

## 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](mailto:postalrecord@nalc.org). We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.



St. Paul, MN Branch 28 member Kirsten Levisen-Lloyd (top and above) recently was interviewed by a local newspaper about her role in helping a choking customer.

## Honoring heroic carriers

**H**eroism, 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.

### Quick-thinking carrier saves choking patron

On Nov. 18, 2015, St. Paul, MN Branch 28 member **Kirsten Levisen-Lloyd** was ahead of schedule on her route and one of her usual customers, Gloria Krueger, was at her front door. "I was putting a letter in her mailbox, which she obviously heard," the carrier said.

Assuming, like any other day, that the customer was there to receive her mail, Levisen-Lloyd was ready with it. This time, though, the carrier noticed that her customer was struggling to get the door open. "Her eyes were teared up," she said. "Her lips were blue."

Levisen-Lloyd asked Krueger if she was choking. "She was kind of gurgling a little bit," the carrier said. She patted Krueger on the back a few times, but realized that wouldn't do it.

"I dropped my mail on the stoop and wrapped my arms around her," she said. After a few tries of the Heimlich maneuver over the course of a few minutes, a piece of steak was dislodged and the woman began to breathe normally again. "There was a huge whoosh of air," Levisen-Lloyd said. "She was very thankful."

When Krueger assured the carrier that she was OK, Levisen-Lloyd

continued on her route. The woman had called 911 about 10 minutes before the carrier arrived while she attempted the Heimlich on herself. Paramedics soon drove up beside the carrier on her route and praised her for her actions. Levisen-Lloyd checked in with Krueger and her family later.

The two-year letter carrier said she was overwhelmed at the thought of being called a hero. "It's just being able to do the right thing. I hope anyone would have responded the same way," Levisen-Lloyd said. "I consider myself blessed and lucky to be there and to know enough to help her."

### Carrier saves clerk during 'worst lunch break ever'

Dayton, OH Branch 182 member **Dana Eby** returned to the post office after lunch on Saturday, June 6, 2015. It's a small office, and the clerk's window was already closed for the day.

He saw the clerk, Alan Schultz, there and said something to him, but Schultz did not respond. Eby looked closer. "He was slumped over the counter," Eby said.

Another carrier asked, "Al, are you OK?" When Eby looked back at Schultz, "He was lying flat on his back," he said. "He was purple."

When Eby bent over him, he said, "He had a glazed look in his eye." So he checked for a pulse, but couldn't find one. The other co-worker called 911 and put the operator on speaker. Eby told her, "There's gurgling sounds." She responded that that was not a good sign, and that the carrier should start CPR.

Eby, a coach for his son's soccer team, was trained in CPR, though had never had to use it. "I started compressions in rhythms of four," he said. "It seemed like a half-hour, but it was probably 15 minutes."

The carrier relayed information to the dispatcher about how to get into the office where they were while continuing compressions until EMTs could arrive to take over, all the while telling Schultz, “Come on, Al.”

All of a sudden, “He breathed real heavy and looked at me,” Eby said. Arriving medics asked questions, but Schultz only stared. After a few minutes, he came to and was able to say his name.

Schultz was taken to the hospital and treated for a heart attack. He soon recovered and returned to work after receiving stents in his heart.

Emergency responders praised Eby’s efforts. They told him, “You know he was dead already, right? You did a good job reviving him,” Eby recounted.

“At the time, you do what you need to do,” he said. “That was quite the experience.”

But the 35-year postal veteran said he was just lucky to be there at the right time. “It’s a small office and we’re a tight group,” he said. “He made it, and that’s all that matters. It’s something anyone would do.

“It was the worst lunch break ever,” Eby added with a laugh.

## Beyond the call of duty to help a young patron

York, PA Branch 509 member **Lars Edleblute** was loading his vehicle at the post office on a rainy Dec. 1, 2015, to begin his route when he heard a woman yelling and running toward a large road. “I wasn’t sure why,” he said.

The city carrier assistant scanned the area to see what was happening. He then saw a small child climb over a fence and dart across a busy four-lane highway. The woman stopped running,

but Edleblute immediately went after the 8-year-old boy. “I just ran up the hill and jumped over the fence,” he said.

Meanwhile, the woman—the boy’s mother—was in hysterics and was on the phone with 911.

Once he was over the fence, Edleblute saw that the youngster was in the highway’s median with traffic going in both directions. “It was pouring rain and no one was slowing down or stopping,” Edleblute said.

The carrier waited for a break in traffic and then darted to the median. When he reached the boy, all the boy could say was, “I want to go to church.” Edleblute grabbed a leash that was attached to the boy, put his arm around him and held his hand. He told the child, “It’s OK; we are going on an adventure.”

