

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Donated not Wasted: Lee County's third annual food-rescue campaign begins as seasonal residents head north

Donations accepted March 22 through April 5

Fort Myers, FL, March 15, 2021 – Lee County Solid Waste's third annual "Donated not Wasted" food rescue campaign encourages seasonal residents and visitors to donate unopened pantry items before returning north. The two previous campaigns resulted in 6,000 pounds of food diverted from potential disposal – enough to provide 5,000 meals to hungry people.

Nationwide, Americans throw out 30% to 40% of the available food supply. In Lee County, food waste accounts for 13%, or 70,000 tons, of the local waste stream, according to a 2016 audit.

Since the onset of COVID-19, the need for food has increased dramatically. "Last year we distributed 32.4 million pounds of food," said Meg Madzar, food drive coordinator for Harry Chapin Food Bank. "Now, we are distributing nearly 1 million pounds a week and feeding a quarter of a million people a month."

People can drop off unopened canned or dry goods from Monday, March 22, to April 5 at libraries or Lee County Parks & Recreation rec centers. Additional collection containers are located at the Parks & Recreation's Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve and at Lee County Solid Waste's Topaz Court Household Chemical Waste Facility.

Partners in the Donated not Wasted campaign include:

- Harry Chapin Food Bank
- Lee County Government – Lee County Solid Waste, Lee County Parks & Recreation and the Lee County Library System
- Additional municipal libraries: City of Sanibel's library and Town of Fort Myers Beach's library
- Waste Pro
- FOX4

For more information, visit www.leegov.com/solidwaste or call 239-533-8000.

Drop off locations include:

Recreation centers

- Estero Recreation Center, 9200 Corkscrew Palms Blvd., Estero, FL 33928
- North Fort Myers Recreation Center, 2000 North Recreation Park Way, North Fort Myers, FL 33903
- Veterans Park Recreation Center, 55 Homestead Road South, Lehigh Acres , FL 33936
- Wa-Ke Hatchee Recreation Center, 16760 Bass Road, Fort Myers, FL 33908

Library locations

- Bonita Springs Public Library, 10560 Reynolds St., Bonita Springs, FL 34135
- Cape Coral-Lee County Public Library, 921 S.W. 39th Terrace, Cape Coral, FL 33914
- Captiva Memorial Library, 11560 Chapin Lane, Captiva, FL 33924

- Dunbar Jupiter Hammon Public Library, 3095 Blount St., Fort Myers, FL 33916
- East County Regional Library, 881 Gunnery Road, Lehigh Acres, FL 33971
- Fort Myers Regional Library, 2450 First St., Fort Myers, FL 33901
- Fort Myers Beach Public Library, 2755 Estero Blvd., Fort Myers Beach, FL 33931
- Johann Fust Community Library, 1040 W. 10th St., Boca Grande, FL 33921
- Lakes Regional Library, 15290 Bass Road, Fort Myers, FL 33919
- North Fort Myers Public Library, 2001 N. Tamiami Trail, North Fort Myers, FL 33903
- Northwest Regional Library, 519 Chiquita Blvd. North, Cape Coral, FL 33993
- Pine Island Public Library, 10701 Russell Road, Bokeelia, FL 33922
- Riverdale Branch Library, 2421 Buckingham Road, Fort Myers, FL 33905
- Sanibel Public Library, 770 Dunlop Road, Sanibel, FL 33957
- South County Regional Library, 21100 Three Oaks Parkway, Estero, FL 33928

Additional sites

- Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve, 7751 Penzance Blvd., Fort Myers, FL 33966
- Topaz Court Solid Waste Annex, 6441 Topaz Court, Fort Myers, FL 33966