



**UNITED
COMMUNITY
MINISTRIES**

At the Heart of Community

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**WORLD PASTA DAY CHALLENGE AT GOLD'S GYM ALEXANDRIA
SUPPORTS UCM FOOD PANTRY**



Photo: File name 11-06-15_UCM_GoldsGym_photo.jpg
Photo attached as 300dpi+ with email distributed to media.

Did you know that October 25 was World Pasta Day? To mark the occasion, Gold's Gym Alexandria on Richmond Highway issued a "World Pasta Day Challenge" to its members during October, encouraging them to donate boxes of pasta to help stock the Food Pantry at United Community Ministries. Pictured at Gold's Gym Alexandria is Personal Trainer John Scott, showing his strength and stamina to lift one of the bins of 100 pounds of donated pasta – just part of the more than 750 pounds collected.

"We are grateful to Gold's Gym and all our community members who are so creative in coming up with new ways to make it fun to support UCM and families in need," says Christine Lucas, UCM Director of Development and Communications. "Every week, an average 400 to 500 families visit our Food Pantry

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for supplemental groceries. Pasta is an ideal non-perishable food item to donate. It's nutritious, easy to prepare, and delicious. The 750 pounds of pasta collected equates to thousands of nutritious meals for families who are struggling to make ends meet."

"I want to especially thank Gold's Gym manager Bob Shepherd for the gym's ongoing support," says Suzy Coffey, also a personal trainer at the gym and a member of UCM's volunteer Board of Directors. "At UCM, 'community' is our middle name, and we appreciate Bob's partnership to encourage our community of Gold's Gym members and families to make a difference for neighbors in need."

If you or your group or business would like to host a Holiday Food Collection Drive for UCM, email marcos.castillo@ucmagency.org. He can provide a flyer to customize, collection bins and signs, and other resources to make your drive a success. Thanksgiving Food donations are due at UCM no later than Thursday, Nov. 19. December Holiday Food is due no later than Dec. 11.

United Community Ministries (UCM) mobilizes the power of community to equip, educate, and empower people to measurably improve their lives. For more than 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 food, financial aid, counseling, and referrals to other resources.
- **Education and Employment.** Services such as job training and coaching, full-day early care and learning, ESL and citizenship classes, and parental education help people achieve stability and self-reliance.
- **Community Engagement.** UCM's neighborhood centers, with after-school programs and leadership training, engage youth and families in skill-building and broader social networks for success.

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, including almost 5,000 children.

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