

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 202-662-2489 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.

Letter carrier becomes first responder after tornado strikes

Donte Jones was delivering on his route in Little Rock, AR, on a March Friday as bad weather approached.

"We knew a storm was coming," the Little Rock Branch 35 member, a carrier since 2018, said. Tornado warnings were starting to buzz on his phone—but he didn't pay them much heed. "You get those all the time," he said, "but you don't really think anything of it."

That changed when a customer saw him delivering and said, "You're still out here?" The customer said a tornado had touched down nearby. Jones turned and saw a large tornado very close to him. "It was big and it was brown, and things were spinning," he said. The carrier got in his LLV and fled, but the tornado changed course and cut him off. He jumped out of the vehicle and found shelter at a nearby home until the twister passed.

As he tried to get back to his station, he found the path blocked by a fallen tree. The same tree, he learned later, delayed police and firefighters from



The scene in Little Rock after the March tonado



Donte Jones

ing help, and he smelled leaking gas. Jones went to the doors of several homes and alerted residents to the danger of the gas leaks and helped them leave their homes as heavy rain poured down.

The EF3 tornado damaged thousands of buildings, including several on the carrier's route, killed one person, and put more than 50 people in hospitals. "It was really hectic that day," Jones said.

The carrier plays down his heroism, though. "I would hope, and I would think, that anybody would do the same thing," Jones said.

Carrier rescues overdosed driver

Wrapping up his route in Addison, IL, on a May afternoon, four-year carrier **Andre Scott** saw a truck pass him and recognized a postal patron

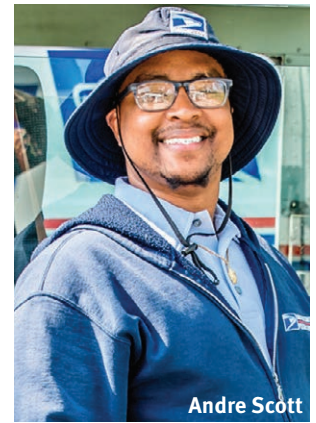
reaching the area. He noticed people, many elderly, outside seek-

as the driver. He soon caught up with the truck when it was stopped ahead, blocking traffic. Scott, a member of Oak Brook Branch 825, saw the driver slumped in his seat with his head down.

When the man didn't react to Scott honking his LLV's horn, the carrier got out and tried several ways to get him to respond, including tapping firmly on his chest. The man finally lifted his head, and Scott could see the veins in his eyes were blue, which Scott took as a sign he was deprived of oxygen.

Scott turned off the man's truck and said to himself, "This man is not going to die on me." He called 911 and continued trying to revive the man. Police arrived and determined that the man had no pulse and helped Scott take him out of the vehicle. The carrier began chest compressions and continued for a short time until paramedics arrived. They eventually revived the man using two doses of Narcan. Scott waited until emergency vehicles no longer blocked in his LLV before continuing on his route.

Scott doesn't see himself as heroic. "I acted on impulse," he said. "It was overwhelming, but I tried to put it out of my mind."



Andre Scott

Eye on the elderly

After bringing the mail into an apartment building on his route with many elderly residents, “I heard a muffled scream,” **Jacob Leas** said. “I thought maybe some grandkids were playing.” But then the Akron, OH Branch 148 member, a carrier since 2016, heard the voice say, “Help me!” Leas searched for the door where the voice was calling from and banged on it. “Please help me,” the voice replied, and he knew he had the right apartment and went inside. “I looked around there was a refrigerator down,” but no sign of a person. He called out and a voice came from under the refrigerator—89-year-old Betty Rucker, a great-grandmother, had accidentally pulled the refrigerator on top of herself. Leas picked up the refrigerator and freed



Rucker. She thanked him and asked him to call her family members, but he called 911 first. Leas stayed with the woman until an ambulance arrived, then he went back on his route. He later learned that Rucker was hospitalized for a few days but was not seriously injured. She told him she was thankful for his actions when she got home and saw him again on his route. “I don’t think I was a hero,” Leas said. “I feel like it’s part of our jobs to look out for people.”



