For Nelson Mandela Day

US importer of South African citrus donates service and citrus

AMC North America, part of the AMC Group, is one of four major importers of South African citrus during the summer months, when the domestic crop is not available. AMC imports fresh arrivals of navel oranges, Clementines and mandarins, as well as specialty varieties such as Cara Cara oranges and Midknight valencias from June to October. The citrus is grown by farmers who are committed to reinvesting in their communities. Many of whom participate in Harvest for Hope that allows farm families to become shareholders in the farms and packing houses where they work. The program also allows for education for their children, childcare and healthcare for the families.

From left to right: Gavin Pearce, Julieann Horner, Stephanie Cavallo, Jennifer Poulson, Casey Ison, Greg Ogiba and Joey Barrett, all from AMC North America

In the spirit of the South African growers, and in collaboration with Nelson Mandela day, the team at AMC North America wanted to take action a little closer to home. They partnered with Cathedral Kitchen, in Camden NJ to spend a morning of service and donation to help feed the hungry.

“It is in your hands to create a better world for all who live in it.” ~ Nelson Mandela

Cathedral Kitchen is the largest food provider in Camden, where the poverty rate exceeds 40%. Their mission is “we use food to change lives” and the team at AMC was there to witness first hand their mission in action on the morning of July 18th, 2017.

With 67 cases of Navel Oranges to donate, in honor of Mandela’s 67 years of service, the team packed their SUVs and pulled up to the Cathedral Kitchen ready to work. They quickly unloaded the four vehicles full of fresh, sweet oranges, generously donated by AMC’s growing partner Goede Hoope Citrus from Citrusdal, South Africa. Once the fruit was unloaded, it was time to get to work! The group was given a tour by Alex Wills, Community Relations Director. The tour included a behind the scenes peak at how this amazing operation works diligently to feed between 300-500 people every day.

“We are the first “green” soup kitchen in America, founded by three 20-year olds who just wanted to feed the hungry after hearing Mother Teresa speak” Alex Wills, Community Relations Director, Cathedral Kitchen.

Once the tour concluded, Alex was quick to put the folks from AMC to work. With Gavin Pearce, CEO of AMC Americas hard at work in the kitchen and Casey Ison, Director of Sales busy constructing peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in the dining room, the team was hard at work and happy to be participating in such a wonderful way to give back to the local community. Not five miles away on the Delaware River, the third vessel from South Africa was busy unloading nearly 5,000 pallets of citrus to go out to grocery retailers across North America. But the most important delivery was the oranges that went to Cathedral Kitchen to help feed those in need.

The AMC Team posing with the South African navel orange donation

“We are pleased to be able to partner with Cathedral Kitchen today in honor of Nelson Mandela day. It is important to AMC and our entire team to keep a spirit of service and giving back to the community. Today was a beautiful experience that our team will be able to learn from and reflect on for years to come.” ~ Casey Ison, Director of Sales, AMC North America

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