

Food Drive Day is May 9

It's almost here; the 28th annual Letter Carriers' "Stamp Out Hunger"® Food Drive is Saturday, May 9. As the big day approaches, branch food drive coordinators are finalizing preparations for the event.

"We look forward to the day when no one in the country worries about feeding themselves or their families," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "but until then, letter carriers will lend a hand to bring food to their tables. We have done this every year since 1993 because we see the hungry people when we deliver the mail to every address in the country, six days a week."

Each day, one in eight Americans, including millions of children, senior citizens and veterans, are unsure where their next meal will come from. To serve that need, letter carriers collect food left out by postal patrons each May.

The timing is crucial: food pantries can face shortages in spring and summer because holiday donations have been depleted. And by summer, when most school meal programs are not available, pressure on food banks grows even more.

Last year, active and retired letter carriers, with the help of thousands of volunteers and NALC's partners, collected 75.7 million pounds of food, bringing the 27-year total to 1.75 billion pounds.

Partnerships make it happen

Part of our food drive's success is owed to our national partners: the U.S. Postal Service, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, Valpak, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO, Valassis, the Kellogg Co. and CVS Health.

The event would not be possible without the support of USPS. "We are proud of the history we have shared in conducting the nation's largest, single-day food drive, and we look forward to supporting this worthy cause this year," Postmaster General Megan Brennan said.

The partners help in many ways, including sponsoring bags, gathering volunteers and getting out the message about the food drive. Kellogg provides a bonus to food pantries by giving matching donations of food in several communities.

Bags make a difference

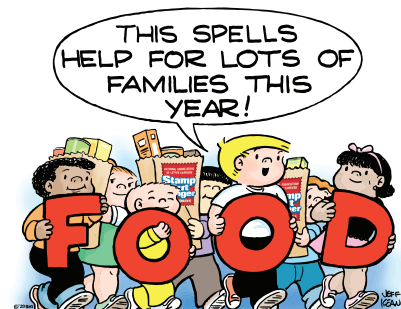
Postal customers who receive specially-marked bags for food donation in the weeks leading up to food drive day are much more likely to participate. Most branches depend on the generosity of local or regional sponsors to help provide bags. Branches are encouraged to search for local sponsors to ensure that every postal patron gets a bag. Look for opportunities to show local businesses how they can get involved and sponsor bags; if not this year, then next year.

"As soon as this year's drive ends, we all start planning for next year's—that's part of our success," President Rolando said. "This year's food drive is a great demonstration to potential sponsors of what they could achieve if they come on board next year."

Getting the word out matters

Beyond bags, NALC Headquarters, branch food drive coordinators and volunteers rely on various means of communication to publicize the food drive.

The digital communications team at Headquarters floods social media with news and reminders. Check out the



LETTER CARRIERS' FOOD DRIVE

SECOND SATURDAY IN MAY

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

National Partners



food drive's official social media accounts on Facebook at facebook.com/StampOutHunger and on Twitter at @StampOutHunger. Use #StampOutHunger to find or send messages about the food drive on either platform.

The food drive's public website, stampouthungerfooddrive.us, provides tools to help food donors, including a post office locator, downloadable files, contact information and answers to frequently asked questions.

NALC continues to make use of newspapers, television and radio to get the word out about the food drive to the public with distribution of news releases as well as individual outreach to media outlets. Those efforts yield news stories leading up to the event—and follow-up coverage afterwards, which helps with future food drives. The Department of Communications and Media Relations at Headquarters stands ready to help branches that wish to publicize the food drive in their communities.

Of course, the NALC food drive website for branch coordinators, nalc.org/food, has all the resources that branches need, including promotional artwork, forms, thank-you cards and even city proclamation templates. The site also may provide new ideas or inspiration for promoting the food drive in your community.

Letter carriers who have questions about the food drive or who need help should contact their branch or regional food drive coordinator. The contact list is available at nalc.org/food. **PR**