



ellenor catering team preparing Christmas lunch for patients.

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ellenor catering team make Christmas extra special for patients.

The most wonderful time of year is almost here – where family and friends come together to celebrate the festive season, perhaps share a meal and enjoy happy times together.

Christmas is normally a time of great joy but when a member of the family is seriously ill, staying positive is incredibly difficult. At **ellenor**, we try and make the festive period a very special time for the patients that we support,

by trying to make life as normal as possible and going the extra mile to meet patient's festive wishes.

Daniel Parzefall has been Catering Manager at **ellenor**, Gravesend for the last four years. He oversees the day to day running of the kitchen to ensure a high quality service for patients seven days a week, producing and serving a range of nutritious and high quality meals.

“Food nutrition is extremely important in palliative care and we do everything we can to enable people who have lost their appetite through illness or treatment to enjoy food again. Some people might need specialist care at **ellenor** hospice over Christmas or some of the patients here may be facing their last ever Christmas; we aim to make them feel at home and put the patient and those who matter to them at the centre of our care.

In the run up to Christmas we invite our community patients in for a festive lunch complete with all the trimmings and as much Christmas pudding as possible! If patients have difficulty swallowing, or if eating and drinking causes discomfort or anxiety, the catering team will tailor the menu to a soft food option, without compromising consistency and taste. We do exactly the same for our patients on the Inpatient Ward should they be staying with us over the festive period and we even send out Christmas lunches on Christmas Day to homecare patients who may be alone or unable to prepare a meal themselves.

When you are having trouble swallowing, the act of eating can sometimes be scary and difficult so we puree the food into specially designed moulds which make it look like real food. I remember a dear chap in his 30s who was devastated to have missed his traditional Christmas lunch as he had been in hospital and was having extreme swallowing difficulties. When he arrived at **ellenor** in January, his partner told us she was saddened by the fact that they had missed their last Christmas meal together so with the help of the Wellbeing Team, we prepared a special and intimate Christmas dinner for two in our private dining room with two special Christmas lunches – they looked identical, the only difference being that his meal was pureed which made him think he was eating the same food as his partner”.

Everyone that walks through our doors is important to us, and we aim to support them, whatever their needs in every way possible.

Your support will make a huge difference to people who are facing the most difficult of times. At **ellenor**, we never stop giving – **ellenor**'s care is provided around the clock, and continues over the festive period including Christmas and Boxing Day.

By supporting **ellenor** this Christmas your kindness will make a real difference – thank you and Happy Christmas.

Please donate online at <https://ellenor.org/donate> or by calling 01322 626509.

We are **ellenor**, a charity funded by the generosity of our local community, offering the best care and support to families facing terminal illness in Kent. We are the **only** charity in the county that provides hospice care for people of all ages – babies, children and adults - and their families. This includes pain and symptom relief, end of life care, respite, bereavement support and emotional and spiritual care.

Our Children's Hospice Care, formerly known as chYps, is provided in the comfort of the family home and spans across North and West Kent and the London Borough of Bexley. Adults living in Gravesham, Dartford and Swanley, receive care in their place of choice, including their own homes, at our Hospice in Gravesend and in local care homes.

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