

# A True Christmas Story Australian Renews Hope for the Elderly Residents of Ikaria Island, the Island of Longevity

*Australian George Stamas GJK Facility Services Breathes New Life into Ikaria Island, Bringing Hope Back to the Island of Longevity a true Christmas story*

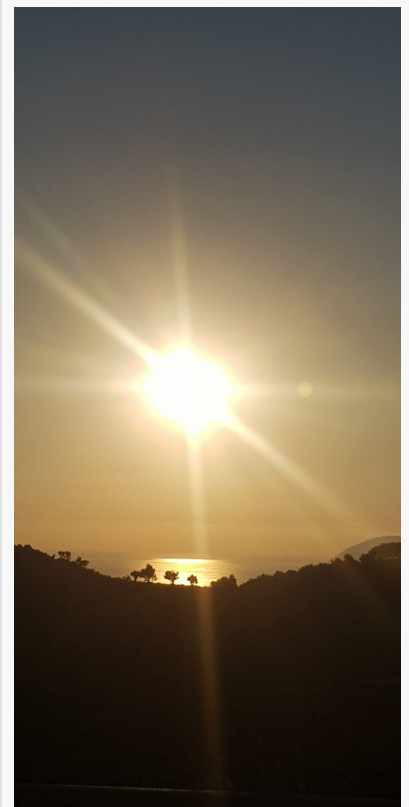
MELBOURNE, VIC, AUSTRALIA, December 12, 2023

/EINPresswire.com/ -- During the lockdown, the island's reliance on tourism had a significant impact on the residents. With tourism at a standstill, the usual flow of visitors and income abruptly ceased. Many residents relied on tourism-related jobs for their livelihoods, such as working in hotels, restaurants, or providing services to tourists. Without tourists, these employment opportunities vanished, leaving the island's residents facing financial hardships.

The sudden loss of income affected the entire community, making it difficult for people to afford basic necessities. The situation was particularly challenging for those who were already vulnerable, such as the elderly and disabled individuals. With limited financial resources, some residents struggled to make ends meet, leading to difficulties in accessing essential goods and services. Most elderly live up in the mountains in tiny old family homes without power and barely running water .

Furthermore, the absence of tourists also meant a decline in economic activity on the island. Local businesses, especially small grocery stores and shops, were hit hard as their customer base disappeared. As a result, the availability of goods and services became limited, exacerbating the challenges faced by the residents.

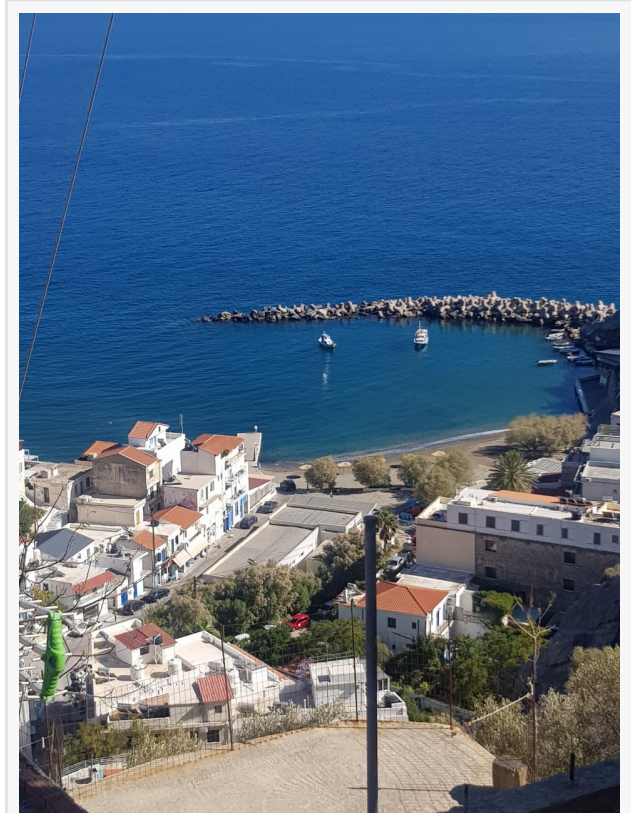
Overall, the island's reliance on tourism made the impact of the lockdown even more severe for its residents. The sudden loss of income, limited access to essential goods and services, and the strain on infrastructure created significant challenges for the community. However, it was in the face of these challenges that the residents came together asking for help through overseas relatives and succeeded.



