

Celebrate the season of giving



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Once again, the holiday season is upon us; a time when family and friends come together to celebrate. The season is filled with reflections of the past, hopes for the future and expressions of care and love. Along with this season of giving comes an opportunity for self-reflection and re-dedication of values. The National Association of Letter Carriers strives to maintain an emphasis on ideals of service and care for not only 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 completed its 30th year of existence this year. Over the past 30 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. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which halted the traditional food drive due to safety concerns, NALC continued on its mission to serve those in our communities by establishing the Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive. Through the donor drive, NALC members and branches were able to provide much-needed monetary relief to local food banks in their communities.

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 members alike have held events and have 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 only need 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. As such, almost a quarter of all letter carriers are veterans of our country's armed forces. 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 its beginnings, the group has grown to more than 18,000 members. NALC veterans graciously accepted the group and immediately began giving back to other veterans in need.

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 their family members living in the same household who have been affected by a natural disaster. Since being formed in 2018, branches and members have responded in force by gifting hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations to the foundation, providing relief to members affected by several storms, fires 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. And frequently, the letter carriers involved place their own safety at risk on behalf of others. Annually, NALC holds a luncheon to recognize several letter carriers for their acts of heroism and compassion carried out in the service of their communities.

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

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

