



# South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **SLED HOSTING ANNUAL ‘GREG’S GROCERIES’ FOOD BOX PACKING DAY TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Agents with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) are excited to take part in a volunteer effort to pack boxes of food for neighbors in need. The ‘Greg’s Groceries’ food box packing event is part of the larger mission of non-profit Serve & Connect, which supports positive partnerships between law enforcement and community members.

**WHERE:** SLED Headquarters, 4400 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC – Aircraft Hangar guest/media parking in visitor lot 2 near the big stone SLED sign

**WHEN:** 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Friday, May 5, 2023

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** Following brief welcoming remarks from SLED leadership, Serve & Connect and event sponsor Walmart, SLED employees, including Agents, forensic scientists and administrative professionals will put together boxes of non-perishable food for law enforcement to distribute while out in the communities they serve.

This Serve & Connect pop-up packing day is sponsored by Walmart.  
More information about the mission of Serve & Connect is attached.

*RSVP to [rwunderlich@sled.sc.gov](mailto:rwunderlich@sled.sc.gov) by 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 4  
Please remember to bring a photo ID*

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*An Accredited Law Enforcement Agency*





## **MEDIA FACTSHEET:**

### **What is Greg's Groceries?**

Greg's Groceries is the only multi-agency, statewide community policing initiative of its kind in America.

Founded in 2017 to honor fallen police officer, Greg Alia, Greg's Groceries has provided thousands of boxes of non-perishable food to individuals and families in need. The overall goal of Greg's Groceries is to provide a resource to police that may not otherwise be available. Greg's Groceries boxes are intended to create opportunities for positive, non-enforcement interactions between police officers and community members while fostering an environment to enhance trust.

Since the inception of Greg's Groceries, over 140,000 meals have been delivered by over 60 departments across South Carolina, including a partnership with SLED. Every Greg's Groceries food box is packed with love by local police officers.

- Over 60 departments participated across South Carolina
- 70% of South Carolina counties represented
- More than 140,000 meals delivered

### **Why Greg's Groceries?**

"For every one negative story you hear, there are thousands of positive stories going untold every day."

These words were shared by Greg Alia, an officer with the Forest Acres Police Department, just months before he was killed in the line of duty. Police officers are the frontline to people in crisis, often encountering people in need and finding ways to help.

However, they don't always have the resources needed to assist. In a statewide survey we conducted in 2017, we learned that while 94% of police said that community policing was important to them, only 29% felt that they had the resources necessary to address needs as they came across them.



## **Who is making this work possible?**

This work is made possible thanks to corporate sponsors, grant funding, and individual contributions. A special thank you to the following sponsors:

- AT&T
- FirstNET
- South Carolina Bar Foundation
- Walmart
- Berkshire Hathaway GT&S

## **Participating Statewide Agencies/Associations**

- State Law Enforcement Division (SLED)
- South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy
- South Carolina Law Enforcement Officers Association
- South Carolina Sheriffs' Association
- South Carolina Police Chiefs Association
- South Carolina Fraternal Order of Police

## **Participating Law Enforcement Agencies**

- Aiken Department of Public Safety
- Anderson Police Department
- Barnwell County Sheriff's Office
- Beaufort City Police Department
- Belton Police Department
- Blackville Police Department
- Camden Police Department
- Cayce Police Department
- Charleston County Sheriff's Office
- Charleston Police Department
- Chester County Sheriff's Office
- Columbia Police Department
- Darlington County Sheriff's Office
- Easley Police Department
- Elgin Police department
- Fairfield County Sheriff's Office
- Forest Acres Police Department
- Gaffney Police Department
- Georgetown Police Department
- Goose Creek Police Department
- Greenville County Sheriff's Office
- Greenville Police Department



- Greenwood Police Department
- Hartsville Police Department
- Honea Path Police Department
- Horry County Police Department
- Irmo Police Department
- Kershaw County Sheriff's Office
- Laurens Police Department
- Lexington County Sheriff's Department
- Lexington Police Department
- Manning Police Department
- Moncks Corner Police Department
- Mount Pleasant Police Department
- Myrtle Beach Police Department
- Newberry Police Department
- Nichols Police Department
- North Augusta Public Safety
- North Charleston Police Department
- Orangeburg Department of Public Safety
- Richland County Sheriff's Department
- Rock Hill Police Department
- Saluda County Sheriff's Office
- Spartanburg Police Department
- Timmonsville Police Department
- West Columbia Police Department
- Winnsboro Department of Public Safety
- York County Sheriff's Office

### **Greg's Groceries Testimonials**

"At AT&T, we consider it a privilege to provide the advanced services and tools the public safety community needs to respond to emergencies as quickly and safely as possible. with the advanced services they need to We really see first responders\_and their support, not only as an honor but an obligation. We are pleased to support Serve & Connect and the work being done to build the police and the community relationship." - Amanda Taylor, SC regional director for AT&T.

"The Greg's Groceries Program is an important and impactful community resource readily available to Columbia Police officers to use when they identify a family or individual in need of essential non-perishable food items. An equally important outcome part of this program is assisting officers in building trust and relationships with some of the most vulnerable citizens we serve." - W.H. "Skip" Holbrook, Chief of Police, City of Columbia Police Department



### **Testimonials Continued:**

"The Lexington Police Department places a tremendously high value on partnerships, and we realize that by working together, we are providing the Town of Lexington community with the highest level of service and meeting needs more effectively." - Sergeant Cameron Mortenson, Lexington Police Department

"These boxes contain non-perishable food items, but they are also more than that — they are a Box of Compassion. City of Newberry Police Officers take time out of their busy schedules to go to Columbia to help pack the boxes of food. Each box of Greg's Groceries was packed with love by one of your local police officers. We all realize and can witness the impact that COVID-19 has placed on so many people over the past 19 months. Greg's Groceries boxes are just another way to let the community know that we are very concerned about the needs of our residents, and another way to positively engage with the community. " – Newberry City Councilwoman Jackie Holmes

Orangeburg resident James Reed and Investigator Albert Black have developed a unique bond through service. "He's an angel; he just pops up," James Reed, Orangeburg resident said. "There's nothing bad I can say about him."

Investigator Black, who works with the Orangeburg Department of Public Safety, said their bond goes back three years. During that time he has been helping Reed get food or other resources. The Department of Public Safety recently formed a new partnership with Serve and Connect to deliver 60 food boxes to Orangeburg residents in need. Investigator Black said the first person he thought about was Reed. "I have known Mr. Reed a long time," said Black. "I know he recently just lost his wife, and he pretty much had a hit to his income. I've delivered food and boxes to him before, so I knew he was a person who needed it." "Everything we do in life, God knows about it," Reed said. "When my wife passed away, he helped with some flowers. That was a blessing."

But Black said he wouldn't change a thing. "It's part of our job," said Black. "It's human nature to care for one another." James Reed, Orangeburg resident & Greg's Groceries recipient and Investigator Albert Black – Orangeburg Department of Public Safety  
Credit: WLTX, Devin Johnson

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