

Lincoln University

Heather Watson

Lincoln University Medal

2015

Lincoln University Catering Manager Heather Watson is committed to caring for her community and the environment.

She is an incredibly humble and selfless staff member who does a huge amount of work for both the staff and students of Lincoln. Nothing is too big a job or effort for her and she will always strive to ensure every request and job is not only carried out, but exceeded.

Heather is incredibly respected in her team and around the University and is the driving force behind many Lincoln and LUSA events. She never hesitates to pass on her knowledge, which allows those around her to not only learn but continue to grow both personally and professionally.

This commitment is exemplified by her actions during the February 2011 earthquakes and the University's catering service receiving the highest award of platinum in the annual Lincoln Responsible Business Awards, for operating in an environmentally sustainable way.

Her role during that unforgettable time in 2011 was out of the spotlight but no less important.

She lived on-campus after the quake to make sure people staying on-site to help with recovery efforts – which included police from New Zealand and Australia, disaster victim identification staff and others in specialised recovery roles, who were all working around the clock, as well as students and staff – were all fed.

During this period, Heather also supported her own staff, who were experiencing the challenges the natural disaster threw up, such as losing homes and stress.

In the weeks that followed, before the University reopened, she provided breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea for the tradesmen and other workers to help make sure the buildings on campus were safe.

She also supported Ronald McDonald House in Christchurch in its hour of need, organising its food supply after the quakes. She continues to support this charity every year.

To deliver all those meals, you need a kitchen, but not just any kitchen. Heather sees the Platinum Award for operating in an environmentally sustainable way as a great honour for Lincoln University.

All the cleaning products in the kitchen are food-safe and biodegradable and recycling is also important. All cans and plastic bottles are crushed before being dispatched to a recycling yard. Incorporated into the kitchen is a chilled room for food scraps that are collected on a regular basis for a pig farm.

All this ensures minimal waste from a catering service which feeds more than 400 students three times a day, and where you might expect the opposite on account of the large quantity of packaging involved with food production.

Heather's dedication and compassion make her a worthy recipient of the Lincoln University Medal.