

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.

Letter carrier team save one of their own

Spacecoast Florida Branch 2689 member **Cole Weaver** was loading his vehicle on June 2, 2014, when he saw fellow Branch 2689 carrier **Tony Callipari** passed out face-down in the parking lot. Another Branch 2689 carrier, **David Kurtz**, raised the alarm for help by running inside and yelling “Carrier down!” Weaver, fellow branch members **Daniella Bragg** and **Guillermo Alfonso** (who had been casing their routes) and supervisor Robert Link ran over to Callipari.

“We rolled him over. He was completely blue in the face,” Weaver said. Bragg noted that there was blood on him and on the asphalt. “We checked for his pulse—he wasn't breathing,” Alfonso added.

Weaver, Bragg, Alfonso and Link began administering CPR until the paramedics arrived. It was a team effort: Link began mouth-to-mouth, Weaver and Alfonso began chest compressions, and Bragg

kept Callipari's airway open and tried to talk to him. They ripped open the carrier's shirt and continued their actions until paramedics arrived.

“There was no heartbeat, no pulse, no nothing” when they got him to the hospital, Bragg said, where after some effort, doctors were able to revive him. “It was an absolute miracle he survived,” Bragg said.

Bragg, who is in her second year of carrying mail, had learned CPR as a high school volleyball coach and from her mother, a registered nurse, while Weaver had learned the life-saving measure from his two tours in Iraq while serving in the Army. “It's just something I've done for so long, I jumped right in,” Weaver, a seven-year letter carrier, said.

Alfonso echoed those sentiments. “You just react. There was no thought to it,” the 27-year postal veteran said.

Callipari was released from the hospital after a 13-day stay, and retired soon after.

Many call the group of carriers heroes. But they brushed off any grand accolades. “I would hope someone would do the same exact thing in my spot,” Bragg said.

All in a day's work

Tulsa, OK Branch 1358 member **Merlie Bell Jr.** was carrying his route on July 26, 2014, when he approached the house of customer Nancy Jackson, who was having a garage sale, and saw a woman sitting in her car outside. “She wasn't moving, she wasn't doing anything,” he said.

Bell went over to the car and knocked on the window. The woman looked lethargic and her eyes were rolled back. The carrier opened the car door at the same time he called to shoppers nearby to call 911. He tried to find identification for the woman, but found her purse to be full only of candy. Bell thought to himself that she might have diabetes



Spacecoast Florida Branch 2689 members (l to r) Cole Weaver, Daniella Bragg and Guillermo Alfonso were credited with saving their co-worker's life after performing CPR until paramedics arrived.

and could be having a seizure.

Bell stayed calm and tried to not cause panic for anyone. He reclined the seat and helped keep the woman comfortable and calm while following the instructions of the 911 dispatcher. "I turned her head to the side so she wouldn't swallow her tongue," he said. Bell also found an empty pill bottle and

read the label to the operator. He kept moving her seat to raise and lower her, which helped revive the woman. Once the EMT team arrived and the carrier saw that the woman was in good hands, he resumed his route.

Jackson sent a note to the local post office to thank Bell for coming to the woman's aid. "This gentleman is an

example to others and to his fellow workers," she wrote. "I'd like to thank him for his quick action."

But Bell, a 10-year postal veteran and eight-year Navy veteran before that, said that he's not a hero. "She was in trouble," he said. "It's something that I would do. It's common sense."

Fire and rescue



Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member Anderson Carr was recently honored for his role in helping to extinguish a fire at his customer's house. Pictured (l to r) are POOM Bill Huber, Carr, Postmaster Anita Tatum and District Manager Lorraine Castellano.

On Sept. 30, 2014, Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member **Anderson Carr** was on his regular delivery route and had pulled up to a customer's house. He noticed the daughter of his customer standing on the curbside, so he asked if everything was OK. The daughter is an adult with autism, and the carrier thought it was unusual for her to be outside alone. "The young lady was outside, saying the house was on fire," Carr said. When the carrier looked up, he noticed that smoke was indeed coming out of a window by

the kitchen. He ran to the front door and asked if anyone was inside. From the door, the 25-year postal veteran could see that the fire was contained to a small area by the oven, so he went in and put the fire out using water. A neighbor came over while this was happening and called 911. There was damage to kitchen cabinets and the back-splash, but no one else was inside. "Once a fire gets going, it can be a disaster," the 27-year postal veteran said. "But I tried to put it out, and it went out." Carr doesn't approve of the "hero" appellation, though. "It was what was in my heart," he said. "If I were in that predicament, I would want some help."

