

## Remembering to say ‘thank you’



Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato

**S**o, we’ve finished another season of the Letter Carrier “Stamp Out Hunger” food drive. Early results show a solid performance, with increased totals in many branches across the country. Unfortunately, we also saw areas affected by horrible weather on Food Drive Day.

The final nationwide total should be reported by June 12, about the same time you will have regained the bounce in your step and your sore back will have healed. I hope you have been told “thank you”—by your customers, your branch coordinator and your food agency recipient. Let me add to that choir with my own heartfelt thank-you.

I also ask you to do two simple yet important tasks. Both are investments in our days, months and years ahead.

**First, say “thank you” to each person who helped in this year’s drive:** your generous customers who trusted you to deliver their donations where they would meet a basic human need; volunteers who helped us collect food, promoted our food drive, provided money for materials we needed such as postcards, posters, bags and billboards or logistics; and our entire postal family of rural carriers, clerks, mail handlers, truck drivers, custodians and those in management who were supportive and lifted up our efforts. Giving a genuine thank-you is not only the right thing to do, it also connects the end of a project with its

beginning, creating the best soil in which to plant our food drive seeds for next year (May 14, 2016—save the date!).

**The second request is to “do the math.”** In last year’s drive, we collected 72.5 million pounds of food. Most folks left a bag, others a single box or can. For the sake of this article, let’s put an average weight per donation at 3 pounds. Now, divide 72.5 million by 3. (I get more than 24 million.) In a *single* day, all across the country, in every type of community, our food drive message translated into 24 million people doing what we asked them to do. A diverse group of blue-collar, affluent, rural, farm-country and urban people of all races, religions, ages and political persuasions helped their less fortunate neighbors.

I say (and calculate) this because it beautifully illustrates the valuable power of collective action: a clear message of a need that exists and the actions necessary to help. That simplicity works because you, and letter carriers as a whole, are trusted. You are capable of amazing, mind-blowing things. Being aware of your capacity and your value in it is key, not just in the food drive, but in all our collective work. America’s letter carriers are delivering hope from our communities to the halls of Congress, for the public good.

By saying thanks, we help build on our relationships with those who responded to our food drive request. And by realizing our capacity to affect and activate those in our communities, we begin to recognize our potential in shaping our careers and as letter carriers and members of the NALC. That’s good for our community and the NALC.

**Attending the Houston Rap Session?**

**Go here first:**  
[www.nalc.org/houston](http://www.nalc.org/houston)

The 2015 national conference (“rap session”) for state and branch presidents (or their designees), which is authorized in non-convention years by the *NALC Constitution* under Article 3, Section 4(b), will take place July 17-19 in Houston, Texas.

To assist the national union’s planning for this event, branch presidents must log into a special application on [www.nalc.org/houston](http://www.nalc.org/houston) to identify who is attending from each branch.