



OF THE
YEAR
AWARDS

National Association of Letter Carriers
Washington, DC

Wednesday, March 25, 2026



NALC

**National Association
of Letter Carriers**

BRIAN L. RENFROE President

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The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) proudly represents more than 290,000 active and retired letter carriers. Our members are dedicated public servants who devote their working lives to serving their communities. Our essential work touches every part of the country, and our customers rely on our affordable and dependable service for their medications, checks, ballots, packages and other essential mail. We are proud of this work that keeps America connected.

Serving our communities does not stop at delivering the mail. Letter carriers are the eyes and ears of every community nationwide. They know their routes and their customers and are often the first to notice something is wrong. They spot fires, keep an eye on the elderly and homebound, and even save lives.

Our commitment to community service exceeds our routes. Every year, NALC hosts the largest one-day food drive in the country, collecting tens of millions of pounds of food, restocking food banks, and helping families put food on their tables nationwide.

Our members also hold fundraisers across the country for our official charity, the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Last year, NALC raised more than one million dollars for this important cause.

This booklet features stories of letter carriers' bravery and commitment to community service over the past year. This is just a sampling of some of the countless ways letter carriers have given back.

I hope you enjoy these inspiring stories and gain a better understanding of the dedicated people who deliver America's mail every day.

Sincerely,



Brian L. Renfro
President, National Association of Letter Carriers

The NALC represents 280,000 active and retired letter carriers of the U.S. Postal Service in all 50 states and U.S. jurisdictions.

Affiliated with the AFL-CIO & UNI Global Union

NATIONAL HERO

CHRISTOPHER PEREZ

WESTCHESTER, NY MERGED BRANCH 693

Christopher Perez, a four-year letter carrier, had just finished one section of his route in Yorktown Heights, NY, on March 28 when he saw a white plume of smoke coming from an area he had just delivered to. At first, the Westchester Merged Branch 693 letter carrier thought that maybe someone was putting leaves in a fire pit, but when the smoke turned black, he realized that burning leaves is not allowed in this development.

He got in his truck and drove back to the area, where he saw several neighbors gathered. This was a 55-plus senior community, so they had canes and walkers and were unable to do much when it came to the fire.

Perez first ran around the four-unit building, knocking on everyone's doors to make sure that they knew about the fire and were getting out. No one came out of one of the units, but he knew, or thought he knew, that the customer who owned the unit normally went to Florida in the winter. But the neighbors informed him that they had seen a man in the unit. Perez walked to the back of the building and saw the man come out onto the second-floor balcony in the back of the house.

"I'm telling the gentleman, 'Hey, I don't know if you know, but the house is on fire. You need to get out of the house,'" Perez recounted. "He looked at me and goes, 'Oh, I gotta get my keys and my phone.' And I'm like, 'OK, you better hurry up. You better hurry up. Come on, get out of the house.'"

Within minutes, the house was starting to go up in flames. "So, now I'm getting pretty antsy," Perez said. "I'm like, 'Dude, you really gotta get

out of there, sir.' He kept saying that he can't find his keys. He kept continuing to go in and out of the house. I'm thinking, 'You know what? I'm going to go to the front door, kick in the door and bring him out, and that'll be the end of the story.'"

Little did Perez know that he wouldn't be able to get within 20 feet of the front door because it was covered in flames. "At the time, I had a big beard that went down to, like, the middle of my chest," he said, "and when I ran to the front where the fire was at, it literally curled my beard on my face. Now that plan is completely out, because there's no way I'm running through a door that's completely engulfed in flames."



Christopher Perez

Firefighters inspect the damage caused by the fire at a house on Perez's route.



The carrier kept his cool and figured out his next steps.

“The flames at this time were at least 20 feet high,” Perez recalled. “I’m like, ‘My God, this guy’s not going to be able to get out, and the only way he’s going to be able to get out is if he jumps.’ ”

He continued: “So, I run to the back, and I’m like, ‘Sir, listen, there’s no way you can get out this front door. Can you please jump? If you jump, I’ll catch you somehow. We’re both going to get hurt, but I can guarantee you that’s probably going to be the best-case scenario, because you will die if you stay in this house.’ He was like, ‘No, I’m not jumping.’ ”

The man was in his 50s, and Perez remembered him saying that he couldn’t “afford” to jump due to the possible effects it could have on his body. Despite the man’s refusal to comply, Perez knew he had to do something.

“It was like a fight-or-flight situation, and I chose to fight,” Perez said.

He decided to move his truck underneath the balcony. He climbed up on the hood, then on the roof, then climbed over the banister. He made his way into the house and found the man in the kitchen, still looking for his keys and phone.

“I was like, ‘Forget about your keys and your phone. That’s replaceable, but you are not,’ ” Perez said. “Then, I dragged him and pulled him out the

door. He did not want to put his leg over the banister. I don’t blame him when you’re at a certain age—you’re not trying to go over no banister—but at that point, I’m like, ‘Dude, it’s do or die now. We’ve got to go.’ ”

To urge him to jump, Perez said, “ ‘I have a family, and I’ve got to make it home to them, and there’s no way that I can go home to my family and say that I left you behind. So, we both have to go,’ and he just looked me in my eye and said, ‘Fine.’ ”

Finally agreeing to leave the building, the man let Perez help him over the banister and onto the truck.

