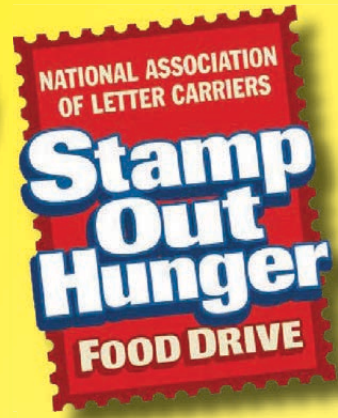


# HELPING WHEN IT'S NEEDED MOST



Toms River, NJ Branch 2128

**O**n Saturday, May 9, letter carriers across the United States continued in their roles as caretakers of their communities by participating in the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive, the nation's largest one-day food collection effort. NALC branches deliver these collections right back to local food banks, helping to feed the hungry in those communities.

"Letter carriers see how the communities that they serve are struggling, and it's with great pride that they and other volunteers contribute their time and energy to make such an impact, year after year," NALC President Brian L. Renfro said. "We know that the recipients appreciate it."

About 1 in 5 Americans, including millions of children, senior citizens and veterans, are unsure where their next meal will come from. The May food drive helps to relieve shortages of food that food pantries experience in spring after winter holiday donations have been depleted. And when summer arrives, most school meal programs are not available, so the need for food grows.

Since NALC's first national food drive in 1993, active and retired letter carriers, with the help of volunteers, have collected a total of 1.94 billion pounds of food leading up to this year's drive. Will this be the year that letter carriers' total exceeds 2 billion pounds of food? While the total for this year won't be announced until next month's issue of *The Postal Record*, anecdotal reports pointed to another great year.

Jaci Christiansen, community impact director at Head of the Lakes

United Way, explained to WDIO-TV in Duluth, MN, how the drive works. "Today is the national Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive," she said, "Logistically, you know, folks got some plastic bags in their mailbox a couple of days ago from their letter carriers. And so, folks are putting food out on their front steps in their mailboxes, and letter carriers and volunteers are heading around the community to pick things up."

Food banks around the country talked about the need for the drive. "Families will see those ever-so-tight food budgets being stretched even more. This is crucial," Ginette Bott, president and CEO of the Utah Food Bank in Salt Lake City, told KSLTV.

It was no different in Tampa, FL. "This is an incredible event," Dr. Sarah Combs, president and CEO of Metropolitan Ministries, told Fox 13. "We're seeing a huge increase in need not just from our seniors, but also from our families. Allowing us to be able to stock our shelves so we can make sure that we're feeding those families as well as our seniors in our community is just incredible."

"The need is still there" even as



Van Nuys, CA  
Branch 2462





San Francisco, CA  
Branch 214

gas and food prices rise, Dale Jones, program director at the Salvation Army Elyria, OH, Corps,

“Actually, the food drive is my favorite day of the year. It’s just taking something that we do every day—we’re out here on our routes, but it just makes it extra special that we’re able to collect the food for people in our own community,” **Lisa Darley** of San Antonio, TX Branch 421 told Texas Public Radio.



Jefferson City, MO  
Branch 127

told *The Chronicle-Telegram* while watching volunteers unload bags and boxes from Postal Service vans or carriers’ personal cars, then sort them into boxes for storage. Jones said he was grateful for the public, the volunteers who showed up, and the letter carriers who gave their time and effort.

Darley, who delivers in Kirby, TX, said that she often sees people who are in need but is rarely asked for help. This is something she can do without having to be asked.

“We’re hearing from families all the time right now that they are really feeling the stretch in their budgets, and so when our community can step up and show up and help us meet that goal of 10,000 pounds, it really allows us to ensure that families have what they need to get through the summer and make sure kids have fun,” Amy Allison, the executive director of Missoula, MT, Food Bank, told KPAX-TV.

“Today’s food drive is important in my opinion because of the economy,” **Mary Pedro**, president of Hilo, HI Branch 2932, told Big Island Now. With 40 percent of Hawai’i Island residents experiencing food insecurity, food drives are critical. “It’s not getting any easier, and there’s a lot of families in need, especially here in Hawai’i.”

And letter carriers were proud to step up to help.

**Terje Tuttle** of Maine Merged Branch 92 told Maine’s Total Coverage (WMTW) that the food drive is something they look forward to every year. “We serve the public. So, this is a great way to give back to the community and show that we are involved. It’s great, I love it and I truly look forward to it every year,” he said.



Minneapolis, MN  
Branch 9

Morgantown, WV Branch 783 President **Justin Jarman** said the timing of the drive is important. “Typically around the holidays there’s an influx of people giving to pantries because of the time of year,” he told MetroNews. “About six months later, May 9, those pantries start to diminish, so this one-day food drive extends that.”

“Last year here in Morgantown we collected about 7,200 pounds



Levittown, PA Branch 4973

of food, which was more than the years before,” he said. “We were able to distribute that to six different food pantries here in Morgantown.”

He said that it’s important for letter carriers to step up for people in their neighborhoods. “It’s a job where you are pretty much part of the family,” he said.

In the Redford, MI, neighborhood where she lives, Detroit Branch 1 member **Elaine Jones** was showing off the neighborhood donations to her letter carrier and fellow Branch 1 member, **Danielle Dill**. “When you tell us to put out the food, we put it out,” Jones said, as captured by WDIV-TV. “We got dried goods, canned goods, and I see the neighbors have put out a lot; we appreciate you.”

“I’m seeing bags here, everyone is donating. I have a great route and will be collecting a lot of food today!” Dill said. “I was one of those people that relied on help. It makes me feel good to give back. I’ll sleep tomorrow.”

The annual food drive wouldn’t be possible without the support of our national partners: the U.S. Postal Service, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, RR Donnelley, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO, Valpak, Nutri-Grain and CVS Health. These partners help by paying for the specially marked postcards, donating thousands of pounds of food and thousands of dollars to food pantries, donating bags that letter carriers distribute to customers, gathering volunteers, or getting out messages about the food drive.

Branches were asked to report their food drive totals to Headquarters by June 7. The total pounds of food collected, and top branch collections, will be announced in the July issue of *The Postal Record*. **PR**



Oklahoma City, OK Branch 458

North Texas Branch 4065

