

USMAA launches the ‘Help the Homeless’ Food Drive

In October 2019, USMAA launched the ‘Help the Homeless’ drive. This was flagship initiative to assist the downtrodden and dispossessed in society by providing them with regular food rations. To this end, at every USMAA event the Membership was requested to donate provisions for this worthy initiative. The collections were then handed over to the Cornerstone Contact Centre in Dandenong which caters to the homeless community.

Here are two updates written by two USMAA children that appeared in our newsletter:

Update 1:



Last week, we visited the Cornerstone Contact Centre in Dandenong to handover all the items that the USMAA members donated for the food drive at the Rugby World Cup event. Gloria, Morris and other volunteers greeted us and helped us carry all the heavy bags into a storeroom. As we were walking, we spotted a mobile shower called ‘Clean as Casper’ and a mobile laundry van, which had a washer and a dryer. It was heart-breaking to witness the homeless people lining up to take the rare luxury of a shower and also to get their clothes washed and dried. We also noticed a soup kitchen in operation, which had volunteers serving platters of fruit, rice and other delicious meals they had cooked for the day. The homeless people were sitting and chatting to other people or playing a relaxing game of pool. Unfortunately, the soup kitchen is only functional on Wednesday and Friday mornings. The rest of the week, the homeless have to survive on the food donations from generous people.

Jazakallah khair to everyone who contributed.

May Allah reward you for your thoughtfulness and generosity

- Talia and Zacky Shums :)

Update 2:



During the COVID-19 crisis, when all of the supermarkets' shelves were running low on essential food items, USMAA visited Cornerstone Contact Centre (CCC) once again to drop off the food rations that were collected at the last event, the Islamic Day celebration.

The Homeless had been severely impacted during this pandemic and were desperately in need of assistance as there was a scarcity in finding sufficient provisions. CCC had moved to a different location in Dandenong causing a slight interruption to their services during this crucial time. At the time of our visit, several of the Homelessness were already lining-up at the new CCC location to benefit from the generous donations to the Centre. COVID-19 had made the problem of Homelessness worse with the spike in the rate of unemployment.

Though USMAA's donation this time around was not as abundant, the volunteers at Cornerstone and the Homeless sincerely appreciated it. This was more so because the donation included some much-needed, in-demand items like long-life milk, tissues, cereal etc.

Jazakallah khair to everyone who donated!

Everyone looks a little awkward in the photo below as we are trying to observe social distancing!

- Talia and Zacky Shums