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96TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION
Georgia State Association of Letter Carriers
Augusta Marriott, Augusta, Georgia
On June 8 and 9, 2018

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GRIGGS: Let's call to order, please. Good morning, everyone.

ALL: Good morning.

MR. GRIGGS: Y'all are bright-eyed and bushy tailed and didn't say in the hospitality room too long last night. At this time, we're going to ask Pam Moore, president of Branch 263, to come to the podium. First of all, we want to ask you all to give Pam and her committee a round of applause for their wonderful reception in Augusta, Georgia.

A few items. The cell phones. If a phone goes off, \$5. Brother Tim McCray will be collecting. No exceptions. Vibration or silent. When you come to the mic, please give your name and branch number. Name and branch number. Everybody's clear. Pamela?

MS. MOORE: Good morning, everybody.

ALL: Good morning.

MS. MOORE: I hope everybody enjoyed themselves yesterday and got a chance to do a boat ride. If you didn't, it was nice. So, if you guys get a chance to do it today while you're here, then by all means do so. Now we'll have the invocation by Eugene Boyd.

[INVOCATION OFFERED BY EUGENE BOYD]

[NATIONAL ANTHEM PRESENTED BY ROLAND CLARK]

[PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE LED BY ALTHEA CHARDON]

1 MS. MOORE: Next, we'll have Mr. Dennis Williams from
2 District Two here in Augusta. Commissioner.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning. I know everybody's awfully
4 happy to be in the great city of Augusta this morning. On
5 behalf of the Mayor, the Honorable Hardie Davis, and the Board
6 of Commissioners, I bring you greetings from our local
7 government. We ask that you enjoy yourself while you're here
8 in the great city of Augusta, and that you partake of all or
9 some of the activities that we have here in Augusta. If by
10 chance you're looking for somewhere to retire, somewhere that's
11 easy to live, great people, good food, and pleasant
12 entertainment, think about Augusta, Georgia. Once again, enjoy
13 your convention. We're happy that you chose our fine city, and
14 we hope that you do come back again. May you all have a
15 blessed and lovely day. Thank you.

16 MR. GRIGGS: I want to recognize special guests this
17 morning. To my extreme left, Vice President Brian Renfroe. Of
18 course, we all know our home boy here, our national business
19 agent all the way from Brunswick, Kenneth Gibbs. To my right
20 here is Vice President Jacob Alston. This young lady here is
21 Ms. Yvonne Robinson. She is the secretary, treasurer of
22 Georgia AFL-CIO. In the pink shirt there is Ms. Connie
23 Dominick. She is the EAP coordinator for the Gulf Coast and
24 Atlanta District.

25 Pamela will come back at this time and she will conduct

1 the introduction of one of our speakers.

2 MS. MOORE: Next we'll have our representative that does
3 our food drive, our food bank, organizing it. Her name is
4 Carrie Jones from Golden Harvest.

5 MS. JONES: Good morning. I am from Golden Harvest Food
6 Bank and I'm just excited to be here today. I thank Pam for
7 bringing me in and giving me the opportunity to speak with you
8 guys today.

9 The Stamp Out Hunger Drive is one that we love
10 tremendously and we're just grateful for your participation in
11 it. So, I just want to take a few minutes and give you a
12 little bit of information about Golden Harvest so you know once
13 that food comes in, what happens with it.

14 At Golden Harvest our mission is to provide quality food
15 and other grocery products right here in our community. We do
16 this through community support, through direct service
17 programs, food pantries, and community education about hunger.
18 The way the food bank works, a lot of people don't know or
19 just, you know, have not thought about what happens with the
20 food.

21 We work with food drives like y'all's. We work with
22 manufacturers and retailers to get the food products into our
23 area. It comes into Golden Harvest and then we get it out to
24 our partner agencies. We currently work with about 300 partner
25 agencies in our service area, and the partner agencies are

1 those that are right there in the community and then can get
2 that food to those that are in need right there in their
3 community so they don't have to travel a great distance.

