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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Annual School Food Drive Crosses 100,000 Pounds of Food Collected for Blue Ridge Area Food Bank**

**Charlottesville, Va. (April 10, 2024)**— The 2024 School Food Drive, a testament to local students' dedication and hard work, has propelled the total food collected for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank from this event over the 100,000-pound mark.

Since 2011, a total of 101,909 pounds of food, or 84,925 meals, have been collected for our community members experiencing hunger through this annual drive. This year, students from 20 schools and two organizations across the Blue Ridge gathered 6,531 pounds of food, making a difference by helping provide 5,442 meals.

Emily Warren and Lily Stendig are student leaders from Albemarle High School and part of "Students Working Against Hunger." This year, Sofia Smith from Tandem Friends School joined as a co-coordinator. Lily is in her second term, and Emily is in her third year as School Food Drive coordinator.

Warren said, "This is a huge milestone and a physical reminder of the difference that youth can make in the community. One hundred thousand pounds is certainly something that must be acknowledged and celebrated for the students in the community. Remember that donations don't stop just because donation bins are no longer in the school lobby. The Food Bank is currently at a historical low in the ratio between donations and need, so we really need to keep helping our neighbors in the community! I am very thankful to everyone who participated, and very proud that I was able to be involved these past three years! Thank you so much to the community for your donations, and make sure to keep them coming!"

Participating schools (and organizations) for the 2024 drive included:

- Agnor Hurt Elementary School
- Albemarle High School
- Baker Butler Elementary School
- Brownsville Elementary School
- Crozet Elementary School
- Greenbrier Elementary School
- Greer Elementary School
- Henley Middle School
- Monticello High School
- Murray Elementary School
- Peabody School
- Renaissance School
- Scottsville Elementary School
- Staunton Montessori School
- Stone Robinson Elementary School
- Stony Point Elementary School
- Tandem Friends School
- The Covenant School: Upper School
- The International School of Charlottesville
- Waldorf School
- The Dairy Market and Cav Futures

School Food Drive winners were determined by the number of pounds collected per student (pounds collected / student body population). The 2024 winners include (broken out by school classes):

**Elementary Schools:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Murray Elementary
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Crozet Elementary
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Brownsville Elementary

**Elementary/Middle Schools:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Waldorf School
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Peabody School

**Middle School:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Henley Middle School

**Middle/Upper Schools:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Covenant School
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Tandem Friends

**High Schools:**

- High 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Renaissance School
- High 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Albemarle High School
- High 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Monticello High School

**Most pounds collected overall:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Murray Elementary School
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Covenant School
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Crozet Elementary School

Livia Marrs, Food Bank Volunteer and Food Drive Manager notes, "The commitment and effort of these young students and the community should be celebrated! Crossing the 100,000-pound collected threshold is something we could only do together. We are extremely grateful for the years of support we've received. The food and grocery items collected here will have an immediate and positive impact on those who need it most in our community."

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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 127,500 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 through our network of more than 400 community partners, which includes food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, schools, libraries, healthcare 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 partner food bank of Feeding America®, a national association with a network of more than 200 food banks, 21 statewide food bank associations, and over 60,000 partner agencies, food pantries and meal programs. Last year, this charitable food assistance network helped provide 5.2 billion meals to tens of millions of people facing food insecurity. For more information, visit [www.brafb.org](http://www.brafb.org).

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