

Proud to Serve

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 202-662-2851 or at postalrecord@nalc.org. We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.

Honoring heroic carriers

Heroism, 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.

Carrier saves children from unthinkable fate

While delivering the mail on the morning of June 26, 2012, Houston, TX Branch 283 **Danny Thompson** noticed smoldering, dense smoke coming from an air-conditioning window unit. Two children who lived there, ages 12 and 14, were home, behind burglar bars at the Watts family home when the malfunctioning air-conditioning window unit burst into flames.

Thompson knocked on the door, which woke the children up. He asked them to tell their parents about the smoke. Thompson thought it was strange that no one had come outside to inspect the A/C unit, so he approached the house a second time. By now, the smoke had intensified.

"I told them to go check that room out, because there was a little smoke coming in from that room," Thompson told a local TV station. "But once I saw that the smoke was a little bit more intense, I wanted to maybe check it out for myself."

Thompson managed to



get the keys to the burglar bars. So, he entered the burning house to make sure that no one was trapped. "He busted the door open. The smoke came out," fire survivor L.J. Watts said. "He told us to exit, so we ran out."

After they made it clear of the house, the house became engulfed in flames and eventually burned to the ground. But by the time firefighters got there, everyone had escaped unharmed.

"I just thought I was doing my job. I just want to make sure everyone's safe out here," Thompson said.

"All I cared about was getting the children out. I knew the house was on fire," Thompson told his branch. "I knew the children were there, not knowing what was going on. I just had to do what I needed to do. There is nothing to compare to a human life."

The family was grateful to Thompson for his actions. "I would just give him a big hug and a kiss, because he saved my niece and nephew's life," Laverne Hargrove, the children's aunt, told the local TV news station.

To honor Thompson's actions, the city of Houston recognized the letter carrier with a proclamation by Mayor Annise Parker declaring Danny Thompson Day. **PR**

Above, right: Danny Thompson spoke to local media about saving children from a burning house on his route.

Below: The carrier celebrates with his family after being recognized by the city of Houston.



Neighborhood watch

South Macomb, MI Branch 4374 member **Janet Daniel** was substituting on a co-worker's route on Sept. 4, 2012, in pouring rain. Because of the weather, she delivered a certified piece of mail first, then as she went back to her truck, she noticed a 6-year-old girl standing on a doorstep. "This poor little girl was banging on the door," she said. Daniel went over to the girl, identified herself as a letter carrier, and asked if she needed help. The child said yes, and that her mother, a nurse, was supposed to have the day off of work. Together, they knocked on the door and

looked through the window. Daniel then looked at the girl. "Her backpack had a bus tag and a phone number," she said, so she contacted the mother. The woman was crying and said she had been looking for her daughter and rushed home. "I have three kids and I would have been freaking out, too," Daniel said. Mother and daughter were reunited within 10 minutes, and Daniel said she was just glad it all worked out. The seven-year postal veteran noted that with all that is going on with the Postal Service, "I hope this great institution stays," she said.

"We're able to help people when they need help."

While on his route on April 17, 2012, Clearwater, FL Branch 2008 member **Jason Frederico** saw a woman who was screaming and was clearly distraught. When he noticed that she was carrying a newborn and was headed straight for a body of water, he jumped into action. Frederico immediately called 911. When officers showed up a few minutes later to ask where the woman was, Frederico directed them toward her and they were able to save the woman and baby from harm.

The carrier was commended for the care he shows the members in his community.

When **Lisa Roberts** detected the unmistakable odor of natural gas emanating from a house on her route, the Champaign, IL Branch 671 jumped into action. She quickly contacted the customer and suggested that they call the local gas company. Upon inspection, a large leak was discovered, which could have caused major damage if ignited. Roberts was praised for her initiative in this potentially dangerous situation. **PR**

Help on the way

South Florida Branch 1071 member **Michael Brisebois** was delivering mail on Saturday, Aug. 25, 2012, when a customer approached him holding her left wrist with her right hand. She said, "I need to go to the hospital; I cut my wrist." She told him that she had sliced it on a broken vase. Brisebois saw the severity of the injury and immediately called 911. He then grabbed a cloth and placed pressure on the wound. "I could see she was anxious," Brisebois said, so he attempted to calm her down while they waited for paramedics to arrive. The carrier flagged the ambulance down and directed it to the woman, who was taken to the hospital for 13 stitches to close the wound. Once the paramedics were on the scene, Brisebois continued his duties.

The carrier said his actions weren't a big deal, but that it shows how important Saturday delivery is. "I'm just doing my civil duties," he said. "Carriers are there when no one else would be around."

Mark Lawrence was delivering another carrier's route on May 9, 2012, when a customer asked for his assistance. Carol Haas asked if Lawrence would check on her caregiver. The caregiver was sitting in her van, and there had been no discernible movement for a period of time. The carrier went to the van and knocked on the window, but the Dayton, OH Branch 182 member did not get a response from the caregiver. Lawrence then opened the door to the van and found the caregiver unconscious in

the driver's seat. The caregiver was diabetic and apparently had passed out while sitting behind the wheel of the van. After unsuccessful attempts to talk with the woman, Lawrence called emergency medical services and stayed on scene until paramedics arrived. He then went back throughout that day, and then again the next day, to check on the elderly resident to make sure that she was OK.

Raymond Koval was going about his route on April 5, 2012, when he saw a woman on the ground. The Pittston, PA Branch 162 member stopped to check on her and found she was disoriented. He asked the woman if she knew where she lived, and her responses were unintelligible. As they were conversing, the

woman fell again, hitting her head on a rock wall. Koval immediately called for an ambulance and stayed with the woman to comfort her. Once paramedics arrived, Koval gave EMTs all the information he could and helped put the woman on a stretcher.

Port Allegany, PA Branch 3034 member **Tim McKnight** was delivering his regular route on March 22, 2012, when he saw a dog running loose. He recognized the dog, and he knew that the animal was always with its owner. McKnight followed the dog to the owner's house—and was led right to a girl in severe diabetic shock. When he realized that the girl couldn't move or speak, McKnight called 911 and kept an eye on her until emergency help arrived. **PR**