

The art of giving generous grains

BY RAHILA BASHIR

On the drive home, after a long day of eye screening patients in homeless shelters, I would pass through the boroughs, towns and villages of east London. Stopping at the soup kitchen, I would meet Christian with heavy cataracts, and Abdul Malik with progressive age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), both waiting for a passerby to gift a free warm meal for the day.

Christmas and New Year witnessed a festive season, celebrating the harmonious gift of humanity by sharing food. A gift from groups so widespread, particularly to the homeless, vulnerable, and needy. Taking to the streets after work in the evenings was one such group of local giving volunteers: Generous Grains (GG). Having experience of delivering food boxes during Covid-19, they were inclined to embark on a noble endeavour of giving again, offering free and fresh wholesome cooked food to those struggling to afford warm meals. A small group of seven quickly grew to a strong team of 20, built of dentists, doctors, accountants, midwives, nurses, teachers, students and artists who finish work and join in distributing food.

On Monday evenings after work, GG volunteers from Epsom joined to serve hot meals in Walthamstow Market Square. Chefs from a catering business with over 50 years' experience in the food industry joined the volunteers team. HMC certified, Barkat Catering prepared meat meals, vegetables, fruit provisions and beverages. It was a privilege to speak to some of GG's volunteers.

Adeil Yousaf, CEO and Senior Optometrist at Eyecare Express, said: "We are proud sponsors of GG. A grass roots project aimed at alleviating poverty in local communities."

Aqsa Mahmood, a registered Associate Nutritionist, said: "GG is a charity which aims to provide essential food resources to those in need. Proper nutrition can help prevent eye diseases. Vitamins A, C, E and minerals like zinc and selenium are essential for eye health."

While GG envisioned a global connection to begin a legacy of kindness one meal at a time, they were delighted to hear from Ratih Rusmayanti in Indonesia. Head of Marketing, Ratih said: "Filantra is a community service organisation and a corporate social responsibility consultant based in Indonesia. We are so honoured to take part in this noble mission with GG Global to feed the visually impaired, blind, and underprivileged people in Indonesia. We believe social impact is built with good synergy, and our collaboration with GG is one of the best answers for that. We cannot wait to expand the social impact with GG worldwide."

Ali Obarey, GG Volunteer Spokesperson, said: "GG, a beacon of compassion, stands as a voluntary nonprofit organisation, dedicated to fostering community and empowering humanity. Rooted in the belief that everyone deserves sustenance and support, we strive to alleviate hunger and uplift those in need through the provision of nourishing grains. Together, we cultivate a spirit of generosity that unites communities and fosters a brighter, more compassionate world for all."

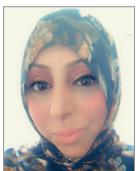


Fresh Barbecue prepared for the homeless in Walthamstow Market Square.



Junior volunteer chef Yaseen Mohammad from Barkat Catering and events.

SECTION EDITOR



Rahila Bashir,

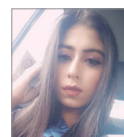
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Special thanks go to:

Ali Obarey, (GG spokesperson),

Executive Director, Ibadah Tours, MK HOLIDAYS LIMITED.



Aqsa Mahmood (local contributor),

Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr) and Dietetic Student, University of Central Lancashire.



Ratih Rusmayanti (international contributor),

Head of Marketing Communications, Filantra, Indonesia.