4 At Golden Harvest we have three different warehouses.
5 This is our 30 county service -- our 30 county service
6 territory that we have, so we are in Georgia and South
7 Carolina. We have a warehouse right here in Augusta, we have
8 one over in Aiken, South Carolina, and then we have one in the
9 upstate area, up in the Anderson area of South Carolina, that
10 we work out of. That's 14,000 square miles of territory. We
11 couldn't do it by ourselves, so that's why we partner with the
12 agencies in their local communities to get the food back to the
13 people that do need it there.

14 Some statistics from our 2017 impact report. We
15 distributed over 14.5 million meals in the 30 county service
16 area, and that's over 382,000 families that were served through
17 our pantry. There's 3.7 million pounds of produce that went
18 out. Then we have over 30,000 volunteer hours that help us do
19 what we do.

20 Some of the interesting things, there's 4,579 children in
21 our children's program, and over 713 currently in our senior
22 program that receive items.

23 First direct service program that I just want to share
24 with you is our backpack program. One in five children right
25 here in our service area struggle with food insecurity. That

1 means they might not have enough to eat over the weekends while
2 they're not in school. Our backpack program is designed to
3 bridge that gap. On Fridays, discreetly, a bag of easy open,
4 single serve items is placed in the children's backpacks before
5 they leave school. Then they take that home and they'll have
6 about three to four different meal options in the bag to have
7 over the weekend.

8 We also have a direct service program for our seniors, and
9 we provide about a 20 pound box of just supplemental grocery
10 items to them on a monthly basis. It's definitely not meant to
11 be their entire food budget, it's just meant to help them
12 stretch their food budget.

13 We also have a Masters Table Soup Kitchen, which is right
14 here in downtown Augusta. We serve a lunchtime meal there
15 every day, year round. It is open to anyone who is need in a
16 hot meal. So, we serve down there. We have a great team and a
17 wonderful chef, so we're very pleased with that establishment
18 there.

19 We also have a garden. This is relatively new for us, but
20 at our Masters Table we have a garden and we grow several items
21 in there that we are then able to take inside and have some
22 more healthy options available with our lunch meals.

23 Here's where you guys come in. The Stamp Out Hunger food
24 drive. It's such a wonderful collection that you do for us
25 every year. I just can't express. This is the largest single

1 day food drive that our food bank is involved with every year.
2 I've done it for years. I've been at the food bank now for 11
3 years and every year I just get so excited about this drive
4 because I know what it means to us. All this food is coming in
5 right here in May, right as we're going into summer, which is
6 typically a time when we see lower donations. So, this food
7 helps us go into summer strong with a wonderful resource of the
8 food available at our food bank here, that we can then
9 distribute back to the community.

10 We had several volunteers and staff that were at the local
11 branches here. They were excited to help unload all the trucks
12 that came in. I know it was a very long and hard and hot day
13 for y'all, and we just appreciate the effort. It is so
14 beneficial to us. Our volunteers had a great time unloading
15 and getting it all back in. We're in the process now, we've
16 been sorting, which is wonderful, and getting it ready to get
17 right back out.

18 Right here in the CSRA, the food that came in this year
19 resulted in -- it's the equivalent of 125,000 meals that can be
20 distributed. That is just a tremendous amount of food that
21 came in right here in our area. It's just -- it's a blessing
22 to the food bank. We couldn't do what we do without wonderful
23 groups like y'all that do food drives, that help us out here in
24 the community.

25 Our staff is small. We rely a lot on volunteers, so we

1 have a great volunteer program. We just truly, truly
2 appreciate what the letter carriers do for us every year with
3 this food drive. It's a huge impact on us. We get to go out,
4 we get to see a lot of folks coming in at the end of their
5 routes hot and tired, but it just makes us so happy because we
6 know all that food is going to go right back out in our
7 community and feed those that are in need right here.

8 I just appreciate the time and being able to come out
9 today. Enjoy your meeting. Like I said, it's just a pleasure
10 and I just want you to know the impact that y'all doing the
11 collection makes on us here at the food bank. So, thank you so
12 much.

