

# Proud TO SERVE

“Everything happened so quick. The baby fell right into my arms.”

—Branch 29 letter carrier Lisa Harrell on catching a baby who fell out of an open window

**W**hen 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.

## Catching a bundle of joy

Delivering a piece of Express Mail to an Albany, New York, home late one morning, **Lisa Harrell** happened to notice a baby looking out a half-open second-story window above the front door. She rang the doorbell and had waited just a few moments when the tot dropped dramatically into her arms.

“Everything happened so quick,” the Albany Branch 29 member told the *Albany Times Union*. One second she was standing idle and the next the child hit her shoulder. She reached out instinctively and “the baby fell right into my arms.”

When the baby's mother realized what had happened, she rushed out to retrieve her bundle of joy and thanked Harrell profusely. The woman had placed her

daughter on a bed up against the window and, when her back was turned, the adventurous baby crawled out. Paramedics checked the girl at the scene and pronounced her perfectly fine.

The 14-year carrier, who wasn't working her usual route that day, is credited with saving the 1-year-old's life. “She's certainly a real hero,” Albany Postmaster David Yanni told the newspaper. Harrell sees it differently: “A hero? No. I was just in the right place at the right time,” she said.

## Preventing a bigger pileup

Winter was at its worst when a simple car accident on a Rochester, New York, interstate led to a dramatic 36-car pileup in white-out conditions. Carrier **Christopher Playford** was driving cautiously behind two tour buses when he abruptly came to the accident scene. He quickly realized the situation would only get worse if no one acted to slow oncoming traffic.

Playford, a member of Rochester Branch 210, pulled his car over to the shoulder, hopped out and began waving frantically to warn the approaching drivers of the danger ahead. “I'm not a hero, I had to do what had to be done,” the letter carrier told the local NBC affiliate. Playford was credited by many for helping to prevent countless other accidents.

**AS HE WAS DELIVERING MAIL ON HIS** route, Charlotte, North Carolina Branch 545 member **Pierre Agena** noticed his 80-year-old customer, Claudine Pate, had not picked up her mail for a few days. Sensing something was wrong, he knocked on her door and window and then called for help. When paramedics arrived, they found the patron, who suffers from multiple sclerosis, stuck in the bathtub, severely dehydrated and incoherent. “Pierre is more than my mailman, he is my friend,” Pate later told local media. “I’m very grateful for his actions to go above and beyond his job scope to give me more days with my family.” Fire department officials credited Agena with saving his patron’s life, but he insisted, “I didn’t do much. I just paid attention to my customer.” Nonetheless, he added, “I am so glad that I was there at the right time to make a difference.”

**WHILE SUPERVISING A MAIL ROUTE**, Maine Merged Branch 92 member **Jan-ine Meservey** and a co-worker noticed an elderly customer who had fallen and broken her leg. The carriers immediately went to her rescue and comforted her while waiting for paramedics to arrive.

**CARL ROOKS WAS** delivering mail on a humid day with a temperature in the mid-90s. He saw an elderly man on his route step out of his house and onto the front porch using a walker. Rooks turned away briefly and when he looked back, the man had disappeared from view. Wondering what happened, the Cincinnati, Ohio Branch 43 member

paused to listen and could hear the man calling, “Help me, Mr. Mailman!” The carrier secured his LLV, approached the porch, and saw that the man had become tightly wedged between the side porch railing and the wall of the house. Rooks tried to help his customer, but when the man complained of severe pain, he worried about further injuries. He dialed 911 and stayed with man until paramedics arrived. The patron had been recovering from a stroke, and the location where he had fallen was not visible from the street.

**PERFORMING HIS DUTIES ON HIS ROUTE**, carrier **Gurdev Virk** heard a weak voice coming from inside a patron’s residence. It was an elderly woman who had fallen and could not get up. After reassuring his customer that everything was going to be OK, the Merced, California Branch 1340 member called the post office and asked that someone call 911. Virk stayed at the residence until paramedics arrived.