After 21 years on the job, **Timmye Crowley** knows her customers well. On her route on a cold, icy evening in Billings, MT, in November 2022, Crowley got out of her vehicle on her mounted route to bring an elderly customer’s mail to his door so he wouldn’t have to come to his box

in the bad weather. When she reached the door, the Billings Branch 815 member heard the man’s smoke detector beeping. Looking in the window, Crowley spotted the man asleep in a chair despite the beeping and the smoke filling the room. She knew he was hard of hearing and the smoke alarm wasn’t waking him. “I started pounding on the door, kicking it and ringing the doorbell,” she said. The man finally woke up and came to the door, still unaware of the fire. “He had no idea what was going on.” Crowley called 911 and brought the man to safety. “I got him outside, away from the smoke,” she said. At the door, she noticed the fire was simply a plug-in cooking appliance with burning food inside, so she went inside and unplugged it. After the fire department arrived, Crowley returned to her route. U.S. Sen. Steve Daines of Montana later honored Crowley for her actions. “I didn’t feel like a hero,” Crowley said. “I feel like I was just doing my job.”

Waiting in his station’s parking lot on a Wednesday morning in June for his office to open,



Rochester, NY Branch 210 member **Vijeon Manivasan** saw an elderly woman dropping off mail at a drive-through box. “She tried to reach the blue box,” Manivasan said, but hadn’t pulled close enough. “She opened the door—without setting the brake.” As the woman reached through the door, she fell out of the car and it moved forward. Manivasan, who has carried the mail since 2015, rushed from his own car to help. He jumped into the open door of the woman’s car and stopped it before it collided with anything or anyone. The woman was shaken up a little but unhurt, and she drove away after thanking the carrier. Manivasan went to work and didn’t mention the incident; managers only learned about it from other carriers who witnessed it. **PR**



Jeric Thomas and Megan Dahn

Carrier sounds fire alarm

Boston, MA Branch 34 carrier **Danita Brooks-Poindexter** was heading back from delivering Express Mail on her route in Watertown in May when she spied black smoke in the air about a quarter-mile away. She thought it was a car fire on the nearby interstate and continued her route. But she soon found the real source of the smoke on a residential street.

"I could see in between the houses [that] in the back of [one] house that there was a fire," the 26-year carrier said. "I pulled out my phone to call 911, and at the same time, I could see a woman heading up the [front porch] stairs to knock on the door. I pulled my truck down further to go back and check on the tenants."

Brooks-Poindexter parked her truck and rushed to help. Then her attention moved to the house next door. "As I got closer, I realized the neighbors had the music so loud that they would not know that there is a rapidly moving fire going on next door," she said. "I feared that the neighbor's house could possibly catch on fire, and they needed to get out."



Danita Brooks-Poindexter

"I banged and banged and banged on the door, and someone finally came," she said. "They were forever grateful that I knocked so hard to get their attention, because they didn't know that there was a fire going on next door." Fortunately, the fire did not end up spreading beyond the one house.

The carrier then went to the house that was on fire to check on the elderly residents. She found an older man who lived there outside, and he confirmed that his wife was away and not trapped inside, but he was upset by the fire. She consoled him and made

sure that he didn't try to enter the burning home. "I just held him by the arm so he would not try to go back in the house because it was too dangerous," she said.

With her truck trapped by emergency vehicles for a while, Brooks-Poindexter consoled other affected neighbors until she was able to return to her route.

"I'm just glad that they all made it out safe," she said. "The fire turned huge really fast."

Co-worker to the rescue

"It was a 'right place at the right time' situation," said 10-year carrier **Jeric Thomas** of his rescue of a fellow carrier in an LLV accident. Thomas, a member of Western Wayne County, MI Branch 2184, was driving to lunch in Canton in July when he saw an LLV driven by colleague and fellow Branch 2184 member **Megan Dahn** turning left from a parking lot—and witnessed a car hitting her truck.

"It T-boned her," he said, and knocked the truck onto its side.

Thomas pulled his own truck in the center lane to block traffic and rushed to help while calling 911. "I could see her" in the truck, he said. "She was terrified. I can still hear the sound of her yelling for help."

Due to the damage and position of the truck, both doors were blocked. Luckily, the impact had knocked the back hatch open. "She found her own way to release the seat belt," he said.

Thomas helped Dahn out through the hatch. Miraculously, she had almost no injuries, though she was shaken up. "I am 100 percent confident that the seat belt saved her life that day," he said. He helped her calm down until paramedics arrived. Dahn went to the hospital to be sure she was OK, and Thomas returned to his route.

