

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



When St. Louis Branch 343 member Kevin Dobbs saw a blaze at a house on his route, he doused it with water and made sure the customers' two dogs were accounted for.

What is a hero? Someone who rescues residents from their burning homes? Letter carriers do that.

Someone who attends to pedestrians knocked unconscious in car accidents? Carriers also do that.

Someone who helps a scared and frustrated woman get her just-snatched purse back? Carriers even do that.

This month, letter carriers did all that and more. The following stories document their heroism. For them, it's all in a day's work.

Carrier puts out fire at patrons' house

Hearing a hissing noise followed by an explosion as he delivered his rounds on Aug. 31, carrier **Kevin Dobbs** got alarmed. He backtracked a couple of houses and discovered the source of the noise: A window air-conditioning unit had fallen from the second-story window of a house and burst into flames. The upstairs was on fire, with the side of the house ablaze as well.

The St. Louis Branch 343 member ran to the front of the house, turned on the garden hose and

doused the fire. He reached for his cell phone to call 911, but a neighbor yelled out that she had already made the call. Dobbs knew that no one was home, but he also knew that the resident had two dogs, and so he tried to locate them. He accounted for one outside and began searching for the second as firefighters arrived. He informed them of the missing animal, which was promptly rescued. Fire officials stated that had it not been for Dobbs' actions, the house surely would have been a total loss. ☒

HELP on the Way

Jesse Green was going about his route

July 2 when he saw customer Linda Bell outside her home, standing over her husband and frantically trying to wake him. The carrier rushed over and learned that that Mr. Bell had just fallen off the porch and been knocked unconscious. Green, a Dallas Branch 132 member, called 911 and stayed

with the Bells until medical personnel arrived. "Mr. Green was very helpful in this situation when he could have easily proceeded with his mail delivery," Linda Bell wrote in a letter to Green's supervisor. "I thank the United States Postal Service for hiring a good Samaritan who is not afraid to help someone in need." ☒

JANICE SPRINGER WAS IN A NEIGHBORHOOD on her route Aug. 9 when she saw a 92-year-old customer walking with a cane moving in circles, but going backward, not forward. The Albuquerque Branch 504 member rushed over to check on him. “Don’t let me fall, don’t let me fall,” he said to her. But he was disoriented and fell backward, hitting his head on the sidewalk. Springer called 911 and stayed with the man, asking him questions and making sure he remained coherent. Rescue squads arrived and helped administer first aid, as the man was bloody and bruised. Once the paramedics were done treating the man, Springer followed their truck back to the home and called the man’s son and waited with her customer until the son arrived. “In today’s world, it is not common to find people who will extend themselves in this way,” the man’s son, Robert Thompson, wrote to *The Albuquerque Journal*. “My family and I are truly grateful to Janice for the assistance she provided to my father in a time of need.” But Springer brushed off any praise. “I’ve been carrying mail for a long time, and our customers are our family,” she said. “I didn’t do anything more than anyone else would have done.”

DETROIT BRANCH 1 MEMBER ROSALYN Bass-Coles was delivering mail this past summer when she noticed something strange about a home she had been delivering to for the last 12 years. The door was open, she could hear the TV on, and the mail had begun piling up. Bass-Coles pushed the door open and found customer Florence Mill lying on the floor, where she had been for three days after hurting her leg. The carrier called 911, and EMS responders said Mill was severely dehydrated and had possibly suffered a stroke. Bass-Coles brushed off the positive attention she kept receiving around town. “As a carrier, it’s something we probably do

“There are hundreds of stories like this every day. I was just doing my part.”

—Branch 294 member **Ronald Oree**, who summoned help for an elderly customer when he realized she may be in danger

almost every day,” she told local news affiliate WDIV. “Any one of us would do the same thing.”

RICHARD ESTER WAS GOING ABOUT HIS park-and-loop route on a sunny day in April when he noticed from a block-and-a-half away that elderly customer Bob Ghilloti was lying on the ground, waving his arms. Ester, a Stockton, CA Branch 213 member, said he “walked over to see what was going on.” He noticed that the man’s head and elbow were hurt pretty badly and he carefully helped him to his feet. The carrier called for help and then stayed with the customer until paramedics arrived. Ghilloti, who had suffered a broken wrist after falling off a step stool while washing his car in his driveway, thanked Ester for his helpful efforts and great customer service.

WHEN FLUSHING, NY BRANCH 294 member **Ronald Oree** saw that mail was piling up in octogenarian patron

Essie Maybanks’ mailbox this past summer, he immediately figured something was wrong. “She’s the type of woman that, regardless of her condition, she doesn’t leave mail in her box,” he said. She would also always alert him when she was away from her house. He rang the doorbell, and when she didn’t respond, he checked the windows and then asked other residents on the block about her. When he reached Felicia Watson Manigo, she was able to contact Maybanks’ niece in Massachusetts and then called authorities, who entered the residence and found the woman in critical condition. “Not only has Mr. Oree saved the life of one of our oldest residents,” Manigo wrote to Oree’s branch president, “he also extended himself when my own elderly, blind mother was locked out of her home. Ronald’s empathy and just all-around positive spirit saved my mother from an uncertain exposure to the elements.” But Ronald doesn’t see himself as a hero. “There are hundreds of stories like this every day,” he said. “I was just doing my part.”

NOTICING A FULL MAILBOX ON MAY 25 at the house of an elderly customer who always picked up his mail on time, Buffalo-Western NY Branch 3 member **Robert Wilk** became alarmed. “He hadn’t gotten his mail on Monday,” Wilk told *The Buffalo News*, “and when I got there on Tuesday, it looked like the Sunday paper was still underneath his mail.” When the carrier knocked on the door and received no answer, he decided to go next door, where he asked the resident to call police. Responding officers gained access to the house, where they discovered the elderly man, who had been lying unconscious for about two days, and then took him to the hospital. Wilk has received much praise from those he works with. “We’re very proud of him,” Branch 3 president Robert McLennan told the newspaper. ✉