

Letter Carriers Food Drive

Saturday,
May 10, 2008

PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN
A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX. WE'LL DELIVER
IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK FOR YOU.
YOUR LETTER CARRIER

UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE

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

Preparations picking up for 16th NALC Food Drive

The pace of preparations is picking up in nearly 1,200 NALC branches across the nation for the annual NALC “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive to be conducted Saturday, May 10—the day letter carriers will tackle hunger in a manner unsurpassed by any group or organization in the country.

This year, the NALC hopes to exceed the 70.7 million-pound collection of food donations a year ago and take a bold step toward reaching the goal set down by President William H. Young to one day soon top 100 millions pounds to help stock local food banks and pantries.

The second Saturday in May has become the one day in the year that can make Americans stop and think about hunger—how fortunate they are to have enough on the table and how unfortunate it is that, even today, more than 35 million men, women and children, are food insecure, meaning they can not depend on obtaining adequate or nutritious food.

Just how bad is the hunger situation in the United States?

With demand increasing, the supply of donated food is at its lowest level in memory, according to a recent article in the *Los Angeles Times*.

In that article, one of the leading anti-hunger advocates in the nation, Eric Shockman, said that food banks in America, and in Los Angeles in particular, are “really in dismal shape.”

Shockman, who heads up Mazon, a non-profit group that funds hunger relief agencies, said the nation’s emergency food system “has really been unraveled over the last few years.”

The majority of people using food banks are the working poor, often families with two members employed. The cause of the distress often is related to the high cost of transportation and housing.

Food bank officials are concerned that the nation’s sputtering economy will further reduce donations and push more people toward hunger.

“It’s such a dichotomy,” Brian Smith, of the Capital Area Food Bank, told *The Washington Post*. “In a recession, we get less funds [and] we get less food. But at the same time, in a recession, more people are becoming at risk.”

The newspaper reported that food banks and soup kitchens across the nation have less and less on their shelves because federal supplies of excess farm goods have dropped and because farmers are selling more of their products to other countries.

Dondey Phandanouvong, a member of South Florida Branch 1071 in Miami, is featured on this year’s official Food Drive poster.

Nationwide crisis

The hunger crisis is nationwide.

A study in western North Carolina in 2006 found 53 percent of food bank clients had to choose between paying for food or paying for utilities or heating fuel.

"The majority of our clients are between the ages of 18 and 64, but there is a significant number of school-age clients who need to be fed in order to learn and succeed in school," said Crystal Weinbarger of North Carolina's Hunger and Health Coalition.

In Oklahoma, a bipartisan task force on hunger noted that the state ranks among the highest in the nation in percentage of residents who are "food insecure" or have "very low food security."

State Sen. Andrew Rice said the issue can no longer be ignored.

"We have the capacity to address this moral issue head-on and find workable solutions to hunger," Rice told *Pottawatomie County (OK) Online*. "Families are being forced to choose between food and rent, food or mortgage payments, food or utilities, and food and medicine. This is not right. We can not afford to leave any of our citizens behind."

Sometimes, it isn't the long-term economic problems that wipe out reserves in food banks. It can be sudden disasters, such as the recent deadly tornadoes that struck the South.

"Our food banks throughout the affected region are working closely with state and local emergency management agencies, our non-government partners in disaster relief, and their local social service agency partners to identify the need for food and other supplies in their local communities," said Vicki Escarra, president of the Second Harvest network.

Stocking up for summer

Letter carriers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands will again make a huge difference on May 10 in fighting this never-ending battle against hunger. With the help of rural carriers, other postal employees and numerous volunteers, they will stock food banks, pantries and shelters throughout America for the summer months.

The letter carrier effort is the nation's largest one-day food drive. Over the past 15 years, carriers have collected more than three-quarters of a billion pounds of food donations—836.2 million pounds—from their postal customers and delivered the goods to local community food distribution outlets. Last May, for the fourth consecutive year, the amount exceeded 70 million pounds.