To Thomas, assisting a fellow carrier was all in a day's work. "For me, it was the only thing to do," he said.

New carrier warns of fire

With only a few months of carrying the mail under his belt, Rochester, NY Branch 210 member **Scott Faticone** found himself coming to the rescue of some of his customers.

On his route in August, Faticone approached a house on his route in Rochester when he saw trouble. "I noticed a little smoke coming out of the house," he said, and also saw insects flying out of a hole in the side. Looking in, he saw the insect nest and a fire that was agitating the insects. He could see that the fire was moving up to the second floor.

The carrier banged on the door to warn the residents and a teenage girl opened the door, but she didn't understand much English. "I grabbed her and pulled her out to see the fire" so she would understand the emergency, he said. But the teenager still didn't understand the urgency of the situation—she began taking video of the fire with her phone.

Faticone asked her who else was in the house, and she said her grandmother and a dog, so he urged her to go get both out of the house. When the girl, grandmother and the dog were all outside and safe, Faticone went to the neighbor's house to alert them, too, in case the fire spread, but nobody answered the door. After fire personnel arrived, the carrier returned to his route.

The next time he delivered his route, Faticone saw the aftermath. "The fire department ripped out the whole side of the house," he said, but added that he was grateful nobody was injured or killed.



Scott Faticone



Enrique Rosado



Liam Brough

A race to help a trapped woman

“I was driving my route like normal,” Arlington, TX Branch 2309 member **Tessa Rios** said, “when I heard a scream.” The three-year carrier, out making deliveries on a March Wednesday, then saw a woman running toward her.

Rios parked and got out to help, but the woman was panicked and screaming and couldn’t explain the emergency. She was holding a phone and Rios heard a 911 dispatcher telling the woman to begin CPR, so Rios knew there was a life-or-death situation going on.

Rios managed to get the woman to tell her which house to go to and went inside, where she found a woman in a bathroom who had collapsed. Her head was stuck between the toilet and the wall. Rios had to crawl under the toilet tank to free the woman. As she laid her down to prepare her for CPR, a distraught teenage girl, the woman’s grandchild, appeared. Before Rios could begin life-saving treatment, EMTs arrived and took over, taking the woman to the hospital.

Rios consoled the stricken woman’s loved ones. “I said a prayer for the family and gave them hugs,” she said, and gave them her phone number in case they wanted to keep in touch.

Rios later learned that the woman had died, but she saw the family a few weeks later and they said that she had helped them get through the situation.



Tessa Rios

“You made a bad situation easier,” they told her.

“I felt comfort knowing I could be there,” Rios said, especially preventing the granddaughter from seeing the woman with her head stuck. “She really appreciated someone being there for her,” Rios said after meeting the girl again.

Alert carrier uses CPR to save man on route

“I was delivering mail like a normal day,” **Enrique Rosado** said, when he saw two women in a front yard. It was a February Wednesday in Haines City, FL. “I thought they were doing yard work or something,” he added. But then he saw the stricken man lying in the yard and heard one of the women screaming in distress. They were performing CPR on the man.

The four-year carrier, a member of Lakeland Branch 1779, rushed to help.

He checked the man’s pulse and, hearing none, took over doing CPR. “I did it about 10 to 15 minutes before the fire department came,” Rosado said. As he and the women watched, the EMTs attached an automatic chest compression machine to the man and revived him. They took him to the hospital, where he recovered before eventually return-

ing home. Rosado returned to his route once he saw that the man was in good hands.

The man’s wife, one of the women attending to him when Rosado found them that day, wrote to the postmaster that doctors told her that without Ro-

sado’s assistance, her husband would have died. “Our family is forever grateful for his heroic efforts,” she wrote.

Rosado and the couple are now fast friends. “I go visit him and see how he’s doing,” he said. “Every time I see him, he has a water or snack for me.”

Carrier gives family time to say goodbye

On his route in Oak Ridge, TN, in April, **Liam Brough** spotted a customer getting out of his car and handed him his mail. Brough, who has carried the mail for the Postal Service for two years, not counting another 12 years as a postman in his native Scotland, saw the man walk up a flight of stairs to his home. Then the man fell.

“He just dropped,” Brough said. “He didn’t go forward, he didn’t go back—he just crumpled.”

