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MEDIA ALERT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LETTER CARRIERS HELP 'STAMP OUT HUNGER' THROUGH 17th ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE

Phoenix, AZ – More than 5,000 Valley letter carriers will join more than 200,000 of their fellow National Association of Letter Carriers in collecting donations on Saturday, May 9, as the 17th annual “Stamp Out Hunger!” food drive seeks to deliver assistance to those struggling with hunger.

A small local food drive that started in the 1970s by NALC Local Union 576 in Phoenix went national in 1993 and has grown into the largest one-day food drive in the United States, with more than 909 million pounds of food collected since expanding nationally in 1993. Last year a record 73.1 million pounds was collected across the country, including 460,000 pounds from 25 postal stations in Arizona, which was delivered to St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance.

With the summer months always an especially difficult time to keep the food bank shelves stocked – and more challenging than ever in the current economic climate – the NALC drive provides a huge infusion of nonperishable items to St. Mary’s and food banks across the country at a critical juncture.

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“Folks don’t always realize that with kids out of school, we distribute more food into the community during the summer months than we do during the holidays,” said Terry Shannon, President and CEO of St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance. “We truly rely on the food collected during this food drive to help us get through the summer months, so we very much appreciate the effort given to this by the National Association of Letter Carriers.”

City and rural letter carriers will deliver grocery bags to residents’ mailboxes the week of May 4. On Saturday, May 9, those who can help are encouraged to place those bags, filled with nonperishable food items, next to their mailboxes. Letter carriers will do the rest, picking up the bags and delivering them to St. Mary’s and food banks across the nation.

Items most needed by the Food Bank include canned fruit and soups, pasta, peanut butter, 100 percent juice (in plastic bottles), canned meat, cereal and rice.

“In these difficult economic times, hunger is an issue that must be addressed in every community across our country,” said William H. Young, NALC president. “We see it daily on our routes. That’s why more than ever before, we need everybody’s help to make a real difference.”

For statistics on poverty and hunger, media inquiries, photos or interview requests, please contact Jerry Brown at (602) 343-3160, (602) 684-0939 or jjbrown@firstfoodbank.org.

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ABOUT ST. MARY’S FOOD BANK ALLIANCE: St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance, the world’s first food bank, is a non-sectarian, nonprofit organization that alleviates hunger by efficiently gathering and distributing food to 534 sites that serve the hungry. Serving 13 of Arizona’s 15 counties, the organization is committed to volunteerism, building community relationships, and improving the quality of life for Arizonans in need. During Fiscal Year 2008-2009, the Food Bank will distribute more than 60 million pounds of food to families and individuals, provide enough food for 300,000 meals every day, and garner more than 230,000 volunteer service hours. Web site: www.FirstFoodBank.org, Phone: 602-352-3640.