

## Minna Shokudo

Making community around delicious food



▲ "What should we make next time?" "Food tastes better when you're eating with other people." Big smiles on the faces of participants gathered around a dining table.

Photo courtesy of Minamisanriku Social Welfare Council

In April 2018, Yui no Sato, a life support facility for the elderly operated by the Minamisanriku Social Welfare Council, opened in Shizugawa. From 2017, Minamisanriku residents got together several times in workshops to brainstorm ways to use the facility and trial ideas. One that emerged from this activity was Minna Shokudo.

Minna Shokudo started up in July 2018, regularly providing lunches to local residents.

The first session attracted about 40 people, including elderly people living in nearby disaster public housing and parents coming with their children. A fee of 300 yen was charged. Splitting into four groups, participants made curry and rice with summer vegetables and enjoyed meals and multi-generational interaction.

Held each month except for August and January, the event has engaged a variety of themes, always incorporating the ideas of the residents. Cooking meals for others and eating at the same table, the participants acknowledge each other as members of the community.

Multi-generational interaction involving everyone from children to senior citizens also takes place. Minna Shokudo thus makes a significant contribution to community building.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Minna Shokudo started to be presented by Life Support Assistants and residents in locations other than Yui no Sato, such as the halls at disaster public housing facilities. The townspeople continued to interact at a relaxed pace, through activities such as the preparation and delivery of bento lunch boxes. At Christmas time, some participants took it upon themselves to dress up as Santa Claus or reindeer and go out to deliver meals. Such activities have been steadily nurturing the human assets that support the welfare of the community.