

MEDIA RELEASE – for immediate release

Bringing Cultural and Community Connections to Crisis Relief

Community and Cultural Connections Inc (CCCi) is supporting local members of the community who are most isolated and vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each week, CCCi delivers grocery hampers with a variety of food, milk, fresh vegetables, fruits and other essential items of a culturally appropriate nature to those in need.



CCCi's Crisis Relief program aims to ensure that no one falls through the cracks, particularly people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Anyone in crisis who resides in (but not limited to) the City of Canterbury Bankstown, Sydney's Inner West, West and Southwest Sydney regions, is eligible to receive our hampers.

CCCi does more than help the multicultural community secure food for 'rainy' days. It offers support and connection that is specific to cultural needs and individual challenges.

"For some members of our community, it can be totally unheard of to ask for help from an agency or organisation", says Vi Pham, Executive Officer of CCCi.

"And if people do have the courage to ask for help, they often find they face a long, complicated process, either because of their English language barriers or their unfamiliarity with how things work here, given the social and cultural systems are often so different to their own."

"We want those people to know that we are here, and we can help."

An elderly resident with a special health condition and restricted mobility in Croydon Park says, "I live alone and this food hamper is getting me through the week. It gives me something for breakfast; my lunch is the instant noodles from the hamper; and my dinner has rice and vegetables. I particularly love the fresh green vegetables and the fruits. I wonder how they know what I eat and what I like and bring it for me."

A single father living in Marrickville without any government assistance or social security safety net says, "The hamper means so much to me and my son. We have some nutritious food to replace our 'potato days', which used to be potatoes for all meals – breakfast, lunch and dinner – which was all we could afford. I lost my job at a bakery shop due to COVID-19. I want to work, any job. Your kindness has warmed our hearts."

For some isolated elderly people, the only human contact they have had for months now have been the CCCi staff or volunteers they meet each week delivering a food hamper.

An elderly Punchbowl woman said, “My only family member in Australia is my daughter. She has married and lives in Perth. I have to take two buses to go where I can buy my food [Vietnamese groceries]. My doctor told me that I am at very high risk of catching the virus. The food hamper helps keep me safe.

“The staff member is my ‘life saver’. She calls me during the week to see if I am ok. She also helps me to buy medical and other necessities. Please keep this service going. I’m afraid if this service ends, I’ll lose the staff member. She is my only connection to the outside world.”

CCCi Chairperson Sylvia Hale says that COVID-19 has brought unanticipated pressures, but that CCCi has been able to adapt: “CCCi’s activities and services are strongly in line with its ultimate purpose, which is to bring Sydney’s Inner West and surrounding multicultural community together with commitment, energy and passion to creatively generate social change”, she said.

“The crisis relief program is one of several programs that CCCi has implemented to help vulnerable members of our community whose situations have worsened during the pandemic.

“Isolated elderly people, those with chronic medical conditions, single parents trying to feed their children, people escaping domestic violence who have nowhere else to turn, people at risk of homelessness, people ineligible to receive government financial assistance, including workers losing jobs, and ‘hidden’ community members not caught by any safety net are just some of reaching out to CCCi for help,” Ms Hale said.

In challenging circumstances, maintaining connection to community and culture are vital. CCCi is committed to ensuring that CALD members of the community are not overlooked.

The CCCi team can provide assistance in Vietnamese, Arabic, Nepali and Greek languages. Regardless of language spoken, anyone in need can contact the CCCi office on (02) 8507 2027 or 0404 937 298, or email admin.exec@ccci.org.au.

For more details of our organisation please go to <https://www.ccci.org.au>.

To find out more about CCCi’s crisis relief program please click on <https://www.ccci.org.au/crisiscare/>

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