Although the building was severely damaged, none of the residents sustained any serious injuries. After being demolished, the building is now in the process of being rebuilt.

Perez often helps out elderly customers in need on his route. On one occasion he performed CPR, bringing back his customer. Even as Perez was being interviewed by *The Postal Record* about the fire story, a customer with dementia suddenly collapsed in the street.

“I put him on my back, and I piggy-backed him up the little flight of stairs in the front of his house then brought him into his wife,” Perez said.

The carrier has received some media attention for his actions, but he’s brushed off any praise. “I feel like it’s something that anyone would do, you know?” he told News 12 New York.

EASTERN REGION

KYLE QUILLEN

CAMDEN, NJ MERGED BRANCH 540

On April 23, Kyle Quillen, a one-year letter carrier, was on his route in Cherry Hill, NJ, turning from one street to the next when he smelled smoke.

When the Camden Merged Branch 540 member turned his head back, he said he saw “a plume of smoke coming from the house.” Quillen called 911 and ran back to the house, which he had delivered to earlier, and saw that it was now engulfed in flames. He knocked on the door, then turned to knock on the neighbors’ doors—but as he turned the corner, he saw a woman, a baby and a dog all on the side porch. The woman was “petrified” by the fire when he found her, the carrier added.

“I ask her just to hand off the baby to me, but she’s worried about the dog getting loose, so I grab the dog [with a makeshift leash made out of his Arrow Key chain], I bring him out and I give him off to a neighbor,” Quillen

said. “Now she [the woman] is in the back yard trying to go out through the back gate, but the fire’s moving pretty quick. So, as I made contact with her, I grabbed the baby and tucked him into my shoulder, and we ran past the fire, and I got them both out of the back yard, past the fire of the house.”

About two minutes after Quillen helped everyone out, the fire department arrived. Firefighters were able to put out the two-alarm fire, but the house has been razed and has been vacant since. The woman and child were checked out for smoke inhalation at a nearby hospital.

After talking to the fire officials, Quillen went on with the rest of his route.

“I was just completely happy that the only thing that was lost was the house, and nobody’s life was lost,” Quillen said. “Nobody lost their pet. It was a good feeling.”



Camden, NJ Merged Branch 540 member Kyle Quillen speaks to a local TV news station about how he helped a family escape a house fire on his route.

CENTRAL REGION

SYDNEY BILLINGSLEY

DAYTON, OH BRANCH 182



Sydney Billingsley

Sydney Billingsley, a Dayton, OH Branch 182 member, was delivering her route on June 28 when she heard a man screaming for help along with dogs barking. Initially, the four-year letter carrier was unsure whether she was hearing correctly, but quickly realized she was, so she approached the house. She asked the man whether there were any dangerous dogs, and he said there were not.

When she entered the house, she found him lying in a pool of blood, having been shot eight times.

“I used to be a firefighter, so I’m no stranger to danger,” Billingsley said. “It was just an instinct. I just saw a man call for help, and I have some medical experience.”

She called 911 and used towels she found in the house to apply pressure to his wounds.

“I was lying across this man’s body,” Billingsley said. “I had my right arm over the top few wounds ... and then I

had my left hand pressing on his left thigh.”

The ambulance came in about five to 10 minutes, while the carrier stayed on the phone with the 911 operator and asked the man questions.

“I knew exactly what to do: put pressure, keep him conscious and talk to 911 thoroughly,” Billingsley said.

The man survived the shooting, but after being released from the hospital, he was taken to rehab due to the loss of feeling in his legs.

“The person who heard the male calling for help and ultimately called 911 likely saved the victim’s life by getting him the medical attention he needed in a timely manner,” Dayton Police Sgt. Andrew Zecchini told the *Dayton Daily News*.

The Dayton police investigation led them to a suspect who, as of July 11, was facing two counts of felonious assault and one count of aggravated robbery.

WESTERN REGION

JAIRO LOPEZ

OKLAHOMA CITY BRANCH 458

Hheavy smoke coming from a customer's trailer windows and loud smoke alarms alerted **Jairo Lopez** of a possible fire as he was working his Midwest City, OK, route on March 13. The Oklahoma City Branch 458 member had worked on his current route for about two years and knew that an elderly woman who was deaf lived there and that she wouldn't have been able to hear the alarms.

The eight-year letter carrier knocked on the door and tried to open it along with the windows, but it was to no avail. So, he searched for help.

"I drove around to the other street where I had seen some maintenance workers," Lopez said. "I notified a maintenance worker, and he drove with me back to the lady's house."

The maintenance worker had a spare key to the woman's home, so they went into the trailer together.

They found the woman toward the back of the trailer. She was unaware of the fire, because she didn't hear the alarms or see a sign of the fire and when Lopez reached her she was "unconscious or asleep." Lopez said, "We took her out," explaining that they lifted her "shoulder to shoulder" and carried her outside.

The fire was minor and resulted from a faulty wire in the oven. It was contained in time, leaving only smoke damage. The woman was fine afterward and hadn't sustained any injuries. Lopez has seen the customer on several occasions since, and she often greets him when he is delivering mail.

Lopez never told anyone about the incident. His actions became known only after the property manager informed the post office about the carrier's good deeds. "If I can help out, I'll help out," he said. "I'm not really a person that likes attention."