On April 30, 2014, Harrisburg, PA Branch 500 member **Jim Kramer** had left the post office to start his route when he saw a man running out of his house, calling to him, "Call 911, call

911!" Kramer asked what was wrong, and the man told him that wood inside the wall of his house was on fire. The carrier called 911, then crossed the street to the post office, grabbed a fire extinguisher and returned to the house to put out the fire. Within minutes, firefighters arrived. Kramer was commended for his heroic actions in helping to prevent what could have been a costly and dangerous situation. The 30-year letter carrier brushed off any attention for his heroic actions, saying, "I just called 911 and helped the guy out."

On June 28, 2014, Cherry Hill/Haddonfield, NJ Branch 769 member **Anthony DiMauro** was delivering mail on his mounted route when he smelled smoke. When he put mail in a box, "I heard a roar, like a big open campfire," he said. When he looked to his right, he saw smoke and fire ripping through the side of

the home of his customers, the Dempsey family. "I saw flames 10 feet high," he said. DiMauro parked his vehicle and called 911 while running toward the house. When he reached the door, he alerted the residents, saying, "Your house is on fire—you need to get out!" The family quickly got their son, who was sleeping on that side of the house, and they fled the burning home. Neighbors ran over and grabbed hoses, and the fire department soon showed up to help extinguish the fire. The Dempseys sent a card to the post office thanking DiMauro for his heroic act, saying that they could have lost their entire home as well as their lives. They were able to move

back later that year. DiMauro, a Navy veteran, chalked up his heroics to just being in the right place at the right time. "Anybody who had seen it would have done the same thing," the 30-year postal veteran said. **PR**



Help on the way



Mark Lloyd

While delivering his route on April 24, 2014, Scranton, PA Branch 17 member **Mark Lloyd** heard someone calling out. He thought it was just someone saying hello, but when he looked up, he saw that a customer was lying on the ground by her new fence after falling. It appeared that she had broken her leg. “She was in such a weird spot, probably no one would have seen her,” Lloyd said. The carrier called an ambulance and stayed with the customer until help arrived. Lloyd also is a high school track coach, so he is used to seeing injuries. “I kind of hung out with her, made sure she was all right,” Lloyd said. “It wasn’t anything spectacular.” In the meantime, Lloyd tried to keep the woman’s mind off of her injury and went inside the customer’s house, at her request, to secure her dogs and lock the door. Paramedics arrived about an hour later and said that the customer had indeed broken her leg and needed

surgery. Lloyd brushed off his heroic actions. “Carriers do this stuff every day,” the 20-year postal veteran said. “[Customers] know if they need anything, they can come to you.”

When Staten Island, NY Branch 99 member **Wilfredo Cruz** slumped down to his knees by his case on Sept. 29, 2014, his fellow carriers rushed over to find out what was wrong. He told his co-workers as they helped him that he was dizzy and scared. Fellow Branch 99 member **Pete Bellantoni Jr.** was concerned for his friend and could not find the manager, so he decided to take action. “I walked him across the street to the fire department,” he said. Dazed and confused but not unconscious, Cruz could not answer simple questions, so Bellantoni filled in the blanks with EMTs until Cruz was able to answer for himself. Firefighters took his blood pressure, which was high. They also provided him with oxygen. Cruz was given a full examination at the hospital. His failure to take his blood pressure medicine proved to be the problem, and he has since returned to work. Bellantoni brushed off any praise for his actions. “Anyone would have done it,” the 28-year postal veteran said.

Going about her park-and-loop route one day in April, Albany, NY Branch 29 member **Lyndsay Jackson** heard a woman screaming. The carrier got closer and saw that that “she was covered in blood.” Jackson asked the woman if she needed assistance and heard a “yes.” It appeared the woman had a serious nose bleed. “I quickly called 911 and asked a resident for ice and towels. I applied some basic first aid,” Jackson said. “I sat with her until the ambulance arrived and tried to keep her calm, considering her frantic state.” But the 10-year postal veteran said calling her a hero is a little “extreme.” She said, “I did what anybody who was standing there would have done.”

