

Talking business with Anthony Haas

Refugee contributors

A generation ago the Human Rights Commission assigned me to create a book film project called **People Like Us** to celebrate cultural diversity for New Zealand. Delicatessen founder Martin Chait was one of the talents we featured. Martin, who died recently, illustrates the contribution refugee families contribute through food and other skills.



Food for thought

business. We made cheeses, continental pickles, and sauerkraut as well as selling poultry”.

His family food business began in Wellington’s Dixon St Deli – eventually they set up in the Wairarapa, including at Wild Oats in Carterton.

Martin became interested in different types of food through his parents. “They were Jews who escaped the anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia in the early 1920s and came to New Zealand. I worked with my father in his poultry shop when I was a boy and learnt the

Staff with understanding

Martin and his wife Jayne preferred to employ staff who have some understanding of foreign food. They found in return they learnt more about the range of foods that it is possible to stock in a delicatessen. They see their staff as part of an extended family. Jayne said “People who can talk to our customers in their own language are a great asset too.”

Bring cultures to neighbourhood.

When we published People Like Us in 1982 the Chait’s said “many migrant and refugee families in every part of the world help to bring the characteristics of other cultures to their neighbourhood, and by doing so help create a demand for even more variety.

“New varieties of food are also a way of meeting new people, new places” said Martin.

A look around contemporary Greytown shows a range of language and cultural groups. How well are they encouraged to contribute to the life of the community, its food and other businesses?

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