



**Nutrition for
Body and Soul**



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Nutrition for Body and Soul

The Nutrition for Body and Soul program was designed to improve the nutrition for people who were experiencing hardship due to COVID-19. It began on 30 March, 2020 and ended with the final meals delivered on 31 July, 2020. The program allowed Chorus to increase the number of meals provided to people in need by 219 per cent compared to the same period as last year. We would have been unable to do this without the generosity of a local Perth family. This thoughtful donation made an enormous impact on our community and had far-reaching benefits we couldn't have anticipated.



How the money was used

The donation enabled Chorus Kitchen to expand our service and provide meals for a segment of the population who were previously unable to access healthy, nutritious meals. Our traditional customer base are people eligible for the Community Home Support Program (CHSP) and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Nutrition for Body and Soul program ran alongside our normal services and allowed us to reach people who were not eligible for a government subsidised meal program or could not afford to eat.

Chorus Kitchen regularly receives calls from people who cannot afford to purchase meals and, unfortunately, we are unable to assist them. The Nutrition for the Body and Soul program was directly responsible for feeding these people, and for providing a heart-warming experience for the team at Chorus Kitchen.

Meals were provided at no charge to members of the community who were in genuine need of fresh, nutritious meals. Chorus Kitchen expected the meals to reach people affected by COVID-19: those who had lost jobs and needed help on a

short-term basis. But in fact, the majority of people we connected with had been living in financial hardship for a long time. Some had been affected by COVID-19; however, for most this was their “normal” life.

Chorus Kitchen was able to reach 140 households, benefiting 450 individuals and providing almost 16,000 meals. This was a staggering contribution to our community.

The donation was directly used to purchase food and required packaging, and hire additional equipment to meet increased demand. We were also fortunate to receive donations of bread and cakes from Umberto's Bakehouse and Continental Deli which were distributed along with the meals. These treats were also well received.



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How Chorus Kitchen found participants

Chorus Kitchen advertised in local newspapers, on social media and appeared on Channel 7 News. We also joined local community network meetings and collaborated with many local agencies, who were excited to know the people they were supporting could be offered meals. The agencies we collaborated with are:

- Black Swan Health
- Carers WA
- Centrelink
- Chorus Mental Health Team
- City of Belmont
- City of Cockburn
- Communicare
- Friends
- Kern Allied Health
- Keys
- Langford Aboriginal Centre
- Life without Barriers
- One Voice
- Peel Connect
- Relationships Australia
- Ruh
- School Chaplains
- Social Workers
- Uniting Care
- Zonta House

The circumstances of families receiving meals were varied and included:

- families who live in financial hardship on a regular basis
- families where the primary earner has become unemployed due to COVID-19
- non-citizens/international students who are not eligible for Centrelink payments and are unemployed due to COVID-19
- families who had been subject to domestic violence and fled the family home
- people living with mental health issues which have worsened by the impact of COVID-19.



Results of Nutrition for Body and Soul

At the end of the program, we requested feedback from those people receiving meals and all were extremely appreciative. Recipients universally thanked Chorus Kitchen and asked us to pass on their thanks to the family who enabled the program. All were grateful for improved nutrition, saying they had enjoyed eating “real food” and had never eaten so many fresh vegetables. Some parents told us they would usually forego eating to ensure their children were fed. Most admitted to preparing cheap meals, such as pasta and rice, or buying cheap takeaways and knew the meals they were feeding their children were not nutritionally sound.

Beneficiaries of the Nutrition for Body and Soul program reported a significant improvement in mental wellbeing, including reduced occurrences of stress, anxiety and depression. Some said they were able to pay outstanding debts or treat their children to small things most of us would take for granted. Customers also reported experiencing joy from receiving a daily visit from a volunteer, children waited excitedly each morning for the meals to arrive and parents enjoyed a brief conversation with another adult.

The story of a gentleman called Chek was one of many stories that touched our hearts.

Chek saw us on Channel 7 and contacted us straightaway. He had been through a difficult time and was in a dark place in his life. Chek believed no one cared about him and was contemplating taking his own life. We started delivering meals and kept in touch with him regularly. Each week, Chek began to feel better; he told us he felt we had saved his life. Chek found that with improved nutrition and daily visits from volunteers, his mental wellbeing improved. After a few weeks, Chek felt well enough to get back into the community and he found a volunteer position at an op shop. He is a changed person and now able to give back to others.

