

# 2014 Food Drive: Praise and thanks follow a day of extra-hard work

**A**s NALC members waited patiently for the final collection totals of this year's Letter Carriers' Food Drive to be tabulated and announced, accolades continued to stream into NALC Headquarters in Washington, DC, about our work on the nation's largest one-day food drive.

"The enthusiastic support that is shown every year by the letter carriers as they pull into the parking lot with many, many bags of food in their trucks is so

evident to all the volunteers who have come to help unload the trucks," Darien, CT Person-to-Person Food Pantry liaison Jane Yezzi told *The Darien Times*.

This year's drive—our 22nd annual effort—took place on Saturday, May 10, with more than 1,500 NALC branches participating in thousands of cities and towns in every state and territory.

"Without this generous display of caring by letter carriers, our co-workers, our families and friends, and our community partners, this annual food drive of ours could not continue to be the success that it has been," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "We're proud that the food drive is a leader in America's anti-hunger effort, and we are proud that we can play a prominent role in helping the families who struggle with hunger in our communities."

Donations from postal customers—who left a bag (or often *bags*) of non-perishable food by their mailboxes for pickup on May 10—were quickly delivered to local food banks, pantries and shelters.

"We are so thankful to the letter carriers, the U.S. Postal Service and the community for their tremendous support," Harry Chapin Food Bank President and CEO Al Brislain told Fort Myers, FL's *News-Press*. "In one day, they came together and made an exceptional contribution to the fight against hunger during the difficult summer season."

Contributions to food banks and shelters usually peak during the winter holiday season. By springtime, those organizations' shelves tend to grow bare, which makes it difficult for charities to meet the needs of the hungry people they serve. And during the summer, many school meal programs aren't available, leaving millions of children who depend on them throughout the school

year to struggle to find alternate sources of food.

But the drive helped turn around that bleak outlook in thousands of communities. For example, Joan Beville, secretary for the Livingston County Community Food Pantry in Pontiac, IL, told the *Pontiac Daily Leader* that her organization had received what she called a "fantastic" 750 pounds of food this year. "It will definitely make a big impact on our clients as far as keeping our shelves stocked," she said.

In 2013, letter carriers across the country collected more than 74.4 million pounds of non-perishable food. That was the second-highest amount since the drive began in 1992, and it brought the grand total to just under 1.3 billion pounds.

"I say it with my fingers crossed," NALC Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato said, "but it looks like we could be on track for another 70-million-plus year."

This year's national collection total was expected to be announced after this issue of *The Postal Record* went to press. The announcement will be posted to [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) and to the union's Facebook and Twitter accounts, accompanied by a press release sent to local, state and national news media outlets.

The top 10 food-collecting NALC branches in 11 membership categories will be recognized in the next *Postal Record*. At the national convention in Philadelphia this month, President Rolando will call representatives of these branches to the stage and present them with plaques honoring their achievement.

And early plans are already under way for the 2015 Letter Carriers' Food Drive, which will take place on Saturday, May 9. **PR**



**Top:** A Southern Illinois Merged Branch 1197 member struts as he delivers food to the station.

**Above:** It was a day in the sun for two carriers from Brookhaven, MI Branch 2396.