Ikaria magical sunsets  
Island of longevity

In the midst of the global pandemic, when the world came to a halt and communities were left grappling with the challenges of COVID-19, a remote island in the blue zone became a beacon of hope for its elderly population. With no access to pensions, COVID payments, or assistance, the residents of this tiny island faced unprecedented difficulties. Struggling with limited medical facilities and the absence of doctors, they were left isolated and vulnerable. However, amidst the darkness, a heartwarming story emerged of a community coming together to support their elderly neighbours in their time of need.

The island, tucked away high up in the mountains, boasts the highest population of individuals over the age of 80. Many have never left the island, unaware of what lies beyond their humble homes. With no regular access to doctors, a weekly visit from a general practitioner was their only source of medical care. However, even this lifeline was often disrupted due to COVID restrictions or the doctor falling ill.



Icaria Island of longevity

When a relative living on the island shared the plight of the elderly residents with George Stamas GJK Facility Services and his wife they knew they had to act. They had a plan together along with a group of other younger locals who had cars, devised a plan to provide essential supplies to those in need. Through the local supermarket, shopping bags filled with groceries that could last for weeks were packed and distributed across the island.

Over the course of 2 weeks, these 4 compassionate men, aged between 30 and 50, embarked on a mission to check on the welfare of the elderly residents and deliver much-needed supplies. Their cars were filled to the brim fuel and with boxes and bags of groceries, containing flour, freshwater bottles, sugar, salt, chicken fresh meat, pasta, rice, coffee, milk, vegetables, and fruit and dried biscuits and bread. As they knocked on doors and entered the homes of the elderly, a mix of emotions greeted them.

The residents' faces reflected a range of emotions - gratitude, appreciation, despair, and hope. Some were eager to thank these anonymous benefactors, while others were simply happy to have their photo taken as a testament to this act of kindness. Approximately 150 boxes were delivered, providing not only sustenance but also a glimmer of hope to those who had been left feeling forgotten and isolated during the lockdown in the rugged mountains.

In addition to the food supplies, the group also handed financial assistance to those in desperate

need. Some residents had their electricity and utilities cut off, adding to their already challenging circumstances. A sum of €200 was given to help alleviate their immediate financial burdens. The hugs and kisses exchanged between the young men and the elderly residents were filled with gratitude and served as a reminder of the power of selflessness and empathy.

Every Sunday for weeks George Stamas paid the local bakeries to supply free bread and pastries on Sundays at the local church and be distributed by these brave men, where people would pray for this pandemic to leave their island. Everyone wanted to know who George Stamas was on this tiny island and thank him. Medical masks and sanitiser were ordered through Amazon UK and delivered to the locals and also the small hospital where people waited for the doctor to arrive.

These acts of kindness were made possible by the efforts of a Greek Australian George Stamas and his wife (GJK Facility Services cleaning company) living in Australia, who coordinated the initiative through relatives residing on the island. The impact of their collective actions was profound, transforming the island into a place of hope and restoring faith in humanity. The residents hailed the orchestrator of his support as a saint, recognising the immeasurable hope that can be instilled in others through simple acts of kindness and genuine concern for one another.

The story of this tiny island's solidarity during the lockdown serves as a powerful reminder that even in the midst of darkness, a glimmer of hope can emerge when communities come together. The selfless actions of the young men who distributed essential supplies and financial assistance to the elderly residents showcased the profound impact that a small group of individuals can have on a community. Their acts of kindness and empathy not only provided tangible support but also reignited a sense of hope and resilience among those who had felt isolated and forgotten. In a world yearning for positive news, this story serves as a testament to the power of compassion and the strength of community bonds.

Ikaria is a beautiful Greek island located in the Aegean Sea. It is known for its stunning natural landscapes, crystal-clear waters, and rich cultural heritage. The island is named after Icarus, the mythical figure from Greek mythology.

Ikaria is famous for its laid-back and relaxed lifestyle, which has earned it the reputation of being one of the world's "Blue Zones." Blue Zones are regions where people live longer and healthier lives. The locals of Ikaria attribute their longevity to a combination of factors, including a healthy



Volunteers hold signs of thank you to George Stamas with first delivery packed bags of groceries ready to take to the mountains for the elderly donated by GJK Cleaning facility Services

Mediterranean diet, regular physical activity, strong social connections, and an stress-free lifestyle. Living to 100 is commonplace on Ikaria, and one in three inhabitants lives past the age of 90. Because of this, the island is considered a world “blue-zone”—a designation for places of exceptional longevity, and one of only four across the globe. Ikaria Has 8000 permanent residents living on its island .

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