

SPCC Pantry

From community to community – food parcels meet practical needs in tough times

The SPCC Food Pantry was set up in April 2020 to provide food and hygiene hampers for vulnerable members of our community, many of whom are on a low income and faced financial hardship and isolation during the pandemic. SPCC put out a call for items and our local community responded generously – we worked together with the **Port Melbourne Focus Facebook** platform, and partnered with **Port Phillip Community Group's 'Share the Food'** program.

Following COVID-safe protocols, SPCC staff and volunteers coordinated donations and delivered 40 specially prepared food and hygiene parcels, assisting 40 adults and 63 children. Care parcels were individually customised to accommodate the different cultural and dietary needs of each household. Parcels also included hand sanitisers and masks where needed – some hand sewn by local children. With some Stage 4 COVID-19 restrictions lifted, SPCC staff were able to deliver care parcels via contactless delivery to individual participants who required it. This proved beneficial for people who, due to immune issues, mobility or anxiety, were unable to collect their parcels in person from the SPCC building.

The SPCC Food Pantry provided much needed practical support for vulnerable people during a difficult year, and the local community should be proud of what it achieved by working together.

Local Children Support Vulnerable Community Members: Mia and Sasha

In April 2020, in an effort to support local residents experiencing hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic, SPCC set up a Food Pantry. The Centre put out a call for food and hygiene donations and were overwhelmed by the generosity of the local community, who responded by providing quality goods and voluntary time. An example of this generosity of community spirit can be seen in the story of Mia and Sasha.

In August, the then Mayor of Port Phillip, Bernadene Voss, passed on a message from a local family who were wanting to help people in need in the community.

In response to the start of the second Victorian lockdown in July 2020, siblings Mia and Sasha came up with an idea: to make face masks for adults and children. The sewing machine, fabrics and accessories were ready to go and the brother-sister team started from scratch, teaching themselves sewing skills by watching online tutorials. After many practice runs (and some failures), Mia and Sasha successfully made 30 face masks - 20 for adults and 10 for children. The masks, well-made and in a variety of patterns and colours, were included in the food and hygiene parcels distributed by the SPCC Food Pantry and were greatly appreciated by recipients.

Congratulations to Mia and Sasha and their parents Jadie and Michael for their initiative, hard work and community spirit - not only have they learnt a new skill, but they have assisted vulnerable people within their local community at a time when it is most needed.