

Proud TO SERVE

When most people picture a hero, visions of fire fighters, police officers or soldiers come to mind. But some think of a different person, also in uniform: their letter carrier.

Letter carriers are members of the communities they serve and know when something is wrong. Spotting fires, gas leaks and even runaway vehicles, they are often the first to respond. The following stories document their heroism. For them, delivering more for America is all in a day's work.

CPR 'as seen on TV' proves to be life-saver

As he drove along his route, **Robert Sweeny** saw a woman suddenly sprint out of her house with a lifeless child in her arms, yelling, "My baby! My baby!" Two men followed behind her, looking confused and not sure what to do. The carrier quickly parked his LLV and calmed the customer, who spoke little English. He took the 19-month-old girl and laid her on the front lawn to administer CPR, even though he had no formal training—just what he had seen on television. "I see it on TV all the time," Sweeny told a local Fox News affiliate. "I knew not to push down hard on the baby's chest."

The carrier had one of the of the men call 911 and the operator assisted with medical instructions. After some suspenseful moments, the toddler, Kelly Jimenez, began to spit up and started to

breathe on her own. Paramedics quickly appeared to relieve the Sacramento, California Branch 133 member.

It wasn't until after Sweeny resumed his route that the magnitude of the situation caught up with him. "I just broke down," he said. "It's emotional; I have two daughters." Later he checked in with the family and found out Jimenez was doing OK despite suffering a seizure. The letter carrier dismissed the praise he was given, saying he just happened to be in the right place at the right time. "You don't ever think you would be in a situation like that," he told KCRA News.

Skittish pet saved from fire

When **Richard Teitsma** came across a burning house on his route, he naturally was alarmed. While it looked like no one was home, he checked the house anyway. When he saw a distressed dog looking out through a downstairs sliding glass door, he knew he had to save the family pet.

With the help of a neighbor, Teitsma broke the slider and went into the basement to get the dog, which had scrambled away in confusion. The Grand Rapids, Michigan Branch 56 member was able to grab the animal and hustled it outside, then searched the basement to make certain no children were home; none were.

"He was here at the right time, and we really appreciate what he did for us," homeowner Matt Molter told a local news affiliate. The 15-year postal veteran said, "I just did what anyone would do."

"I see it on TV all the time. I knew not to push down hard on the baby's chest."

—Branch 133 letter carrier Robert Sweeny on using CPR techniques learned from TV to save a toddler on his route

ON HER ROUTE ONE DAY, CARRIER Karen Bucklew came across customer Donna White, who was listless and non-responsive. After trying unsuccessfully to talk to the elderly woman, Bucklew realized she needed immediate medical help. The Dayton, Ohio Branch 182 member was able to get in touch with the woman's daughter, who arranged for her care. White, who suffers from COPD, was hospitalized for a few days. Doctors credit Bucklew's perceptiveness and prompt action with helping to save the customer's life.

ED BILLS WAS CONCERNED WHEN HE noticed that the previous day's mail was still in his elderly customer's box, since she was very conscientious about picking it up each day. He approached the house and saw that the inside door was open, so he called out. He got no response. When the Boston, Massachusetts Branch 34 member returned to the office, he notified his supervisor about his concern, and they contacted the police. They soon learned that the customer had been found lying on the floor and was taken to the hospital. The 911 dispatcher said that if she had gone unattended one more day, the result might have been tragic.

DELIVERING MAIL TO THE HOME OF an elderly customer who lives unassisted, **Susan Hurley** noticed unretrieved newspapers as well as mail from previous deliveries still in the man's mailbox. Knowing that the patron picked up his paper and mail daily, and that the customer has health issues, the Frederick, Maryland Branch 664 member became worried. She knocked on the door and rang the bell several times. When she got no response, she went to a neighbor's house to call 911. Paramedics arrived shortly and found the man severely dehydrated, after falling and being

unable to move for three days. The doctor checking the patron stated that without Hurley's actions, the customer may not have survived.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON BRANCH 79 member **Gary Lyon** became worried about 78-year-old Barbara Henderlite when he had not seen her in several days and her mail began piling up. Lyon knew the woman lived alone and had no family close by, so he called police. The responding officers tried knocking on the door to no avail. Fearing the worst, they prepared to force entry. They then heard a faint voice coming from inside and were able to talk to Henderlite through an open bedroom window. Entering through the garage, they discovered the woman lying on her bedroom floor, unable to get up. She had fallen about 10 days before and said she had been waiting to die since then. She survived that time by drinking cans of nutritional supplements she could reach from the floor. Lieutenant Brett Hatfield of the Federal Way Police Department wrote to the USPS, saying Lyon's actions should serve as a reminder "to others in the Postal Service that they, too, are the eyes

and ears that we rely on...to help keep people safe (and alive)."

