

LIFELINK WINTER APPEAL 2020: Catholic Outreach continues ministry through the tough times

04 Jun 2020

By The Record



The Doubleview Rosary Care group has run a craft group which works to produce items from mostly donated wool which are then donated to those in need via St Vincent de Paul during winter. They have continued to do so, to help those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic and will do so for the winter months.

Photo: Supplied.

For an agency that operates by connecting with people – visiting, delivering meals, providing transport – the restrictions in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic have meant that coordinators of Catholic Outreach Parish Care programs have had to reconsider the delivery of their services.

Catholic Outreach Director Marietta Russo, said that although it had been impossible to continue as per normal for now however, alternative measures have been put to practise in order to still be able to help the community in need.

“For example, meals and essential groceries have been delivered and left near front doors to ensure appropriate social distancing remains in place,” she explained.

“Some of our volunteers and coordinators are over 70, so they have had to look out for themselves over the past weeks but they’re still committed to helping others the best way they can.

“And while we can’t have our regular meetings, there have been lots of ‘are you okay?’ calls and emails back and forth.

“These have been delightful and affirming in that everyone expresses concern and interest in everyone else,” she added.

Visiting under regular circumstances often involves sitting down and chatting face-to-face over a cup of tea, but have now been replaced with phone calls.

Marie from St Luke's Ministry of Care, Woodvale, happily and readily passed seven hours calling care recipients in that community on Easter Vigil this year, ensuring those people felt connected.

Over in Willetton, a John Paul Care Coordinator mentioned that she makes a phone call to say when she has arrived at a care recipient's home and they then come outside to have a conversation across the front yard.

In Dianella, an elderly resident being among the most vulnerable to COVID-19, as are a lot of the care recipients, found himself unable to continue his regular outings to eat at his favourite cafes or to go shopping. Tina from Petercare in Bedford prepared and delivered meals packaged in take-away containers. Although their first conversations were conducted cautiously through the front door, Tina has been back with more meals on several occasions.

"I was delighted to be able to assist in a very small way," Tina said.

To keep Cloverdale Parish informed, Notre Dame Care Coordinators and volunteers are helping distribute the weekly bulletin by way of a letter box drop to parishioners who are not online to receive an electronic copy.

Catholic Outreach has been calling parishes even where a Parish Pastoral Care Program has not yet been established to offer a 'phone pal' for any parishioner who may benefit from or enjoy a social chat.

"After all, the days and weeks can be long in isolation," Ms Russo observed.

St Mary's Care in Guildford transports a parishioner to Mass regularly although she currently resides outside the parish boundaries. Recently, while her sister was here on holiday from Malaysia, the parishioner's husband became severely ill. A St Mary's Care volunteer was able to transport the visitor to the hospital so she could spend time with and support her sister and brother-in-law during that difficult period.

For the past couple of years, Rosary Care in Doubleview has run a craft group that works to produce items from mostly donated wool which are then donated to those in need via St Vincent de Paul during winter. Since its inception, the group has knitted more than 26 rugs, headwear, toys and scarves.

This group serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it helps the recipients of the delightful products that have been professionally crafted and secondly, it provides a social outlet for parishioners, mostly women, many of whom are widowed, where they can engage their talents and creativity.

While the participants have continued to knit and crochet in isolation over the past couple of months, they are looking forward to recommencing their gatherings in the parish centre this week.

"Being able to access wool to knit or crochet, and to have leaders in the group who maintain the meeting arrangements and organise the collection of the finished works and see that they are handed over to St Vincent de Paul leaves them to be creative and social," said Rosary Care's Dorothy.

“At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, some went out to buy yarn to keep themselves busy. Others were able to get wool from the boot of my car if they needed it.

“Knitting or crocheting has helped the member to find a way to be a giver, and gain confidence in socialising in the group,” Dorothy added.

The Archbishop’s 2020 Winter Appeal for LifeLink was officially launched 4 May 2020.

To donate to LifeLink, go to www.lifelink.com.au

Read the Archbishop’s Letter by [Clicking Here](#)