Jairo Lopez

HUMANITARIAN

MEAGAN MURRAY

WATERLOO, IA BRANCH 512



Meagan Murray

In late September 2024, Meagan Murray, a carrier in New Hampton, IA, drove up to where she was going to park to start her next loop, but as soon as she pulled in, the Waterloo Branch 512 member saw smoke coming from a house. She called 911 and started walking to the door. Knowing that an elderly woman lived in the house and usually was home at that time of day, Murray banged on the doors trying “to see if she was in there, even,” she said.

She tried multiple doors and there was no answer, so the carrier moved onto windows. At this point Murray said, “smoke was, like, really coming out all through the roof and the foundation.” She knocked on a few windows, then she said she “tried one more time and then the lady finally knocked back from the inside in the window.”

She went to the doors to see if she could open them, but they were all locked.

“I have no idea if it was adrenaline or what, but I just was, like, banging on the door, like, wiggling the door-knob as much as I could,” Murray, a three-year letter carrier, said. “Jerking it, pushing it. I don’t know if it was God or what, but I got it.”

Murray walked into the smoke-filled

house and spotted the soot-covered resident. The carrier reached out to the woman, and helped her out of the house to safety, comforting her until her family arrived.

As it turns out, the homeowner had just returned home from an errand and started the stove. A few minutes later, she heard a “pop” in the basement and then started to smell and see smoke. She couldn’t get the door between the kitchen and garage open, so she instead made her way to the living-room door. She had begun banging on the window when she spotted Murray.

A fire department investigation found that the electrical cord of a dehumidifier in the basement was likely the source of the fire, so luckily the resident wasn’t touched by flames. The letter carrier has seen the resident since, and she seemed OK.

“If you drive by the house, you wouldn’t think anything had happened,” the fire chief told the *New Hampton Tribune*, “but there’s pretty serious damage. If you think about it, when you have a fire in a basement, it’s going to cause damage to the floor joists for the first floor.”

The home was deemed a total loss, but the resident is still living in the same neighborhood while she waits for it to be rebuilt.

HONORABLE ACT

ALEXANDER SKOMRA

BUFFALO-WESTERN NEW YORK BRANCH 3

Over the summer, Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **Alexander Skomra** had visited Philadelphia, PA, and happened upon a fire station that was giving away free Narcan, a medicine that reverses an opioid overdose. Thinking that he would never know when it might come in handy, the carrier picked up some. On Oct. 15, only his third day carrying mail alone, his decision ended up saving a customer's life.

Skomra had missed a delivery and went back to put it in the mailbox when a man came up to him asking if he happened to have Narcan. Remembering the Narcan he had in his bag,

Skomra retrieved it from his truck.

They went to the living room of the apartment where a woman appeared to be overdosing. When Skomra arrived, the woman was making “this awful breathing noise,” he said. Skomra administered the Narcan to the woman by nose.

“Within a couple minutes, she was fine,” Skomra said. “She, like, came around and could answer questions and stuff. Before that, you could just see her eyes moving.

“I was glad I was there,” Skomra said. “I should have already had left that area. It was kind of weird that it happened in a way for me to be able to be there to help.”



Alexander Skomra

HONORABLE ACT

TIFFANY MCCARTY

WICHITA, KS BRANCH 201



Tiffany McCarty, a two-year letter carrier in Wichita, KS, was delivering mail on Feb. 26 at 10 a.m. when a young woman suddenly ran across the street toward her. She yelled to the Branch 201 letter carrier, “He’s going to kill me!” and asked her to call 911.

“She was so scared and crying,” McCarty said. “She was hysterical. ... She was only 21. ... I felt like I had to do something right then.”

To hide her, McCarty had her sit on her LLV steps, which were facing away from the house she had run out of. As McCarty was calling 911, she saw the man whom the young woman was running from emerge from a nearby house. He had a gun raised just enough for McCarty to see it. After spotting the gun, McCarty crouched down on the floor of the LLV between a tray and her seat. The man looked around, seeing the mail truck, but did not notice her, so he went back inside the home.

“I was scared for her. I’m a mom, so I

can only imagine [her] being one of my daughters,” McCarty said. She added that she didn’t feel scared for herself and felt as if she was “a bulletproof vest for [the young woman].”

An emergency response team arrived in about 10 to 15 minutes. After McCarty spoke with them, she returned to her route.

Following the incident, she was still delivering mail to the assailant’s house, which made her worry something would happen to her on her route.

“I was nervous for the simple fact that I was still on that route, and I wasn’t sure if he would find out that the postal worker said something, you know?” McCarty said.

A few days after the incident, McCarty found out from a police report that the man had been arrested for aggravated robbery. He had stolen toiletries, a charger, a debit card and a few other items from the young woman. McCarty is unsure of what has become of the assailant, but she is now working at a different station.

THE VIGILANT AWARD

THEODORE MAY

BUFFALO-WESTERN NEW YORK BRANCH 3

Theodore May was walking his route on Oct. 21 when the Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member came across a child walking down the middle of a side street near the busy Main Street in Buffalo. The carrier had just gotten out of his truck when the boy's cries coming from the street alerted him that something was amiss.

"I was shocked," the three-year letter carrier recalled. "You see a 3-year-old, you're not thinking he's unsupervised. ... It was just him in the road ... so I was kind of in shock for a minute."

