

DINING WITH THE NEIGHBOURS

By: Peter Keijsers

This time I went to the Mospelheim, where a meal was prepared for the people in the neighbourhood, Vastenavondkamp. It was the day of municipal elections, and by accident I walked in through the wrong entrance. Via the kitchen I was led to the dining room.

When we were still in the Vijfsprong building, there already was a meal for the neighbours twice per month, which we continued in the Mospelheim building. In the Vastenavondkamp as well there is a meal twice per month. Perhaps in the future it will be every week, but that also depends on the interest. If there is enough interest it will certainly be considered, but for now it will be twice per month.



The dishes vary every time; one time there will be Dutch stew, another time it may be Indian and yet another time it might be even more exotic. This time the meal consisted of

Turkish lentil soup as an entree, the main dish was Indian Tjap Tjoi, and dessert was Turkish yoghurt with sour cherries. The neighbours are presented with a three course menu, which they pay €5,- for. I have to say that the food was of restaurant quality, for a fraction of the price!

In the kitchen, Netty was diligently stirring the pans, while a few other volunteers had neatly laid the table. Netty, only 1.50m tall and with a broad smile upon her face, is standing on a chair so that she has a good look in the pots and pans. She visibly enjoys cooking.



On the bar, coffee and tea are ready for the taking in pots, and I pour myself a cup of coffee. I sit down at the table with Antoinette, who explains to me what it is exactly we do in the Mospelheim. While we are talking, we are served by one of the other volunteers. As befits a true restaurant, we are served one course after the other. Because I am fasting – because I want to live that experience, not

specifically because of my religion – they had already taken the chicken out in the kitchen. Except cooking for the neighbours, on Mondays throughout the day and on Wednesday mornings there are Dutch language lessons; on Wednesday afternoons there is also a language café for people who want to practice their coverage of the Dutch language. On Wednesdays from 12.30 to 2.00 pm there is a meal with the neighbours. After this meal, everything is neatly cleared away and tidied by our volunteers. Nothing reminds of a reasonably filled dining room, except for the delicious scents of a well-groomed three course meal.

