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Media Release

Friday 20 June 2008

OzHarvest delivers 11,000th meal in Canberra

OzHarvest, the program that collects excess food and delivers it, free of charge, to community organisations that feed disadvantaged men, women and children, has now delivered 11,000 meals across Canberra and Queanbeyan.

The program, which is supported and managed in Canberra by Communities@Work, commenced in late February this year with just a handful of donors. Today, OzHarvest collects from 32 donors and provides meals to 30 shelters and refuges in Canberra and Queanbeyan.

The program was officially launched today by the Member for Canberra, Annette Ellis MP, at The Salvation Army Canberra Recovery Services in Fyshwick - an OzHarvest program recipient.

Maureen Cane, CEO of Communities@Work, said that every day in Canberra many kilos of high quality, nutritious food is thrown away while, elsewhere, people go hungry.

"The program is the missing link between excess food and those who are hungry in our community - OzHarvest bridges the gap between surplus and need.

"Reaching our 11,000th meal delivery is a significant milestone involving the rescue and delivery of over 3,300 kilograms of nutritious food in the last four months. Without OzHarvest, this food would have been thrown away. This is a great start to the program but we still need more food donors and sponsors to ensure OzHarvest's ongoing success," Ms Cane said.

The delivery of food by OzHarvest enables recipient charities to redirect funds originally budgeted for food to other programs such as education, training and rehabilitation. According to Major Bob Garven, Manager of The Salvation Army Canberra Recovery Services, the provision of OzHarvest meals also significantly boosts the morale of program participants.

“The quality of OzHarvest meals is often higher than our program participants would normally receive and their moral is boosted by the special treats that can accompany the meals. It helps us provide them with a higher standard of care,” Major Garven said.

OzHarvest collects excess food from restaurants, shops, delis, corporate catering and event venues where there is high quality, excess food available. The food collected ranges from fresh fruit and vegetables to prepared meals, salads, pies and desserts and is delivered on the same day to recipient charities.

Macquarie Group Foundation is the core founding partner of OzHarvest which launched in Sydney in October 2004. The Macquarie Group Foundation has provided OzHarvest with a further three year grant to assist in its expansion plans, with Canberra targeted as the initial partner. Additionally, Macquarie staff have been active supporters in a pro bono and volunteer capacity including OzHarvest board membership.

The program is sponsored in Canberra by the Home Loan Centre, which has provided the refrigerated van to transport the food. The van has already clocked up over 11,000 kilometres rescuing and delivering food.

OzHarvest Canberra would like to hear from other food donors and potential sponsors. Call OzHarvest on 6288 0709.

ENDS

Media contact: Michael Byrne 0412 690 429 6260 8777