May knew there was a day care facility about half a mile away because

it is part of his delivery route. May stayed with the child while a nearby resident called the business. The day care was unaware of the boy being missing, although May estimated that he had been gone for at least 10 minutes.

Concerned about the day care's loss of the boy, May reported the day care to the Office of Children and Family Services, the agency responsible for child care in New York state. "I just want to make sure this doesn't happen again to a kid," May said.

Reflecting on the incident, May remembered that there wasn't anyone around, saying, "If it weren't for me, he probably would have been gone."



THE VIGILANT AWARD

RAFAEL POZO

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL BRANCH 2810



Rafael Pozo (above) alerted residents near a burning garbage truck (below) minutes before the truck exploded.

Smoke coming from a garbage truck alerted Arlington Heights, IL Branch 2810 member **Rafael Pozo** of a fire as he was delivering his route on the afternoon of Dec. 6, 2024. The 13-year letter carrier saw the driver get out of the truck and attempt to put out the flames with a small fire extinguisher, but the fire had already reached about 15 feet high, so it was of little use.

After making sure that the driver was all right, Pozo called 911. Worried about the children who were leaving school for the day and going onto the residential street where the fire was raging, Pozo warned students and administrators.

Within minutes, firefighters arrived. They had only started setting up to fight the fire when the blaze reached the compressed natural gas the truck ran on, causing it to explode. Shrapnel flew everywhere, injuring three of the emergency responders, including a firefighter whose leg was hit with shrapnel.

“Those guys are the heroes in this situation,” Pozo said of the emergency responders.

One teacher was about to drive up to her house when Pozo warned her, and she was able to avoid the shrapnel from the explosion.

“She would have been standing in her living room when the truck exploded,” Pozo said. “Shrapnel flew through her living room window, destroying the interior of her house. She says that I saved her life.”

The shock wave from the explosion caused substantial property damage in the immediate area. Sections of roof and siding were blown off onto nearby houses and windows were shattered. Parts of the truck were found several blocks away.

Although Pozo was far enough away from the explosion to avoid getting hit with shrapnel, he said, “My ears were definitely ringing for a couple of days after that,” due to the extremely loud noise that came with the explosion.

This wasn’t the last time this happened. Exactly six months later, on June 6 around the same time of day and in the same part of his route, Pozo again called 911 about a garbage truck that was on fire. There were hundreds of kids outside for their end-of-the-school-year party. Pozo described the situation as being a lot “scariest,” so he made sure to warn them of the fire.

“If that thing blows up, you’re talking about dozens of kids getting hurt,” he said. “I was worried that it was going to fall on one of the kids.”

This time the truck driver avoided the explosion by dumping the truck load onto the pavement, preventing the fire from reaching the natural gas.

The fire department determined that the fires had been caused by a lithium battery, which are not supposed to be disposed of in the regular pickup due to their tendency to ignite if damaged or crushed.





Lawrence's Lens



STRONGER TOGETHER

Top: Rockford, IL Branch 245
Below: San Juan, PR Branch 869



On Saturday, May 10, letter carriers across the country delivered more than the mail—they delivered hope by participating in the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive. The second Saturday in May has become a red-letter day for the food banks and pantries that feed millions of Americans who aren't sure where their next meal will come from.

Since the first drive in 1993, the food drive has collected approximately 1.94 billion pounds of food for those in need. With 69 percent of branches reporting, this year's drive collected 39,876,782 pounds of food and cash donations of \$873,711.40 for an overall total of 47,244,858 pounds of food added to the previous year's total.

The food drive is a simple idea brought to life. Letter carriers, with the help of postal employees in other crafts, managers, family, friends and volunteers, collect bags of nonperishable food placed near their mailboxes by residents and then deliver the nourishment to food banks and pantries in the local area.

"In just one day, letter carriers collected tens of millions of pounds of food for hungry people in their communities. It's an incredible example of how strong we can be when we all work together," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. "I couldn't be prouder of the carriers, retirees and volunteers who made this food drive a success."

About 1 in 5 Americans, including millions of children, senior citizens and veterans, are unsure where their next meal will come from. The Stamp Out Hunger food drive is held in 10,000 cities and towns across the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. It's the largest single-day food drive in the country. All food collected in a community helps local residents in that community.



Top I: Cape Atlantic, NJ Branch 903
 Above: Columbia, MO Branch 763
 Below: Montgomery, AL Branch 106
 Bottom: Monterey, CA Branch 1310

The May food drive helps to relieve shortages of food that food pantries experience in spring after the winter's holiday donations have been depleted. And when summer arrives, most school meal programs are not available, so the need for food grows.

The annual food drive wouldn't be possible without the support of NALC's national partners: the U.S. Postal Service, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, RR Donnelley, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO, Valpak, Kellanova and CVS Health. These partners help through such actions as paying for specially marked postcards, donating thousands of pounds of food and thousands of dollars to food pantries, donating bags that letter carriers distribute to customers, gathering volunteers, or getting out the message about the food drive.

Letter carriers and the beneficiaries of the food drive—food banks and the communities that rely on them—expressed their appreciation through local media outlets in communities from coast to coast.

"I've done this for several years now; it's been many, many years that I've done this, and every year, I am excited to do it," Albuquerque, NM Branch 504 carrier **Mo Molina** told KOAT-TV, the local ABC affiliate. "Just filling up the truck with food and driving back to the station, and we have food in the back, and we have all these volunteers unloading the food, and knowing that everybody should be doing something good, but today we're going to do something great."