**WITHIN A FEW MONTHS, CARRIER LAMAR Rivers** was called a hero twice. Keeping

a watchful eye on his elderly patrons, one day he noticed accumulating mail at the house of an 80-year-old woman. He grew concerned since he knew she lived alone and usually picked it up every day. He knocked on the door and checked a couple of windows, but there was no sign of her, so he went to a neighbor. When the neighbor couldn’t reach her by telephone, they followed up by calling a friend of the woman, who was able to gain access to the home. The customer was discovered lying on her floor, dehydrated and disabled by a stroke suffered three days earlier, and was immediately taken to the hospital. A similar incident had occurred a few months earlier when the Norfolk, Virginia Branch 456 member noticed mail piling up at another customer’s house. With no response at the door, he walked to the back of the house, where he found the customer had been lying in the back yard for two days, also the victim of a stroke.

**CARRIER ZACH THOMAS WAS DELIVERING** mail when he heard a thud and a

woman cry out in pain. He looked around to see what had happened and spotted a 95-year-old woman two doors away, who had fallen down her steps and was not able to get up. The woman refused any medical treatment, but the Spartanburg, South Carolina Branch 628 member helped her to her feet and got her back into her residence, where she called her daughter. Thomas made sure to stop by again later to check on her.



photo by Rosemary Martin-Fountain

Charlotte, NC Br. 545 member **Pierre Agena** was honored for assisting customer **Claudine Pate**. Pictured with Agena are Charlotte PM **Tom Callahan (l)**, District Manager **David C. Fields Sr. (r)**, and Charlotte Fire Department officials.

# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Carrier **Frank Ercole** was delivering to an elderly resident and was following her request to leave the parcel on the porch. When Ercole opened the screen door to put down the package, he was nearly sickened by a strong odor of natural gas. Hearing no response to his knocks on the door, the Westchester Merged, New York Branch 693 member immediately contacted the complex's maintenance office, which sent a team to open the door. The woman was found unconscious and emergency crews were called. The oven had been turned on but not ignited, causing the gas accumulation. Officials said if Ercole hadn't responded so swiftly, his customer might have died.

Quick thinking by carrier **James Hampshire** prevented his customer's car from crashing into a trailer. When the woman was having trouble stopping her car, the West Coast Florida Branch 1477 member stepped in and was able to halt the car and save the customer from serious injury.

Carrying mail on his route, **Willie McLemore** smelled something of concern: the odor of natural gas. When the local fire department responded to investigate, they discovered a major gas leak and cordoned off a large area as a safety precaution. The Irving, Texas Branch 4240 member was credited with possibly saving his customers' lives.

While delivering mail, **Jonathan Bond** discovered a gas leak on his route and immediately notified his customer, who called the gas company. Workers showed up to fix the leak while the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania Branch 274 member was still on the street.

On his route, Tucson, Arizona Branch 704 member **Manny Chretin** saw a customer signal for help. The carrier rushed over to assist the choking patron, and successfully administered the Heimlich maneuver. The woman later contacted Chretin's office to tell them the carrier had saved her life.

When **Dean Weber** noticed a suspicious vehicle in the vicinity for sev-

eral days as he delivered mail, he grew concerned. He jotted down the car's tag number and reported it to law enforcement authorities. A man was apprehended with a large amount of stolen mail in his possession and the San Diego, California Branch 70 member was credited with foiling the criminal activity.

Thinking she had put her vehicle in park, 79-year-old patron Frances Carpenter exited her car in the driveway to give approaching carrier **Archie Simmons** some mail. The car, however, started rolling forward, dragging the customer as she struggled unsuccessfully to get back inside to stop it. Simmons saw the dilemma and ran across the street, shouting for Carpenter to let go. She did and when the car rolled onto the street, the Raleigh, North Carolina Branch 459 member jumped in and halted the vehicle before it could crash into anything. Once the car was secured, Simmons rendered aid to the customer and made sure she was not seriously injured. Carpenter later wrote a letter to the postmaster commending Simmons on his "brave and selfless actions."

One cold Friday, Centralia, Illinois Branch 738 member **Amy Chamberlain** saw a 6-year-old who was locked out of her house after being dropped off by the school bus. Concerned, the carrier called the school to report the situation. "I just wanted to let you know how much we appreciated her taking time on a cold day, when I know she was busy herself, to make sure our student got home safely," Debbie Redfeairn, a secretary at the child's school, wrote to the local postmaster. "The world would be a nicer place with more people like Amy Chamberlain."

