



## Partnership with Adventists serves Christmas cheer to island's needy

Jonathan Bell

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Volunteers from Take Five Ltd. which operates Buzz and Devil's Isle, drop off donated meals for Christmas Eve at the Pembroke Seventh-Day Adventist Church for collection by community service leader Carolin Scott, (third from left). Also shown from left are Jason Berwick and Meisha Medford of Take Five, Take Five founder Holger Eiselt, his wife Hayley Williams-Eiselt and their sons Lukas and Dylan. (Photograph by Jonathan Bell)

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Hundreds of meals were served up for Christmas by a restaurant chain that hopes to make a tradition of helping others in partnership with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

Volunteers from Take Five Limited, in conjunction with the Salvation Army, delivered 500 meals on Christmas Eve at churches across the island to be distributed throughout the community.

The Hamilton Seventh-Day Adventist Church serves a Christmas Day meal annually, and 2020 is no exception: from noon to 3pm, volunteers will be giving out takeaway dinners rather than hosting guests indoors, in keeping with Covid-

19 protocols.

But the latest round of help from Take Five Limited, which has worked with the Adventists throughout the pandemic to help the island's needy, brought fresh meals to seven churches around Bermuda.

Jason Berwick, one of Take Five's chief executives, said the company had started working with the Adventist community when the lockdown began against Covid-19.

The company also supports the food charities Meals on Wheels, Daily Bread and the Eliza DoLittle Society.

Mr Berwick said: "Our executive team are all involved, and there have also been some generous private donors.

"With the amount of need created during the time of Covid, and the financial pressure on feeding centres, the numbers of people needing help have doubled and tripled.

"The ones in the community that are blessed enough to still be employed and have some financial security need to be giving this year."

Holger Eiselt, also chief executive, said the firm hoped to continue its relationships with charities in the new year.

He added: "We've made a commitment to make this a regular event through the year, and not only on this special occasion."

Carolin Scott, the community service leader at the Pembroke Seventh-Day Adventist Church on The Glebe Road, has been providing meals in the community there for 26 years.

Ms Scott, who accepted 60 meals, said the food would be taken to the needy in a variety of locations, while others would come to the church to collect.

"This is very helpful, because I don't have to cook it – I can just heat it up and serve," she said. "It's much less pressure; it's a blessing."

Marva Trott, who directs the feeding programme at the King Street church, said Mr Berwick had telephoned at the start of the pandemic to offer fresh produce from Take Five's warehouse.

She added: "I was able to go and pick out whatever I wanted to use for our feeding programme, and hand out supplies to people in need. It was overwhelming that he would allow me to just go and choose whatever I needed. I got a call a few weeks later and I was able to go again.

"I only found out last week that they wanted to provide dinners for the churches. I can't thank them enough."

Dora Baker, one of the church's community service coordinators, said the relationship with the company had been welcome assistance for Ms Trott and her team, who had been serving 200 to 250 meals twice a week during the lockdown.

Ms Baker added: "Furthermore, Jason said they would like to have special meals for major events through the year.

"They are planning to work with us in partnership, considering that we are strategically placed in every parish."

Take Five's chefs cooked and packaged the meals, which included turkey, cassava pie, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables and dessert.

Executives and staff contributed their own funds while Viking Food, Butterfield & Vallis, Bermuda Import Export, Pacheco Farms, J Harvey and J & J Produce provided food at discounted prices.

Take Five includes the Buzz Group, the Village Pantry Restaurant, Devil's Isle Restaurant and Coffee Company, and Take Five Catering.

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