"It's a fantastic way for people to donate," Kyle Peck, development coordinator of the Idaho Food Bank, told the local NBC affiliate.

"As we see bags hanging on the mailbox or see bags on the ground, we stop and we pick them up and then eventually we'll take them to their destination," Panama City, FL Branch 3367 carrier **Jeff Lange** told WMBB-TV, the local ABC affiliate. "All the food that we pick up and the wonderful community donations all go back to our own people in our own community. So, eventually, we're just helping ourselves out or helping each other out the way a good neighborhood should."

"Typically, this time of year, most food banks are struggling for donations. So, it's a real big help for all the [non]perishable items between dog food, napkins, just everyday things that are essential for just survival of people," Branch 3367's **Jared Jones** told WMBB-TV.

"It's important, because you always want to help the needy, the people who don't have things this summer," Hattiesburg, MS Branch 938 carrier **Dennis Mitchell** told WDAM-TV, an NBC/ABC affiliate. This year, the food donated by Branch 938 went to Christian Services, Inc.; Edwards Street Fellowship Center; Salvation Army of Hattiesburg and the Petal Children's Task Force, who were all appreciative.

"It's hard times right now," Ann McCullen, Edwards Street Fellowship Center executive director, said in the same news report. "We are serving a record number of people at



Top 33 branches by size category *

Category 1 (2,000 or more members)

Los Angeles, CA Br. 24	1,079,300
New Jersey Mgd. Br. 38	768,000
Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100	705,000

Category 2 (1,500-1,999 members)

San Antonio, TX Br. 421	618,847
Central Florida Br. 1091	535,149
Buffalo-Western NY Br. 3	425,925

Category 3 (1,000-1,499 members)

Tampa, FL Br. 599	1,894,068
W. Coast Florida Br. 1477	1,058,483
Toledo, OH Br. 100	254,402

Category 4 (700-999 members)

Oklahoma City, OK Br. 458	1,462,476
Clearwater, FL Br. 2008	1,398,775
San Juan, PR Br. 869	451,000

Category 5 (500-699 members)

Ponce, PR Br. 826	572,304
N. Oakland Co., MI Br. 320	206,024
Lexington, KY Br. 361	165,970

Category 6 (350-499 members)

Southwestern MI Br. 246	310,459
Spacecoast Florida Br. 2689	223,060
Lakeland, FL Br. 1779	205,345

Category 7 (200-349 members)

Columbia, MO Br. 763	486,950
Vancouver, WA Br. 1104	195,453
Green Bay, WI Br. 619	155,428

Category 8 (100-199 members)

Southern Delaware Br. 906	339,491
Billings, MT Br. 815	285,330
Panama City, FL Br. 3367	185,000

Category 9 (50-99 members)

Aiea-Pearl City, HI Br. 4682	492,978
Butte, MT Br. 621	268,645
Ocala, FL Br. 1103	85,749

Category 10 (26-49 members)

New City, NY Br. 5229	62,382
Staunton, VA Br. 513	49,177
Rochester, NH Br. 990	32,000

Category 11 (1-25 members)

Conway, AR Br. 1592	20,000
American Fork, UT Br. 2609	15,209
Springville, UT Br. 2821	14,588

*Awards are subject to change as more branches report their totals.



the Edwards Street food pantry, and all the agencies say that they are seeing more and more new faces all the time. “So, it’s just great that our community gives back and that they care super deeply about every person that is in our community.”

“We are starting to head into that time of the year when school is out and there are a lot of families who need a little bit of extra help, as school lunches and other supports start to tick down during the summer months,” Blake Willadsen of the Des Moines Area Religious Council’s food pantry network in Iowa told the local CBS affiliate. He explained the ease of the Stamp Out Hunger drive. “You’re just leaving a bag of some nice grocery items at your doorstep. It’s going to help out some families here in the Des Moines metro area.”

“Last year we collected over 800,000 pounds of food,” Aiea-Pearl City, HI Branch 4682 carrier **Adele Yoshikawa** told KITV4 Island News, an ABC affiliate, on the day of the drive. “So, our goal, and I say this before I retire, is to collect 1 million pounds of food. And just looking at the volume we are looking at right now, we are going to do it, I know we will.”

Branch 4682 worked with the Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO to distribute the food.

“We have over 200 volunteers trying to get the food bank stocked. We are grateful for those in the community who give canned goods; this is just one of the ways we give back,” Randy Perreira, executive director of the employees association and presi-

dent of the Hawaii State AFL-CIO, said in the same news report.

“When kids are out of school in the summer, they don’t have access to the school meals,” Mary Jane Crouch, executive director of Second Harvest in Savannah, GA, told WTOG-TV, the local CBS affiliate. “So, what happens in the summer is the parents really struggle. You know, they don’t get a raise just because their kids are out of school, but they’ve got to make sure they have that ability to be able to feed their families.”