Around Christmas time, letter carrier **Chuck Dooty** saw an elderly man sitting in front of a grocery store, ringing a bell for donations. Just then, two men approached the volunteer and grabbed his money bag. As they ran away, they nearly collided with the West Coast Florida Branch 1477 member, who yelled at them, spooking them enough that they dropped the money and beat a hasty retreat. ☒

## Often, timing is everything



**Amy Williams** was in the midst of another busy delivery day when she heard screams of "He's dead! He's dead!" coming from a home nearby.

Williams, a member of Salisbury, Maryland Branch 902, secured her LLV and dashed to the source of the commotion, where she found 3-year-old Eliezer Charles, wet and unconscious, lying on the ground next to an above-ground pool, his frantic aunt and uncle pacing nearby.

Fortunately, the carrier had learned CPR nearly 25 years before, although this was her first chance to put those long-dormant skills to work.

"(Eliezer's) eyes were wide open," Williams told the *Salisbury Daily Times*, "these big brown eyes looking back at me, with no life." While she worked to revive the boy, the aunt and uncle anxiously related what had happened: The youngster had slipped out of the house undetected, made a beeline for the uncovered pool and then fell in.

Moments after Williams' rescue efforts began, little Eliezer coughed up the water that had reached his lungs. "When he started to cry, I knew everything was all right," she said.

Williams waited until paramedics came to check the boy out, then continued on her route.

"I've been here for 20 years," acting Salisbury postmaster Jerry Jubb told the *Daily Times*, "and this is the most courageous thing I've seen."

**When he saw a fire ravaging a nearby house, carrier Douglas Minteer**, a Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member, went to assist police in helping a woman and child escape. The two residents reached safety by exiting a second-story front window and sliding down to the arms of waiting rescuers on the first-floor porch, *The Buffalo News* reported. Minteer returned to work without letting anyone know of his heroic deed.

**Making deliveries, carrier Bryan Thoms saw a woman emerge** from her home, calling for help from anyone who might be around. The customer is blind, but could smell smoke in her home. Thoms answered her calls and went inside, where he discovered a dish towel had gotten onto a burner of the stove and caught on fire. The Paris, Texas Branch 501 member was credited with removing the patron from harm's way and saving the residence from substantial damage.

**As Brian Hausman delivered mail one day, he saw smoke coming** from a door. With no one home, the carrier investigated and soon heard a smoke detector, then saw flames through the window. He immediately called 911. The Reading, Pennsylvania Branch 258 member was commended for preventing the loss of most of the family's possessions.

**Seeing smoke rising from a house down the street, Paris,** Texas Branch 501 carrier **Mike McHam** became alarmed and called 911. He also noticed a small child leaving the scene, which he reported to police along with other information when authorities arrived on the scene.

**Delivering his route, letter carrier Mike Berneck** noticed wood chips in a flower patch next to a customer's home bursting into flame. Grabbing his cell phone, he called 911 before he "whomped on the flames with my satchel" until help arrived, he told the local Fox News affiliate. The homeowner credits the Minneapolis, Minnesota Branch 9 member with saving her residence.

**"I saw a thin line of smoke, then a thick plume,"** carrier **Sal Rodriguez** told CBS News in Fresno, California. "I just knew a fire was starting." Rodriguez saw all this while delivering across a busy street from the burning residence. The Fresno Branch 231 member called 911, and within three minutes emergency crews arrived. Fire fighters discovered the lone resident of the house unconscious in a bathroom, overcome by smoke inhalation. She was rushed to a

nearby hospital for treatment. The fire had apparently started when a water heater malfunctioned. Because of Rodriguez's quick reaction, there were no casualties and minimal damage to the residence.

**After Charlie Garcia knocked on an apartment door to make a** delivery, he was alarmed to see dense smoke plumes coming out when the resident opened it. The woman was frantic and did not speak English. The carrier saw a burning pan on the kitchen stove, with flames reaching for the wall and cabinets above. Garcia directed his patron to call 911 as he entered the apartment to attempt to put out the fire. Unable to extinguish it with the resources available, Garcia carried the burning pan and its contents from the kitchen and threw it outside the apartment building, where it safely burned out. In the process, the carrier suffered second-degree burns to his hands and fingers. Fire department officials credit the Houston, Texas Branch 283 member with averting a significant loss of property and the possible loss of lives.