He wanted to share his story, which you can listen to on the Chorus Voices podcast.

Chek’s episode is called “From Darkness to Colour” and can be found at chorus.org.au/chorus-voices/



Participant feedback

Below is additional feedback received from families who participated in the Nutrition for Body and Soul program:

This has helped a lot financially and it has been good to have healthy meals for my family.
Veneus

The meals have been very helpful financially and they were lovely.
Phitcy

"My doctor and her son have seen an improvement since I've been eating healthily. I feel much better and am trying to be more mobile. I find it makes me feel happier in myself and I've managed to put on weight. It was great to receive the bread, and toilet paper too, which was donated by you. It's good to have the right fuel in the body."
Sandy

"I'm so grateful and can't believe how much stress it has released. My mental health has improved and things have been going well. The meals were beautiful. I feel more relaxed and have started to set goals and I'm achieving them."
Tabitha

"The meals have made a big difference to my mental health - my depression is easing. It has also helped with my diabetes. I loved seeing the volunteers and having a chat each day. I have been isolating as I'm scared to go out. The volunteers are lovely and friendly."
Lorraine

"These meals have helped so much. I have a disability and my son cares for me. He does not have to cook and clean and it gives him more time to do his homework. This has also given me so many ideas about healthy eating once things go back to normal."
David

The meals have been a big help; I was living off sandwiches. I feel so much better.
John

"This was very helpful. I feel better because I'm eating well. The kids have been fed healthy meals and enjoyed them."
Ashton

"I would like to thank the family who donated the money. I don't know what I would have done without your help."
Glenys

"I cannot believe how much this has helped. I really appreciate the service - it has taken a lot of pressure off mentally."
Charlene

I couldn't walk so only had to heat them up. Thank you. They made a big difference while I was unwell.
Elfride

"Being on a single parent payment, getting the meals has enabled me to give the children extra things that other children take for granted."
James

"I struggle to eat, and having the meals prepared has helped me and given me more time to care for my 14-month-old baby. I have so much more energy."
Zoe

Our nutrition improved, the family were happier and it took a lot of stress away.
Brendan

"I have felt at ease by receiving the meals - less stressed - and the children are loving the meals and eating more vegetables."
Loren

"I am so grateful for the meals. I cannot thank the family and Chorus enough."
Chrissy



Benefits for Chorus Kitchen Staff and Volunteers

Receiving this money benefited not only the recipients of the meals. The donation had an enormous impact on the staff at Chorus Kitchen, too.

When the team were informed Chorus Kitchen would be upscaling services and providing free meals, they weren't sure if they had the capacity to achieve this. Each team member and volunteer accepted the challenge and committed to the cause. The team adapted their processes, created split shifts to enable more efficient use of the kitchen space and increased their working hours.

By July, we were delivering 3500 meals per week. Prior to this, we were producing, on average, 970 meals per week from our small kitchen in Palmyra. We committed to providing fresh meals delivered daily rather than taking the easier option of producing frozen meals and delivering in bulk. Every member of the team, whether in the kitchen or office, or as a volunteer, played a significant role in the success of the program.

What Chorus Kitchen did not anticipate was the melancholy feelings we experienced when the program ended. The entire Chorus Kitchen team (staff and volunteers) feel blessed to have been able to participate in the Nutrition for Body and Soul initiative and are grateful to the donor family for the opportunity.

The team are committed to looking for new ways we can continue to support the broader WA community. We are currently looking for other organisations to collaborate with so we can continue the work started by this initial generous donation.

Chorus Kitchen is thankful for this outstanding opportunity to provide this program. It has made a positive change in the lives of people who received meal assistance, and also in the lives of Chorus staff and volunteers who were part of the program.

“ I just stopped eating. I stopped cooking for myself. I ended up in a mental hospital for two weeks. I just wanted to die. ”

With the donation

Chorus Kitchen delivered a total of 41,000 meals, which is more than double the 18,700 meals delivered during the same period in the previous year. The Chorus Kitchen Team were ecstatic to be able to provide so many more meals to people in need.

970 
meals per week



3500 
meals per week



If we all work together
the possibilities are endless.

Contact Us

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