

# 2013 NALC Food Drive, here we come

*A special message from NALC's community and membership outreach coordinator*



**Pam  
Donato**

**W**ith 20 official years of our national NALC food drive in the history books, it would be easy to rest on our laurels. But we are letters carriers and the communities we walk through each day are *our* communities. So, as long as hunger remains in the neighborhoods we serve, we will continue our work to help those in need.

There is plenty of evidence of hard work and creativity this year by local food drive coordinators across the country. New community partnerships have been formed, providing funding for bags, postcards and other promotional materials. These relationships have been built over years of community involvement and are as strong as

ever with a renewed commitment to stamp out hunger.

Many local branches also have exciting new food drive allies with local groups and businesses, and we have added a few new partners at the national level as well. They help bring an incredible energy and fresh perspective to our tried-and-true formula of letter carrier determination, community know-how and a ground game that is second to none. Together, we are an unmatched force to fight hunger in America.

While this is a national food drive and we are rightly proud of the cumulative total of food we've collected over the years, for most of us it is much more. It's in the very personal result of our work—a meal provided for a family in need in our own hometown—that we find the passion to drive even harder and do more.

With under a month to go to May 11, there are still many ways to make this the best food drive year ever. And as it is with every element of this food drive, it all begins with *you*.

**Write a letter to the editor of your local paper.** There are sample letters in the food drive coordinators' manual to give you a good start. (You can find a link to the manual on the food drive page at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).) Personalize it with details about your own town and the positive impact of our food collection for your local food shelves. This is a free form of public promotion and provides a great reminder of the simple way to help.

**Talk about the food drive whenever you get a chance.** Talk to friends at church gatherings, your children's Boy/Girl Scout or sporting events, and call your local radio stations. Wherever people are gathered, there is an opportunity to build awareness. That's the genius of the food drive—its simplicity.

These are effective and cost-free ways to promote our drive and provide an important reminder to participate.

**Put up posters, flyers and yard signs to promote our food drive.** Our [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) food drive page provides a full range of elec-

tronic food drive artwork for easy printing. Full-size Family Circus food drive cartoon posters are also available (for a nominal cost). To order, simply use the order form on our food drive web page or call our NALC Supply Department at 202-662-2873 to order by phone and pay with debit or credit card.

**Solicit local businesses and community organizations to post messages on their electronic bulletin boards.** Signage, by way of lawn sign and flyers on bulletin boards and at shopping malls and grocery stores, are important ways to tie together the many other public messages. It is the drip, drip, drip repetition

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of these small yet powerful communications tools that will ultimately be responsible for the bags of food donations left next to mailboxes across the country on May 11.

**Use all available social media tools.** There's no denying the enormous impact and influence e-mail, Facebook, Twitter and all forms of “social media” have on our daily lives. Their reach has clout. And even if you aren't *connected* directly with any form of social media, your conversations at work, on your route or at your dinner table have been affected by their content. Help us to reach the public by posting messages, encouraging your followers to “Like” and “Share” information on the May 11 food drive. You can even create competition within your group of friends between their home cities and states. Start now and build momentum leading up to May 11 with daily messages. Even if you are not directly connected to any form of social media, ask your spouse, kids or grandkids to show you what they can do!

**Reach out to your local branch food drive coordinator.** These dedicated volunteer branch coordinators have taken on many important and time-consuming responsibilities to organize the food drive activities in your branch. Offer to help. There is always an opportunity to contribute your special skills, especially in the areas of media, promotion and logistics. Your help is needed and will be greatly appreciated.

**Go to the food drive page on [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) and find a way to make a difference.**

Many hands make light work, and in the case of our Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, it also means we can feed more children, seniors and families.

Thank you in advance for all of your hard work!