Food Drive: Hard work + sacrifice = great rewards

s this issue of *The Postal Record* reaches you, the 24th annual Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger[®] Food Drive is mere days away.

This one-day drive, the nation's largest, provides letter carriers, other postal employees and thousands of volunteers across the nation the opportunity to meld their forces together to conduct the drive in their local communities.

"Letter carriers touch every residential and business address in this country at least six days a week," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "and our continued effort in the fight against hunger—often in our own neighborhoods—has made us all too familiar with the staggering numbers of people in need."

The availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, or the ability to acquire such food, is limited or uncertain for 1 in 6 Americans, many of whom are in households with at least one person working.

"So our goal is to help restock community food banks, pantries and shelters for needy families throughout the summer," Rolando said, "and to build upon the millions of pounds of non-perishable food collected since 1992 from millions of generous postal customers."

Last year's drive collected approximately 71 million pounds of non-perishable food that was left in bags next to postal customers' mailboxes. It was the 12th consecutive year that letter carriers have collected more than 70 million pounds of food, and it brought the drive's grand total to more than 1.4 billion pounds of food collected.

The drive is held each year on the second Saturday in May, and so Saturday, May 14, has for months been circled on the calendars of hunger-relief advocates who have watched as food supplies collected during winter holiday drives dwindle day by day. The drive also comes just before many school systems end their academic years, and that often can mean a suspension in subsidized meals for many students.

"Our hard work and sacrifice will not go unnoticed, I assure you," Rolando said.

The food drive's national partners are the U.S. Postal Service, the National

Rural Letter Carriers' Association, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO and Valassis.

As noted in last month's *Postal Record*, award-winning actor Edward James Olmos is this year's national spokesperson, the star of food drive—promoting

public service announcements (PSAs) for TV and radio in English and Spanish. But whether these announcements reach the airwaves often can be a game of chance, usually relying on community-minded TV and radio stations to find a timeslot for them to air. In an effort to help boost the drive's awareness among TV stations this year, NALC has enlisted the help of Synaptics Digital, a firm whose staff has been working the phones in recent weeks in a concerted effort to get these PSAs on TV screens at high-viewership times in specially targeted communities throughout the United States.

New for this year's drive as well is a pilot project through special food drive partner Amp Your Good, which is accepting throughout the month of May online food donations for select hunger organizations in San Francisco, in New York City, and in Greenwich, CT. Amp Your Good's online "Crowd-Feeding" platform is designed to make it easy for postal customers to donate fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy food, to complement the non-perishables

> donated on Food Drive Day. Visit stampyourgood.com to learn more.

And let your hard work be known! Be sure to capture the action on Saturday, May 14, by sharing your best photos on your Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. You can help us find them by using the hashtag #StampOutHunger. Who knows? Your pics could get posted on any of NALC's social

media accounts on those platforms. Check us out—simply search for the Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts named "StampOutHunger," then share, post and "like" what's there. (See NALC Director of Community Services Pam Donato's column on page 38 to learn more.)

Branch collection results are due at NALC Headquarters by June 10. The official results form can be found on the Food Drive Tool Kit page at nalc. org, in the "For Food Drive Coordinators" section. If you have questions regarding the food drive, get in touch with Donato at 202-662-2489 or at donato@nalc.org. PR

