

# 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.

**W**hat 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, we spotlight some letter carriers who did all that and more. The following stories document their heroism. For them, it's all in a day's work.

## Carrier assists woman after serious car crash

Driving her LLV on a cold March 11, Buffalo-Western NY Branch 3 member **Kim Taylor** came upon a car that had struck a large utility pole whose lines supply power to a local military base. She got closer to investigate and saw that the driver "was unconscious, laying on the airbag." The vehicle was still running and Taylor noted that the car was leaking gasoline.

She saw two men standing around and asked if they had called 911 yet, but both responded that they didn't have cell phones, so she immediately pulled hers out and made the call.

"I started running around, trying

to get the doors open," she said, but they were all locked, so she and the men broke the rear window. Taylor reached in and unlocked the driver-side front door, while someone else got to the passenger-side door. She asked one of the men to shut the vehicle off and put it in park.

"It was nerve-wracking," Taylor said, when one of the men whispered to her that a child's car seat was flipped over in the back. Luckily, when they investigated, they found no baby in the back seat nor anyone else in the car.

Since gasoline was still leaking from the vehicle, she told one of the men to keep an eye out for a spark as she attended to the driver, who was starting to regain consciousness. The carrier unhooked the woman's seatbelt and asked how she felt. The woman said her head hurt, so Taylor made sure she remained still, to prevent any further injury. Meanwhile, the two men shook glass out of a blanket they found in the car so that Taylor could cover the woman to keep her warm while they waited with her until an ambulance arrived.

During that time, Taylor kept an eye on the gasoline leak, preparing herself to pull the woman from the vehicle at a moment's notice in case a fire erupted. Taylor also did her best to keep bystanders clear of the dangerously bent utility pole. Once police arrived, she gave them a statement about what had happened before returning to her route.

Taylor didn't think twice about helping. "That's what you're supposed to do," she said. "That's probably someone's mother—you don't leave someone there like that." ☒

**"She was unconscious, laying on the airbag."**

—Branch 3 member **Kim Taylor** recalled coming across a horrible car accident, where she helped to save the driver.



Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member John Filacchione

**L**ong Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member **John Filacchione** had just pulled up to begin a park-and-loop on his route in March when he heard a loud male voice. “I heard a scream, but I didn’t know where it came from,” he said. He looked at a nearby house, and then heard a man shouting, “Someone call 911!” Looking closer, he saw a man bleeding profusely, holding his right arm and appearing to be in severe pain. Nearby was the power table saw the man had been operating while doing construction in the driveway. “There was blood on the driveway, blood in the garage,” Filacchione said. He jumped in his truck to call 911 (for the first time in his life), and then rushed over to the customer. Thinking quickly, emergency operators on the phone directed the carrier to use an extension cord to tie above the man’s wound as an impromptu tourniquet to stop the bleeding. The customer’s son came home just then and, seeing what had happened, took off his sweatshirt and also wrapped it around his father’s arm. Filacchione then tried to keep the man calm as they waited for help to arrive a few minutes later. The customer—who lost two pints of blood in the accident—called Filacchione a true hero. “The doctors said if not

for his quick action, I could have easily bled to death,” he told the USPS about the 15-year postal veteran. “I am very lucky that John was there when he was.”

**W**hen **Elizabeth Bradt** came across a pile of accumulated mail in a customer’s box on March 16, she grew concerned. So, the Rochester, NY Branch 210 member called 911 and waited for police. When the officers gained access to the home, they discovered the homeowner, Charlie Gianforti, trapped under a fallen bookcase and in bad condition. The man was able to get the medical attention he needed and Bradt was commended by the police and the local mayor. Authorities said if Bradt had not intervened when she did, Gianforti would have died.

**D**elivering his route on April 21, **Dwayne Martin** saw an ice cream truck ahead of him in the middle of the road. “At the same time, a little boy was trying to cross the street,” he said. The carrier then saw a car come up behind him, speed up to go around the truck—and then struck the 7-year-old boy. The Alexandria, VA Branch 567 member immediately called 911 and, staying on the phone with an EMT, became the emergency first responder. Doing as he was instructed, Martin administered first aid to the boy and, after checking his vital signs, he took a towel from his truck and covered the wounds on the boy’s leg. “His bone was sticking out of his skin,” the carrier said. He did his best to keep the boy conscious until an ambulance arrived a short time later. Martin was commended for his quick thinking and for going above and beyond the call of duty, but he doesn’t see himself as a hero. “I really don’t think I was doing anything special,” he said. “I was just trying to help the kid.”