**Carrier Brian Horn smelled something burning when he** approached the front entrance of a house while on his route. When he looked through the door, he heard what sounded like a gas leak. The Moorhead, Minnesota Branch 1051 member immediately alerted a neighbor and contacted authorities. Fire fighters arrived a few minutes later, saw that the building was filling with smoke, and were able to shut off a natural gas feeder line. Investigating further, they found a fire burning in the basement and quickly extinguished it. The house was rented by college students, who were all away on a holiday break. Fire officials said if Horn hadn't called when he did, the building would have been a total loss.

**While delivering one day, Ken Williams** saw smoke coming from an apartment building on his route. The carrier entered the burning building, yelling and pounding on residents' doors to alert them, and told one to call 911. Continuing upward to the top level, Williams heard cries for help coming from the apartment where the fire began. He wasn't able to gain entry, but he told arriving police officers about the trapped patron's location, allowing them to quickly break down the door to rescue the man, who was critically injured. After he was sure everything would be OK, the Saginaw, Michigan Branch 74 member completed his route. He later received a service award from the Postal Service. ☒

**"I saw a thin line of smoke, then a thick plume. I just knew a fire was starting."**

**—Branch 231 letter carrier Sal Rodriguez, whose report of a fire on his route led to the rescue of a patron**

**WHILE DELIVERING MAIL ON HIS ROUTE, Brian Maines** heard faint cries for help. When he called out, he heard a plea for help in response. Looking through the window of the house, the carrier saw his 89-year-old customer on the floor, obviously injured and in desperate need of medical attention. The Warsaw, New York Branch 1825 member enlisted a neighbor, a fellow postal employee, to call 911. Maines entered the home by climbing through the window and stayed with the woman until paramedics arrived. The patron had fallen the night before, suffering both head and shoulder injuries.

**CHECKING ON AN ELDERLY PATRON, AS** he does regularly, Rochester, New York Branch 210 member **Kenneth Rowlands** grew concerned when his knocks on the door went unanswered. The carrier called 911, and when the emergency crew arrived, they discovered the man had fallen and was unable to get back up.

**A FAINT TAPPING SOUND CAUGHT THE** attention of letter carrier **Fred Beck** while he was delivering mail to a house on his route. The member of St. Clairsville, Ohio Branch 3823 traced the noise to a bathroom window, where he heard his customer, Ms. Bonnel, calling for help from inside. The woman told him that she had tripped and fallen in her bathtub two days before and had been unable to pull herself out. Beck tried unsuccessfully to get inside the house to help, then went to a neighbor's and called 911. Paramedics soon arrived and forced their way in, and Bonnel was treated at a local hospital for dehydration as well as for a few bumps and bruises. "He's a wonderful person," Bonnel said of Beck later. "He's my favorite mailman."

**WHILE SWEEPING LEAVES IN HER DRIVE-**way, Bernadine Smith, 87, tripped on the broom, fell, and broke her hip. Since she hadn't expected to be outside very long, she didn't have a coat, even though the

temperature was in the low 40s. As **Timothy Jackson** passed by on his route, he noticed Smith laying on her driveway, not moving. The carrier pulled into the driveway and offered his assistance. Although Smith asked him to just help her get back inside, the Rochester, New York Branch 210 member instead called 911 and retrieved blankets from the house to help keep her warm until the ambulance arrived. Smith underwent surgery and rehabilitation, and her daughter wrote a letter to the post office saying, "[Her recovery] will be a long process, but thanks to Tim Jackson, she received prompt medical attention and is making progress every day."

**WHILE DELIVERING HIS ROUTE, DENVER,** Colorado Branch 47 member **Greg Pauley** discovered one of his elderly customers lying on the floor of her home. Knowing that she had health problems, the carrier tried to question her. When she wasn't sure what had happened or even where she was, he enlisted the help of a neighbor. They contacted the patron's children and stayed with her until help arrived. The customer's daughter wrote, "If had not been for Greg's compassion and quick thinking, my mother may not be here today." Coincidentally, the elderly woman's husband had worked at the post office for many years.