GROWING ANXIOUS WHEN SHE NOTICED a customer had not picked up her Social Security check for several days, **Karen Teller** first went to the back door of the customer's house and knocked. Hearing no response, she went to the front door. The customer inside heard Teller and called out that she had fallen days earlier and was unable to get up. The Lenoir, North Carolina Branch 1852 member called 911 and then called the postmaster. The customer told Teller to tear the screen door to gain entry. Once inside, she assisted the customer by getting her water and staying with the woman until help arrived. The customer, a diabetic, suffered a few fractured ribs from the fall. Teller was credited with helping to save her patron's life.

HEARING A WOMAN CALL FOR HELP while on his route, **Oscar Valencia** ventured toward the patron's house and found the 78-year-old woman lying on her stomach. The patron, who was recovering from breast cancer, said she had fallen that morning and had been there for hours. The Hudson Valley Merged, New York Branch 137 member called 911 and stayed with the woman until emergency responders arrived.

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA Branch 84 member **Adria Brodak** was dismayed when she found her elderly customer lying on the hillside of her driveway in a remote area. The customer had slipped and fallen, then had lain outside in the rain for two hours, unable to move. Brodak helped the woman back to her house and comforted her until she was confident the woman was all right. The carrier was praised for showing concern for the citizens in her community.



Seattle, WA Br. 79 member Gary Lyon was honored by the Federal Way Police Department for assisting an elderly customer whom he discovered had fallen 10 days earlier and desperately needed assistance.

DELIVERING MAIL ON A VERY BUSY street, **Kelvin Madison** noticed an elderly customer who appeared disoriented walking on the roadside. Madison stopped the man and asked if he needed assistance. She learned the man was blind and had lost his way. The Durham, North Carolina Branch 382 member walked the man home, where his granddaughter greeted him. Madison's keen observation and caring concern were commended as preventing a potential fatal accident.

WHILE ON HIS ROUTE, BERNARD Sullivan saw an elderly patron wandering aimlessly down the street. The carrier stopped her and asked if he could help, but quickly learned that she was disoriented and not sure of her name or address. Inquiring further, Sullivan found out she was a diabetic. The Columbia, South Carolina Branch 233 member called EMS and remained with the woman until emergency crews arrived. In a clever effort to establish her identity, the carrier recited the names of customers on the route until she recognized a neighbor's name.

AFTER RETURNING FROM A FEW DAYS on vacation, carrier **Steve Brittingham** saw that an elderly customer's mail had accumulated quite a bit, which raised a red flag. "She is the type of lady who is always home. When I delivered her mail, before I could get back to the truck she had already been to the door and gotten it," he told the *Laurel Star*. "I knew when I saw the mail stacked up in her box something was wrong." The Southern Delaware Branch 906 member went straight to the top and called Police Chief Michael "Jamie" Wilson, who immediately came to the scene. When no one answered his knocks, the chief forcibly entered the house. Inside he found the patron on the floor, where she had been for three days without food, water or medicine. Brittingham was credited with saving his customer's life. "You

"I knew when I saw the mail stacked up in her box something was wrong."

—Branch 906 letter carrier Steve Brittingham, who discovered an elderly customer who had been incapacitated for days after a fall

demonstrated the kind of alertness that we would hope is alive in all of our citizens," Wilson said. "This was a heroic act; there is no other way to describe it."

CARRIER JOHN CAMPBELL WAS SHOCKED as he was delivering mail when he saw an elderly patron lying on his living room floor and he immediately called police. Responding officers knocked on the door and a window, but their attempts to rouse the customer were futile. Fire fighters were called to pry open the door. An ambulance crew then was able to reach the disoriented 91-year-old man and took him to the hospital. The Youngstown, Ohio Branch 385 member was commended for his attentiveness in helping to save the man's life.