13 MR. GRIGGS: How many first timers here at the state
14 convention? [Response] How many CCAs? [Response] That's our
15 future right there. The CCAs are the future. A few years from
16 now they'll be taking over the position that we all hold. So,
17 thank you for coming and sharing with us.

18 Convention committee, can we get a preliminary report?
19 Are they still outside? Next, Bobby Johnson, come on in, read
20 the minutes the previous convention. While we're waiting on
21 them, I thought about telling y'all a joke. I'm not a
22 comedian, so I guess the joke might be on me. [Tells jokes]

23 MR. STEVE LAUDERDALE: Good morning everybody. Everybody
24 feeling good? My name's Steve Lauderdale. I'm president of
25 Branch 4568, retired. My committee members, Rod Thomas out of

1 Athens, and Angela Dunn, Branch 73. Right now, as of right
2 now, we've got 200 delegates signed in. We've still got around
3 40 or 50 that have not signed in. You need to hit that desk
4 out there before in the morning so you can vote. Thank you.
5 See you in the morning.

6 MR. GRIGGS: Bobby Johnson.

7 MR. BOB JOHNSON: These are the minutes from the last
8 Georgia State Association of Letter Carriers convention. I
9 will proceed without further ado. I will proceed with reading
10 those minutes.

11 MS. HUMPHREY: I make a motion to suspend the reading of
12 the minutes. Veronica Humphrey, Branch 1119.

13 MR. SHEPPARD: Pierre Sheppard, Branch 73, I second that
14 motion.

15 MR. GRIGGS: I have a motion and a second that we suspend
16 the reading of the minutes. Any discussion? Hearing none, all
17 in favor to suspend the minutes from the previous convention
18 say aye. Opposed? The minutes are on the website.

19 At this time we're going to have Connie to come and give
20 us a presentation on the EAP. Back in the day it had a bad
21 connotation to it. Everybody assumed that with the EAP that
22 they would do with alcohol and drugs. But EAP has a very
23 important part that they play in the working for us at the
24 postal service. There's a lot of things that they do that are
25 not apparent to postal employees. I thought it was very

1 important that we know what's available and how we can utilize
2 EAP.

3 Unfortunately, there have been postal workers that have
4 felt so depressed and have given up and committed suicide. I
5 can understand that there are things going on in people's lives
6 that we're not aware of. But we do know that there is some
7 help if we can get them to the right people. So, Connie is
8 going to give us some -- I think some very valuable information
9 that will help your co-workers. Not only your co-workers, you
10 might have some issues or some problems in your own family.
11 It's very important to know where to go and get help.

12 So, Connie, if you will come to the mic and just give a
13 brief overview of who you are, what you're going to do?

14 MS. DIAMOND: Good morning. First of all, my name is
15 Connie Diamond. I am the EAP consultant for the Atlanta
16 District and the Gulf Atlantic District. I've been around and
17 I will tell you today I'm celebrating. Today 10 years ago, I
18 came on this contract with EAP as your EAP consultant in the
19 South Georgia District. So, today I'm celebrating 10 years
20 with you.

21 The only way I've been able to do that is because we have
22 our own EAP and I wear that number out. So, best laid plans of
23 mice and men often go astray. Everyday. So do mine. But
24 first of all, what I want to recognize are all the people who
25 served in our military. Would you please stand, all of the

1 veterans? Awesome. Thank you very much for your service to
2 our country, and for your service to the post office.

3 Now I would like to ask all of the people who currently
4 have people serving, please stand. Close friends, relatives.
5 Look around. Thank you very much.

6 Part of what the EAP does, is we deal with military
7 issues. We deal with families of military. Last night I was
8 -- yesterday I was going to put a presentation together and EAP
9 does not have a computer that -- we're not allowed to put thumb
10 drives on it because of security. Let me just tell y'all, make
11 clear. First, raise your right hands. All of you raise your
12 right hand. Say I swear, I will keep confidentiality of this
13 presentation. I will not spread it in the rooms or anywhere
14 else. Thank you.

