

Why potlucks are starting to get political

By Kristin Donnelly, Taste

A new generation of chefs and activists are using dinner parties to help refugees and immigrants affected by the election.

It's dark when we arrive outside the Hopewell Presbyterian Church in Hopewell, N.J., so I follow the burly guy carrying a foil pan of fried turkey. In front of us is a parade of other guests—each carting a covered platter, a vintage Pyrex casserole dish, a slow cooker, or more foil trays. As I enter, the unmistakable odor of church basement hits me along with the Thanksgiving-like smell of the crisped turkey skin.

My husband and I know none of the people around us, but we are here to support Interfaith-RISE, a 1-year-old New Jersey-based organization devoted to helping settle newly arrived refugees. Like many businesses and organizations operating in the aftermath of the election, this one had decided to use communal dining to support the people most affected by tenuous immigration policies.

The event's focus is more humanitarian than political, but of course my tablemates and I can't avoid discussing the election that rocked all of our world views. The conversations are similar to those I have with friends daily: We discuss the fears we have and what new policies might mean for immigrants, the environment, racial justice, public education, and the growing wealth gap.

Read the whole story