AN UNUSUAL NOISE COMING FROM inside a home on his route caught the attention of carrier **Marcelous Daniel**. Looking closer, he discovered an elderly customer who had fallen. The woman, who lives by herself, was

able to drag herself over to the window and had been tapping on the window pane, hoping someone could hear her. Daniel called 911 and stayed by the window until help arrived. Orland Park police praised the South Suburban Merged, Illinois Branch 4016 member's quick reaction and attention to his customer.

ACCUMULATING MAIL IN MS. GRABENBAUR'S box tipped off Tucson, Arizona Branch 704 carrier **Lonnie Pate** that something was wrong, since overflowing mail was an anomaly for the elderly customer. Pate contacted a neighbor to express his concern, who in turn contacted a member of Grabenbaur's family. The customer was found on the kitchen floor, where she had been since falling and suffering a back injury several days earlier, and was severely dehydrated. Pate was praised for his concern for Grabenbaur.

ON A SWELTERING DAY, RHONDA KNEE was delivering mail when she heard a dog barking. Looking to see what the commotion was about, Knee saw that the animal was barking at an elderly woman who had apparently been working in her garden, had fallen, and was unable to stand again. Knee assisted the woman into her home and contacted the customer's family members, who came to care for her. The woman had been outside for a considerable time in the 90-plus degree heat. The Pocahontas, Arkansas Branch 332 member was commended for helping to save the customer from suffering severe heat stroke, or worse.

APPROACHING THE MAILBOX OF A blind senior customer, Suncook, New Hampshire Branch 4519 member **Tom Juranty** heard moaning. He knocked on the door to see if she was all right. The woman had apparently had a reaction to her medication and needed medical assistance. Juranty called 911 and waited with his customer until emergency responders arrived.

Driver chokes—carrier doesn't

While making deliveries on his walking route one afternoon, New Hampshire Merged Branch 44 member **Steven Logan** saw an automobile drift across one of Manchester's busiest streets and crash into a tree.

Logan ran across the street to the car to offer assistance.

As he approached the vehicle, the driver emerged, signaling that he was choking on something and couldn't breathe. Logan went into action, performing the Heimlich maneuver and dislodging the bite of hamburger the man had been choking on, enabling the man to breathe once again.

Logan spotted a police cruiser and flagged it down. When he was confident the situation was in good hands, he continued on his route.

Carrying is part of fire rescue

Delivering the mail one afternoon last fall, **Leo Czyzak** heard a woman's voice from around the corner shouting for help. Approaching the ruckus, the

Flushing, New York Branch 294 member smelled something burning as the shouts became more urgent.

When he reached the scene, he saw smoke pouring out from the front door and a woman inside, desperately trying to escape while also pulling out her 96-year-old mother, who suffers from Alzheimer's. Without hesitation, Czyzak ran up the stairs, picked up the elderly woman, and carried her out to safety, accompanied by the daughter, while onlookers stood outside, staring in disbelief.

Czyzak then recruited a couple of passersby to ring the doorbells of the connecting houses adjacent to the burning building. Fire fighters arrived shortly to put out the blaze and paramedics took the women to the hospital to treat them for smoke inhalation. Czyzak went back to his route and delivered mail as far as the cordoned-off area would allow. Jo Ann Dody wrote a letter to the post office on behalf of herself and her mother, commending the carrier on his "very courageous act of kindness and bravery."

While on his normal daily rounds, **Eddie Quijas** observed what appeared to be a burglary. A young woman took a position in the front of a residence as a lookout while three teen boys went into the back yard and then the garage. The teens left the house with full duffle bags. Quijas, taking care to not be seen, followed the crew while relaying information about their location to a 911 dispatcher. Ultimately police officers nabbed the four at an apartment complex. Quijas, a member of Greater East Bay, California Branch 1111, identified them as the individuals he had watched as they committed the earlier burglary. A search of the juveniles' homes turned up additional stolen property from other burglaries. Quijas was commended for helping authorities apprehend the suspects and praised for his high level of civic duty.

On his route one morning, **Daniel Chireno** came across an altercation between a man and woman. The man had his hands around the woman's throat and was yelling at her. The carrier approached the man and tried to get him to release the

woman, calmly explaining that he needed to stop. The man began verbally abusing Chireno, but he continued to try to talk the man down from his emotional frenzy. Frustrated, the man knocked the mail out of the carrier's hands and fled. The Hudson Valley Merged, New York Branch 137 member was credited with helping to prevent further harm and potential serious injury for a customer on his route.

