

Proud TO SERVE

Proud to Serve is a semi-regular compilation of stories about heroic 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.

In this modern age, with greed and violence staples in the news, examples of courage and compassion are more important than ever. The following reports are offered to honor the actions of NALC members whose quick thinking and sharp reactions have saved lives.

Brave carrier saves elderly couple from blaze

On Jan. 4, Hudson Valley Merged, NY Branch 137 member **Jason Dang** went back to part of his route that he had already served to drop off some oversized packages. As he was delivering them, he heard a smoke detector that alerts with a human voice, followed by cries for help from the home of elderly residents Gus and Judy Uhry.

Dang knew he couldn't hesitate. With the fire department already on its way, Dang rushed over to help out. Judy is more mobile than her husband and got out of the house quickly, but she wasn't wearing a jacket. It was the coldest day of the season, with windchills in the teens.

"[Dang] actually gave Mrs. Uhry his coat to wear," Rye Brook Police Chief Gregory Austin told the Lower Hudson *Journal*

News. "They came out with just the clothes on their back."

Then, Dang made his way back through the smoke and flames to assist Gus. The 12-year postal veteran tried to reach the man, who uses a walker, but found himself choking from the smoke. When Rye Brook police arrived, they helped Dang with Gus's escape from the fire. Once he made it out of the flames, Uhry met up with his wife and retreated to safety at a neighbor's house.

Before fire trucks could block him in, Dang returned to his LLV and continued to deliver the rest of his route.

Responding firefighters extinguished the three-alarm blaze before it could spread to nearby homes. Investigators said the cause of the fire appeared initially to be accidental, but they planned to continue to look into the situation.

Dang was praised by many in the community for his actions. "This native Vietnamese man came to the U.S. at the age of 22 and has seen his share of peril," Branch 137 officers said of the carrier. "A very humble and unassuming person, he is quietly gracious and glad no one was hurt. He only wanted to help, and now two people are alive because of his bravery." ✉

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

While filling in on another carrier's route on Sept. 6, 2011, **Ron Peterson** stopped at the sight of a young child alone. The boy was "no higher than the fence post," the carrier told the local Fox TV affiliate. "He was crying and he was scared." The post office believed that the boy had gotten off at the wrong bus stop on his first day of the school year. Even though the child didn't speak English, the Minneapolis Branch 9

member knew something was wrong. He noticed that the boy had a backpack and there was a piece of paper attached to it, which he described to the local news (at right). Peterson checked it out, and saw that it had on it



an address and phone number, probably written by the boy's parents. Peterson dialed the number and reached the mother. "I said, 'I have him,' and she was just ecstatic," the carrier said. Police soon arrived to pick up the boy, telling the carrier they had been

searching for the boy for four hours and were about to issue an Amber Alert. Peterson returned to his route once he saw the child was in good hands. "It's the most important thing I ever did, finding a child," he said. "It made me very happy." But that's not the only important thing he's done. A year

earlier, he alerted the gas company when he smelled natural gas coming from a residence on the route. Company officials came to check on the leak, and Peterson was credited with helping to save the house from a potential explosion. ✉