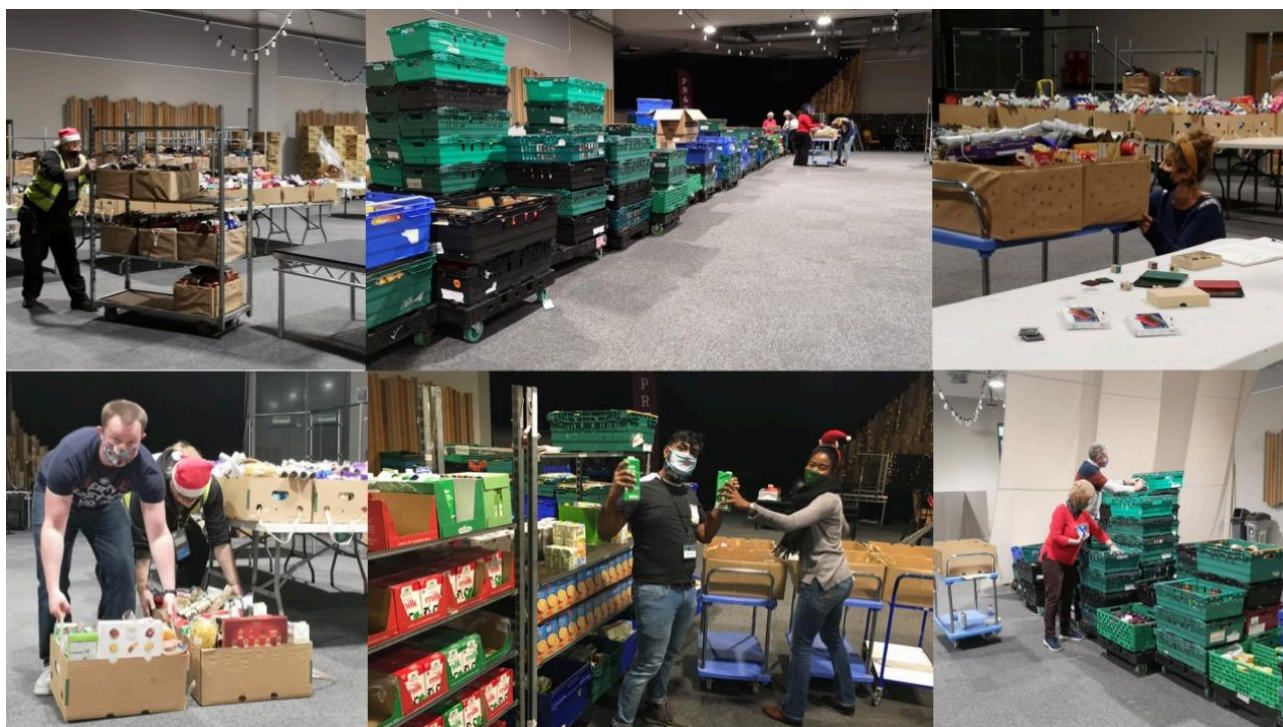


LOCAL CHURCH FEEDS HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES OVER CHRISTMAS

Citygate Church coordinated the delivery of 200 hampers filled with food, seasonal goodies and toy vouchers to help over 700 people celebrate Christmas.

On Wednesday 23rd December 2020, a huge team of volunteers delivered 200 hampers to local families in crisis feeding 743 people (329 adults & 414 children).



