

GIVING COMMUNITY A CHOICE

AN INITIATIVE OF THE GIVE WHERE YOU LIVE FOUNDATION, THE COMMUNITY CHOICE PROGRAM BRINGS TOGETHER FOOD RELIEF AND LOCAL HOSPITALITY VENUES TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY AND BRING THE DIGNITY OF CHOICE TO PEOPLE ACROSS OUR REGION.

SINCE 2020, there has been a 24% increase in demand from local support agencies for voucher assistance. In the Foundation's July 2022 voucher allocation, we received requests over \$150,000, however we were only able to provide funding for just under \$100,000.

THE IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY

FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2022, WE PROVIDED

- **\$60,627** in Community Choice food & pharmacy vouchers
- **3,163** vouchers distributed



WE WORKED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

- **25** local community agencies to distribute vouchers and
- **10** local businesses exchanging voucher for food and pharmacy items



WHO COMMUNITY CHOICE HAS SUPPORTED

- **24%** were single parents
- **20%** people with disability
- **10%** culturally diverse
- **80%** reported being a recipient of government benefits
- **33%** unemployed
- **23%** impacted by health issues
- **14%** on a low income or had unstable working hour



STORIES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

A family in emergency accommodation were provided with multiple Community Choice vouchers. The family members were extremely stressed for money due to having a limited income. They were so appreciative of the vouchers and had a very positive experience buying food from the Geelong Food Relief Centre who were so friendly and kind. The family has now been successful for Transition Housing, and when they find long-term housing intend to give back to the community as they are so grateful for the help they received.
- BCYF

A young mother who fled family violence moved into a new home and needed to utilise all her funds just to take possession of the property to cover rent and bond. Having left her previous home with next to nothing, Community Choice vouchers helped her to replenish basic food staples in her new home plus a few extras. Having access to the Community Choice food voucher enabled her kids to attend school with snacks like the other kids have.
- Bethany

A father whose wife had recently passed away and who had lost his job due to the pandemic, was sleeping in his car with his teenage daughter. He had managed to find a new home but had nothing in the way of furniture or household goods to set it up. He arrived at Homestart quite distressed and after we explained how we could help him, he was just so relieved and thankful. We provided beds, fridge, washing machine, dining setting, linen packs and a kitchen pack to help them set up their house and make a fresh start. People who are in this situation find it very hard to think about what they need and we are always there to help them figure out the essential items needed. He has also now gone on to find employment.
- Encompass Homestart