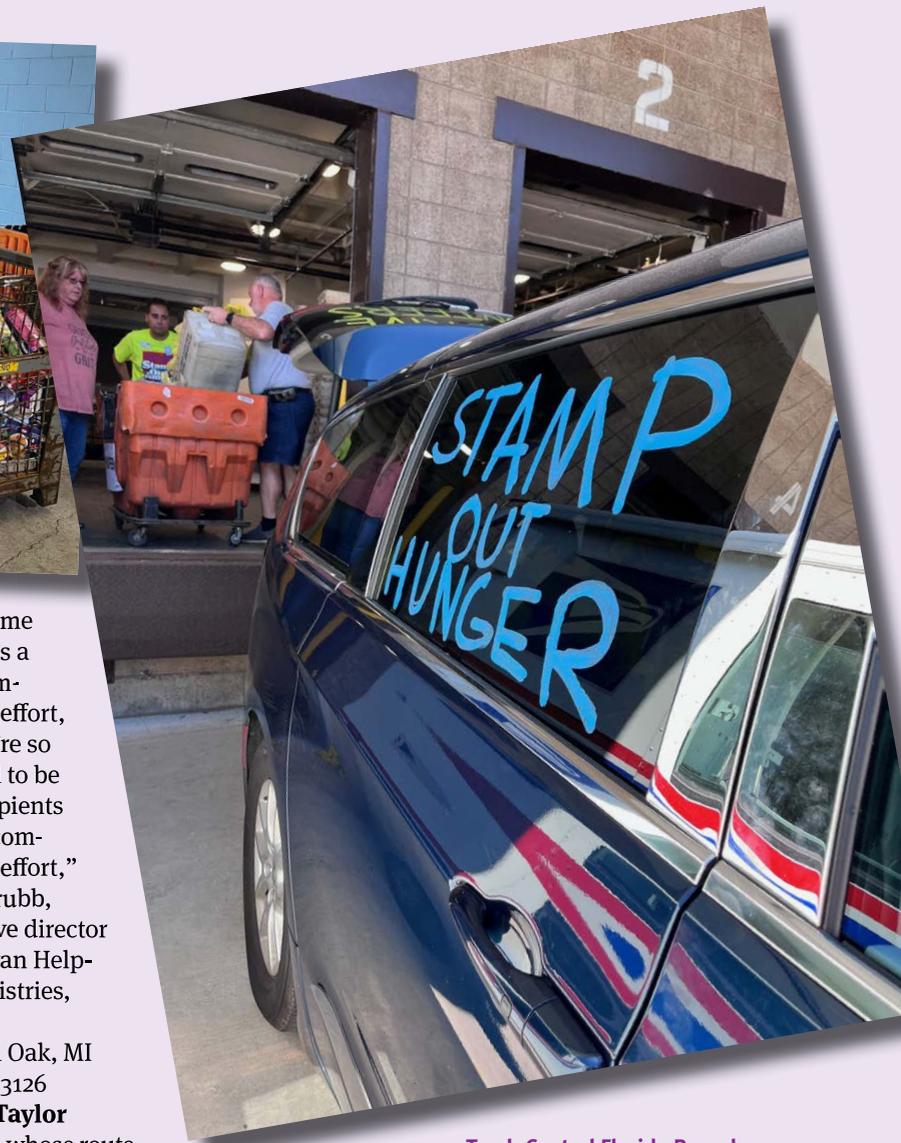
And that’s where the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive comes in, helping to provide summer meals each weekday at 85 locations.

“This food drive helps us be able to do even more. Do our mobile food pantries. Help the 240 nonprofit organizations that came to us to get food,

Top: St. Louis, MO Branch 343

Below: Spacecoast FL Branch 2689





and this is how we're able to make it happen," Crouch said.

For rural letter carrier Tracey Pinion of Commerce Township, MI, the food drive is a family affair. Pinion's 26-year-old twin daughters, Amber and Nicole, have been assisting Pinion since they were in junior high, when they needed to get volunteer hours for school.

"It's fun," Nicole Pinion told *Novi Note*. "It helps out other people and it helps out my mom."

Tracey Pinion said that the drive is so important to them that she takes part in the event every year, even on her day off. "I've known quite a few people who need help. So anytime I can help, I would like to help," she said.

"Every year, our letter carriers go above and beyond, they don't just deliver mail; they deliver hope," San Francisco, CA Branch 214 carrier **Steve Quesada** said. "The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is a powerful reminder of the compassion and dedication that defines our profession and our union."

Danny Damato, a Salisbury, NC Branch 934 carrier, told the *Salisbury Post* that he's very appreciative of everyone's help: "Seeing people like this [who] will take their time to step up and help and be able to help other people, you can't put words in it."

Officials at the food banks that Branch 934 donated to also were grateful. "We're so thankful to our local letter carriers and everyone who took part in the drive. The food collected through Stamp Out Hunger will help stock our pantry shelves at a time when need is at

an all-time high. It's a true community effort, and we're so grateful to be the recipients of this community effort," Kyna Grubb, executive director for Rowan Helping Ministries, said.

Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126 carrier **Taylor Morris**, whose route includes Fox Run Senior Living, told *Novi Note* that the senior living community contributes an "insane" amount of food. "I'm blessed to be on this route and be surrounded by people who are so caring and giving," he said. "I just love the fact that it gives us the opportunity to give back to everybody. The outpouring of love and support that everybody gives is just incredible to me every year. Usually, I'm not a big fan of working Saturdays, but this is one Saturday I don't mind coming into work for sure."

"It's always a surprise how much the community gives back every year," San Diego, CA Branch 70 carrier **Armando Real** told KFMB-TV, the local CBS affiliate. "You never know who's going to give. And just at the end of the day, when I have a full truck, it just puts a smile on my face."

