



Blue Ridge Area  
**FOOD BANK**  
Everyone should have enough to eat.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and 26 Area Schools Partner for 12th Annual School Food Drive**

*The 26 local public and private schools and local YMCA taking part in this year's drive are the most since 2016.*

**VERONA, Va. (March 2, 2023)** – Starting on Monday, March 6, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, along with 26 local schools, will kick off the annual School Food Drive in the greater Charlottesville area. In its 12th year, the drive will run from March 6-24.

The annual drive boosts food supplies at the Food Bank during the spring when donations traditionally run low, and with pandemic SNAP benefits expiring on March 1, the Food Bank expects to see increased demand. The food collected provides meals for nearly 21,000 local individuals and families experiencing hunger who are served each month by the Food Bank, along with its 90 partners throughout the region, including soup kitchens, shelters, nonprofits, and partner pantries.

Albemarle High School students Emily Warren and Lily Stendig are leading this year's efforts in the schools, and they are looking to build on the success of last year's drive, which collected 11,516 pounds of food, equal to 9,596 meals.

"It's a huge honor to help lead this year's School Food Drive and continue its tradition of serving those experiencing food insecurity," Warren said. "This isn't a problem that should only be left to adults to address. We have peers experiencing hunger, and we need to play a part in helping them and other families who are affected by food insecurity."

Participating schools for the 2023 drive include:

- Greenbrier Elementary
- Jackson-Via Elementary
- Johnson Elementary
- Venable Elementary

- Buford Middle
- Charlottesville High
- Albemarle High School
- Charlottesville Waldorf School
- Crozet Elementary School
- Field School of Charlottesville
- Free Union Country School
- Hollymead Elementary School
- Journey Middle School
- Locust Grove Primary School
- Locust Grove Elementary School
- Greer Elementary School
- Monticello High School
- Murray Elementary School
- Ninos and Nature
- Peabody School
- Renaissance School
- Staunton Montessori School
- St. Anne’s Belfield School
- Stone-Robinson Elementary School
- Stony Point Elementary School
- Tandem Friends School
- \*Charlottesville YMCA

“The School Food Drive underscores the impact our area’s youth can have in addressing food insecurity,” said Brynna Strand, volunteer and food drive coordinator at the Food Bank. “It is incredibly inspiring to see their passion and generosity help thousands of families experiencing hunger throughout our region, year after year.”

Since the annual School Food Drive began in 2011, 84,883 pounds of food, or 69,967 meals, have been collected for neighbors by the participating schools and organizations. The Food Bank’s collection barrels are available throughout each of the participating schools. To learn more about how to support the 2023 School Food Drive, go to: <https://www.brafb.org/event/school-food-drive-2023/>.

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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 and program sites, 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](http://www.brafb.org).