**H**earing someone beat on a window from inside a home, **Kevin Rogers** grew alarmed as he was delivering his route March 30. “I heard some glass breaking,” he said. He

went to the house and yelled, “Are you all right in there?” When the man inside said no, Rogers investigated, and he discovered customer Chris Miles lying on the floor, screaming. “I’ve fallen and broken my hip,” he told the Louisville, KY Branch 14 member. The carrier entered the house through the front door and called 911, then drew some water and tended to Miles until paramedics arrived. Miles had fallen the previous night and had lain there since then with a broken hip, unable to move or use his cell phone. He knew his only hope was Rogers, who he knew usually delivered the mail around 11:30 a.m. When the ambulance arrived, Rogers helped load the man into the vehicle. Miles later called to thank Rogers, telling him that his doctors had stated that had he arrived at the hospital any later, he probably would have ended up paralyzed. “I just so happened to be there at the right time,” Rogers said of his actions. “I would have done it for anyone.”

**R**andy Fraser became worried on April 19 when he saw that the mailbox at a house on his route had a buildup of mail. Since he knew the resident had a health condition, he decided to take action. He looked in through the front window and saw the man on the ground, unresponsive. The South Macomb, MI Branch 4374 member called 911 and stayed on site until emergency services arrived. Although it turned out that the man had passed away, Fraser was commended for being alert and summoning help.

**C**arrier **Dara Kellan** had just delivered mail to the local hospital and was leaving in her LLV when she saw a woman in distress. The woman had been pushing her husband in a wheelchair up an entrance ramp when one of the wheels got stuck in a crack, which forced the chair and the man’s oxygen tank to fall backward. The woman tried to lift her husband but couldn’t by herself. Kellan rushed over to help and they were able to lift the man and the tank back into the wheelchair. The woman called the post office to thank the Petoskey, MI Branch 523 member for her help. ✉



**Naples, FL Branch 4716 member Laura Franz recently received kudos for helping to save a longtime customer on her route after he had fallen and lain on the floor of his home for an extended period of time. She decided to check on him when she saw an unprecedented amount of mail at the man's home.**

#### ONE DAY'S WORTH OF UNCOLLECTED MAIL

at a customer's house on March 8 was enough to alert carrier **Laura Franz**. "Mail was in the box and I immediately knew something was wrong," she said. Her 90-year-old customer, Sal Titilo, has been a customer for the past 20 years, so the Naples, FL Branch 4716 member knew that Titilo, who lives alone, was a little frail after suffering a few heart attacks. He also had contracted pneumonia. "I always like to keep an eye on him," Franz said. On this day, she climbed out of her LLV and, after recruiting a neighbor, banged on Titilo's door and called out his name. The door opened slowly, and she saw Titilo standing in the doorway, appearing confused. There was a gash on his head, bruises on his left side and his legs were bleeding from cuts. "He told me he'd fallen in the shower and had been unable to move for at least seven hours," Franz said. "But it could have been a whole day or more." He also mentioned that he didn't think he had eaten for a few days. Franz helped the

man to a chair in the family room and made him comfortable before calling his daughter in Arizona and 911. Titilo is grateful to Franz for her actions. "I love her like a daughter," he told the *Marco Island Sun Times*. Franz, who calls Titilo "such an interesting person," takes her role as a hero in stride, saying that as a carrier, she is pretty much a "neighborhood watch," too. "It feels good that you're able to be there to help someone and not just deliver the mail," she said.

#### AN UNUSUAL PILE OF MAIL

outside a conscientious customer's home on Saturday, June 25 signaled to Tampa, FL Branch 599 member **Gabe Carrasquillo** that something was wrong. Usually, "she was either waiting for you to give her her mail, or as soon as you get 'about face' from her porch walking

toward the truck, she was opening the door to get her mail," he told the local Fox News TV affiliate. Knowing the woman lives alone, Carrasquillo decided to check the situation out. He knocked on her door and windows and, receiving no response, called 911. First responders went inside, and "she was moaning and groaning on the kitchen floor," the carrier said. The woman had been lying there for two days. Responders gave her medical attention for her diabetes before they transported her to the hospital. Carrasquillo was commended for his concern and called a hero by neighbors, but he said he was just doing what any of his co-workers would have done. "Oh no, no, no, I am not a hero," he said. "I am far away from that."

**FORT WAYNE, IN BRANCH 116 MEMBER Vic Getts** was delivering mail on his route in February during a blizzard when he heard a faint cry for help. Investigating, he found that Mrs. McBride

"had fallen on her driveway and was hidden by the snow," he said. "She was sure glad to see me." Getts gently helped the woman up, careful not to make her injuries any worse, and assisted her in getting back inside the house. Once there, he located contact information for her family members and notified them. When he was sure she would be OK, he continued on his route. The woman's daughter called the post office the next day to express her appreciation for Getts' actions. "It was a no-brainer," the carrier said. "Anyone would have helped her if they were able to."

