

CARRIERS OF THE COMMUNITY



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF LETTER CARRIERS
**Stamp
Out
Hunger**
FOOD DRIVE

On May 11, letter carriers in virtually every community across the country shouldered the load by collecting food donations left by customers as part of the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. The food helps the hungry in those communities, with donations delivered by NALC members to local food banks.

Since NALC's first national food drive in 1993, active and retired letter carriers, with the help of volunteers, have collected a total of 1.9 billion pounds of food leading up to this year's drive. While the total for this year won't be announced until next month's issue of *The Postal Record*, preliminary results pointed to another great year.

"Letter carriers showed up again for their communities and helped ensure that the needs of the hungry are met in every city and town in the United States," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said.

One in 8 Americans, including millions of children, senior citizens and veterans, are unsure where their next meal will come from. The May food drive helps to relieve shortages that food pantries experience in spring and summer after holiday donations have been depleted. And when summer arrives, most school meal programs are not available, so the need for food grows.

"This food drive comes at a critical time for your food bank, as our shelves are quite depleted heading into the summer months when we know the demand for food assistance will be high," said Mike Manning, the president and CEO of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank in Louisiana.

"When school lets out, those meals that they count on for breakfast and lunch, if they're part of that program, they're not able to get that meal when they're at school," said Sonya Warwick of Roadrunner Food Bank in Albuquerque, NM. "We're just so honored that the community continues to raise their hand and participate and do this event. These donations mean a tremendous amount of help to people who need that additional assistance right now."

In the days following the food drive, reports from branches and media outlets again demonstrated the dedication from postal employees and their customers to help alleviate hunger—and also showed that food banks and the people they serve appreciated their efforts.

"We've been doing this for 32 years, the National Association of Letter Carriers," said Honolulu, HI Branch 4682's



Levittown, PA Br. 4973



President Renfro (center) led a national kick-off at NALC HQ on May 8 with representatives from the national partners, including UFCW, CVS Health, Kellanova, United Way and NRLCA.

Adele Yoshikawa. “We always tell people we do more than just deliver the mail.”

“They see the neighborhoods, they see the need,” Jane McLaughlin, volunteer program manager for The Idaho Foodbank in Boise said of letter carriers. “They also see the appreciation of people that are giving food to us.”

Pittsfield, MA Branch 286 President **Amy Breault** prioritizes the food drive even above her own family. Her sister’s college graduation was on May 11, but Breault wasn’t there. “She’s sending me pictures because I told her it was [the] food drive, so I couldn’t come,” the letter carrier said. Instead, Breault brings her family to the food drive, with her daughter, husband and brother-in-law all serving as volunteers helping to sort the collections.

“Letter carriers see firsthand the communities that are struggling when we walk the streets and deliver the mail,” Corpus Christi, TX Branch 1259 President **Juan Munoz** said. “Most people donate at Christmas, Thanksgiving—the normal times. Right now, the food banks are starting to run low. This is a good way for us to replenish the food banks right when they need it most.”

“This food drive is so important,” said Middlebury [IN] Food Pantry Executive Director Pam Bingaman. “The shelves have gotten a little bare. We didn’t have quite as much money to buy food.”

“We get a ton of food, and it helps thousands of families in Kentucky fight food insecurity,” said Hanna Martin, volunteer and food drive coordinator for God’s Pantry Food Bank in Salem, IL. “It supports our pantries here.”

“We’re definitely seeing an increase of need over the past year, just with the

state of the economy, everybody is feeling the need for assistance,” said Brensy Thompson with Metropolitan Ministries in Tampa, FL. “It’s not just single people. We’re seeing people in two-parent homes coming to us who are needing assistance, an increase in seniors who are on a fixed income who are needing assistance, and so these donations really help us be able to serve those in the Tampa Bay area.”

The annual food drive wouldn’t be possible without the support of our national partners: the U.S. Postal Service, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, Vericast, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO, Valpak, Kellanova and CVS Health. These partners help through such actions as paying for the 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.

Branches were asked to report their food drive totals to Headquarters by June 7. The total pounds of food collected, and top branch collections, will be announced in the July issue of *The Postal Record*. **PR**



Ann Arbor, MI Br. 434



Plantation, FL



Wheeling, WV Br. 66