

2016 Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive—Thank you, and you, and you!



Community and Membership Outreach Coordinator Pam Donato

If you participated in last month's Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive, I hope you've had a chance to take a deep breath, put your tired feet up and enjoy a glass of your favorite cheer. You've earned the rest—and you've earned the feeling of accomplishment that comes from being a part of the largest food drive in the world.

We're still counting up the donations made by postal customers to the thousands of food pantries and agencies across the country, but one thing's already confirmed—letter carriers have done a fantastic job again this year. Please know that your incredible work on Saturday, May 14, has made a big difference for the millions of people who will have access to good meals as a result of your work. Helping to fill a basic human need for someone is always the right thing to do, and I hope your generosity comes back to you, tenfold.

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Before we close the book on our 2016 food drive, make sure you check off these final three tasks:

1. Help count all donations.

- This includes *all* donations, to little food shelves and church food pantries as well as to large food banks.
- Include the residual food collected in the days following the drive.
- Don't forget to figure in, and report, any money that was donated.
- Add in any corporate or business donations, including matching contributions.
- If you've already submitted your final results form and you realize that additional food or money needs to be added to it, just submit a new form—with the updated total—through your national business agent or your state's food drive coordinator

2. Thank your local partners, your fellow letter carriers and other postal employees, your customers and your community.

- For local partners and supporting businesses, a certificate of appreciation makes a great wall-hanging

in their lobby. (Find the certificate template under “Certificates” via the tool kit link at nalc.org/food.)

- A thank-you letter also is a nice personal touch.
- Letter carriers and postal employees always appreciate rolls or donuts. See if your branch and your postmaster are willing to split the cost of this simple celebration.
- Follow up with any reporters who covered the food drive; provide them with collection totals for your branch or community.
- Call radio stations, write letters to the editor of your local newspaper, and post your pounds collected and thank-yous on any food drive posters displayed around town.
- Throughout the week after the drive, every letter carrier should say “thank you” to every customer they see on their route. Even if they didn't leave a donation, your thank-you might inspire them to do so next year. (It's on Saturday, May 13, 2017, for those already looking forward.)
- People like to know that what they did on Food Drive Day mattered and was appreciated. Local food agencies can be wonderful partners for joining us in our community thank-yous; ask them along for this important task.

3. Make a list now of what worked well, of what went wrong, and of things you need to help your food drive effort improve in 2017.

- The best time to take stock of your event and to evaluate it is while its details are still fresh in your mind.
- From filling out the registration form through counting all of the donations, what worked well? Who provided help? What communications were effective? Were there problems with your postcards or bags? What did you need? Who were your good contacts? What can NALC Headquarters help you with?
- Make a list: “Good,” “Bad” and “Still need.”

Come August, we'll start our work for 2017—which is the 25th anniversary of the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. That's a quarter century—and you're still looking fabulous!