



St. Merkorious Charity

Unit 3, 6-20 Braidwood Street
Strathfield South, 2136 NSW
0478 760 450 (02) 9799 9954
charity@stmerkorious.com.au
www.stmerkorious.org.au

Issue 19. July-Sep 2021

From July through to September, we, along with the rest of the state, had to rapidly adjust our procedures with the ever-changing COVID-19 lockdown. While we were all in lockdown the need for food increased. Our wonderful volunteers, staff and community members stepped up during what was an incredibly challenging time for everyone. I am truly proud of St Merkorious Charity for the support we were able to provide the community and will forever be thankful for all the donations and support we received in this time. God bless you, and our continuing efforts to end poverty and provide hope to all.



*Paula Nicolas
Founder and President*

LOCKDOWN FOOD RELIEF CAMPAIGN

During the food relief campaign, St Merkorious Charity received quite a few anonymous donations, and a few donors also online orders through Coles and Woolworths and delivered it straight to us. We thank you for your generous support during such a challenging time.



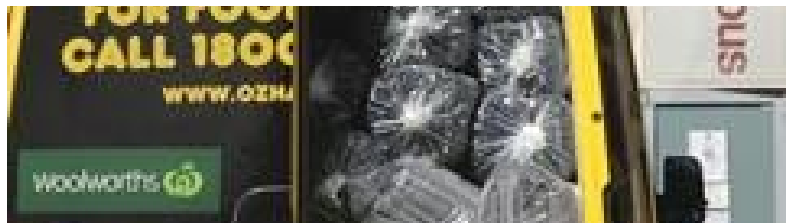
CANA FARM DONATIONS



Thank you to Cana Farm for their amazing donations during the lockdown. It was so encouraging to see the community continue to give. These donations went such a long way in giving back to the community and help provide hope during a difficult time.

OZ HARVEST DONATIONS

Oz Harvest made several donations throughout the weeks during the lockdown period. Their support means a great deal to us and a big thank you goes to them! Also, a big thank you to American Airlines for donating small blankets for our clients that was delivered to St Merkorious Charity by Oz Harvest. It was a particularly cold winter, and those blankets have gone a long way in helping those most in need. We really appreciate your constant support.



ST PATRICKS COLLEGE VOLUNTEERS

Thank you so much to the boys from St Patrick's College Strathfield for donating their time during their school holidays. They made a huge difference in supporting the local community and lit up our warehouses during the school holidays with their energy and cheer.



WE ARE OPEN



Even though most businesses were in lockdown during the July to September period, St Merkorious Charity was working harder to help all those who were struggling through these trying times.

We were still operating and providing for people in need throughout the lockdown in COVID-safe conditions.

Thank you to all our volunteers, staff, sponsors and donors who kept us operational during these tough times!

STRATHFIELD COUNCIL DONATIONS

Strathfield Council extended the duration of their Winter Appeal for an extra month due to the lockdown. Residents in the Strathfield area could drop these items to the council at their customer service area, and these items were then distributed to both St Merkorious Charity and St. Pauls Parish Pantry. These donations went such a long way in helping those people particularly struggling during the lockdown. We are so thankful for their efforts and the ongoing support they provide us.



DONATION FROM GUY ZANGARI MEMBER FOR FAIRFIELD AND GOOD 360 OF HYGIENE PRODUCTS

During the lockdown, St Merkorious Charity never stopped helping our community, and it was the generosity of the people and organisations around us that meant we could continue giving.

We received wonderful hygiene product donations from Guy Zangari Member for Fairfield and Good360 Australia. These items went so far in helping the community get through lockdown and provide relief to those struggling the most.



PARRAMATTA FOOD RELIEF SERVICE

The Food Relief Service in Parramatta Park continued right through lockdown, as we recognised that our food relief was needed now more than ever. Our service continued every Monday evening thanks to the efforts of all the selfless volunteers who dedicated their time to help share bread to those in need.



DONATION FROM CBCC AND GOOD 360 AUSTRALIA



A huge thank you to Wally Mehanna from the Canterbury-Bankstown Chamber of Commerce and Good360 Australia for their generous donations and ongoing support during the COVID lockdown.

We appreciate the amazing effort to collect donations that you put in during such a difficult time for people and businesses across Sydney and New South Wales.

HELPING WESTERN SYDNEY UNI

The lockdown has been extremely difficult for everyone but was particularly challenging for international students. We were able to help the students of Western Sydney University by providing them with food and other essential items.



NSW POLICE AND ADF DELIVERY HELP

We extremely appreciative of the Australian Defence Force and New South Wales Police for assisting the delivery of these goods to the community. This was extremely helpful as we were able to prepare all the goods at the warehouse and send them out. It was great to be able to work together for the good of the community during this extremely difficult time.