Partnership

To achieve this Citygate Church coordinated the efforts of a network of 52 partner organisations who contributed towards the project. The church wants to express their deepest thanks to the full list of their partners:

70x7 Ministry; ASDA Bournemouth; BCHA; BCP Council; Bmth & Poole Home Ed Community; Boscombe Salvation Army/BH1 Project; Bournemouth University; Britannia Leatherbarrows Removals; Citygate Church; CMA Hampshire and Dorset; Coastline Church; County Foods Ltd; Dorset HealthCare NHS Trust; Eco Natural Products; Envista Branding; Faithworks CMA; Feed our Community; Foresters Financial; International Care

Network; Jesus Reigns Ministries UK; Jewell Academy; Joy Cafe; JP Morgan; Lansdowne Church; LIFEhouse; Lloyds Bank; LV=; Makro Poole; Nationwide Building Society; Nurturing By Nature; Plymouth Brethren Church; Poole Bay Methodist Circuit; Poole Food Bank; Probation Services; Rosebery Park Baptist Church; Rotary Club of Bournemouth East Cliff; Safe Families UK; Salvation Army Winton; Seetec Pluss; Smyths Toys Bournemouth; St Ambrose Church; St Christopher's Church; St James Church; St Michael's Primary School; St Paul's Church; St Saviour's Church, Iford; The Verwood Team; Toadstall Plants; Traincrew for SWR; Vitanova & YMCA Bournemouth.

Some agencies nominated families to receive the hampers like BCP social work teams, local schools, health visitors or other churches and charities who are working with these families all year round and provide that vital link as we let people know what to expect on the day. International Care Network who work with refugees and asylum seekers and Safe Families who provide support by working with churches and local authorities. Both took particular care to make sure their families had a great Christmas.

Some partners pledged food or other items to go in the hampers like local businesses and community groups. Their staff or members collected exactly what was needed. A couple of local business (Eco Natural Products and Envista Branding) very kindly donated PPE so face masks and sanitiser could be included in every hamper. Both Bournemouth and Poole food banks also shared their stock to help fill out the hampers.

Other partners helped recruit volunteers to help deliver the hampers. Bournemouth University have supported the project from the beginning with placement students to help administer the project and staff who love to do the deliveries. A social group based in Verwood also send a group of drivers and helpers.

Some of partners help us raise the funds we need to overcome the logistical and administrative hurdles. Grants from Foresters Financial and the Designs For Humanity fund made it possible to include lots of Christmas luxuries and a £10 toy voucher.

The project simply wouldn't be possible without the vital help of each partner group. For example, safely delivering frozen produce was only possible thanks to the team at Nurturing By Nature who provided special polystyrene boxes and Britannia Leatherbarrows Removals who transported them!



Generosity

11,466 items were collected and stored at the Citygate Centre on Holdenhurst Rd while groups turned them into 200 hampers. The cardboard boxes were recycled banana box wrapped and decorated with all natural, biodegradable paper and fibers. Volunteers really let out their inner child as they decorated them.

The families also received a bag of fresh and a box of frozen food. Nutritionists from the University confirmed that this was plenty to feed a family of over five people for three days. And the biggest families received two hampers, just to be sure!

Every year the feedback from families is that overwhelming gratitude for the sheer quantity of gifts.

Delivery day was a huge event. 70 volunteer drivers came through the Citygate centre carpark where they were loaded up and sent out to deliver their hampers to the door. By the end of the day all 200 hampers had been successfully delivered, over 268 miles had been covered and the team were so worn out, the last to leave was mistaken as a rough sleeper on their way home and offered a hot meal!

Make no mistake: these were quality hampers (it would easily cost you over £60 to fill it at the supermarket across the road) and the team moved heaven and earth to make sure they get to the people who need them most. A massive thank you should be extended to the 85 givers who helped us raise a total of £11,859.82 to cover the costs and support the ongoing work of the food bank that operates at Citygate all year round.



Hope

As well as all the food, Christmas stuff and toy vouchers, the families also received a card containing our message of hope from the Bible:

We often hope for stuff like feeling safe or comfortable or well-off or liked. It is a desire for something that we aren't sure we will get or how long it will last. The Christmas story is a real story about a hope that lasts and does not disappoint.

The Christmas story for Mary was about a journey. She thought her life had a clear direction: engagement, marriage and hopefully a family one day. However, she had to take a detour: teenage Mary falls pregnant! She must have wondered what was going on?

