の交流を図ることができる。

「ここに来ることで少しでも母親たちの心が癒せたら」と吹野さん。母親たちの心のケアは、子どもの笑顔につながる。「食を通して、心の貧困を減らしたいですね」と意気込む。

たくさんのおかずは、実は本来なら廃棄されてしまう「食品ロス」の食材で作られている。

提供しているのはNPO法人「フードバンク関西」（神戸市東灘区）。賞味期限が近い、包装が破損しているなどの理由で、品質に問題がなくても廃棄される食品や、家庭で眠ったままの品を集め、福祉施設などに送る活動を、平成15年から続けている。母子家庭の支援や子ども食堂をつなぐ活動にも力を入れる。

年間で扱う食材は約200トン。「余らせない、捨てない、使い切ります」と代表の浅葉めぐみさん（71）。食支援の需要は急増しているといい、「食べ物には命の糧。あるだけで安心感が生まれる。将来を考える余裕ができるのよ」と力をこめる。

里親や児童養護施設出身者の支援に取り組む団体「Giving Tree」（神戸市垂水区）は、フードバンク関西の支援を受け、施設を巣立った「子どもたち」に食料などを送る「ふるさとギフト」を昨年末から始めた。

「施設で育った子供に実家はないですから」

メンバーで自身も養護施設で育った畑山麗衣さん（28）は、大学時代、親から友人に届く荷物の話がうらやましかったという。

頼れる親元がない施設出身者が生活に困窮するケースは後を絶たない。食生活が乱れ、体調を崩して学校や職場に行けなくなる。

「生活をつくる食を通して心のつながりも続けていきたい」と畑山さん。

誰かが余らせたものを必要とする人に届ける。新たな使命を受けた食品は思いと命をつないでいく。

出典：【活写2020】ロスからギフトへ 広がる「食」の輪

<https://www.sankei.com/photo/story/news/200219/sty2002190001-n1.html>