One day in the fall of 2014, Houston, TX Branch 283 member **Laura Lee Carson** had gone back to the post office to get packages for a parcel run when she heard

that a carrier from another post office, Candy Malony, had called the postmaster and voiced concern that she hadn’t heard from her mother and had not been able to contact her on the phone. The postmaster called the post office that serves the mother’s house and spoke with the supervisor there, saying that Carson was the carrier on the route and would check on Malony’s mother. “When I knocked on the door, I heard the lady crying inside the house,” Carson told the post office. “She was able to crawl to the door but could not open it. After assisting her to open the door, which was difficult due to a chain being wrapped around the door knob, I saw Candy’s mother lying on the floor with blood coming out of her mouth and extremely swollen ankles.” The woman had apparently dropped a TV on her feet the night before, disabling her. “She couldn’t tell what year it was,” the carrier said. Carson called 911 and made sure the woman was properly clothed. An ambulance arrived to take the woman to the hospital to treat her injuries. “I’m not sure what would have happened to her if I didn’t show up,” Carson said. “She also didn’t have [air conditioning] because it went out the night before.” After three weeks in the hospital, the woman was transferred to a nursing home. Carson, a 28-year postal veteran, said she was just glad she could help. “I would want someone to do that for me or my parent,” she said. **PR**



Houston, TX Branch 283 member **Laura Lee Carson** recently was recognized for helping a fellow letter carrier’s mother while on her route.

Community recognizes repeat hero

Charleston, SC Branch 3902 member **Mark Conway** was delivering his mail route in North Charleston on Sept. 4, 2014, when he noticed a buildup of mail in the mailbox of an elderly customer whom he knew to be in poor health. Concerned, the carrier went to the man's door and knocked.

"He asked me to come in," he said. "The apartment looked in disarray."



The customer was dazed and dehydrated, so Conway got him some ice water.

Conway also called a local councilwoman who takes care of elderly in the community, and she got the man the medical care he needed. Hospice workers were supposed to come by a few times a week, but they had not checked on him that particular day. Conway later checked in with the man, who thanked him and said he was doing fine.

The 28-year postal veteran is no stranger to being in the spotlight for his heroics. He was featured in the April 2011 *Postal Record* for getting help for another one of his elderly customers.

Because of his many actions to help the community, North Charleston Mayor R. Keith Summey declared Sept. 25, 2014, "Mark Conway Day."

Though he said "it was pretty cool" to have that honor bestowed on him, he insisted that he is not a hero. "This isn't going into a burning building," Conway said. "It was a citizen needing help. I'm doing my job." **PR**



SC mailman delivers in a big way, saving woman's life

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NORTH CHARLESTON, SC (WCSC) - On Wednesday, Mark Conway was wearing a United States Postal Service uniform, but underneath he may as well been hiding a Superman costume.

On his North Charleston route, Conway felt something was a little off and he was right.

Off Rivers Avenue, Conway delivers to the home of an elderly woman. At the first of the month the woman always meets him outside for the mail. It's her routine, Conway says.

"I see her peeking through the window," Conway said. "I get out of my truck and I open the gate and I walk up the steps and hand her, her mail. She shakes my hand and thanks me very much."

On Tuesday, the first of February, the mailman was at the mailbox alone. The same thing happened Wednesday.

"I found the mail still there and I got a little concerned because it was out of the normal," Conway said.

The mailman says he knocked on the door, asked neighbors her whereabouts and when the pieces didn't fit together he called police.



Because of Charleston, SC Branch 3902 member Mark Conway's many actions to help improve the community (including the one featured in the 2011 news story shown above), North Charleston Mayor R. Keith Summey declared Sept. 25, 2014, "Mark Conway Day."

Neighborhood watch

On Aug. 15, 2014, Clarksburg, WV Branch 817 member **Clay Clark** was nearing the end of his route around 3 p.m. when he saw something that concerned him. "I noticed a young boy sitting by the sidewalk in the grass. He was crying," he said. "There was no one around, and I could tell something wasn't right." He asked the youngster if he was all right, and the boy said he had gotten off the school bus at the wrong

stop. Since the child's school was on the other side of town, Clark figured the boy had been sitting there for more than 20 minutes by himself. "It was his third day of kindergarten and he didn't know where he was," Clark said. "It was probably a pretty traumatic day for the little guy." Clark told the boy it would be OK and he would help him get home. "He had contact numbers on his backpack," the carrier said. Clark called all three phone

numbers on the boy's student information card with no luck. Clark then called 911 and explained the situation to the operator, and then waited with the boy until a police officer arrived to get the boy home safely. The 13-year postal veteran said he was just happy that he could help out. "It's just part of the things we do as letter carriers. We're the eyes and ears of the community out here," he said. "Being a parent, I would want someone to step

up and help my child in the same position." **PR**

