

FREE FRUIT AND VEG

On a bitterly cold afternoon, during the COVID19 lockdown, boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables were delivered to Narla Community hall in Belmont North, Lake Macquarie. 60 of them! One for each unit. What a sight! 60 boxes of fresh food! Forming a chain, the boxes were soon taken out of the vehicle then put out on tables. Residents were staring gob-smacked at what they saw, overwhelmed by the generosity of others and the effort made to deliver them.

Harris Farm Markets (Cooks Hill) joined forces with Newcastle Meals on Wheels to provide fresh produce care-boxes as part of their inter-community support project to Narla Village. Thanks were expressed to the person who delivered them and our Manager, Kym presented a certificate of appreciation.

Residents braved the chill wind and carried their boxes back to their units. Those with less mobility were remembered, and deliveries made. Next morning, walking round the village, I checked to see whether those I could contact, had received their box. Some only wanted the fruit, for medical reasons, and kindly donated their vegetables to an unemployed family member.

Along with the Chairperson of the Narla Village Social club it was decided to ring a few whom we were unsure whether or not they had received their fruit and veg. Some hadn't seen the notice, others were out of the Village, or didn't know how to access the hall.

It was a revelation to hear what people were planning for their unexpected gift. Potato bake, apple crumble, Mulligatawny soup, crockpot curried veg, cabbage soup – the gift had stirred a culinary passion in so many. Someone asked “what does one do with capsicum in winter?” What to do with vegetables became the talking point all week.

The gift was unexpected but received with gratitude, providing an impetus to cook something warm during our sudden cold chill.

Helen Weavers

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