

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LETTER CARRIER FOOD DRIVE

Every year on Mother's Day weekend, we are the fortunate recipients of the "Stamp Out Hunger" Letter Carrier's Food Drive. This is the second largest collection of food for the year. During the holidays, there are many wonderful organizations that gather up items in honor of Thanksgiving and Christmas. All of that food gets us through the next few months . . . right up to early May. Then, the Letter Carriers of Snohomish County (nationwide, really), drop off postcard announcements, then the bags in mailboxes days before the big pick up. Residents are asked to fill this bag for the mailperson on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. These groceries get us through the fall . . . then back to the holidays and we start all over again.

First of all, I would like to personally thank the generous people of Snohomish because you make it so we can serve our families healthy foods all year long, with special services for every holiday. I'd also like show appreciation for Haggen, Safeway, Albertsons, Franz Bakery and Northwest Harvest for the many donations they give throughout the year. And a big round of applause for an amazing Board of Directors coupled with the 130+ volunteers that make this place run so well.

Now, to the main reason for this message . . . A quick tutorial on what to include (and not include) in this year's Letter Carrier Food Drive:

- 1) Keep it healthy. Canned vegetables, canned fruit, healthy cereals and staples, like peanut butter and jelly are greatly appreciated and distributed weekly.
- 2) Go for non-breakable packaging: plastic jars of jelly, applesauce and pasta sauce instead of glass.
- 3) We like fresh fruits and vegetables, just not for this particular drive. Sometimes we can't unpack the bag for days and by that time, well, it's not fresh anymore!
- 4) Don't be a part of our Wall of Shame (pretty please) . . . over the past seven years we have built up a collection of the strangest items people think we should have, like:
  - a. 2010: Ten year old box of cake mix sealed in as plastic bag with the note, "May have bugs".
  - b. 2014: Pasta that is shaped, uhhh, well, let's just say, do not include leftovers from bachelorette parties for us!
  - c. 2015: Two cans of 1984 Quail eggs.
  - d. 2016: A can of Split Pea Soup from 1986

We appreciate our Letter Carriers because this is not an easy day for them. It's a lot of weight (collectively, they bring in over 20,000 pounds in one day!) and for some this requires a few trips back and forth to the post office to drop off groceries. Finally, the end result is a gift to many of our friends and neighbors ~ again, thank you for your part!

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