



## Supporters' Newsletter, April 2024

### Food, Community and Celebration!

#### From Virginia Moebus-Nelson, Executive Officer

One of the most important aspects of our work at CAN is food! We love to share food – over meals with neighbours, volunteers and staff at our weekly community lunch, rescuing unused excess food through our partners; Foodbank and OzHarvest, to share with our neighbours who are doing it tough through our community pantry and our Little Free Pantry, sharing a delicious gift of scones over morning or afternoon tea from a generous and thoughtful congregation member, or a shared meal with the board before a board meeting.... Whatever it may be food brings us together. It is an important leveller – we all love food and it's a way of remembering what we have in common, sharing stories, conversation and culture, and breaking down barriers.



Over the last few months at CAN we have shared some wonderful celebrations over food.



We were able to once again since COVID, bring our community together in one place to mark the end of the year and Christmas. This was a joyous occasion involving fairy floss, gourmet halal BBQ, rainbow ice-cream and African coffee ceremony. Over 100 people gathered in the hall in mid-December to celebrate all that had been in the previous year together over a shared meal and mark the Christmas season. The conversation was raucous with plenty of laughter and catch ups with old friends from all different walks of life. With cost of living weighing heavily on our neighbours, it was also wonderful to be able to gift our community 100 Christmas Hampers. One grateful participant commented that this would be the only Christmas gift she received. What a privilege to be able to bring a little bit of hope and light at a time of year that can bring mixed feelings for many people.

On Wednesday March 6<sup>th</sup> we celebrated a very special community lunch marking International Women's Day. Everyone dressed up in their finest, with the stunning colours of all of the cultures in our community bringing a real festive feel. We shared food from Persia prepared by a local neighbour, and an African coffee ceremony generously hosted by some of the women from our women's group. Khadra Omar, a well-known face and long-term African community development worker with families in Carlton, came and shared her story of how she was inspired by the community work her mother did supporting women in Ethiopia. An inspiring story of two very strong women who have invested in their local community and gone above and beyond to ensure that women are safe, celebrated and included.

Through the sharing of food, our bodies, hearts and communities are nourished and strengthened.

We are so grateful to everyone who contributes to our work - from those who drop items into our Little Free Pantry at the front, to those who volunteer to cook our community lunches or drive the van to Foodbank, to those who contribute financially.

Thank-you for faithfully journeying with us.



## Meet the team - Zeinab - Multicultural Women's Group Participant & Volunteer Extraordinaire

*Zeinab is a beloved regular visitor around CAN Community Support. She loves coming along to our Multicultural Women's Group each week, and gifts us her skills in cooking at our weekly community lunch and baby-cuddling at our playgroup on a regular basis.*

**How did you first become involved with CAN Community Support?** After many years of moving around and challenging life experiences, Zeinab was welcomed into the CAN Community Centre 12 years ago. She was particularly lonely and she was just walking around the neighbourhood; She saw the sign, and although she was nervous someone said, "Sister, are you looking for something?" Zeinab says, "It was a lovely surprise. When someone smiles you can feel it from your heart". Zeinab came every day; "I overcame my homesickness... before this I was just staying at home, eating and watching TV." While her circumstances have changed over the years and she has come and gone, and moved around, CAN has become like family.

**What do you love most about CAN Community Support?** "This is the Church of ALL Nations - where people from all cultures are welcome. I love to cook and introduce my "cultural food technology" to break down differences." She loves coming to Women' Group. She feels safe with the group co-ordinator and "...can talk to her about my stresses." Zeinab also loves helping out with some volunteer work - she says there are many benefits to volunteering and she feels "it's my responsibility". It gives her a sense of purpose and builds her skills.

### **Zeinab's take home messages:**

- "Go slowly and patiently, don't try to force things."
- "When you are struggling, the best thing is to join community. Go out and try!"



We are so excited have received a grant from StreetSmart Australia to support our food security program. This money will ensure that we can continue to offer community and support through food to our neighbours.

[Click here](#) to find out about their DineSmart program.



## Become a CAN Community Support partner through regular giving!

As you may know, funding for our programs can be unpredictable and unreliable at times. Regular monthly donations from CAN Community Support Partners gives us some predictability and stability in income, so we can plan into the future. We would love you to consider becoming a CAN Community Support Partner by committing to a regular gift each month:

\$50 a month provides stationary for students needing extra educational support through tutoring in our Homework Club

\$100 a month provides a weekly nutritious shared meal and companionship for someone who is lonely and unwell.

\$150 a month provides 10 food parcels for neighbours doing it tough in our community.

Click below for to sign up for regular monthly donations.



**Sign me up!**

## In other news...



### Food Rescue with OzHarvest

In the last 12 months we have collected 51 deliveries, provided



### Volunteer Role Open: Community Lunch Coordinator

Do you love people, food and



### Little Free Pantry

We are always taking donations for our [Palmerston Street Little Free Pantry](#). Please consider buying extra non-perishable items during your

the equivalent of 36,823 meals, rescued 18.411.5kgs of food from landfill, and saved a whopping 17,859kgs of CO2!

hosting? Do you have what it takes to coordinate our weekly Wednesday lunches? This role includes supporting volunteers and ensuring that our lunches run smoothly. Send expressions of interest to [contact@cancarlton.org.au](mailto:contact@cancarlton.org.au)

next shop, and support a local family in need.

**Your donations to CAN Community Support mean that we can continue to say 'yes' to everyone who comes to our door. We wish we could convey how grateful they are - and how much of a privilege it is to do this work on your behalf.**

Click the link below to make a donation today!

**Give Now**

CAN Community Support is a part of Carlton (Church of All Nations) Uniting Church Parish Mission  
a: 180 Palmerston St (PO Box 1013) Carlton 3053  
w: [www.cancommunitysupport.org.au](http://www.cancommunitysupport.org.au)  
p: 03 9347 7077  
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