

[The Connection](#)

- [Sign in](#)

Monday, March 20, 2017

Communities ▼

Upvote 0

Votes

Food Drive Raises Hopes at Rising Hope

Letter Carriers deliver more than mail this Saturday.

[Tuesday, May 8, 2007](#)

- [Sign in to favorite this](#)
- [Discuss](#) [Comment](#), [Blog about](#)
- Share this [Email](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church and the U.S. Postal Service share a common goal Saturday, May 12 — "No Empty Tummies!"

That is the day everyone is urged to support the 15th annual Letter Carriers Food Drive and its 2007 slogan, "No Empty Tummies!" by placing non-perishable food at their doors or mailboxes to be collected by letter carriers as they make their rounds. The donated food, nationwide, will be used by various non-profit institutions to nourish the needy.

"We estimate we give away at least 1,200 cans of food weekly which helps to feed about 200 families totalling about 500 to 525 people every week," said Sandra Leathery, minister, Volunteer Coordination, Rising Hope Church, on Russell Road just off Route 1.

"We are one of the few food pantries that allow people to pick the items they want. We really depend on this food drive to supply our needs," she said.

"We've been participating in this event for the past 11 years. Last year we received four and a half tons of food and the year before we collected six tons. If we get another six tons this year, that will carry us to about July," Leathery said.

Postal carriers pick up the food as they deliver the mail and see that it is distributed to local non-profit organizations. The two primary recipients in the Mount Vernon area are Rising Hope and United Community Ministries, according to Laura Derby, Rising Hope's church administrator.

Throughout the year Rising Hope also gets food from other churches, various grocery stores, Fairfax County's "Food for Others," and individual donations. "Our volunteers visit grocery stores each week to pick up their excess and items that are not selling," Leathery explained.

Food received from the grocery stores are of all categories, not just non-perishables. "Grocery stores supply us with eggs, milk, bread, meat and many other items," Derby said.

All of Rising Hope's food is distributed at the church through a database/appointment system. "Our only requirement is that recipients have to live within this zip code," Leathery said.

TWO SUCH GRATEFUL recipients are Blanca Bell and Elizabeth Ellis. The latter also serves as a volunteer in Rising Hope's Food and Clothing ministries.

"I come in once a week to get food to feed three adults and two children," said Bell, a resident of the Hybla Valley area, who has been depending on Rising Hope's Food Ministry since last November.

"This is the best place for me to come because I have diabetes and here I can decide what food I need with my condition. This really helps us a lot," Bell said. Originally from Mexico, Bell has lived in Northern Virginia for the past 21 years.

Ellis, who resides just off Buckman Road, has been attending Rising Hope for the past two years. In addition to her volunteer service in both the Food and Clothing ministries, she also participates in the church's fund raising activities.

"I am very grateful to be able to utilize the food ministry as well as serve as a volunteer. I'm disabled and living on only my Social Security. It's a real blessing to be able to get \$40 worth of food each week," she said.

A native of the District of Columbia, Ellis was a federal employee for 30 years in the U.S. Department of Transportation. She moved to northern Virginia in 2000.

Although her grown children live in the area, Ellis lives alone. "They help when they can but they have their own families and needs," she said.

"I come to Rising Hope to worship every Sunday. The people are beautiful people here. Everyone gets along. It's truly a blessing to have Rising Hope," Ellis said.

The Food Ministry is open two days a week — Wednesdays from 2 to 4 p.m. and Thursdays from 4 to 8 p.m. "The hours are staggered to help people that work. They can come before or after work to get what they need," Leathery said.

"We also deliver food to approximately 42 shut-ins and seniors that can not come here to pick up their food," she said. The church has volunteer drivers as well as other volunteers who fill food bags for those who have food delivered.

In addition to the annual Letter Carriers' Drive and other contributions, Rising Hope is a member of the Capital Area Food

Bank and the Mid-Atlantic Gleaning Network. The latter supplies most of the produce. In addition to other churches, their Food Ministry is also supported by Scout troops, youth groups, and Sunday schools, according to Derby.

Canned food donations should be placed in a sack or bag next to individual residential mailboxes or at the front door. Letter carriers will collect and deliver them

More like this story

- [Letter Carriers Collect And Deliver](#)
- [The Thanks Is in the Giving](#)
- [‘Stamp Out Hunger’ Fills Pantries for the Poor](#)
- [Help ‘Stamp Out Hunger’ This Saturday](#)
- [Volunteers Persevere In Tough Times](#)

Sections

[News](#) / [Sports](#) / [Opinion](#) / [Politics](#) / [Education](#) / [Entertainment](#) / [HomeLifeStyle](#) / [Wellbeing](#) / [Newcomers](#) / [People](#)

About Us

[Staff](#) / [Advertising](#) / [Contact Us](#) / [Terms of Use](#) / [Privacy Policy](#) / [Print Archives Online](#)

Online Submissions

[Free Digital Subscription](#) / [Internship Applications](#) / [Mother's Day Photo Submission](#)

Contents of this site are © Copyright 2017 Ellington. All rights reserved.