Top l: Central Florida Branch 1091
Above: La Crosse, WI Branch 59
Below: Mark Morard has been the Bay City, MI Branch 187 volunteer coordinator for 32 years.



Building on our support for



NALC has remained among the strongest fundraising partners for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) for more than seven decades. Our secret weapon? The commitment and creativity of letter carriers at the branch and state association level who dream up new fundraisers or find ways to boost the effectiveness of old standbys.

“Our goal with MDA is not to sustain our fundraising each year, but to build on it,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. “To do that, we rely on letter carriers at the local level to volunteer, raise funds, and have fun in the process.”

Letter carriers’ efforts to support MDA help children and adults with neuromuscular diseases, as well as their families, who depend on MDA for medical research and support. NALC has been one of MDA’s top supporters since the charity was founded in 1950. Two years later, the union adopted MDA as its official charity and became its first national sponsor. Branches

nationwide took their commitment to MDA into their communities.

Since then, NALC branches have stepped up with fundraising events that increased our fundraising totals to millions of dollars each year. With bowlathons, golf and poker tournaments, fill-the-satchel drives and dozens of other kinds of events, branches and state associations bring donors in. Letter carriers also support MDA by volunteering at MDA Summer Camps and other events.

Carriers also rely on internet tools created when the COVID-19 pandemic forced the suspension of traditional fundraising events. Those tools were so successful that NALC kept them in place to supplement in-person fundraising.

MDA works in close collaboration with NALC to offer similar online tools so that letter carriers can focus on the fundraising, such as event websites that track donations. Branches add the details of their events and enter the RSVPs, payments and other data, which automatically go to MDA.



**Southeast Massachusetts
Merged Branch 18 members
Tom Rebello and Tom Mendonca
won the cornhole competition at
Stone Path Malt in Wareham.**



MDA can help with fundraising details as well, from tax information to assisting with donation letters to offering an MDA-branded template for publicity materials. The popular shamrock, summer camp and holiday pinups that donors can buy and display their names on a wall also are available. The charity can even arrange for a nearby MDA ambassador with muscular dystrophy to attend an event to represent the people whose lives MDA affects.

“We have the technical tools ready for you,” Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson said. “All you have to do is plan the event and get people there. This is how we’ve succeeded in building our support for MDA for so long.”

Every year, NALC recognizes the top fundraising branches. On page 27, you’ll find the MDA Honor Roll, listing branches that collected the most donations for MDA in 2024, along with the list of what each contributing branch and other offices brought in. This year, representatives from the top branches will be recognized with a trip to an MDA Summer Camp in Wisconsin.

We also bring you some highlights of the events from across the country that carriers organized to raise a total of \$1,125,912.18 for MDA last year.

“I’m so proud of what they’ve accomplished and thank them for their hard work,” Vela Davidson said. “We’re here to help them with whatever they need to support their efforts.”

An outside effort

Representing carriers in a large geographic area, Northeastern New

York Branch 358 has many carriers in several communities to work with when raising money for MDA. It’s enough to support multiple events in different places.

“Our area is huge,” Branch President **Chris Jackson** said. “We’re 260 miles long, our branch. So, we do two—we do a golf tournament up north of our branch, then we do a golf tournament down south.”

Jackson organizes one of the branch’s two golf tournaments held at different courses many miles apart. “Most of our members are towards the south, but I live up north. So, I’ve been running one up north since something along the lines of 2009,” he said. “I started out with a bowling tournament up here. Then in 2015, I went to the golf tournament.”

That tournament, in Plattsburgh, also organized by branch member **Ann Beatty**, honors “Mighty Matthew” Check, a young man with muscular dystrophy and grandson of retired Branch 358 member **Patrick Henry**. Check attended and played in the tournament, which attracted about 40 players in all.

Outside of Mechanicville, 150 miles south of Plattsburgh, the branch’s other annual golf tournament brought a record 140 golfers last year. With raffles of donated items and hole sponsors included, the two events roughly raised a combined \$17,000.

At the 73rd Biennial Convention in Boston last August, Branch 358 was recognized as the top fundraiser for its size group. Jackson said the branch takes advantage of its size and location. “We end up usually raising more money per person,” he



said, “because we’re kind of geographically isolated.”

But the branch’s success is about more. With Chech among them as a personal reminder of their impact, and another young man with muscular dystrophy who unfortunately died last year, Derek Murphy—nephew of branch MDA volunteer **Michael Curran**—the branch has embraced MDA’s mission and sponsors several other events, including a pub crawl to honor Murphy.

“It’s always been a goal of the branch to be one of the leaders at MDA,” Jackson said. “We’ve got personal stakes in it.”

Baggers compete for MDA

After a chance visit to a “baggers” venue, **Nick Langenfeld** revived a lost idea for a cornhole tournament at his branch.

A few years earlier, another member of Southeast Massachusetts Merged Branch 18 had mentioned the idea of an event involving “baggers,” as cornhole players call themselves. In cornhole, players toss beanbags at the hole in an inclined wooden platform. But the pandemic nipped the event in the bud. Then hunger jogged Langenfeld’s memory. He happened to visit Stone Path Malt in Wareham, which often hosts cornhole competitions.



