

NEW TRADITION OF FEEDING HOMELESS TO CELEBRATE YOUR BIRTHDAY BEGINS IN MOSCOW DURING QUARANTINE



The number of people coming to the Hangar of Salvation, run by the Orthodox charitable foundation Mercy in Moscow, has tripled since March 20, with more than 300 people coming daily for free meals.

The Hangar has been operating since 2014, offering the homeless free meals, a place to stay during the day and to shower and wash their clothes, and to receive other necessary assistance.

And during this time of quarantine, a new tradition seems to be taking root.

It began with a girl named Ksenia who decided to celebrate her birthday by ordering a delivery of food to the Hangar for the needy, reports the Russian Church's Synodal Department for Charity and Social Service.

The idea caught on from there, and the homeless enjoyed festive meals 6 out of 7 days last week thanks to the kindness of several other Muscovites. A 10-year-old girl named Lisa used her birthday money to send her favorite, cheeseburgers, to the Hangar of Salvation. Those who enjoyed her charity were able to wish her a happy birthday via video chat.

“We’re seeing amazing care from completely different people who share a common goal: to organize a feast where it’s especially important,” commented Irina Meshkova, head of Mercy’s charity programs.

People aren’t able to gather with family and friends to celebrate their birthdays as usual now, so instead, they are bringing joy to complete strangers, Meshkova said.

“These birthday parties make life easier not just for the homeless, but also for the employees of the Hangar of Salvation, who are bearing a very heavy burden during the pandemic. Everyone’s spirits are high. And this is very important!” she continued.

More than 10,000 meals have been distributed at the Hangar of Salvation during the pandemic. The Mercy service has reorganized its projects to prioritize victims of the coronavirus and their loved ones.

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