The boy was mumbling and was not making any sense, so Edleblute tried to

## Help on the way

On July 22, 2015, Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 member **Casey Stevens** was delivering mail when he heard someone calling for help. Next door, he noticed an elderly customer, Louise Mulcahy, on the ground in her driveway. “She had fallen behind her car that was parked,” the city carrier assistant said. “I walked over and asked if she was OK.” Mulcahy told Stevens that she couldn’t get up and wanted him to help her up. Stevens was hesitant to move her in case she was seriously injured, but when his customer persisted, he did. Mulcahy cried out in pain,

so the carrier called 911 and waited with the woman until paramedics arrived. It was discovered that Mulcahy had broken her pelvis. Mulcahy’s daughter, Patricia, wrote a note to the local postmaster to praise Stevens. “Due to his kindness and professionalism, she will not require an operation, since she did not try to move on her own. At her age, an operation would have been very dangerous and he may have saved my mother’s life,” she wrote. “Please tell him my family is deeply grateful for his assistance to my mother.” But the first-year letter carrier doesn’t think he’s a hero. “It was something any-

one else would have done in my situation,” Stevens said, “whether a postal worker or good-hearted person.”

On Saturday, June 20, 2015, Rochester, NY Branch 210 member **John Lamuraglia** was delivering his route when he noticed that traffic nearby had stopped. The flow of cars was blocked by a vehicle pulling a boat into a driveway. The carrier waited, but after a few minutes of nothing moving, he worried that something might be wrong. He rushed over to the vehicle. “The car was still in reverse, and [the driver] was sleeping,” Lamuraglia

said. He called 911 and began to render aid. “I was able to get him out of the car,” the carrier said. “He was having trouble breathing.” A jogger going by stopped to help. Together, they listened to the 911 operator explain how to do chest compressions while they waited for paramedics. “I was a little out of my comfort zone,” the carrier said. Lamuraglia later found out the driver did not survive, but the carrier was commended for his help in trying to prolong the man’s life. “I’m not sure I’m a hero,” the 17-year postal veteran said. “I was just trying to help the guy out.” **PR**

keep him calm. He later found out that the boy was autistic.

Eventually, a man nearby came to help. They safely escorted the boy across the highway and back to his mother. The mother had stayed behind the fence and was thankful when they put the boy over the fence and returned him safely to her care.

The first-year letter carrier doesn't think he did anything out of the ordinary, though. "I just feel like I did my job," Edleblute said. "I was just happy I was there to save the boy."

## Knowledgeable carrier fights fire, saves building

Moulton, AL Branch 6194 member **Jeff McCrary** was delivering mail at an apartment complex on July 21, 2015. "It was almost my last stop of the day," he said, when he heard a woman calling for help.

He followed the sound and opened an apartment door to see a grease fire coming from the stove. Flames were already starting to climb up a wall. "She was cooking a grilled-cheese sandwich," the carrier said.

McCrary knew that everyone's first thought is to use water, but recognized that a grease fire was different. "I once had a grease fire in an apart-

ment," he said.

McCrary asked the woman if she had flour or salt. "We got salt on it and put it out," he said.

Because they got to it quickly, there was only minimal damage to the apartment.

The building manager was not on duty that day, but later told McCrary that he had probably saved the entire complex.

The 27-year postal veteran said he just tries to look out for the people on his route. "I get to know my customers," McCrary said. "It's just instincts. I try to help where I can."

## Carrier's 'crazy start to the day' helps trapped child

Pittsburgh Branch 84 member **Sean Matulevic** was delivering mail on a pivot to an apartment complex on the morning of June 3, 2015, when he saw smoke coming out from under the door of an apartment.

He banged on the door, then heard a boy yelling for help. "I just kind of reacted," the carrier told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. "Once you hear a ... kid screaming, you kind of freak out yourself."

The carrier called 911 and his manager and then began trying to run and kick the door, eventually breaking it open.

Matulevic found the 14-year-old boy in a closet. He had tried to hide because he was scared after the kitchen fire started while he was cooking eggs, but the door knob inside was broken and he got locked in. After helping the youngster come out, the carrier opened the windows in the kitchen and poured water on the small kitchen fire.

Once they got outside, the fire department, police and neighbors had already gathered. "He gave me a hug, and I went on my way," Matulevic told the *Post-Gazette*.



**Sean Matulevic**

He might not think he's a hero, but others do. Sargeant Grubbs of the Ross Police Department said, "We can all make an accurate critical assessment of the outcome if it were not for Sean making such an impressive entrance. We all wanted to meet the mailman who knocked this door, not only the dead-bolt, but the steel frame, too."

The first-year letter carrier said, "I feel like anyone who was there, big or small, would have tried to knock down the door," adding, "It was a pretty crazy start to the day."

