

Proud to Serve is a semi-regular compilation of heroic stories about letter carriers in their communities. If you know about a hero in your branch, contact us as soon as possible at 202-662-2420 or at [postalrecord@nalc.org](mailto:postalrecord@nalc.org). We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.

# Honoring heroic carriers



Mitchell Dettman

**H**eroism, like the mail, comes in many packages—think of police officers or firefighters. But for some citizens in need of assistance, their heroes come in the form of concerned letter carriers.

Letter carriers are members of nearly every community in this nation and know when something is wrong. Spotting fires and injuries, they often are the first to respond. The following stories document their heroism. For them, delivering for America is all in a day's work.

## 15-foot-high trash fire put out by letter carrier

As Fort Dodge, IA Branch 645 member **Mitchell Dettman** was walking his route in Sac City, IA, one early summer day in 2022, he turned a corner and smelled smoke. The 18-year carrier spotted flames shooting 15 feet up from a trash can. The can was only about 5 inches from a single-family home, the siding was starting to bubble, and Dettman was concerned.

"The house is just about ready to start on fire," Dettman said. "All I could think of was the two little girls that were living in that house."

He knocked on the side door and the mother answered. He told her that their home was in danger of catching fire, and the family quickly escaped through the front door.

In the meantime, Dettman noticed a hose lying on the ground, so he turned it on and was able to extinguish the flames. Once the fire was out, Dettman grabbed the garbage can and threw it to the side to ensure that if anything ignited again, it would be away from the home.

"The family just said 'thank you' and they were going to take care of it [the

trash can on the ground]," said Dettman. "So, I proceeded to just go ahead and deliver my route."

## Carrier recognizes stroke signs

**Linda King**, a 25-year Great Falls, MT Branch 650 carrier, handed an elderly woman on her route the mail every day, but one day in the summer of 2022 the customer wasn't her usual self.

"She was one of my customers that I always checked on anyway," King said. "Every day I would make sure she would answer the door."

When the woman opened the door to her townhouse and walked outside to receive her mail, the carrier noticed that she was slurring her words, was mumbling and was difficult to understand.

King called an ambulance and waited with the woman until it arrived. Friendly neighbors gathered and sat on the steps of the house with the woman. Once emergency responders arrived and King knew that her customer was in good hands, she returned to her route.

The woman was treated in the hospital for a stroke, and King visited her that same night. She made a speedy recovery, and King said that by that night "she was back to normal." She was out of the hospital within a couple of days and returned to her home, where she continued to answer the door every day for King.

King had noticed similar stroke-like symptoms in her customer in 2019 and gotten help for her, the woman's daughter wrote to the local post office in 2019. "I would like to recognize Linda King, my mother's mail carrier, for her lifesaving deeds," she wrote. "Had

Linda King with  
the customer  
she helped



it not been for Linda’s quick thinking and attention to detail, my mom would have suffered dire consequences from having a stroke.”

## Two carriers quell Wawa mulch fire

One hot summer day in 2023, **Christine Cellasio** and **Shanna Cesare**—both Clementon, NJ Branch 4623 carriers who deliver in Pine Hills—ate their lunches side by side in their trucks near a Wawa, a convenience store, as they often did.

As they did, 20-year carrier Cellasio glanced at her sideview mirror and noticed smoke coming from behind her truck. Cesare, a 19-year letter carrier, said she was initially alarmed when Cellasio pointed it out because she thought the truck might have been on fire.

“Me and my co-worker, who’s also one of my best friends, we just jumped out of our trucks,” Cellasio said—and they realized that the mulch behind her truck was on fire. “We grabbed all of our water bottles that we had, and we just started pouring.”

Despite their attempts to put out the 2-foot area that was on fire, the fire continuously reignited. They went inside the store and alerted the manager, who used a pitcher of water to completely extinguish the fire.

“Thank goodness these two were there to jump into action so quickly,” Branch 4623 President **Joseph Walder Jr.** wrote to *The Postal Record*.

## Letter carrier helps elderly man from fall

San Francisco, CA Branch 214 member **Jeffrey Moore** was putting mail into a rack box one mild day in

Mill Valley when he saw a woman he recognized. She asked him, “Hey, could you please help me? My husband has fallen over,” Moore said.

The 39-year carrier followed the woman to where her husband, who was in his 90s, had fallen and injured himself, about 100 feet away. Moore said the man “was laying on the ground with a big gash in his forehead.”

Moore picked him up from his arm-pits and lifted him onto the curb that he had fallen off, so he could sit while Moore was getting help.

The man’s house happened to be only three city blocks from the fire station, so Moore got in his truck and drove 30 seconds to the fire station, where he banged on the door. Receiving no response, he drove back to where the man was sitting on the curb with his wife. He called 911 and emergency services quickly arrived. Once the customer was in good hands with EMTs, Moore continued delivering his route. **PR**



Jeffrey Moore