**CARRIER MARK BALFOUR WAS CONCERNED** when he noticed that Thelma, an elderly customer, hadn't picked up the previous day's mail. When he knocked, the patron's dog came to the door barking and then ran to the back room of the house, which increased Balfour's worry. The Salt Lake City, Utah Branch 11 member immediately called his supervisor, Mitchell Beilfus, and asked him to call the police. When authorities arrived, they found out the woman had lain helpless on the floor for more than a day and needed immediate medical attention. "I

believe it is because of Mark and the kind of carrier he is, and the knowledge and awareness he has for his customers. He probably saved Thelma's life," Beilfus said.

**ONE MID-AFTERNOON, AS MILWAUKEE,** Wisconsin Branch 2 letter carrier **Laurie Giorno** approached an apartment to deliver a package, she noticed that the elderly woman's "Meals on Wheels" lunch was still sitting in front of the door. Giorno knocked, but the only response was a shuffling sound coming from behind the door. Sensing something was awry, the letter carrier first used her cell phone to call the apartment complex's emergency number, then dialed 911. When police responded, they climbed inside through a window and found the customer lying behind the door, unable to speak. Giorno later found out that the woman had been suffering from complications related to diabetes and gall bladder disease.

**ACCUMULATING MAIL IN AN APARTMENT** box concerned carrier **Lorraine Beverly**, so she went to the building manager's office and asked about the customer's whereabouts. When the office workers said they hadn't seen her, nor had she paid that month's rent, the Chicago, Illinois Branch 11 member urged the manager to check on the woman. When they did, they found her on the bathroom floor, where she had been for four days after suffering a fall. The customer was immediately taken to the hospital.

**GREG SPENCER HEARD A FAINT CRY FOR** help as he made a delivery. Finding the door unlocked, the carrier entered and discovered the 87-year-old customer covered in blood—she had fallen four hours earlier and hit her head on the stove. Spencer contacted 911 and the patron's daughter and stayed with her until help arrived. The St. Paul, Minnesota Branch 28 member is credited with saving his customer's life.



Oklahoma City, OK Br. 458 carrier Sara Hanson (r) rescued a woman from an apartment fire, and then warned other building residents of the fire, the aftermath of which can be seen above and right.



## ‘Small fire’ a big challenge

When carrier **Sara Hanson** heard a woman calling out that there was a small fire, she ran to the adjacent apartment building to see if she could help. Upon arriving, she immediately saw that the “small fire,” started by a candle, was actually large enough that the entire building was being engulfed by flames. Hanson found the woman and pulled her out, then proceeded to bang on other residents’ doors to warn them of the danger.

Questioned later about her heroics, Hanson said, “I was just doing what needed to be done.” The fire chief estimated damage to the building of about \$1.5 million. Despite being treated for smoke inhalation suffered during her rescue efforts, the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Branch 458 member reported for work the next day.

## Delivering a crucial tip

A young man sprinted past **Charles “Murray” Rose** while he was delivering mail. As the carrier moved along his route, he noticed some commotion and about five police cruisers in the neighborhood. Rose, an Athens, Ohio Branch 997 member, wasn’t sure whether police were seeking the man, or knew what direction he had run, so he approached an officer with the information. It turned out the young man was wanted on felony theft and vandalism charges and bolted after the car he was in was pulled over. Thanks to Rose’s tip, officers were able to track him down.

“We love the public to help,” Athens Police Chief John Withers told *The Messenger*. “We can’t

do it without them.” Rose, a 20-year carrier, said he can usually detect when things aren’t right in his delivery area. “Letter carriers are very keen with their senses,” he told the newspaper. “Most days are routine, but some days you see something out of the ordinary.” In the past, the carrier has detected a gas leak and aided a man in cardiac arrest by calling for help. ☒

“Letter carriers are very keen with their senses. Most days are routine, but some days you see something out of the ordinary.”

