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MINISTRIES**

*At the Heart of Community*

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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**Stamp Out Hunger Community Food Drive:  
Place a Bag of Food by Your Mailbox for Local  
Letter Carriers on Saturday, May 14**



Photo is attached to email for media distribution. File name: 05-06-16\_UCM\_SOH\_Photo.jpg

*Photo Caption:*

Letter carriers across our region are busy preparing for the 24<sup>th</sup> annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, which takes place Saturday, May 14. Hosted by the National Association of Letter Carriers, it's the nation's largest single-day Food Drive. Pictured at far right is US Representative Don Beyer, Virginia 8<sup>th</sup> District, at the Main Office Postal Branch in Alexandria with (from left) Brian McCormick, Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive Coordinator for NALC Union Branch 567, along with representatives from two area Food Pantries that will receive donations: Robert Petitti, Executive Director of Koinonia Foundation, and Elizabeth McNally, Deputy Executive Director of United Community Ministries. UCM needs volunteers on Monday and Tuesday, May 16 and 17, to help sort and organize the many tons of donations at UCM's main office at 7511 Fordson Road. If you or your group (ages 14 and older) can help, email Emily Griffin at [volunteer@ucmagency.org](mailto:volunteer@ucmagency.org).

The 2016 Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, sponsored by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and supported by the US Postal Service, takes place Saturday, May 14, across the nation

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and throughout our Northern Virginia region. Now in its 24<sup>th</sup> year, Stamp Out Hunger is the nation's largest single-day food drive and has collected more than 1.4 billion pounds of food over the drive's history.

"It's so easy for residents to participate," says Brian McCormick of NALC Local Branch 567 and Alexandria area coordinator of Stamp Out Hunger. "Simply place bags of non-perishable food items by your mail box on Saturday, May 14, before your mail is delivered. Letter carriers will pick up the food and get it to local area food pantries, including United Community Ministries. Donations can also be dropped off at local post office branches throughout the day on May 14.

McCormick has served as champion for the annual Food Drive event for many years, helping to shed light on fighting local hunger. "My fellow Letter Carriers really get into it and enjoy seeing who can bring in the most food donations," he says. "Hunger affects us all. In my travels to Postal branches here in Alexandria, I have talked with many Postal employees who shared that they or members of their families have faced personal challenges and have had to turn to local agencies for food and other emergency assistance."

"We are very grateful to Brian and our local Letter Carriers for their ongoing support to fight hunger here in our neighborhoods," says Richard Dobber, UCM Director of Social Services. "Like other area food pantries, we especially welcome donations of canned tuna, rice, whole wheat pasta, low-sugar cereals, and heart-healthy food items, including low-salt canned goods like vegetables and sauces, nuts, and energy bars."

In Fairfax County, more than 63,460 people are considered "food insecure," according to recent "Mind the Meal Gap" project data from Feeding America. On a typical week day, 80 to 100 families are in need of supplemental groceries at UCM's Food Pantry to feed their families. Dobber continues, "We always have a need for individuals and groups who will sponsor food drives or contribute funds directly so that we can purchase food at discounted prices from our partners. When you donate funds designated to the Food Pantry and encourage your friends and colleagues to do so, we call that a 'virtual' food drive. You can even donate online at [www.ucmagency.org](http://www.ucmagency.org)."

UCM is in need of volunteers on Monday and Tuesday, May 16 and 17, to help process the many tons of Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive donations. Volunteers will sort and organize food at UCM's main office at 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria VA 22306. If you or your group (ages 14 and older) can help, email Emily Griffin at [volunteer@ucmagency.org](mailto:volunteer@ucmagency.org).

**United Community Ministries (UCM)** mobilizes the power of community to equip, educate, and empower people to measurably improve their lives. For the past 46 years, UCM has provided a vital connection between people in need and the people committed to helping them thrive. Services include:

- **Immediate Help.** For families and individuals in crisis, UCM provides counseling, food, financial aid, and referrals to other resources.
- **Children's Programs.** UCM provides the next generation with essential education and enriching experiences, including full-day early care and learning, new parent education, and after-school programs for youth leadership development and computer access.
- **Workforce Development.** UCM helps adults increase their employability with job counseling and computer training and with ESL and citizenship classes.

In Fiscal Year 2015, thanks to generous community support, UCM provided life-changing assistance to 10,200 individuals in 4,000 families in the Alexandria portion of Fairfax County. This included 5,000 children – more than any other private nonprofit agency in the Huntington-Mount Vernon area.