Brough called 911 and then checked the man’s breathing and pulse. He didn’t detect either. Having learned CPR from his soccer-coaching days, Brough began chest compressions. “It just kicked in,” he said.

Emergency personnel arrived a few minutes later and detected a pulse, and Brough saw the man’s eye’s open when he was carried into an ambulance and taken to the hospital. Brough continued on his route.

He called the man at the hospital a few days later, who said he was very thankful for Brough’s life-saving efforts. Unfortunately, the man died a week or so later, but Brough was happy that the man had time to see his family before his death.

Though his colleagues at the post office recognized him as a hero, Brough said the experience felt more strange than heroic. “It didn’t feel real,” he said.



Dominic Jack



Shelia Alexander

Children safe from fire after carrier's efforts

On his route in White Castle, LA, earlier this year, **Dominic Jack** had just delivered to a house at the end of a loop and was circling back when he saw trouble. "I saw gray smoke coming from the back of the house," he said. The two-year carrier, a member of Baton Rouge Branch 129, knew there were children living in the house, so he rushed to help.

"I could hear somebody screaming," he said.

He saw a small boy in the back yard, afraid to move. He coaxed the boy to come to him to reach safety. Jack then encountered a teenage girl at the front and convinced her not to go back inside to retrieve her phone. He went through the back door of the burning house to rescue the children's grandmother, who he found near the door, and helped her to the street.

When he was sure all four children and the grandmother were safe, Jack went to the next-door neighbor's home to warn them because he knew there were elderly people living there, and then alerted the neighbors on the other

side. The house on fire was completely engulfed by the flames, but the others were not harmed—but more importantly, nobody was killed or injured.

"Due to the quick thinking of this carrier we, and several of our neighbors, were able to get out of our houses safely and before the firefighters had arrived on the scene," one elderly neighbor wrote to the post office. "Carrier Dominic is definitely an asset to the Postal Service and the community!"

"It was just an instant reaction," Jack said of his heroic efforts. "I just did what I would do any day."

Carrier supports family of suicide victim

On Sept. 1, Indianapolis, IN Branch 39 member **Shelia Alexander** had just rung the doorbell of a customer's home after dropping a package. As she walked away, a young girl opened the door.

"She was so distraught," Alexander said. "I could see the stress, the hurt, the pain in her face."

The girl told Alexander that her brother had just attempted suicide in the home.

Alexander, a carrier since 2012, raced inside and found their mother performing CPR on the brother. The carrier checked the boy's pulse and called 911, and then turned to consoling the girl, who soon collapsed to the ground. When the girl said she wanted to take her own life too, because she couldn't live without her brother, Alexander knew exactly what to say because she had faced similar tragedies twice.

"God put me in front of you for a reason," she told the girl as she hugged her. "I lost my brother, who was my best friend, and I thought I wasn't going to make it, but I did." Alexander's older brother died in 2014.

"And just last week," she added, "I buried my younger brother."

When emergency personnel arrived, Alexander comforted the girl some more and then gave her her contact information, telling her to call anytime. After finishing her route, Alexander checked on the girl again and found out that her brother had died.

Alexander has kept in contact with the girl and helped her get through the tragedy. **PR**

Neighborhood watch

Two-year carrier **Kyle Mailman** is helping Wichita, KS, with a dangerous gopher problem. Recently, construction of a bridge spanning the Arkansas River was causing gophers to move into a residential area near the bridge. The gophers dug long tunnels underground, and when they encountered gas lines, they often chewed through them, causing dangerous leaks, Mailman

said. Delivering the mail on a route in that area in April, the Wichita Branch 201 member approached a recessed door of a home to put the mail in a door slot. "I'd heard a report in the area of people having gas leaks," he said. When he reached this door, the odor was unmistakable. "I about choked right then and there." Mailman warned the woman who lived there. "I knocked on

the door rather feverishly," he said, and told her to call the authorities immediately. After experiencing the ill effects of breathing gas himself due to an unlit pilot light on a stove many years ago, Mailman could tell that the woman showed the signs of gas poisoning. When the gas company came to fix the outdoor leak, it also found a leak in a faulty valve of an indoor gas fireplace as well.