Kathy Strickland, a customer on **Edward Aprile's** route, was having trouble before he showed up. Strickland's cleaning woman had been acting suspiciously, and showed up at Strickland's house one day with a car full of people when she thought the homeowner would be alone. Their apparent plan was to have one person distract Strickland while the others searched the house for valuables. The group tried to force their way in and Strickland was

struggling against them when Aprile passed by on his route. When he saw what was happening, he stopped his LLV nearby to let the would-be intruders know he was there and that he knew their intended victim. When the group saw him, they got in their car and left. The customer wrote a letter to the local postmaster commending the Clearwater, Florida Branch 2008 member, saying, "It is a good feeling to have the sense of community and feeling of safety knowing that there are people who care about each other and are willing to take time out not only to say hello, but to get involved if necessary in the lives of the people around them."

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Sean Richmond was alarmed when he heard smoke detectors blaring and saw smoke billowing out of a second-floor window of a home on his route. The Rochester, New York Branch 210 member called 911 and hurried over to the house, where he banged on the door but got no answer. When emergency services arrived, they entered the home and found Lena Cason, an elderly customer who had not heard the smoke detectors. She was evacuated and Richmond later was credited with both helping to prevent a full-fledged fire and possibly saving his customer's life.

A beeping noise coming from inside a house signaled to **Brian Torri** that something was out of kilter. After delivering to the address, he did a quick check around, but found nothing unusual. Once Torri finished his loop and was returning to his LLV, he heard the beeping again. He tried to knock on the door, and when he got no response, he decided to call 911. Fire fighters arrived shortly and forced their way inside via the back door. They discovered a pot had been left on the stove. Whatever had been left cooking had burned away, and the pot bottom was glowing red. Fire officials told the Palatine, Illinois Branch 4268 member that his persistence prevented a serious fire.

Seeing a fire inching its way along the Long Island Power Authority electric lines behind some homes on his route, carrier **John La Marca** called 911 to report it. The Floral Park, New



York Branch 2061 member was thanked for saving at least two homes on his route through his conscientious actions.

Mere days before Christmas, **Andy Acebal** was delivering his route when he heard the frantic screams of two customers who were on the sidewalk in front of their home.

He then saw the reason: smoke was escaping from under the garage door of the house after fire erupted in the kitchen. Acebal asked the patrons if they had called 911 yet. They said they hadn't, so the South Florida Branch 1071 member calmly called to report the blaze. Fire fighters arrived within minutes, but it was too late and the house was declared a total loss. "Helping my customers was the right thing to do," Acebal, a 28-year carrier, said. "It's a shame that this incident occurred, especially during the holidays."

Plumes of smoke seeping out of a customer's home sparked quick action by Sedalia, Missouri Branch 139 member **Arvol Bartok**. He immediately notified the fire department and rushed to knock on the door to see if anyone was inside. The homeowner was at work and the heat from an unattended electric space heater on the back porch ignited the blaze. Fire fighters were able to stop the fire from going beyond the porch wall, preventing major damage to the home. "The postal carrier deserves all the credit," fire Battalion Chief Greg Harrell told *The Sedalia Democrat*. "Ten minutes either way, it could have had a different outcome. He did a tremendous job." ☒

Timely arrival foils kidnapping

While on his route, carrier **James Patton** came across a harrowing situation. A 9-year-old girl was playing with her cousins in a park when a stranger pushed her off her swing, grabbed her arm, and pulled her to the park entrance. As her cousins tried to help her, they got Patton's attention, who immediately called 911. Realizing he had been spotted, the man released the girl and attempted to flee, but police soon arrived and arrested him for attempted kidnapping after the Ft. Lauderdale, Florida Branch 2550 member identified him. Patton was commended for his role in rescuing the young girl.

Carrier helps quell blaze, despite that sinking feeling

Out on his route, it seemed like a normal workday for carrier **Donald Ellestad** as he approached a house to deliver mail. But the smell of smoke became more pervasive the closer he got to the residence and Ellestad grew concerned. Continuing toward his next stop, the carrier glanced down the side of the house he had just delivered to—smoke was seeping out from an open window and from under a door.