## Carrier saves the day

Clinton, IA Branch 126 member **Charlene Munck** was delivering her route on Saturday, Aug. 15, 2015, when "out popped a girl and she looked like something was wrong," she said.

Munck noticed that the 8-year-old was wandering on the street with no shoes on. The carrier asked if she could help her, and the youngster said, "My house is on fire and my parents are not home and I don't know what to do."

Munck called 911 and asked the girl if anyone else was in the house. The girl responded that she was home alone.

The letter carrier then started checking with the neighbors to find out if



**Jeff McCrary**



anyone knew who the girl's parents were; however, no one answered their doors. Most people in town were at a local parade, which was where the girl said her parents had gone.

Black smoke had started to pour

from the house as fire trucks that were taken out of the parade showed up to quell the small kitchen fire.

Meanwhile, the police took custody of the girl until her parents could be located. "I guess she was sleeping and

the smoke alarm woke her up," Munck said.

Still, the 23-year letter carrier brushed off any major superlatives. "No one was in the area; I just happened to be there," she said. **PR**

## Eye on the elderly

One day last fall, Augusta, GA Branch 263 member **Joseph Stiles** was going about his route when he heard someone scream. "I didn't know where it was coming from until I pulled up," he said. He then noticed that an elderly customer had fallen as she was going down her front steps to her car. The woman's husband was struggling to get her up, as both used walkers. Stiles rushed over to help. "The walker had gotten away from her," he said. Fortunately, the couple was not injured. "As much as they get around, it was just a mishap that day," Stiles said. The carrier received praise for his kind actions. "Good, kind man," the woman's daughter wrote to *The Augusta Chronicle*. "We need more like him." But Stiles said helping out goes along with carrying mail. "It's just part of the job, being mindful of people in the surrounding area," the 16-year postal veteran said.

Gunniston, CO Branch 5301 member **Wayne Smith** was delivering as a T-6 on May 20, 2015, when he noticed that an elderly customer in a particular apartment had not picked up his mail, something he knew

was unusual for the man. "His apartment was real close to the mailboxes," Smith said. The carrier would often see him outside, but he had not recently. He decided to go to the man's apartment to check on him. "His dog was barking uncontrollably," Smith said. He knocked on the door, but got no response. The carrier returned to the post office at lunchtime and asked the postmaster to call the police for a wellness check. Officers responded to the call and found that the man was having severe health issues and took him to the hospital. Police called the post office to thank Smith and said that the situation could have turned critical without intervention. But the 32-year postal veteran doesn't think he deserves any special attention for his actions. "Everybody does stuff like that all the time," Smith said. "Any normal person would do it."

On July 9, 2015, Tucson, AZ Branch 704 member **Sylvia Mireles** was delivering her route when she noticed a stack of mail from the day before at an elderly customer's mailbox. The patron, Sara Saunders, is wheelchair-bound but "she always comes

out to say hello," Mireles said. That day, though, the carrier didn't see her and the stack of mail worried her. She headed to Saunders' apartment. "I heard what I thought was a cat," Mireles said. Getting closer, she heard a meek voice saying, "Help me, help me." The door was locked, so the carrier called out to Saunders, who responded that there was a spare key hidden. Mireles could not get it, so she called 911, and a dispatcher promised that help was on the way. Mireles finished her rounds at the condominium complex and came back to check on Saunders. Responders were able to get inside to take care of the woman, who had apparently tipped out of her wheelchair and was unable to move. "She wasn't hurt; she was a little dehydrated," Mireles said. The 30-year postal veteran received praise for her actions. "I appreciate the carrier's observational skills, awareness, and the willingness to act in this situation," Saunders' daughter, Cynthia Dunn, wrote to the local postmaster. "Again, thank you for your service that went beyond your duties." But Mireles doesn't think she's a hero. "I wasn't doing anything

extraordinary. I was just concerned about her," she said. "She's a brave woman with a positive attitude, and I love talking to her."

On Aug. 11, 2015, Akron, OH Branch 148 member **Benjamin Lipford** was going about his route when he passed by the house of his 78-year-old customer, Norma MacInnis, and something startling in the front yard. "I looked down and was like, 'Is that a body?'" Lipford said. But then he saw movement. He rushed over to the woman, who had been raking leaves in her yard. "She fell flat on her face and busted her face up pretty bad," the carrier said, adding that the woman was bleeding profusely. Lipford asked MacInnis if he could help her back into her house, and then did so. The carrier then called 911 and stayed with her until an ambulance arrived. Responding paramedics said she had suffered a concussion from the fall, and that she was lucky that Lipford was there. "She called me her angel," Lipford said of MacInnis. But the 21-year postal veteran doesn't think he's a hero. "It's good to know she's OK," he said. "I did what anyone would do." **PR**