

## **Volunteering Opportunities at the Jesuit Refugee Service**

Jesuit Refugee Service's (JRS) mission is to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees, people seeking asylum and forcibly displaced people.

JRS supports more than 3,800 people per year through our Centre in Westmead and Women's Space in Parramatta. Our programs include: specialist casework support, employment support, food bank, emergency relief, English classes, legal surgeries, community activities such as gardening, youth group, cooking together, yoga, etc and a women's only space to support women seeking protection survivors or at risk of SGBV. During the COVID -19 crisis many of the people we support have lost their jobs in the casual sector and are not able to secure food, buy life-saving medicines or pay the rent. Many are in a situation of hunger and destitution. People seeking protection and migrants in vulnerable situations have been excluded from JobKeeper and JobSeeker and therefore don't get government support and are relying on charities such as JRS. Demand for JRS' services has increased by more than 224% and we are directly providing food to around 800 people per week with the help of amazing volunteers.

We have several volunteer roles involved in supporting our food bank and food deliveries:

### **Delivery Drivers:**

If you have access to a vehicle then one option is to help us as a volunteer delivery driver. The process involves collecting pre-packaged food parcels from Westmead and a list of drop-off points for the day. Each driver will make approximately 10 - 15 deliveries per day in one area. Delivery days are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during business hours. We have developed a protocol to ensure no contact is made with clients during delivery in order to reduce risk.

### **Food Collection:**

A second option if you have access to a vehicle is food collection. Each week we are lucky enough to receive donated food from Foodbank NSW, Harris Farm and SecondBite, but we need volunteers to collect it for us. Foodbank NSW Collection and Harris Farm collection take place every week on Monday and Wednesday, and Second Bite Collection takes place every week on Tuesday. The food is collected from the relevant location and then delivered to our centre in Westmead.

### **Food packers:**

We also need assistance making up parcels of food to be delivered by our delivery drivers. The food packing takes place at Arrupe Place in Westmead from Monday to Thursday, and our food packing volunteers usually do half a day, either 9am - 1pm, or 1pm - 5pm.

### **Dispatch Coordinators:**

This involves being the communication point between drivers and clients. Our dispatch volunteers are given the list of deliveries for the day, the driver calls the dispatch volunteer when they have made a delivery and then the dispatch volunteer calls the client to let them know their food is outside for collection, and makes sure that they receive it.

NOTE: All volunteers are required to have a Working With Children Check from Service NSW, and at the moment we are not able to accept volunteers in any of the 'at risk' categories - those who are over 70 or have a chronic illness.

Please contact Jane Turner at [jane.turner@jrs.org.au](mailto:jane.turner@jrs.org.au) if you are interested in becoming a volunteer or for further information.