—Branch 997 letter carrier Charles “Murray” Rose on tipping off police in the search for a suspect



**“Mailman! Mailman, help me! They’re** trying to kill me!” Turning toward the shouted plea, carrier **Rico Griffin** saw two masked men grappling with the victim and beating him with a garbage can. Griffin moved his LLV a safe distance away and called 911. As the Memphis, Tennessee Branch 27 member waited for police to arrive, the victim broke free and the attackers fled. Griffin circled back and discovered the man had been shot in the leg and was bleed-

ing profusely. The letter carrier used his belt as a tourniquet to slow the bleeding and tried to keep the man from going into shock until emergency services could arrive.

**When Mary Trayte lost her balance and fell inside her home** one morning, she couldn’t get up. With no one else at home and unable to reach a phone, she began to call out for help. **Denise Agurkis**, a Cleveland, Ohio Branch 40 member, heard her while delivering mail. She notified authorities and waited with her patron until an emergency medical team arrived. “You are lucky to have such a fine letter carrier,” Trayte wrote to the local postmaster shortly after the incident.

**Carrier Shane Williams was on his mail route in an apartment** complex when he came upon a man exhibiting symptoms of a heart attack. The man had walked into the building and told managers his side was hurting and he was nauseated; he was also perspiring heavily. The managers called 911 and were getting instructions from the operator. When Williams, an EMT, walked in, he immediately took over, calmly checking the man’s pulse, instructing someone to get an aspirin and telling the manager what to tell the operator. When emergency personnel arrived, the man’s symptoms had eased and he was up walking around. Confident things were under control, the Bowling Green, Kentucky Branch 468 member went back to work.

**James Ashmead noticed that a wheelchair-bound customer had** not picked up his mail from the previous day. The lights were on but the customer was not in his usual place by the window, so the letter carrier knocked on the door. When the patron didn’t respond, the Benton Harbor, Michigan Branch 560 called 911. The man had apparently fallen out of his wheelchair and had been lying on the floor for almost two days. After returning from the hospital, the patron thanked Ashmead for his life-saving attention.

**Carrier John Hopkins was alarmed when he saw his patron,** Robert Greenwood, slip, fall and strike his head on the sidewalk as he left his house. Hopkins rushed to the man, who was bleeding and unconscious, took his pulse and dialed 911. He stayed with the man and applied pressure to the wound until emergency services came. The fire chief praised the Mountain Grove, Missouri Branch 1715 member’s actions, saying that without Hopkins’ help, the freezing temperature could have caused Greenwood to suffer hypothermia.

**Dropping mail through a door slot on her route, Williamae** **Jacobs-Johnson** heard what sounded like a kitten. When she was walking off the porch, she heard the noise again—the resident had fallen in the back yard and was calling weakly for help. The carrier ran to the back, saw the woman’s face covered in blood, and immediately called 911. The Royal Oak, Michigan Branch 3126 member helped her patron off the ground and waited for help to arrive.

**As Brent Hyde was going along his route in the busy pre-Christ-**mas rush, a motorcycle crash happened right in front of him. The Paris, Texas Branch 501 member promptly called 911 and stopped to render aid and to comfort the injured rider until paramedics could arrive. “In this day and time, I find it reassuring to know that our town has someone of Brent Hyde’s caliber serving the people,” Paris resident Patsy Bolton wrote in a letter of appreciation.

**Seeing customer Mary Luehring suffer a gash on her head after** a slip and fall near her house, **Damian Casalnuovo** went to her assistance. The letter carrier helped her get up and into her house, and offered to call 911. Casalnuovo then got some ice and made a compress to try to help stop the bleeding. The customer decided to wait for her husband to take her to the emergency room. The San Francisco, California Branch 214 member stayed with her a little while longer to be sure she was all right before continuing with his route. The patron, who received five stitches, later wrote a letter thanking Casalnuovo, saying, “Your concern and quick action certainly reflect great credit to you and the post office.”