15 What does EAP really do? A lot of people think that what
16 we do is we're touchy feely people who go around and, you know,
17 we save people's jobs. We cannot save anybody's job. Let me
18 be very clear about that. What we can help with is dealing
19 with stuff so that they don't get into job performance issues.
20 If they're already in them, you know, we can help with that,
21 too, because everybody has stuff going on.

22 We do several things. We have several things that we
23 address. Last night I was going to put a power point together.
24 Because we can't do it on our work computer, I had my computer.
25 I swear to goodness, Satan got in that computer and it

1 obviously was not meant for me to have the power point together
2 today. At three o'clock this morning I finally said I've had
3 enough. And a few more choice words. I can't tell you what
4 those were.

5 So, what do we do? We have several things that we do.
6 Everybody thinks it's for counseling, that you come to us for
7 counseling. That's only one thing we do. That's really how it
8 all started out, and it's thanks to [unintelligible] and NARC
9 that you even have an EAP program. Both of those units got
10 together and they said it's important. My philosophy is, if
11 you don't use it, you lose it. It's something you've already
12 paid for. It's something your membership's already paid for.
13 Really, the post office has paid for it. So, it's a service
14 that we provide.

15 So, we do counseling. We do coaching. It could be done
16 telephonically. Say you've got an issue that you're dealing
17 with, maybe retirement, you're looking at retirement. I know a
18 lot of people are. So, we do telephonic coaching with you,
19 looking at your retirement. Some people -- a lot of them are
20 retiring. What are your retirement plans? I'm going to go
21 home and sit down. You know a lot of people that have retired
22 and gone home and sat down. Guess what happened? They died.
23 They did.

24 So I'm telling you, look at all your stuff. We work with
25 you -- you know, we need to be aware, because I'm not a postal

1 employee. That's why we are confidential. I'm not a postal
2 employee. But we have to know what y'all are dealing with, and
3 that's part of our job. So, we do coaching. I'm going to help
4 you through retirement. I'm going to help you come up with a
5 bucket list and I'm going to encourage you to take me with you
6 when you go on this bucket list.

7 But we do a lot of things. We address a lot of issues.
8 People say -- and I always say people, please don't let it
9 become a crisis before you call EAP. We have an 800 number
10 24/7. I wish there were people calling in the middle of the
11 night, because I want to make sure the people in the call
12 center are awake and working, you know. But we have people
13 available to you 24/7. Please encourage membership to access
14 it. Pam this morning said, hey, I haven't seen you in a while,
15 when you going to come back to Augusta. We need to go visit
16 the stations again. I'm like, okay, Pam, I'll be glad to.

17 You know, we are out and as a consultant it is my job to
18 be out and to know what's going on. It's my job and I really
19 appreciate the relationships that I have developed with the
20 units. Part of what I do, we do crisis response. Part of that
21 crisis -- what's going to create a crisis? Tell me.

22 UNKNOWN: Death of a co-worker.

23 MS. DIAMOND: Death of a co-worker. National disasters.
24 Oh my God, we're going into hurricane season. What else?
25 Financial. That's going to be under coaching or counseling.

1 That's going to be an individual thing. But when anything
2 impacts your community -- I know at one point, was it last year
3 or year before last, we had about six officers killed in
4 Georgia. That impacts you. You all are the eyes and ears of
5 the community. When something happens in your community, guess
6 what? It impacts you out in the street. How often do you see
7 shots or -- you know, somebody, they're talking about an
8 officer got killed and here you go, you see a little postal
9 truck going through. Because you're delivering in that area.
10 So, whatever goes on in the community is something that we are
11 supportive of you.

12 So, we do counseling, address financial issues. Anybody
13 got adult children living with them? I need to have a group
14 session with all of you who have your adult children still
15 living with you. Anybody got teenagers? I need to have
16 another group with all of you people dealing with teenagers.
17 They're a different breed. They are a different breed.
18 Dealing with aging parents. Anybody dealing with aging
19 parents? Yes, it's our job to know because the laws have
20 changed about your parents.

