



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

14th Annual School Food Drive Provides Record-Breaking 17,642 Pounds of Food for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank; Annual Event Surpasses 100,000 Meal Milestone

VERONA, Va. (April 21, 2025) – The **14th Annual School Food Drive** reached a historic milestone, delivering 17,642 pounds of food (the equivalent of **16,791 meals**) to individuals and families experiencing hunger. This year's effort marks the largest collection to date, bringing the total number of meals provided since the drive's inception in 2011 to **100,766**.

This year's drive expanded its reach, uniting **33 schools** (listed below). Among the new participants were 5 schools from the Greater Charlottesville area and 10 from the Shenandoah Valley, in a record-breaking collaboration. Their contributions have strengthened the initiative's impact, ensuring more families have access to essential resources.

Since its inception in 2011, the School Food Drive has provided a **cumulative total of 119,533 pounds of food** for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, equating to 100,766 meals for individuals and families living with food insecurity. This year's effort was spearheaded by student leaders Lily Stendig of Albemarle High School and Sofia Smith of Tandem Friends School; their leadership inspired participation from more schools across a broader geographical area, marking a significant milestone in the effort to eradicate hunger in the region.

"This record-breaking year highlights the incredible dedication and compassion of our students and schools," said Lily Stendig. "Surpassing the milestone of 100,000 meals is a truly remarkable accomplishment and a clear example of the impact we can achieve when we unite as a community."

"Being part of this year's food drive has been an incredible experience," said Sofia Smith. "Seeing so many schools come together and contribute to a record-breaking collection shows just how powerful our community can be. Every meal we provide makes a real difference for families in need, and I'm proud to have been part of this milestone moment."

Organized by local students, schools, and community partners, this annual initiative continues to grow in size and impact. This year's expansion into Valley schools has strengthened its reach and demonstrated the potential of collective action to address food insecurity.

Participating schools for the 2025 drive include:

- Agnor Elementary School
- Albemarle High School
- Albemarle Montessori School
- Bessie Weller Elementary
- Brownsville Elementary School
- Buffalo Gap High School
- Buffalo Gap Middle School
- Charlottesville Waldorf School
- Churchville Elementary School
- Covenant School (Lower School)
- Covenant School (Upper School)
- Crozet Elementary School
- Field School
- Greenbrier Elementary School
- Henley Middle School
- J. Frank Hillyard Middle School
- Johnson Elementary School
- Monticello High School
- Mountaintop Montessori School
- Murray Elementary School
- Peabody School
- Red Hill Elementary School
- Renaissance School
- Staunton High School
- Staunton Montessori School
- Stone Robinson Elementary School
- Stony Point Elementary School
- Stuarts Draft Middle School
- Tandem Friends School
- Trailblazer Elementary School
- William Perry Elementary School
- Journey Middle School
- Lacey Spring Elementary School

Livia Marrs, the Food Bank’s Volunteer and Food Drive Manager, remarked, "The dedication and hard work of these young people and the community deserve to be celebrated. Reaching the milestone of 100,000 meals provided is a shared achievement. We are thankful for their efforts. The food and grocery items gathered will provide immediate relief and bring a positive impact within our community."

Media Opportunity: Student leaders Lily Stendig and Sofia Smith, along with Food Drive Manager Livia Marrs, will be available for interviews on Tuesday April 22, 2025, from 10:00 to 10:30 a.m. at the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank’s Eastern Region Distribution Center, located at 1207 Harris St., Charlottesville or by teleconference. To schedule an interview, please contact Les Sinclair at lsinclair@brafb.org or 434-962-5403.

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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