



Blue Ridge Area
FOOD BANK



News Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Invites Schools to Join Annual School Food Drive Sign up by February 27 for March 6-24 event.

VERONA, Va. (February 1, 2023) – The 2023 annual School Food Drive will run from March 6-24. All the food collected goes to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and its food pantry partners in the greater Charlottesville area. Public and private schools operating in Albemarle, Buckingham, Charlottesville, Culpeper, Greene, Fluvanna, Madison, and Orange counties will be led by Albemarle High School students Emily Warren and Lily Stendig and will participate in collecting food.

Local students, educators, and other interested parties are invited to sign up to take part in the food drive. The deadline to register is **February 27**. Food will be collected at designated areas within the participating schools during the drive and then donated to the Food Bank at the end. It's easy to get involved! Contact Brynna Strand, volunteer and food drive coordinator, for more information and to get a toolkit to make your event successful.

"The School Food Drive is very special because students lead the project, and students and staff bring in donations, which shows the large impact younger people can have in a community," said Warren. "I am excited to continue working on this project with the Food Bank! Last year we collected more than 10,000 pounds of food. This year I am thrilled to continue the upward momentum, expanding the drive to counties that previously did not participate and getting more schools and students involved!"

In the past, dozens of public and private schools have taken part in the annual drive. Some even compete to collect the most pounds of food. In addition to schools, businesses and organizations are invited again this year to offer support and join in.

"Local students inspire us every year by participating in this community-wide effort to help alleviate hunger," said Michael McKee, CEO of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. "We're pleased that it takes place during National Nutrition Month, helping raise awareness of the vital need in our community. One in 12 in our region are food insecure."

This annual event boosts food supplies at the Food Bank in spring when donations typically run lower than usual. The food collected will provide meals for nearly 21,000 individuals and families experiencing hunger who are served each month by the Food Bank and 90 partners—soup kitchens, shelters, and nonprofits—and programs throughout the city of Charlottesville and Albemarle, Buckingham, Culpeper, Fluvanna, Greene, Madison, and Orange counties.

Since the annual School Food Drive began in 2011, schools and organizations have collected 84,883 pounds of food, helping provide 69,967 meals for neighbors and proving how young people are making a difference in their communities.

If your school or business would like to participate in the School Food Drive or learn more, please get in touch with Brynna Strand at bstrand@brafb.org by Monday, February 27.

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About the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank

Founded in 1981 and headquartered in Verona, Virginia, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is the largest organization alleviating hunger in western and central Virginia. The Food Bank serves an average of 109,500 people per month across 25 counties and eight cities through distribution centers in Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Winchester, and Verona. We're serving record numbers of Virginians during a prolonged pandemic and its associated economic impacts through our network of more than 400 community partners, which includes food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, schools, libraries, health care clinics, community centers, and more. We pledge to continue innovating and adapting to secure, store, and distribute more food to more individuals, families, children, and seniors experiencing hunger. The Food Bank is a member of Feeding America®, a national food bank association that supports 200 food banks across the United States providing 6.6 billion meals to tens of millions of people through 60,000 partner pantries. For more information, visit www.brafb.org.