“It was probably early in 2022 that I happened to go to the venue,” he said, “just to go in and grab a bite to eat and stuff. They had a tournament going on. So, I was watching the tournament and just was like, ‘Man, this looks like a lot of fun.’ And it was for a fundraiser as well.”

Langenfeld, a Branch 18 carrier for 20 years, approached the people holding the tournament and learned that using it as a fundraiser would be easy. The cornhole tournament organizers had all the equipment and technology—a scoreboard and system of iPads for each pair of cornhole boards, along with a host on a microphone to organize play. All Langenfeld had to do was pick a date, recruit players, and raise money for raffle prizes to boost the fundraiser.

Members of Northeastern New York Branch 358 play golf at the branch’s Plattsburgh golf tournament.



Langenfeld signed up enough carriers for 28 teams of baggers, each paying a small entry fee. The organizers found an additional 12 teams of regular players to fill up the remaining spaces, divided into a “postal division” and a “competitive division.” The venue space was free—Stone Path Malt provided the space to help sell food and drink.

After paying the organizers, the amount raised for MDA came to \$3,700 last year, the third year of the event. Carriers **Tom Rebello** and **Tom Mendonca** won the competition.

The best part of the event, Langenfeld said, is that anyone can play cornhole.

“We’ve done golf tournaments. We’ve had basketball games,” he said. “Not everyone can run up and down a basketball court. Not everyone has the skills to just do a golf tournament. This is something that pretty much everyone can do—all ages and all skill levels.”

Langenfeld said the event lends itself to getting non-players to attend, too, which boosts sales of raffle tickets. “We always tell the membership that even if they don’t want to participate in the tournament, they are more than welcome to come and hang out with their brothers and sisters.”

“Cornhole is a very social activity,” he added. “With teams of two, partners stand at opposite ends of the court, and you share your end of the court with one of your opponents for the duration of the match. Usually conversations start like, ‘What office are you from?’ or ‘How many years do you have in?’ and can go anywhere from there. I love seeing

the 30-year vets talking it up with the newer members.”

Rolling for dollars, '70s style

With help from carriers from across her state, Illinois State Association MDA Coordinator **Miriah McMillan** organized a roller rink fundraiser with a 1970s theme.

After selling tickets to both postal employees and the public at \$25 (\$15 for youngsters) and selling raffle tickets, the event at a rink in Summit, just outside Chicago, brought in more than \$1,500.

The “Groovy Disco Party,” as they called it, was especially popular among those who actually remember the 1970s, she said.

“Of course, there was an older crowd. You know, people were nostalgic about their childhood,” McMillan added. The event, hosted by a DJ spinning all the old-school music, included friendly skating and clothing competitions.

McMillan, a member of South Suburban Merged Branch 4016, leveraged the talents of carriers across the state to make the event a success.

It started with the idea from the former state MDA coordinator, **Hope Miles** of Chicago Branch 11.

“She came along and developed the committee of us. We were all from different branches in the state of Illinois,” McMillan said. “We came together, we delegated different tasks such as securing a venue, advertising, decoration, theme.”

The group members brought benefits like business connections in the area, which **Diana Hani-Taylor** of Oak Brook Branch 825 used to secure prizes for raffles, and **Tenisha Hart** of Melrose Park Branch 2183, who

The Illinois State Association hosted a “Groovy Disco Party” at a roller rink in Summit to raise funds for MDA.

created many prizes by hand.

“It really came together because we all played our roles and made it happen because we wanted it to be successful,” McMillan said. “Nothing was just on one person.”

McMillan is planning another skating event this year—this time with a 1980s theme. She hopes to invite an MDA ambassador to participate.

MDA’s mission

Since it was founded, MDA has used the funds raised by letter carriers to support medical research on dozens of neuromuscular diseases to develop medications and treatments that ease symptoms, some of which might extend life spans. For instance, most children with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, the most common and severe type of the disease, once died in their teens. Today, there are adults in their 40s living with Duchenne.

MDA is the nation’s largest non-profit supporter of research on neuromuscular diseases, funding hundreds of physicians and scientists in the struggle to free children, and the families who love them, from the harm caused by muscular dystrophy and by more than 40 related muscle-debilitating diseases, including amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). MDA’s efforts have contributed to numerous major advances in muscle biology and therapy development.

MDA has been involved in research into basic muscle and nerve biology since its inception, when little was known about how muscles were formed or how they functioned. Since then, thousands of published scientific papers have explained how the tissues work and what goes wrong in neuromuscular diseases,



building a knowledge base for finding treatments. MDA funding supported the research that led to the identification of the genetic causes of dozens of diseases, starting with the discovery of the dystrophin gene in 1986. This research is paying dividends as new medications and therapies are being developed.

The charity also supports children and adults with neuromuscular diseases, and their families, by improving their quality of life. One way it provides this support is by sponsoring summer camps for children. At these adaptive camps, children participate in traditional summer camp events, including swimming, arts and crafts, sports and games. Letter carriers not only help fund these camps—some carriers volunteer their time to work directly with the children.

MDA Honor Roll

“Our commitment to MDA has never stopped—it has only grown,” President Renfro said. “The potential is unlimited. Any letter carrier can organize events, volunteer or participate. We are proud of what our union has accomplished to make the lives of people affected by neuromuscular diseases better. I can’t wait to see what letter carriers accomplish together for MDA again this year!” **PR**



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