Most of the neighborhood was attending a nearby community harvest festival parade, so Ellestad was one of very few people around. The Arvada, Colorado Branch 4405 member had a sinking feeling when he realized he had forgotten his cell phone, but he spotted two men walking up the street and prevailed upon one to call 911. Emergency responders arrived quickly and got the fire under control. It was caused by a faulty fish tank heater, and the damage was mostly restricted to smoke damage, thanks to Ellestad's quick actions. ☒



Noticing mail piling up at a customer's house while the resident's car was in the driveway, **Bogdan Dziewaltowski** suspected there was a problem. He contacted a neighbor and they both went back to Leo Laplante's home.

When they heard a tapping noise, Dziewaltowski tapped back. There was more tapping in response. The 22-year carrier checked all the doors and windows and discovered an unlocked door in the back of the house. Once inside, Dziewaltowski found Laplante semi-conscious in the bathtub, and he called 911. The resident had been stuck in the tub for five days and had survived only on water dripping from the tub's spout. Laplante's niece wrote the Hartford, Connecticut Branch 86 member a letter, saying, "Had you not intervened, this incident could have had a very tragic outcome. In every sense of the word, you are our hero."

Gary Scheuring was pulling up to a cluster box when he noticed a woman sprawled across a driveway. He quickly grabbed his phone to dial 911. When he told the dispatcher of the situation, he was directed to immediately begin CPR. "I had never performed CPR before," the Cleveland, Ohio Branch 40 member told a local publication. "I handed the phone to a neighbor who came over to see what was going on. He took the instructions from the operator, told me what to do, and I did it." Scheuring continued to administer CPR until an ambulance arrived. Unfortunately, the woman died later at the hospital. The carrier brushed off commendations for his efforts. "You just always try to do the right thing," he said.

Carrier **Lynn Meyer** stopped short at an address on his route when he heard a call from an injured customer inside the home. The woman had slipped in her kitchen and suffered multiple broken bones. Despite

her injuries, she managed to crawl to the front door to unlock it. Meyer asked for permission to enter and quickly provided basic first aid treatment while calling emergency services, and he contacted relatives as well while he waited for help to arrive. The Topeka, Kansas Branch 10 member was praised for going above and beyond to help a customer in need.

A loud crash from inside an apartment caught the attention of carrier **Brian Shaffer** as he was making his rounds. Alarmed, the Bordentown, New Jersey Branch 1913 member went to the building manager, who went to open the apartment door. The customer, Delores Marue, had suffered a fall and was unable to get up. "I commend him for his care and concern," Marue later wrote in a letter to the post office, "Because if it wasn't for him, I don't know how long I would have been on the floor."

With a parcel in hand, **Matthew Utz** rang the doorbell at a customer's house. When the man opened the door, he appeared very shaky, using the wall to balance himself, and he asked Utz to bring the package inside to a table. As the carrier went to do so, the customer suddenly fell into the wall and hit another table and was knocked out. The Liberty, Missouri Branch 1264 member called 911 and waited with the man until EMTs arrived. He later learned from the man's wife that the customer was terminally ill and had just returned from the hospital.

Delivering mail on his route, **John Clark** noticed that the door of one of his businesses was open, but the lights were not on. As the Staten Island, New York Branch 99 member walked into the store to investigate, he heard a call for help. The store owner's mother, Dorothy Walsh, was on the floor, unable to get up. Clark asked the woman if she wanted an ambulance, then called 911 before helping the woman up off the floor. When the carrier checked in a few days later, Walsh's daughter thanked him and reported that her mother was OK.

When **Lennie Schwarzmann** saw a backlog of mail in a customer's box, he knew something was awry. Recruiting a neighbor's help, they looked in the woman's window and could see her on the floor. They called 911 and proceeded to break in. There had been a natural gas leak in the home and the woman had been lying on the floor for three days. The Baltimore, Maryland Branch 176 member was praised for his initiative in assisting his customer.

Tucson, Arizona Branch 704 member **Yann Hitchings** was on his route when he came upon customer Suzanne Jones, who had fallen in her carport, breaking her hip. He quickly came to her aid, called 911, and waited with the woman until help arrived. Jones said had it not been for Hitchings, she likely would not have been found for hours.

Knocking on the door to deliver a parcel, **Hugh Maguire** heard a cry for help in response. Maguire entered the apartment and found Mr. Welch on the floor next to his bed. The man was having a diabetic episode and had been on the floor since the previous day. The Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member called 911. He then fetched some juice for Welch to help restore his blood sugar balance while they waited for the fire department to arrive.

