

Fill a Bag-Help Feed Families

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Stephanie Ellis stands on the loading dock of Arlington N Post Office late Saturday afternoon waiting for the mail trucks to return with their donated food. Ellis is the coordinator of the postal AFAC food drive for the 22207 zip code. She says she has been doing this for 15-20 years. “This is my passion.”

Brittany Davis pulls in. She has route T-6 which means she fills in for the regular carriers with a different route each day. She says she has brought back five bags. “They were heavy; a lot of people put in canned goods.” She says her strategy is to deliver the mail and pick up the food at the same time if the residence is on a corner but if it is in the middle of the block, she has to deliver the mail and come back to pick up the food because it is too heavy to carry down the block. She is doing double duty.

The carrier for Route 737 backs up and opens the back mail truck doors. He has been participating in the food drive for decades. The back of his truck seems to be filled with bags of pasta, frosted flakes, chicken noodle soup and tuna. But he says it is light this year. “I think it is inflation; people aren’t donating as much.”

Ellis adds that she thinks the low-



Stephanie Ellis, coordinator of the Arlington N. Post Office location food drive.

er contributions may also be related to the change of date this year.

“We have always held this the Saturday before Mother’s Day but this year was different. I don’t know why they changed it but people didn’t get the word. People were putting out food last week but we picked it up anyway.” The food drive is traditionally held on the second Saturday in May, which generally falls right before Mother’s Day but Mother’s Day fell ear-



Carrier for route 737 unloads back of his mail truck.

lier than usual this year.

Nicole Waldron arrives and slowly carries a box to the dock. “This one is heavy.” She says it is her first year as a carrier and on the food drive.

Ellis says Waldron has done Route 54 today, which is Ellis’s usual route, but Ellis had to be at the post office all day making sure the carriers know what to do. “I tell them how important it is to give food to the needy.”