#### SYLVIA PARTAIN, 83, WAS WALKING TO

her mailbox on June 1 when she tripped and fell, injuring herself. Carrier **Donna Jackson** was making her rounds at the time and saw the woman fall. The Richmond, VA Branch 496 member immediately got out of her vehicle and rushed over to Partain. Unable to pick her up by herself, Jackson sought help from neighbors. Together, they were able to help the woman back inside her home. Partain sustained a broken leg and was taken to the hospital. "I feel that community-oriented mail carriers serve an important role in the areas they service, especially where the elderly are concerned," Partain's son wrote in a letter to the Postal Service. "I thank Ms. Jackson for coming to the aid of my mother in her time of need."

#### DENNIS MATTESON WAS DELIVERING ON

his route March 16 when he saw an elderly customer fall down the stairs as she was retrieving the mail. He immediately went to her aid and, with the help of a neighbor, was able to help her up the stairs and back into her home. The Williamsport, PA Branch 50 member then helped treat a cut she had suffered in the fall and made sure she was comfortable before continuing on his route. ☒



# NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH



**W**hile he was delivering mail on May 26, **Harold Corbin** saw a child playing in the street. The Stockton, CA Branch 213 member next saw a nearby resident get into a parked

vehicle and start to back out of a driveway, heading directly toward where the child was playing. "The kid was directly behind the car," Corbin said. The carrier suspected the driver could not see the child, so he tried to get their attention, unsuccessfully. So, he ran to the vehicle, yelling "Hey! Hey!" and waving his arms, and the driver finally stopped. "I thought he had hit the boy," Corbin said. He ran to the other side of the car to check, but the car had stopped just before striking the child. Once Corbin saw that the child was all right and under his sister's watch, he continued on his route and returned to the office without telling anyone what had happened. Others soon found out though, and flooded the post office with calls calling Corbin a hero for saving the child's life. "It wasn't a big deal," he said. "I was just trying to keep him from getting hit."

**A**n elderly woman had just parked in front of a medical building on April 8 when a man came up behind her. He shoved her and grabbed her purse out of the car. The woman screamed and grabbed his legs to try to stop him, but he kicked her and ran through the parking lot, with the woman chasing the man "until I got to the point I couldn't run anymore," she told the Springfield, MA *Republican*. Western Massachusetts Branch 46 member **Jeffrey Atkins** heard the commotion and quickly parked his LLV, chased the robber down and confronted him. When the man pushed Atkins, the carrier tackled him and the two fought on the ground. Bystanders came to Atkins' aid until police arrived. "He was a dangerous fleeing felon, and Mr. Atkins did a very commendable job," Sgt. John Delaney, an aide to the police commissioner, told the newspaper. "This was an outstanding arrest with the assistance of the public." Officers recovered the woman's purse and belongings. The man had 12 prior incarcerations and in this case was charged with assault to rob while armed, among other charges.

**O**maha, NE Branch 5 member **Ron Hollins** noticed a 2-year-old girl wandering the street as he was delivering his route May 26. The carrier recognized the girl, so he approached her and "I told her I'd

walk her home." When they arrived at the apartment, however, Hollins noticed that the door was open. He yelled many times for someone to come to the door, but there was no response. He called his supervisor and then called 911. Officers responded a few minutes later to search the apartment, but found no one. Hollins had been with the child for about 30 minutes when the girl's father showed up at the door 20 minutes later. Police questioned him and took the girl into protective custody until they could further investigate the situation. Hollins was commended for his attentiveness and involvement. "I was just there to make sure she wasn't harmed," Hollins said. "I just thought it was my duty." ✉



Omaha, NE Branch 5 member Ron Hollins



photo by George Salsberry/The Press and Standard

**W**alterboro, SC Branch 6123 member **David Carey** helped to save the home of customers on his route. When he noticed there was a fire, he called to report it and checked the residence to make sure no one was home.

**W**HILE ON HIS ROUTE MAY 31, **David Carey** was beginning to pull away from a mailbox when he saw smoke coming from the back of a house. "I first thought the resident might be burning leaves out back," the Walterboro, SC Branch 6123 member told *The Press and Standard*, but then he noticed that the smoke seemed to be coming from near the roof. Carey got out of his LLV and checked the back of the mobile home, where he found a porch on fire. He quickly knocked on the door to make sure no one was home, and then he called 911. He waited at the residence until the fire units arrived, before returning to his route. Fire authorities said the fire appeared to have started

## FIRE & RESCUE

in the electrical wiring and spread to the back of the house, where it was mostly contained. "He helped save the house," Colleton County Fire-Rescue Director Barry McRoy told the paper. Carey, a nine-year postal veteran, said this was the third time in his career that he's spotted a fire. "We are out here every day," he said. "When we see something, we report it." ✉