

'We are honored to be able to help our fellow citizens'

Your story (May 17) on the letter carrier from Tecumseh who was killed after helping run the letter carriers' annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive last year has received national attention – for good reason.

Reporter Jackie Koch superbly told the story of Brian Mueller, a letter carrier and father of three who had moved to Florida from Tecumseh a few years ago. He died in an accident in May of 2017 in Clearwater, Fla., after staying late to assure that all the food carriers had collected that day would be taken to local food banks.

As Koch noted, his wife, Sheila, subsequently moved back to Tecumseh, where she put out a bag of food for the recent May 12 food drive. Attached to the bag was a note explaining that the food was donated in memory of her husband.

With the help of generous Tecumseh residents, letter carriers collected two-and-a-half truckloads of food to

help local food banks meet the need over the summer months, when school meal programs aren't available.

Held the second Saturday every May, the letter carriers' effort is the nation's largest one-day food drive. Over its first quarter-century, letter carriers collected 1.6 billion pounds of food to replenish local pantries, church shelves and shelters. We're awaiting this year's total.

Because letter carriers are in every neighborhood across the country six and even seven days a week, delivering to 156 million addresses daily, we see personally the needs in communities. One in six Americans – including millions of children, senior citizens and veterans – faces issues of hunger.

We are honored to be able to help our fellow citizens.

More broadly, the U.S. Postal Service, which is based in the Constitution,

handles an astonishing 47 percent of the world's mail while providing Americans and their businesses with the most-affordable delivery network anywhere. It's the center of civic life in small towns and rural areas throughout the country. The Postal Service operates with earned revenue – not taxpayer money. USPS is the centerpiece of the \$1.4 trillion national mailing industry, which employs 7 million Americans in the private sector – including 266,223 Michiganders. It's the largest civilian employer of military veterans; nearly one in four letter carriers is wearing his or her second uniform in service to our nation.

We're looking forward to holding our biennial national convention in your beautiful state; thousands of letter carrier delegates will gather July 16-20 in Detroit.

*Fredric Rolando, President,
National Association
of Letter Carriers*

'In memory of my husband'



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Brian and Shelia Mueller pictured in 2015.

Food drive receives a special donation

By JACKIE KOCH

jackie@tecumsehherald.com

The cold and wet weather last Saturday wasn't enough to stop mail carriers at the Tecumseh Post Office from collecting donated food during the Annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, with one donation that held additional significance.

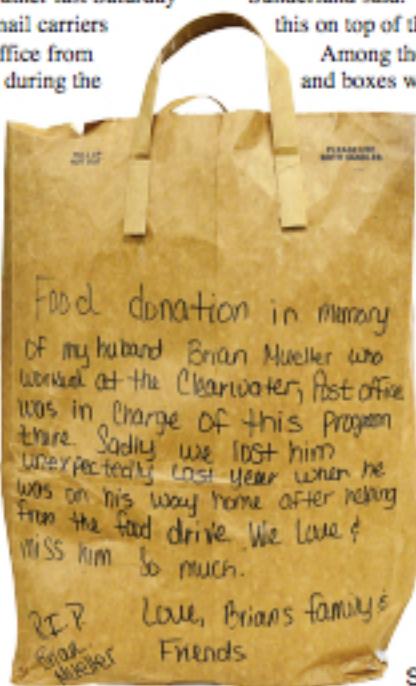
"Even with the bad weather, the mail carriers collected 1,246 pounds of food that was donated by the Tecumseh community," said Colleen Sunderland with the Tecumseh Service Club, which received the donations. The food collection filled two and a half trucks.

"It was a crazy day for the mail carriers as

they had to collect the food in the rain while working around all of the cars parked on the streets for the City's annual garage sale," Sunderland said. "They did a great job adding this on top of their usual job!"

Among the collected bags of cans and boxes was a full paper bag with a note written on the side. "Food donation in memory of my husband Brian Mueller, who worked at the Clearwater Post Office, was in charge of this program there. Sadly we lost him unexpectedly last year when he was on his way home after helping from the food drive. We love and miss him so much. Love, Brian's family and friends. RIP Brian Mueller," the note said.

Sunderland was compelled to learn the story behind the note, so she reached out to Mueller's



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Special message comes with donation in Tecumseh post office food drive

widow, Sheila, on social media, who then spoke to The Herald about her husband.

Sheila said she had filled the bag and left it for her letter carrier. "I just wrote on the outside of the bag stating that the food was being donated in memory of my husband, who was in charge of the food drive in Clearwater, Florida," she said. The Mueller family, Ann Arbor area natives, had moved to Florida in 2014 after living in Tecumseh for 17 years.

While in Michigan, Brian had worked at the Ypsilanti Post Office for two decades and also spearheaded the food drive there. After working at the post office in Tallahassee for a couple of years, Brian transferred to the Clearwater office and had only been there eight months when the time came for the annual food drive, but he was instrumental in making that run smoothly, too.

The 2017 Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive was held on May 13, and Brian stayed late at the post office to organize the day's donations and load them onto trucks heading for local food banks. Just before 6:30 that evening he was on his way home, and as he approached an intersection, a driver pulled out in front of his motorcycle,



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Pictured (l-r) are Tecumseh Service Club volunteers Bill Rhodaberger, Debby Kayner, Colleen Sunderland, Jennifer Shearer, Mike Sunderland and Monte Shearer.

resulting in fatal injuries for the father of three.

A few weeks later his family gathered at the Clearwater Post Office for a ceremony to gift a \$10,000 donation to the local food pantry of RCS Pinellas in Brian's name, a contribution offered by CVS Health and an honor suggested by Al Friedman, president of the Florida State Association of Letter Carriers. Friedman said Brian was "a dedicated guy." This year's food drive to

benefit the RCS Pinellas food pantry was dedicated to Brian in celebration of his life and service.

Sheila and the couple's two younger children, Collin, a Tecumseh High School senior, and Morgan, a freshman, moved back to Tecumseh after the accident to be close to their roots, while Austin, 22, stayed in Florida.

"He was just one of those guys with a big heart, always willing to help anybody he

came across," Sheila said of her late husband. "He was very known around Tecumseh Public Schools for volunteering at the schools, too. He just loved to volunteer for things."

While his loss left an empty space in their lives, Brian's generosity lives on, in his effect on his loved ones and those who knew him. "He was just the type of person that anybody he came across, he left a mark in their heart," said Sheila.