

# 2016 Food Drive video: The story behind the story



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Each year, NALC produces a video that is sent to each branch registered for the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive. The video comes to fruition with professional filming and editing work performed by a union media company (this year, Sutherland Media of Washington, DC). It then gets played on workroom floors throughout the Postal Service, as well as at community meetings and other labor gatherings, all with an eye toward motivating letter carriers and providing a rallying point for working for our food drive.

The goal is to create a short video, so it's difficult to have it go into much depth. This year's video has a simple message: The folks we help with the food we collect are folks we all know. We wanted to personalize the message, showing real people and real situations.

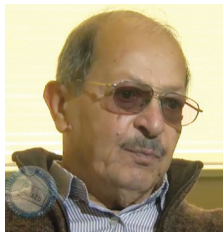
Let me shed a bit of light on the story behind the stories you'll see in this year's video; if you know some of the players' back story, it should help remind us why we've been working nationally at this food drive for so many years.

First up in the video is Mark, who's dealing with serious, chronic health issues and who had been homeless for 14 months before we'd met him at the Food for Others food bank in Fairfax, VA. Mark's first visit there was on the day we filmed; he was looking for food to stock his newly acquired apartment. He was able to obtain some basics—food, toilet paper, dish soap—and he was excited about the prospect of preparing a meal in his own kitchen that evening, something he had not done in more than a year. Watch as Mark



sincerely expresses his gratitude for the help. He was kind and articulate, with a sense of optimism about his life—and he thanked letter carriers for the work we do that was helping him get back on his feet.

Next we meet Hassan, who fled Iraq in 2011 because he feared for the safety of his wife and four children. He was in his late sixties at the time, having been a surgeon for more than 40 years. Hassan worked hard while in Iraq and saved for his retirement, but that was all lost when his family emigrated. To gain the credentials necessary to practice medicine in the U.S. would be expensive and require many exams, and now that he's over 70, doing so isn't realistic. Hassan and his family have all become American citizens. His chil-

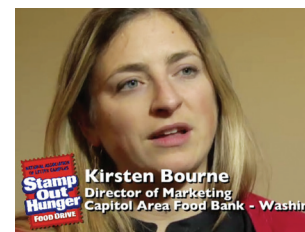


dren are all adults now. All are working as much as they can, but they still come up short every month, so they rely on their food bank for help.

Rebecca is on next. She's a young, single mother who recently left a violent relationship; the day we filmed at Food for Others was her first time reaching out for help from the food bank. Rebecca had been laid off from the airline industry. She gets no government assistance; instead, she works to put herself through nursing school. Her son's school counselor referred her to Food for Others. For Rebecca, being on the receiving end of help was unfamiliar. With humility, she sought the food bank's help to see her and her son through until she graduated from nursing school and could gain full-time employment.



The video also features interviews with Roxanne and Kirsten, two food agency representatives who understand how important the Letter Carriers' Food Drive is in supporting their ability to serve those in need. Like letter carriers, these two women work face-to-face with real people in need every day, confirming in human terms this country's staggering hunger statistics.



Maybe the most compelling person we met at Food for Others was Leo, a warehouse worker and driver there. Leo had been one of four children being raised by his single mother; his first experience with food agencies was as a child on the receiving end of help. That experience made Leo deeply appreciate such places, and he has a passion and drive that lets you know he is indeed in his element. Leo is now happily married with two young children, and it's easy to imagine how a Letter Carriers' Food Drive some 20 years ago might have provided Leo with the best leg up that any one of us could have given.



The video ends there, but the story will continue with this year's food drive on Saturday, May 14. (To watch the video, visit [nalc.org/food](http://nalc.org/food).)