Kyle Mailman

"To me, it's not really a big deal," Mailman said about his actions, which may have saved a life, "because I hope everyone would be out there helping each other." **PR**

Help on the way



Tommy Howe

Out on his route in Taunton, MA, on a hot July day, Fall River Branch 51 member **Tommy Howe** thought the man sitting by the road with a push lawnmower resting on his legs was feeling the effects of the heat. It looked serious enough that Howe stopped to help the man. “I tried to sit him up,” Howe said, but the man lost consciousness and collapsed. “That’s when I knew it was serious,” he said. “I had to get help quickly.” Howe, a carrier since 2007, spotted a pair of roofers working on a house nearby and yelled to them to assist. He took the lead, calling 911 and telling one roofer to flag down the approaching ambulance and gave the other one his water jug to give water

to the stricken man. “His lips were blue, so I know it was a matter of minutes” before he could die, Howe said. “We basically kept him alive until the ambulance got there.” EMTs arrived and managed to revive the man, who fully recovered. Though the man lost his memory of that day, he was apparently stung by insects and had an allergic reaction. The man was thankful when he talked to Howe later, and the city of Taunton gave him a certificate of appreciation, but Howe doesn’t think of himself as a hero. “I just happened to be at the right place at the right time,” Howe said. “I reacted.”

Cleveland, OH Branch 40 member **Kevin Seuffert** has carried the mail for 26 years, but never needed to call 911 until last August, when he discovered a customer with a serious injury. The customer, who had fallen from a ladder while installing gutter guards on his home, had been lying on the ground for about 30 minutes when Seuffert found him. “He was entangled in the ladder,” Seuffert said. The man was awake, but told Seuffert, “I don’t have

any feeling in my body.” The carrier calmed the man and called 911 and the customer’s wife. Seuffert waited with him until paramedics arrived, and then continued on his route. Seuffert later learned that the man had made a miraculous recovery despite being paralyzed by the accident. “He was in the hospital about 40 days,” Seuffert said. “He was told by three doctors that he wouldn’t walk again, but with a lot of rehab, he’s using a walker.” The thankful man is now back home. “It made me feel a lot better” that the man is recovering, Seuffert said, but he downplayed being a hero: “I was just doing my job,” he said.



Kevin Seuffert

Just a few months into her job as a carrier in Cincinnati, OH, **Mechelle Wright** encountered a life-or-death situation. On her route, the Cincinnati Branch 43 member saw a note on a customer’s door. She thought it might be a routine message about the mail or a package, but it was anything but—it was a suicide note. “If you are reading this, I am already dead,” the note said. The author requested a call to her brother, and included a phone number. Wright called 911 and waited for police to arrive, and then called the brother and told him what happened. She then continued on her route. The brother later called the carrier and told her his sister had survived the suicide attempt and was getting help for her difficulties, and thanked Wright for possibly saving her life. Though the woman has since moved out, the memory is still with Wright. “I always think about her when I’m on my route,” she said. Wright said she doesn’t feel like a hero. “I was just in the right place at the right time,” she said. “It wasn’t her time—God had other plans for her.” **PR**

Time running out for Combined Federal Campaign

The open enrollment period for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) ends on Jan. 15, 2024, so don’t wait too long to make your contribution. CFC is the world’s largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, raising millions of dollars each year. Federal and postal employees participate in the CFC by choosing from a list of charities to support through automatic deductions from their paychecks.

“For carriers, there’s no busier period than the holidays, but it’s also the time when we focus most on the needs of others,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said.

“Please try to find a moment to pledge to give to the charities you support.”

All active letter carriers can participate through payroll deduction. Participants may use payroll deduction, credit or debit cards, or bank accounts to make recurring donations. They also can make a one-time donation using any of these methods except payroll deduction. Participants can even volunteer for the charity and count the value of the hours as money raised.

The easiest ways to sign up are through the CFC Donor Pledging System at cfcgiving.opm.gov or through the CFC Giving smartphone app, available on the

App Store and Google Play. Retired letter carriers may donate through a deduction from the annuity, by making a one-time or recurring donation using a credit or debit card, or through an automatic deduction from their bank account using the CFC Donor Pledging System.

Letter carriers can choose from among 2,000-plus nonprofit charitable organizations to support through CFC. By looking at the list and choosing a charity’s CFC number, you can donate directly to one or more charities. You can search for charities at cfcgiving.opm.gov/offerings. For more information, go to nalc.org/cfc. **PR**