

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.

Getting a dangerous criminal off the street

Peoria, IL Branch 31 member **Cristy Perfetti** had returned from her route on May 10, 2013, and was unloading her LLV at the post office when she noticed a man and a 10-year-old boy walk through the LLV parking lot and go behind a shed in the lot. The man was holding the boy's arm as they walked behind the shed.

"The boy kept looking at me," she said. "He looked scared."

Perfetti went into the office to report the suspicious activity to her supervisor, Stacie Pence-Bailey, who approached the shed and found the man and boy standing in the parking lot next to the shed. "The boy was crying," Perfetti said.

Pence-Bailey asked them if everything was all right and the man said that everything was. The supervisor then asked the boy if he was OK, and he shook his head and said, "No, you're not my dad," Perfetti related. The man again said that everything was OK.

Pence-Bailey asked the boy if he wanted to stay there with her. The boy nodded, and she grabbed the boy by

the arm, took him away from the man and began walking the boy inside the post office.

The man began to run away. At this point, Pence-Bailey instructed Perfetti and fellow Branch 31 member **Steve Plunkett** to try to get a picture of the man or his vehicle and to try to get license plate information, a description of his vehicle, and to watch where he was going.

Pence-Bailey took the boy into the post office, where he informed her that he was unharmed, but that the man had a knife and had threatened him with it.

After the supervisor called the police, the boy gave Pence-Bailey his dad's phone number, and she notified him of the situation.

Using the postal employees' observations, police were able to apprehend the suspect four hours later, and Perfetti was able to help identify the man in a police line-up at the police station that afternoon. The suspect, a homeless registered sex offender who had a previous conviction for unlawful restraint of a child and had served five prison terms for violent crimes, was charged in this case with two counts of aggravated kidnapping.

Perfetti and her co-workers received high praise for their actions. "I feel it's important to acknowledge the postal workers for their immediate intervention to allow the victim to get to a place of safety," State's Attorney Stewart Umholtz told the *Peoria Journal Star*.

The letter carrier doesn't think she's a hero, though. "I was just doing what I was supposed to do," Perfetti, a 27-year postal veteran said. "What's right is right." **PR**

"The boy kept looking at me. He looked scared."

—Branch 31 member **Cristy Perfetti** speaking about the child she helped to save from the grasp of a potential kidnapper

Help on the way

Andrews, SC Branch 5826 member **Tim Tyler** was delivering his route on June 18, 2013, when he saw a frantic customer. “Somebody jumped out and started hollering,” the carrier said. The customer’s 3-year-old relative had apparently climbed out of a window of her home without anyone noticing, then got into a neighbor’s yard. The toddler then somehow got inside a fence where an in-ground pool was located and fell in. When Tyler saw what had happened, “I wanted to get to that child as quick as I could,” the carrier told the local ABC TV station. He asked if anyone had called 911; they hadn’t, so he quickly did. Then Tyler, a former EMT of 16 years, began the CPR technique

appropriate for an infant. After 20 minutes of effort, EMTs arrived to take the child to the hospital. “Even when I was doing CPR, I was doing it because I felt like I had to do something but I really felt like we couldn’t bring her back,” he told ABC. Unfortunately, the child was pronounced dead upon arrival at the hospital. Nevertheless, the community called Tyler a hero for his efforts. Tyler was quick to brush off accolades. “I would feel like a hero if it would have been positive results, if we were able to do something to bring her back,” he told ABC. The tragic incident did have a profound effect on the post office, though. “It kind of inspired others to take CPR class,” the 26-year postal veteran said. **PR**

Neighborhood watch

Rogers, AR Branch 1514 member **Susan Broxson** noticed a woman shut the doors of her car and went inside a house, leaving her 1-year-old in the car on Aug. 29, 2013, a 92-degree day. “I was hoping the car was still running with the AC on, but it wasn’t,” she said. The carrier went up a few mailboxes but kept watching. “The baby had been in there with all the windows up in the summertime,” Broxson said. “I was watching in my rear-view mirror for 10 minutes.” Broxson went up to the house and could hear arguing inside, so she knocked on door, thinking the woman forgot. The woman answered, and the carrier told her, “You can’t leave the baby in there like that.” She told the carrier, “I was coming back out.” The

woman then went and opened the front driver’s-side door of the car, which was sitting in full sun, and went back inside to continue arguing. Broxson continued to deliver mail but when she saw that the baby was still in car about 10 minutes later, she called police to report it and continued with her route. She looped around at the end of her route to check on the situation at the end of her rounds, and the car was gone, so she called police again to make sure they had handled the situation. The 14-year postal veteran brushed off any accolades, though. “I was just doing what I should do,” Broxson said. “Every day, you should always look for things like that.” **PR**

Eye on the elderly

On Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2012, New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member **Angel Acconzo** was on her route when she noticed that an elderly customer’s mail had not been taken in for two days. The carrier knew her patron, Ann Thompson, and said that “the woman is like clockwork” when it comes to picking up her mail. She thought, “Something’s wrong; her car’s here,” she said. Acconzo knocked on the door, but didn’t get a response, so she called 911. Thompson’s son is a police officer, but the department was unable to locate him. The responding police officers broke into the house and found Thompson

in bed, where she apparently had had a stroke over the weekend. EMS responded and took the woman to the hospital, where she recovered. Acconzo received high praise from the community. “Mrs. Acconzo’s attention to detail, her knowledge of her customers on her route and dedication to these residents resulted in saving Mrs. Thompson,” Keansburg Chief of Police James Pigott wrote to the local postmaster. But Acconzo doesn’t think she’s a hero. “You get to know your people, being out there 28 years,” the postal veteran said. “I would do it for anybody.”

Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member **Lawrence Schor** was on his route on March 27, 2013, when he noticed three days’ worth of mail in an elderly customer’s mailbox. The woman received about 20 pieces of mail each day, “so it was quite noticeable,” Schor said. He also noted that he spoke with her almost daily, making her absence even more unusual. Schor checked with a neighbor to see if she had seen the woman, but she said she hadn’t. So, the two went to check the house, and both the front and back doors were locked. The two were able to break into the house and discovered

that the woman was in her bedroom, so Schor asked that the neighbor go in first, and then he followed her in to help. The carrier called 911, and an ambulance soon arrived to rush the woman to the hospital. Once he knew she was in good hands, Schor continued on his route. Medical personnel said that if the woman hadn’t been found when she was, she would have been dead within a day, but Schor downplayed his actions. “I was just doing my job and somebody needed help,” the 24-year postal veteran said. “I’d want someone to do that for my mother or grandmother.” **PR**