



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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Students Join to Support Neighbors Through Annual School Food Drive

Schools and Businesses: *Sign up by February 21 to participate in the March 3-21 event.*

VERONA, Va. (February 7, 2025) – Public and private schools, as well as organizations in Albemarle, Augusta, Buckingham, Culpeper, Greene, Fluvanna, Madison, Orange, and Rockingham counties, along with the cities of Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Waynesboro, and Staunton, are invited to participate in the annual School Food Drive this year. The registration deadline is February 21, and the event will take place from March 3 to March 21. All food collected during the drive will be donated to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and its food pantry partners in the area. This year's event will also feature a fundraising component.

Local students, educators, and other interested parties are encouraged to sign up for the 2025 School Food Drive. Getting involved is easy! For more information and to receive a toolkit that makes participation simple and enjoyable, please contact Livia Marrs, the volunteer and food drive manager.

This year's student leaders are Lily Stendig from Albemarle High School and Sofia Smith from Tandem Friends School. Food will be collected at designated areas within participating schools during the drive and donated to the Food Bank once it concludes.

"This food drive shines a spotlight on what the young people in this community are doing to make a difference. We are joining together across schools, organizations, and even counties to help provide food for families that need it," said Stendig.

"Last year we connected with more than 20 schools and organizations and collected enough food to provide more than 5,000 meals. This year, we're expanding our reach and hope to reach even more schools and organizations to help provide even more food withing the community," said Smith.

The School Food Drive started in 2011, inspired by a local student. Since then, countless public and private schools have taken part in this annual event. Some schools even compete to see who can collect the most pounds of food. Businesses and organizations are also invited to offer their support and participate.

"We are solving hunger, every day and the young folks participating in this drive every year are a big part of it. It's an inspiration to see them rally around the community and in turn the community rally around them," said Michael McKee, CEO of the Food Bank, "Demand for food assistance in our area is increasing, making this food drive crucial, right now. The food and funds collected from the drive are vital to helping restock our shelves so that more people can have access to nutritious meals."

All the food collected from this annual event helps provide meals for individuals and families experiencing hunger, who are served by the Food Bank and its partners such as soup kitchens, shelters, nonprofits, and programs throughout the region.

Since 2011, a total of 101,909 pounds of food—equivalent to 84,925 meals—have been collected through this annual drive for community members living with hunger. Last year, students from 20 schools and two organizations across the Blue Ridge region gathered 6,531 pounds of food, providing 5,442 meals. This effort highlights how young people are making a positive impact in their communities.

If your school, organization, or business would like to participate in the School Food Drive or learn more, please contact Livia Marrs at lmarrs@brafb.org by Friday, February 21.

About the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank

The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is the largest hunger-relief organization serving Western and Central Virginia. Founded in 1981, the Food Bank serves 25 counties and 8 cities through distribution centers in Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Winchester, and its headquarters in Verona. Each month, the Food Bank supports an average of 148,200 guest visits, reaching record numbers of Virginians through a network of nearly 400 community partners—food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and program sites. As a partner food bank of Feeding America®, the nation's largest hunger-relief organization, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank pledges to continue innovating and adapting to secure, store, and distribute more food to more individuals, families, children, and seniors experiencing hunger. For more information, visit www.brafb.org.

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