Tidewater Virginia Branch 247 member **Hector Sierra** was on his way to deliver a late-arriving package to a school on a local Air Force base when he noticed a car that had stopped partly over the curb with its engine still running. He went to check on the situation and found the driver, a school employee, unconscious in the car. Sierra immediately turned the car off and notified school personnel, who called 911. Sierra stayed with the driver until paramedics arrived. Emergency crews determined that the victim had lost control of her car after suffering a stroke. Sierra's alertness was praised for helping the woman receive prompt medical care. ☒



Eye on the ELDERLY

AS RAMON RODRIGUEZ WAS PUTTING mail through a door slot, he heard a faint noise inside the home. He knew an 85-year-old woman lived there, so he became concerned. He rang the doorbell and knocked on the door, but there was no response. After calling his station manager, the letter carrier decided to go a step further, opened the door slightly and called out, asking if anyone was home. He heard the customer, Ms. Elliot, appealing for help. She had fallen and had been on the floor for hours. Rodriguez went to her and checked whether she needed immediate medical attention. The Colorado Springs, Colorado Branch 204 member was able to contact Elliot's son, who came to take her to the hospital. Rodriguez was thanked for his help during such grave circumstances.

AS SHE WAS DRIVING DOWN HER DRIVE-way, Rosie Gonzalez found her elderly neighbor, Mr. Parson, who had fallen while walking outside. She and her husband weren't able to assist him, so when they saw **Enrique Hilario's** LLV, Gonzalez immediately hurried to the letter carrier to ask for assistance. The carrier quickly reached the scene and helped Parson sit up. The man suffers from Parkinson's disease and was bleeding from scratches and cuts he had suffered. Hilario stayed with the group until an ambulance arrived, then completed his route and returned to the office, not saying a word about the events. His cover was blown when Mrs. Gonzalez sent a letter to the postmaster, calling the Brownsville, Texas Branch 1456 member the "guardian angel" of the neighborhood.

ONE BLUSTERY, SUB-ZERO WINTER DAY, **William Pazurek** was en route to deliver a parcel to a customer's house. When he arrived at the home, he found the elderly Mr. Wagner laying on freezing cold concrete outside his home, unable to get up after a fall. He told Pazurek he had been there for at least an hour, but he rejected the idea

of medical assistance. The Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin Branch 1083 member, however, started to treat Wagner for shock, covering him with blankets, and he called emergency services to the scene and waited until medical personnel arrived to take over treatment. Pazurek stopped by Wagner's home again at the end of his route to make sure he was feeling better.

WHILE DON LYERLY WAS ON HIS route, a woman came running up to him, asking him to call 911. Her elderly neighbor had fallen coming out of his house and had cracked the back of his head. The carrier called 911, but the cell gave no location. The injury had occurred on an adjacent route, so he didn't have an exact address to give the operator, only cross streets. Thinking quickly, he said he would find the customer and park his vehicle in front of the house as a signal for the ambulance, which soon arrived to take the elderly man to the hospital, thanks to the Ft. Myers, Florida Branch 2072 member's quick thinking.

“Letter carriers touch the lives of their patrons in remarkable ways, both on the clock and off.”

—President William H. Young during an address at the 2008 Heroes of the Year ceremony

WHEN KERRY WELSH SAW THAT AN elderly customer's mail hadn't been picked up in a while, he grew concerned. Knowing that the woman lived alone, the Wheeling, West Virginia Branch 66 member tried contacting neighbors to ask about her whereabouts, but gleaned no information. Next, he spoke with a relative that also lived on his route to see if he could check on her. The two men found the customer on the bathroom floor, having suffered a heart attack five days earlier. After calling 911, the two men waited for the ambulance to take her to the hospital. The relative later stopped by to see Welsh and thank him for his care and concern.

WHILE WALKING TO HER NEXT DELIV-ery, carrier **Rita Sparling** noticed an elderly customer, John Gattuso, reaching down into a drainage ditch on his property. When Sparling saw hands reaching up from the ditch, she ran to Gattuso and found he had been trying, unsuccessfully, to pull up his 87-year-old wife but was too weak to lift her. Sparling helped the woman up and walked her to the house before resuming her deliveries. The Virginia Beach, Virginia Branch 2819 member checked in on the couple later, and found out the woman had only suffered minor bruising. Gattuso called the post office later to report that Sparling had performed a heroic act and that he appreciated the extra effort she provided.

