Mail carriers collect food for pantries

By News Staff
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Letter carriers in Gloucester, Rockport, Manchester and Ipswich will be taking part in the national Stamp Out Hunger campaign this Saturday, May 14.

Courtesy image

This Saturday, North Shore mail carriers will be doing double-duty — picking up donated food packages while delivering mail on their routes and then delivering the tons and tons of food to local agencies that help feed the hungry.

The beneficiaries of the 30th annual Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive will be nonprofit community food resource centers such as Citizens Inn’s Haven from Hunger, Beverly Bootstraps’ Food Pantry and Open Door.

Postal patrons may participate by leaving a bag of food by their mailbox on the morning of Saturday, May 14.
The last year the food drive was held was 2019 and Citizen Inn, for example, received more than 25,000 pounds of food.

The Open Door, which operates in Ipswich and Gloucester, is specifically requesting donations of coffee, condiments, peanut butter, tuna, and cooking oil. Community members are urged not to donate items in glass jars, and to only contribute non-expired goods.

“Stamp Out Hunger is a unique opportunity for members of the community to make a food donation, without having to leave their front yard. It’s traditionally a hugely successful food drive for us, and it’s all possible because our local letter carriers are willing to go the extra mile to put food on the table for others,” The Open Door President and CEO Julie LaFontaine said in a release announcing the drive. “We’re deeply thankful to partner with them on this event and for their dedication to alleviating the impact of hunger locally.”

The initiative is part of a nationwide effort spearheaded by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC).

“This is the largest single-day food drive in the United States,” said Bruce Johnson, a retired Gloucester letter carrier who continues to help coordinate NALC Branch 25’s Stamp Out Hunger food drive on Cape Ann.

“The timing is crucial because food pantries can face shortages in the spring and summer months after a long winter, and most school programs are not available in the summer. It’s a good time to fill the shelves at the food pantries.”

There has not been an in-person Stamp Out Hunger food drive since 2019 due to the pandemic, Johnson said. The Open Door has typically received 10 to 15 tons of food as a result of the drive.
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