Maybe your life has also had its detours and you have asked the same question. The reality is that God was at work in Mary's life so that the hope of the world could be born into the world. God has a plan to help us. He sent his Son so we could hope not just in something, but in someone. Jesus gives us a hope that goes beyond this life and lasts forever.

The project leader, Ed Briggs, said,

"Thankfully I wasn't alone coordinating all this. I've got a great team, who have been helping me administer the nominations, manage the stock, coordinate volunteers and otherwise make the impossible happen. Special thanks to Asha, Blu, Dannielle, Dom, Hannah, Hele, Rukhsana and Spencer.

"I'm really excited about 2021 at Citygate as we search scriptures like Isaiah 61 that 'proclaim good news to the poor'. I believe that we have a role in

leading our community in social action that reaches people way out on the edge. Let's draw them in to celebrate with us this year of the Lord's favour. Amen to that!"

The Christmas Hamper Appeal has been a partnership between Citygate Church and Bournemouth Foodbank for four years. Groups or individuals can find how they can get involved here: <https://citygate.church/hampers>.

ENDS

For interviews, call 07793 085157 or email ed@citygate.church.

Notes to Editor

Citygate Church is a friendly community of believers who love and serve Bournemouth. For more information, visit <https://citygate.church>.

The Citygate Community Hub is an open door to everyone 2-4pm weekdays and 10am-12pm on Saturdays except Bank and Public Holidays: <https://citygate.church/hub>.

The Christmas Hamper Appeal is a partnership between Citygate Church, Bournemouth Foodbank and a network of supporting charities, groups businesses and agencies: <https://citygate.church/hampers>.

Bournemouth Foodbank is part of The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network; it provides three days' emergency food and support to local people in crisis. For more information visit www.bournemouth.foodbank.org.uk.

Photos



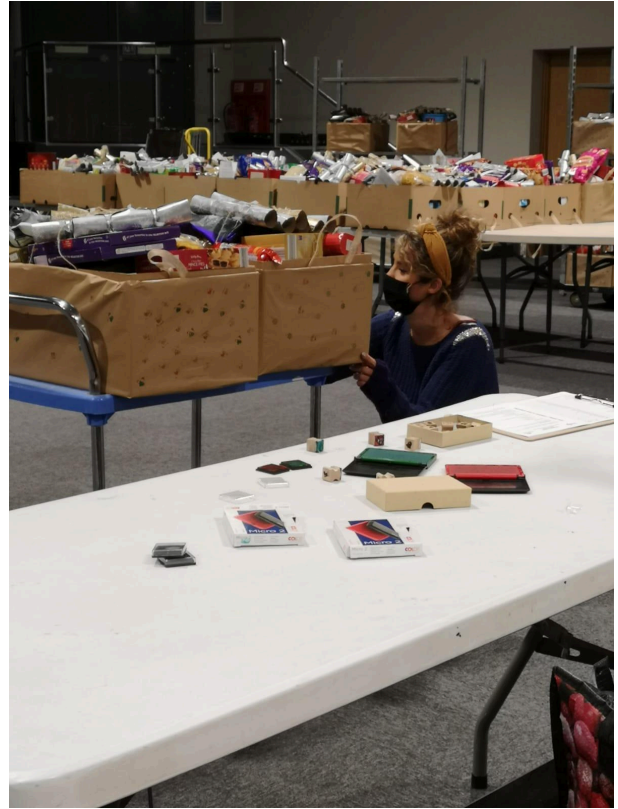
Tonnes of food were donated by local groups. Available to download [here](#).



The church auditorium became a warehouse. Available to download [here](#).



Cardboard banana boxes were turned into hampers..
Available to download [here](#).



Volunteers decorated the hampers.
Available to download [here](#).



Volunteer drivers are briefed on their deliveries.
Available to download [here](#).



A large team helped support the deliveries.
Available to download [here](#).



Some hampers were even delivered by cargo

bike!

Available for download [here](#).



Available for download [here](#).