

For NALC, the season of giving becomes a year of giving back



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Every year at this time, family and friends come together to celebrate the holiday season. Almost inevitably, the focus quickly turns to expressions and recognition of caring and hope. Along with this season of giving comes an opportunity for self-reflection and re-dedication of values. NALC strives to maintain an emphasis on ideals of service and care, not only for our members, but also the communities we serve. And we, as a union, celebrate the season of giving all year long.

The Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive is coming into its 28th year. Throughout the past 27 years, the food drive has helped

countless people bridge the gap between hunger and sustenance. Without this gift of care, many would be faced with an unconscionable hardship. The adage that "a picture speaks a thousand words" is never more poignant than when you see the enormous amounts of food collected by caring letter carriers with an undying devotion to those who live in the communities they serve.

In 1952, NALC joined with the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) as the first corporate sponsor in the fight against muscular dystrophy. Throughout the years, branches and individual members have held events and participated in fundraising efforts, all in the name of delivering hope to people with neuromuscular diseases. The efforts of our members have raised awareness and provided much-needed financial assistance to MDA. One need only attend an MDA Summer Camp to fully appreciate the gift our efforts provide to the campers and their families.

The Postal Service is the largest civilian employer of military veterans. Nearly a quarter of all letter carriers are veterans. In 2015, the NALC Veterans Group was founded as a way to thank our veteran members by providing resources and information specific to their service. Since the beginning, the group has grown to more than 12,000 members. NALC veterans graciously accepted the group and immediately began giving back to other veterans in need, as evidenced at the 2018 NALC convention in Detroit, where 2,000 bags were filled with care kit items to be distributed to local homeless vets.

In response to an overwhelming desire by NALC branches and members to develop a means to assist members affected by natural disasters, the NALC Disaster Relief

Foundation was formed. The purpose of the foundation is to assist in alleviating the suffering of those members and family members living in the same household who have been affected by a natural disaster. Since it was formed in 2018, branches and members have responded in force by giving thousands of dollars in donations providing relief to members affected by several storms, wildfires and an earthquake.

Often, letter carriers are referred to as the eyes and ears of the communities they serve. Routinely, they go above and beyond in their public service by rescuing customers, stopping crimes or providing support to those in need. Many times, tragic outcomes would have resulted had the letter carriers not intervened. Frequently, the letter carriers involved place their own safety at risk on behalf of others. Every year, NALC holds a luncheon to recognize certain letter carriers for their acts of heroism and compassion carried out in the service of their communities.

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These are but a few of the examples of how NALC branches and members extend the season of giving throughout the year. The dedication of letter carriers to their communities and each other extends far beyond that of acquaintance. Those ideals of service and care are on full display as much as the uniforms they wear while delivering America's mail. In so many ways, letter carriers truly make a living by what they get but make a life from what they give.

I wish everyone safe and happy holidays, and thank you for the gift you give to your communities and fellow letter carriers through your dedicated service and your membership in the NALC.

