

Cooking up a storm with Lotto cash

School pupils benefit from good cause grant for Peebles-based You Can Cook initiative

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Pupils at St Ronan's Primary School in Innerleithen are among those benefiting from a National Lottery Awards for All grant of almost £9,000.

Peebles-based community interest company You Can Cook is teaching older primary pupils at three local schools basic cooking skills, and has also invited their parents to get involved too.

Director and community cook Bosco Santimano explained: "We got the money from Award for All, and the project is called Food for Thought.

"It is aimed at primary six and seven pupils and their parents in schools in the area. Last week, we started the first programme at Priorsford in Peebles and the second started at St Ronan's in Innerleithen this week.

"The idea is that the school selects the pupils that they feel will benefit most from it –



Bosco Santimano of You Can Cook

mainly those from low income families, those with single parents and those that don't have any cookery skills, or more importantly, if their parents don't have cookery skills."

Bosco added: "We have run

similar projects in the schools, so they know how we work and what we deliver, and they were happy to let us run it, with the parents involved, too.

"It is not compulsory, but it would be great if the parent

Can Cook staff to go into the schools with all the ingredients necessary for everyone to make two recipes each week.

Bosco said: "We focus on local and seasonal products, food that is readily available and also some that is not.

"We also focus on basic cookery skills, because a lot of people don't have the basics – if people have them then they can make a number of different cuisines, but without them they are stuck with maybe only one style of cooking."

You Can Cook provides a variety of services to a huge range of organisations and groups.

In the past they have worked with local housing associations to help young people moving out of care and into their own homes.

This involved the community cooks teaching the young people basic cookery skills, showing them how to use an oven and even showing them how to shop, and what essentials they should have in their

store cupboards. Bosco said the insight given to the young people about how supermarkets entice shoppers to spend more than needed was a revelation to them, and helped cut weekly food bills substantially.

You Can Cook's services are tailored to their clients' needs, whether that be specific dietary requirements, the nutritional needs of office workers or skill levels of school pupils.

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