

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 202-756-7403 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.

Postal employees pitch in for one of their own

One cold day in spring 2015, a rural letter carrier had returned from his route and was unloading his vehicle in the post office garage. While closing his vehicle's back door, the man fell to the floor, unconscious.

Another carrier alerted a driving instructor, who called 911 and then the postmaster. Another employee began CPR with assistance from Rochester, MN Branch 440 member **Jolene Ramler**.

"I got down there and started doing it," Ramler said. "It being a fellow carrier, I didn't want to see anything happen to him." They continued CPR until the paramedics arrived.

"He was taking breaths here and there," Ramler said. Because of the low temperature, despite it being spring, "It was a good thing he collapsed in the garage," she said.

The driving instructor directed traffic in the garage and the paramedics took over. The fallen carrier's heart was shocked three times and paramedics established a heart rhythm. His breathing and heart rate were still labored when he was taken by ambulance to the hospital, but he was later able to return home to continue his recovery.

Ramler brushed off any praise, though. "I don't know if I'd call myself

a hero," the 11-year postal veteran said. "I'm just glad I was there, glad I was able to help."

The helping hands of a letter carrier

As Merced, CA Branch 1340 member **Penny Guillory** was driving to work on Feb. 26, 2015, she saw a man on the side of the road waving for help. "It was kind of out in the middle of nowhere," she said. "I pulled over and there was a lady who was passed out and in duress."

The city carrier assistant got out of her car and talked to the man, who had been in the passenger seat and was able to pull the car over when the woman, who had been driving, fainted. He had pulled the woman out of the car and laid her on the roadside.

Another passerby, April Wagnon, had stopped as well. Guillory asked Wagnon to call 911 while the CPR-certified CCA started chest compressions on the woman. "We took turns giving her CPR for 15 minutes," Guillory said.

Once the ambulance arrived and the carrier saw that the situation was in good hands, she returned to her commute to the office.

She doesn't think she's a hero, though. "It wasn't that big of a deal," Guillory, a 15-year postal veteran, said of her actions. "The thing is, anyone passing down the street that day would have done the same thing."

'Superman' to the rescue

Anchorage, AK Branch 4319 member **Jonathon Mancilla** was delivering mail one day in November 2015 to a business building. "I heard this lady on the phone, yelling," he said. The carrier thought she might be arguing with someone.

He continued to go to his truck and tried to figure out what was going on. "Something in my gut said something was wrong," the second-year letter



Jolene Ramler

carrier said.

When Mancilla saw that the woman had a baby and seemed distressed, he rushed out of his postal vehicle to her. “She was in a panic,” he said. “She said, ‘My baby can’t breathe.’”

Mancilla grabbed the child. “The color of the baby was a bruised purple,” he said.

They were in a health services building, and the carrier knew there were nurses around, so he yelled out, “I need help! Call 911!”

He then flipped the baby over and gave it a couple of taps on its back, as the carrier learned in the infant CPR class he took after his first child was born. After he did this, “The baby

sounded like it was trying to breathe and turned to a normal color,” Mancilla said.

A nurse had come over, so Mancilla handed the boy over and said, “He’s breathing again.”

An ambulance soon came to check out the child, though by that point, Mancilla had already taken control of the situation. “It was so quick,” he said. “My adrenaline was so high.”

Mancilla returned to his route once he was sure everything was OK. He got a message later that afternoon from his supervisor with an update that the child was doing fine.

Despite the fact that his co-workers now call him “Superman” at his station, Mancilla said it just feels good to help. “What if it was my baby?” he said.

Alert carrier warns customer of fire

On July 10, 2015, Oshkosh, WI Branch 173 member **Eric Momsen** was delivering his route when he smelled smoke while delivering to an elderly customer. He started looking for signs of a fire and knocked on the door to alert the customer.

“I smelled smoke in the garage,” Momsen told her. She said her house was not on fire and that everything



Eric Momsen

was OK; it was probably just the exhaust from her car.

Momsen continued on and went to the back yard. “There was more smoke coming out from the garage,” he said. It was also pouring from the eaves. This time, the carrier was persistent, and he again knocked on the customer’s door. “You better come out,” Momsen told her. “I think there’s a fire somewhere.”

She followed him outside to see the smoke, and then she called 911. It was determined that an old heating coil in her bathroom had faulty wiring, which caused it to smolder. There was a lot of smoke damage to the house, but the woman was able to get out safely.

The woman stopped by the post office a few days later to thank the carrier for saving her and her house. She had been about to leave to head to the senior center, which would have left the house vacant.

Momsen said he’s no hero; he just did what he would do if it were his house. “It was clearly the right thing to do,” the 23-year postal veteran said. “It felt really good to help someone.” **PR**



Jonathan Mancilla

Eye on the elderly

Boston Branch 34 member **Tom Balzano** was concerned on Feb. 12 when he noticed that an ailing retiree on his route didn’t meet him at the door to collect his monthly check like he usually does. “Maybe he’s not feeling well,” Balzano said he told himself. He put the check in the mailbox and continued on his route. But when he came back

the next day and saw that the mail was still accumulating, “I said, ‘Something is not right here,’” Balzano told the *Boston Herald*. “He didn’t look good the last time I saw him. For some reason it clicked ... that I should do something. And thank God I did.” Worried that something was wrong at the man’s home, Balzano called police, who had

trouble getting into the house. Firefighters arrived next and managed to break in through a basement door; emergency responders searching the house found the man barely responsive in a room upstairs. The 19-year postal veteran was praised for his actions. “If it weren’t for the action of that mailman, he definitely wouldn’t have been alive too

much longer,” Braintree fire Chief James O’Brien told the *Herald*. “I don’t know what the outcome would have been—but it wouldn’t have been good.” But Balzano doesn’t think he’s a hero. “Ask any carrier—it’s what we do,” he said. “We pay attention to our surroundings, and we see when something seems out of whack.” **PR**