A CRY OF “MAILMAN, PLEASE HELP me,” caught the ear of carrier **Rob VanTassel** as he was delivering his route. VanTassel went up to the door and found 85-year-old customer Norma Mahan on the floor after falling and breaking several bones. The carrier grabbed his cell phone and called for help. The Los Banos, California Branch 3768 member waited for emergency personnel to arrive and calmly explained what had transpired before Mahan was taken to the hospital for treatment of her injuries.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

MOUNTING MAIL IN A BOX, INCLUDING the elderly customer's regular prescriptions, greatly concerned Chicago, Illinois Branch 11 member **Darryl Thornton**. He asked neighbors if they had seen the man recently, and when they said they had not, Thornton contacted police and waited for them to arrive. Sadly, the customer had died days earlier from a heart attack, but the carrier was applauded for his caring actions.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA BRANCH 9 member **Kelly Lundgren** was delivering her route when she noticed newspapers piled up on an elderly patron's porch. She quickly contacted her manager, who notified local police. Paramedics arrived shortly and found the woman on her floor, where she had been since falling several days earlier. Her condition had deteriorated to the point where she likely would have been dead by the end of the day. Police thanked Lundgren for her alertness and concern for her customer.

WORKING HIS ROUTE, LARRY THOMAS came across an elderly patron appealing for help. The man's wife had fallen inside the home and was unable to get up. The customer was not strong enough to lift her, so Thomas stepped in to help her up and also help calm the man down. The Southern Delaware Branch 906 member made sure everything was all right before continuing on his rounds.

CRIES FOR HELP STARTLED CARRIER Rick Plummer as he was going about his route. When he looked around the back of the house where the cries were coming from, he found that the resident had fallen about an hour earlier and couldn't get up. He assisted the elderly woman and called for emergency assistance. The Boston, Massachusetts Branch 34 member was commended for helping his elderly patron. ✉

Silver Spring, Maryland Branch 2611 member **William Wright** encountered a man on his route entering a customer's home. Later, the sound of glass breaking somewhere nearby got the carrier's attention. As he continued with his route, he heard more glass breaking at another house and knew something was not right. So as not to tip off the apparent burglar, Wright stopped three houses down and made contact with a customer, who called 911. Police arrived a short time later and apprehended the would-be thief. Police questioning of Wright confirmed the identity of the suspect. The Teichmans, a couple whose home was almost burgled, commended Wright, stating, "Bill's quick thinking, accurate assessment of the situation, and concern for the individuals on his route prevented significant damage to our property and preserved all of our possessions."

Delivering his route, **Trent Heard** suddenly spotted a small child standing in the center of the road. After getting him out of traffic, the carrier quizzed the toddler, who did not know where his parents were or where he lived. After calling the police, the carrier took the child to several nearby houses, but no one recognized him. Heard stayed with the child, and after police arrived, he continued to help in locating the child's parents. A short while later, one of the parents appeared running down the street, yelling "My baby, my baby!" The parent expressed gratitude for the Cairo, Georgia Branch 3582 member's care and determination to reunite the family.

As part of an investigation into several home burglaries, police began questioning members of the community. They got a solid lead when they talked with Rochester, New York Branch 210

member **Justin Quade**, who directed officers to a wooded area where he had noticed some suspicious activity. Upon searching, police not only discovered some of the stolen items, they apprehended suspects in the crimes. The carrier was commended for the attention he paid to his surroundings and for helping to make the community a safer place.

Postal customer Kenneth Goach had parked his vehicle in front of his house and was exiting when his foot became wedged between the tire and the curb. He couldn't free his foot and did not have his cell phone with him, so he couldn't call for help. Not knowing what to do, he laid down beside the car. In a span of about 45 minutes, several people passed without offering to help. As carrier **Kitty Adams** turned onto the street, she noticed something or someone lying by the car. Realizing the situation, she secured the mail and ran down the street to aid her 79-year-old patron. She freed his foot and helped him into the house. She offered to call 911, but he said that wasn't necessary. Adams left only when she was sure Goach was OK. Goach's wife, Ruth, later called the station manager to express her gratitude for the Amarillo, Texas Branch 1037 member's assistance. ✉

