

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF LETTER CARRIERS

# Stamp Out Hunger

FOOD DRIVE

# A DAY FOR FOOD AND HOPE

Below: Escondido, CA Branch 2525  
Bottom: New Orleans, LA Branch 124



**F**or the 27th year, letter carriers circled the second Saturday in May on their calendars as a day to deliver for the nation's hungry. And on Saturday, May 11—Food Drive Day—they delivered!

Letter carriers brought caring and compassion to the communities they serve by participating in the Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive, the nation's largest one-day food collection effort. NALC members representing more than 1,400 branches worked alongside

thousands of family members, friends and volunteers—not to mention their fellow employees in the other postal craft unions and in management—to pick up bags upon bags of non-perishable food left by postal customers' mailboxes.

"Every year, I am humbled by the extra work letter carriers take on to make this humanitarian effort such a success," NALC President Fredric Rolando

said. "And while we remain saddened to know that hunger remains an issue in this great country, we know that NALC will continue to stay engaged for as long as it takes to stamp out hunger."

The food drive is an especially timely event, since food drive donations typically peak during the winter holidays and food pantries usually are depleted by Memorial Day weekend. Complicating matters: Free or reduced-cost meals for the children of families in need tend to be available only while school is in session, which means that many families face greater hardship once summer vacation begins.

Letter carriers had to make an extra effort to collect through storms in the South and along the Eastern part of the country. But no matter the weather, nothing could dampen the enthusiasm among participants.

This issue of *The Postal Record* was heading to press just as many branch collection result forms were on their way to NALC Headquarters, even as other branches were simply swamped by the overwhelming generosity of postal customers. Coordinators in those places were busily calculating just how much non-perishable food had been donated.

"It's too early to know what the results of this year's drive will be," Assistant to the President for Community Services **Christina Vela Davidson** said, "but no matter the result, the food



banks and pantries that receive these contributions will make the most out of every single pound.”

None of this would have been possible without the assistance of the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive’s national partners. “These partners provide tangible support that helps to encourage the generous participation of our postal customers,” Rolando said.

This year’s partners were the U.S. Postal Service, the United Food and Commercial Workers International, the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, Valpak, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO, Valassis, the Kellogg Co. and CVS Health.

There were plenty of other helpers too, from American Postal Workers Union volunteers to local bag sponsors. Every little bit helped.

“It wasn’t hard to see the effort underway on Saturday, May 11,” Davidson said, “and in plenty of locales across the country, you could easily catch sight of Jeff Keane’s ‘Family Circus’ food drive art in post offices and countless other venues.”

As this magazine was being prepared, news media reports about the drive—before, during and after—were still being gathered. But early reports showed the necessity of the drive throughout the country.

“Stamp Out Hunger is the most important food drive for many food pantries in the area,” DeDe Flounlacker told NorthEscambia.com. Flounlacker is executive director of Manna, which operates three food banks in the Florida Panhandle. “The food collected by the letter carriers is critical to our ability to feed our neighbors in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. Every donation helps ensure the immediate



needs of the hungry can be met in the coming months.”

Jerry Brown of St. Mary’s Food Bank in Glendale, AZ, put it more bluntly to azfamily.com: “The electric bills are going up higher. We get less donations in the summertime than any other time. So this drive is a make-or-break drive for food banks. Not only in Arizona but across the country.”

In Holyoke, MA, Brenda LaMagdeleine, manager of Margaret’s Pantry, told WWLP-TV, “This food is supposed to last us up until October of this year, so the better the [Stamp Out Hunger] drive is, the better we will be in position to serve the people of the community.”

As donations were sorted and counted, many locations saw increases in donations, often by delivering bags for the donations before the drive.

WFMZ-TV quoted Aimee Hafer, a member of Helping Harvest food bank in Berks County, PA: “We’ve had a



Top: Ballwin, MO Branch 5050  
Above: Mass. NE Merged Branch 25



Carmel, IN  
Branch 888



South Suburban Merged, IL Branch 4016

Ann Arbor, MI Branch 434



Portland, OR  
Branch 82

higher rate of donations coming in than we have in years past. So we anticipate this will be the best one yet.”

In Prichard, AL, nearly 12,000 pounds of food was collected and will stay in the Gulf Coast region. “This here helps a lot of people. We have lot of single parents out there in need of help, so this not only helps the kids,

but everyone in the community,” Tony McConnell of Feeding the Gulf Coast told WPMI-TV. He expressed gratitude to the letter carriers and the residents who donated. “We thank them for all that they do to help us,” adding

that, without their help, his work of feeding people in the community wouldn't be possible.

Letter carriers took ownership of the local drive, doing all they could to maximize donations.

In Albuquerque, NM, Branch 504 President **Angel Martinez** told KOB-TV, “It makes them feel proud when they're carrying those bags and emptying out their vehicles; you can see smiles on their faces.”

Pasco, WA  
Branch 1528 Presi-

dent **Mele Ball** told KEPR-TV that the food drive is just one more way that letter carriers look out for the communities they serve. “We might not interact so much with everybody but we get to know the families. So if things are happening, we try to figure out how we can help. That's important to us; we like to make sure that everybody's doing well,” she said.

Elyria, OH Branch 196's **Michael Sprachmann** told *The Chronicle* that he came in on his day off to help tote bags of food from walking routes in his pickup: “I volunteered today. Our union does this every single year, we always try to promote as much as possible, try to talk to as many people as possible to bring out food. ... I figured I'm not doing anything else this weekend, it's a nice day, so I might as well help everybody else out.”

**Pierre Saba** of Cedar Rapids, IA Branch 373 told KCRG-TV, “The cans are heavy, but hunger is heavier.” On Food Drive Day he had to use his niece's car to help transport the food because his mail truck got full. “It's good; it's a way to bring the community unity,” he said.

It was the same in Columbia, SC, where Harvest Hope Food Bank CEO Wendy Broderick told WIS-TV, “Our letter carrier in our neighborhood was reminding us, ‘I want you to leave the bags out there.’ Hunger is a huge issue, and we can't move the needle alone,” she said.

**Branch collection results forms are due at NALC Headquarters by June 1. A final national total for the drive is scheduled to be announced shortly after that; a detailed report on the drive, including branch-by-branch results, will appear in a future issue of this magazine. PR**

