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The Solidarity Refrigerator

Thanks to the impetus of cooperators of Opus Dei, a neighborhood initiative began in Brazil to help needy people during the ongoing pandemic.

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In Campinas, Brazil, Zita Krammer had a great idea. Why not put a refrigerator next to a workshop in a poor neighborhood, which people could fill up with food on a voluntary basis, making it available for the needy?

The goal was to encourage people to bring prepared and packaged food with the expiration date clearly visible, and leave it in the refrigerator so that anyone who needs it can, without embarrassment, take it for free. A left-over oven dish, roast meat, classic Brazilian rice and beans; everything can be placed in the fridge, making it available to anyone who is truly in need.

A cooperator who attends activities at Altavila Cultural Center began this social initiative and invited other people there to help out. It went into operation in the first half of 2021, with a good-sized group of people now involved.

The COVID-19 pandemic considerably increased the number of people who had to make use of the free food. This led to the idea of also including unprepared food, with a

guarantee that the required health laws were being followed.

The proposal spread quickly among friends and in the first few months of the year approximately 800 lbs. of fresh food was delivered. Now this provision of unprepared food is one of the biggest sources for the project.

We recently placed an appeal on Instagram: *“This month we managed to get almost half a ton. Help us get more!”*

The women involved in this project give importance to small details of affection and try to foster a sense of solidarity. This is expressed in the notes placed on the refrigerator door, called “Spiritual Food”: words of encouragement, small messages from the Bible, and even “Bon appetite!”

Not only donors but also users leave messages. For example, “Today I received help, one day I want to

donate.” One day an unexpected note appeared, along with a basket with almost 45 lbs. of rice, some packets of biscuits and cans of tomato sauce: *“I have been receiving help from the Solidarity Refrigerator for months. This month my daughter got a job and we want to help out too...”*

As the months went by and the pandemic lengthened, the number of people who assist the Solidarity Refrigerator project has also grown, enabling us to reach more needy families.

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