

Letter carriers deliver hope to Downers Grove food pantry

Downers Grove Area FISH receives 24,000 lbs. of food

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An all volunteer organization, the Downers Grove Area FISH Pantry knows a thing or two about donating time and money in the service of those less fortunate.

Last week, however, it was the charity organization that benefited from this spirit of giving. The Downers Grove FISH Pantry was the local recipient of the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, receiving more than 24,000 pounds of food from local donations.

"We hit an all time high with the amount of food that came in," said June Miller, corresponding secretary for the pantry. "This is an extraordinary amount of food.

Now in its 24th year, the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive invites letter carriers across the country to "display concern, compassion

and commitment to their postal customers and to the communities in which they work and live" by working to collect and distribute food donations.

Miller said the May 14 event involved delivering paper bags to addresses in the community, which the property owners could fill with suggested items. Filled bags were left by the mailbox on the day of the drive and then delivered to the food pantry.

According to the National Association of Letter Carriers, which sponsors the food drive, 10,000 cities and towns in the U.S. participated in the effort.

"It is gratifying to see so many NALC members and other volunteers sacrifice their time and energy to make sure this humanitarian effort is a success, year after year," NALC President Fredric Rolando said in a statement. "I'm sure that the recipients of our efforts appreciate it."

In Downers Grove, the drive's recipient was certainly grateful.

Miller said the overwhelming response by village residents is

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the hallmark of a "very generous community."

But, the community's generosity didn't end there.

Miller said members of the Downers Grove North High School football team volunteered from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. the day of the food drive. Some delivered the filled bags to the pantry, while others stocked its shelves.

Miller added that the food will be dispensed over the next several months.

Founded in 1969, the Downers Grove FISH pantry has been in operation for more than 45 years. The pantry, located at 4340 Prince St. in Downers Grove, assists between 230 and 260 families every month.

For more information on Downers Grove Area FISH, visit www.downersgrovefish.org.