The NALC drive had its origin in 1991, patterned after a successful drive by Phoenix, Arizona Branch 576. The drive went nationwide two years later and 11 million pounds of food was collected, a major success then that is a mere fraction of what letter carriers now accomplish yearly.



Above: Executive Vice President Fred Rolando (r) addresses the meeting of the food drive partners at NALC Headquarters.

Below: Terrence Atkins of Campbell Soup Co. points to a Campbell's packet being used to encourage supermarkets to promote the food drive as representatives of other food drive partners observe. Seated (l-r) are Doug Montgomery, America's Second Harvest; Jordan Biscardo, United Way of America; Atkins; and NALC food drive national coordinator Drew Von Bergen. Standing (l-r) are Connie Totten-Oldham, USPS; Peter Byrne, Pace Press Inc.; Chris Bilotta, Valpak-Cox Target Media; and John Faulkner, Campbell Soup.



New system for awards

A new system is being used this year to honor branches that do the best compared to other branches of similar size.

This year, the NALC and Campbell Soup Company will honor the top branches in 10 NALC membership categories. In the past, the awards have gone to the top two branches in each of five membership categories.

NALC President William H. Young will present the NALC-Campbell Soup plaques to representatives of the winning branches at the 66th Biennial NALC Convention in Boston this July. In addition, Campbell Soup will provide a 1,000-can donation of soup to a food bank or pantry designated by each of the 10 branches.

The top branch in the following 10 membership categories will receive awards:

Category I	1 to 49 members
Category II	50 to 99 members
Category III	100 to 199 members
Category IV	200 to 349 members
Category V	350 to 499 members
Category VI	500 to 699 members
Category VII	700 to 999 members
Category VIII	1,000 to 1,499 members
Category IX	1,500 to 1,999 members
Category X	2,000 members or more

In this 16th anniversary year, President Young is optimistic that NALC members across the country will surpass last year's 70.7 million pound total.

"Our annual 'Stamp Out Hunger' drive plays a critical role in America's effort to aid families in need, especially in providing high-quality and high-protein food for their diets," Young said. "I am proud that NALC members and other volunteers can help by delivering donations from citizens along our postal routes to their community food banks, pantries and shelters."

Joining again as national supporters of the drive are the U.S. Postal Service, Campbell Soup Company, Cox Target Media and its Valpak direct mail marketing operation, the AFL-CIO, United Way of America and its local United Ways, and America's Second Harvest.

Officials of the food drive partners conducted a three-hour meeting at NALC Headquarters February 12 to review plans for the drive. NALC Executive Vice President Fred Rolando addressed the group briefly and encouraged the parties to continue their cooperative effort to make the 2008 drive a success.

Strong supporters

In a letter to President Young, Postmaster General John E. Potter expressed the Service's strong support of the 2008 drive.

"In 2008, the Postal Service once again will help to alert every postal customer to this urgent need and encourage them to support the 'Stamp Out Hunger' drive," Potter said. "We also will communicate the importance of the National Food Drive to managers and employees systemwide in the weeks leading up to the drive and encourage all postal employees to participate in this worthwhile cause."

AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney also backed the drive and asked the labor federation's affiliates to join in helping the NALC promote and conduct the event.

"Please publicize and promote the May 10, 2008 food drive among your members," Sweeney said in a letter to the presidents of national and international unions and principal officers of state federations and central labor councils. "State and local labor councils and Community Services staff should volunteer to assist their local NALC branch with collecting, sorting and delivery of food."

Branches that have registered for this year's drive have been mailed a food drive packet including a coordinator's manual, DVD of a new food drive video, forms for ordering *free* Campbell Soup-Postal Service postcards, the official NALC poster, and other items.

Questions regarding the food drive should be directed to Drew Von Bergen, national coordinator, at 202-662-2489 or at vonbergen@nalc.org. ✉