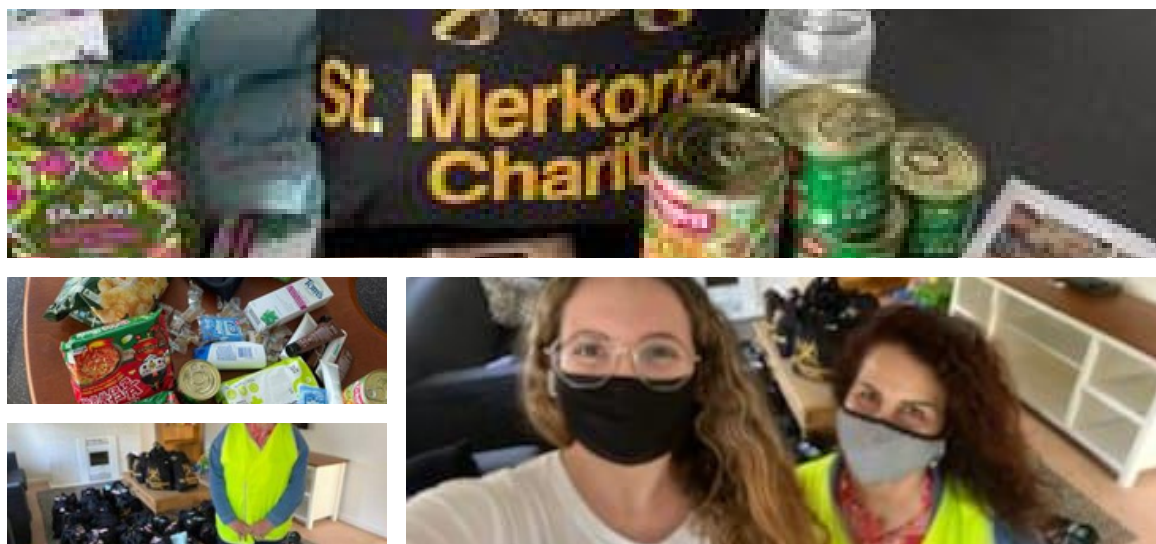
LOVE OF LEARNING ELC DONATION

We received an extremely generous donation from the Love of Learning ELC during the lockdown. It was so great to continue receiving donations during such a challenging time. Thank you to everyone for the ongoing support you have provided during this period.



PARRAMATTA WOMENS SHELTER HAMPERS

St Merkorious Charity was able to organise hygiene hampers for the women's shelter in Parramatta, distributing them to women who have been forced out of their homes and into the shelter due to various circumstances. These hampers went towards providing support and happiness to the women during their difficult times.



HELPING FAMILIES FROM REFUGEE/ASYLUM SEEKER BACKGROUNDS

We helped our local schools who have families from refugee and asylum seekers backgrounds. We delivered meals and other products to the schools, providing students and families with a little bit more support. Thank you to everyone who donated products so that we were able to make this happen for our schools.



NEW PORTABLE COOLROOM



Recently, we were able to purchase a new portable coolroom to help feed more families in need. We are so grateful to the Tucker Foundation who contributed to the purchase. This coolroom will allow us to serve hundreds more people each month.

SPECIAL HAMPERS TO CHEER UP OUR CLIENTS DURING LOCKDOWN

We were able to deliver some special hampers during lockdown. We wanted to help spread some cheer during such a difficult time for our community. It is because of the wonderful people and businesses that donated goods that we were able to do this. So, a big thanks to all of the people who kindly donated to us.



MESSAGE FROM JODIE MCKAY

On 22 September 2021, former MP Jodi McKay posted an extremely kind article regarding Paula Nicolas and St Merkorious Charity:

"I started by just helping a friend cook meals for families who needed a bit of help. But when she got ill, I took over and was cooking for 25 families in my own home. I did that for five years, until we needed more space.

From those humble beginnings, St Merkorious Charity has grown to providing meals for about 520 families. I see meals as a way of connecting, getting people to trust us and feel comfortable. It also reminds me of when my family first came to Australia. We were fleeing the war in Lebanon, most of my childhood was during the war, so bombings were a daily part of life. I was so happy to leave the fighting and come to Australia, it was like a dream come true. We didn't have much when we first got here, but we would always make sure to share a meal together and with friends.

Before COVID we used to run community meals at the St Merkorious Coptic Orthodox Church in Rhodes. We hired buses to pick up people from Parramatta and Martin Place to come and have a sit-down meal. We wanted them to feel like they were our family, to give them dignity and a place to sit and eat, because you can't get that if you're having to sit on the ground to eat. At our community meals, we also gave people an opportunity to have a shower at the church, have a haircut or someone to talk to so they can get access to support services.

The work I do is so rewarding. I'll never forget this one gentleman, Pedro. We picked him up from the city and in the bus ride over to Rhodes, he had the saddest expression. He wasn't looking at anyone, didn't smile and kept to himself. We gave him a meal and welcomed him into our community. At the end of the night, when everyone went to get on the bus, he turned to me and had the biggest smile on his face. He had transformed that night. It's moments like that that really touch my heart and make me realise it's worth it.

I'm so grateful to the community who have given us so much support. We've got more than 200 volunteers, the church has generously let us use their facilities, and our sponsors have helped us financially."



HAPPY FARM DONATIONS

Thank you to Happy Farm for the ongoing donations of organic fresh produce. We greatly appreciate your desire to help our community and your ongoing support. Your donations go directly towards giving back to the community and making a difference in the lives of people in need.



Stay updated via Social Media:



@stmerkorious



St Merkorious Charity



charity@stmerkorious.com.au



**St. Merkorious
Charity**

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Are you looking for ways to give back?
We have many opportunities available!

**MT. DRUITT AND
BLACKTOWN OUTREACH**

***Tuesday and Thursday
12-2pm***

Cleeve Close and Main St.

**FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY
MEAL**

Monday 12-2pm

Fairfield Community Centre
25 Barbara St. Fairfield

HOT MEAL AND FELLOWSHIP EVENING

Monday 7-9pm

2 Cavell Ave, Rhodes

every second Monday, alternating with

PARRAMATTA OUTREACH

Monday 6-7:30pm

Prince Alfred Park, Parramatta

DRIVERS TO DELIVER INDIVIDUAL FOOD DELIVERIES

Pick up and drop at home addresses.



For more information contact: **0478 760 450**