**Driving along his route, Paul Gereffi saw a man whose shirt was** covered in blood struggling with another man behind an office building. The Ft. Lauderdale, Florida Branch 2550 member called 911 and, with the help of another witness, subdued the attacker until police arrived. The assailant, apparently a disgruntled employee, had been stabbing his boss with a steak knife. A local TV station reported he was arrested at the scene and charged with attempted murder. ☒



**APPROACHING A HOUSE TO MAKE A** delivery, **Nolan Jensen** was startled when the front door opened and an elderly man in distress stumbled out of the door, collapsing into his arms, crying, “Help me, help me.” Jensen called 911 and tried to make the man comfortable until paramedics arrived. Postmaster Leona Gardner praised the Payson, Utah Branch 2376 member’s efforts. “Nolan is very conscientious about the people on his route,” she said. “He is very aware of any changes in the neighborhood.”

**WHILE ON HIS DELIVERY ROUTE, CARRIER Aaron Taylor** saw his 85-year-old customer shoveling snow from his walkway. Within minutes, Taylor heard a crash come from the man’s garage. The carrier ran to the scene and found the man had fallen and suffered a head injury. The Northern Virginia Branch 3520 member helped the disoriented patron into the house, called an ambulance and notified the man’s daughter. After dealing with the situation for about an hour, Taylor completed his route. It was later discovered the customer also had broken his hip.

**EACH DAY THAT CARRIER JOHN BARSOTTI** delivers his route, he makes a point of stopping to check on the well-being of a 95-year-old customer. The routine is so well established that when she didn’t answer the door one day, he became concerned. The woman, who rarely leaves her home, had told Barsotti where she hides an emergency key and when he used it to gain entry, he found the woman sprawled on her back. He went to her aid and called members of her family, who live nearby. Once the relatives arrived and Barsotti knew his patron was in good hands, the Staten Island, New York Branch 99 member continued on his route.

**ON HIS LUNCH BREAK, DALE STEVENS** went to a local restaurant. Suddenly, he heard a commotion at another table—someone was trying, unsuccessfully, to perform the Heimlich maneuver on an elderly patron who was choking. Stevens jumped in to help, and was able to exert

“I always try to look out for the older people on my route. I have an elderly mom, too, so I know how it feels to worry about them.”

—Branch 70 letter carrier Pete Aguigam, who discovered an elderly patron had fallen and been incapacitated for days

more leverage on the choking woman, dislodging the food. The woman’s granddaughter, who worked at the restaurant, thanked the Saginaw, Michigan Branch 74 member with a big hug.

**TRENTON, NEW JERSEY BRANCH 380** member **Kathy Donahue** likes to keep a close eye on her customer, Walt Artes, who is a diabetic and has suffered a few strokes over the years. The carrier would help him out with errands and usually checked in every day. When she called one day and there was no answer, she began to worry. She stopped on her route to call the postmaster, George Wallace, who met up with her and together they went to Artes’ home. After ringing the doorbell, knocking on the door and banging on the windows to no reply,

they heard a TV on, so Wallace managed to crack open a window and peek inside. Seeing two legs on the floor, he opened the window and crawled in while Donahue called paramedics. Artes’ heart was racing, his blood sugar had dropped dangerously low, and he had been lying there for two days. Emergency responders said if he stayed on the floor much longer, he might not have made it. Wallace credits Donahue with saving her patron’s life, telling *The Burlington County Times* she went “above and beyond the call of duty.”

**PETE AGUIGAM BECAME WORRIED ABOUT** one of his elderly customers when a carpet installer at the apartment complex said her front door was open, but she was not responding to his knocks or cries through the screen door. The carrier went to the residence, where he could hear a TV on, but also got no reply when calling out the woman’s name. Once he checked her parking spot and saw her car there, the San Diego, California Branch 70 member entered the apartment and found the woman collapsed and unconscious on the floor. Doctors said later she had only about three hours to live when she was found. The customer’s daughter, Catherine Katz, called Aguigam “a real hero.” “I always try to look out for the older people on my route,” the carrier said. “I have an elderly mom, too, so I know how it feels to worry about them.”

**WHEN CARRIER ROBERT SNEE SAW A** senior citizen fall face first onto a sidewalk, he jumped into action. The Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania Branch 115 member helped her get up and walked her to a pharmacy, where the staff helped treat her injuries, gathered her packages and contacted her neighbor to take her for additional medical attention. ☒

**Correction:** In the May 2008 issue, David Lundy was misidentified. He is from High Point, North Carolina Branch 936.