21 So, these are things, some of the things, that we deal
22 with. Anything that goes on in your life, in your work life as
23 well as your personal life, that's what we deal with; okay?
24 So, we've got counseling -- remember, all this is confidential;
25 okay? They can call me and say, hey, Connie, I know Pam came

1 to see you. Pam who? I know she came. Okay, no problem. We
2 cannot divulge that. We can only break confidentiality -- we
3 deal with all of those things that go on, but it's
4 confidential. You can go out and tell anybody what you talked
5 about, but you can't say what I talked about. Sometimes I
6 don't exactly walk down the path that I'm supposed to walk
7 down. That being said, I get in trouble. My job is to make
8 sure that you're taken care of.

9 We do crisis intervention. I have had people call and
10 say, hey, Connie, I'm sitting in the office. I've got a -- let
11 me just tell you, there are two areas we're seeing an increase
12 in. We have a national district advisory committee, which
13 Manny serves on, to help guide us in terms of what's going on.
14 Suicides, domestic violence.

15 We do training. That's another thing we do. When your
16 stewards get together, we can come and we can do trainings for
17 you. We don't expect you to do our job. What we do want to
18 provide you with are the tools to look for. You may pick up
19 the phone and call and say, hey, Connie, I've got this person
20 sitting in the office, I've got the postmaster here, and she's
21 saying that she's a victim of domestic violence. I know what
22 to do to help guide you to get that issue resolved.

23 Picked up the phone yesterday morning. This is where my
24 plans started to go awry. I get a call from a union official.
25 Connie -- well, I get a call I don't answer because I couldn't

1 get to the phone real quick, and I don't have it on ringer.
2 Connie, I have one of our stewards on -- one of our stewards on
3 the phone. She's threatening -- she's saying she wants to die,
4 she's threatening suicide. I'm fixing to conference us in.
5 Boom. I'm like, okay. So, then I'm dealing with that, I'm
6 dealing with her, I'm dealing with the ins and outs. I'm not
7 dealing with postal, I'm taking care of the employee. Which I
8 got in a little bit of trouble for because postal didn't follow
9 their policy. But that was one of those suicides that got
10 averted and wasn't successful. That's all I care about, that
11 she got help.

12 But what you are seeing today in Atlanta and around the
13 country are an increase in suicides. Any time we go for a
14 month and we have none, that's a good month. I am on the
15 national crisis response team. We are totally devoted to
16 postal. That's one of our things we do. Like the crises when
17 a co-worker dies, a homicide. You had a carrier right before
18 Christmas that died out on the street. We've got -- we're
19 there to support you, to support everybody around. Those are
20 some of the things we do.

21 Don's got me on a leash here, so let me just say last year
22 50 percent of our business was crisis response. Fifty percent.
23 That's a lot. That's probably why my little brain is not back
24 into gear yet. We go to shootings. We've been to Parkland,
25 we've been to Texas. I have relationships with people that I

1 get calls. I got a call from APWU saying are y'all in Texas.
2 I'm not, but we are. We're on the ground with y'all. That's
3 what we do. That's how we roll.

4 When something happens, my job is to communicate with the
5 local president. Now, oftentimes I don't know who that is, so
6 I call Don, Don T. Griggs. I love his answering machine.
7 You've reached Don T. Griggs. But you know what? Don always
8 responds. I call him. I say, I'm going to be down there, you
9 going to be with me? He's always with me. So, my job is to
10 connect with whoever it is. This was a suicide in Savannah,
11 death of an employee. He was with me. I don't like to go
12 alone. I contacted him, I let him know.

13 You all work together to do what you do best, and that's
14 do your customer service. So again, please be on the lookout.
15 Domestic violence is on the rise. My philosophy is, if you
16 hear something, see something, say something. You just pull
17 somebody out to the side, say I'm really concerned about what
18 you're saying, let me help you. Let me sit here. I'll sit
19 here while you call the 800 number. Those are some things that
20 work.

21 So, those are two things; crisis response, shootings,
22 Parkland, Vegas. We had a consultant on the ground at the
23 hotel within two hours. We had two more people flown in. We
24 have a national disaster response team, which I am very proud
25 to be a part of.

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Last year I was leaving to go to Houston to work.