

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 202-662-2489 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.

Swooping in to help

"I was getting ready to deliver the mail and I could kind of see that something was not quite right," Corpus Christi, TX Branch 1259 member **Shimon Hawkins** told KIII-TV, the local ABC affiliate, of delivering his route on June 26.

The customer, Lily, had heard the carrier come to the side doorway, and she rushed to catch him. The woman lived alone and told him she had been going into respiratory failure and couldn't make a call to 911.

"She looked disoriented," Hawkins said. He asked Lily if she was OK and if he should call for an ambulance. She nodded yes.

Hawkins ran to get his phone and ran back. "Her face was so red," he said. "She could talk, but it was laborious. She was really scared."

While on the phone with the emergency dispatcher directing EMTs on how to get to the woman's house, Hawkins grabbed insulin and breathing treatment apparatus for her. "She wasn't getting any air," the carrier added. "I really thought she was going to die."

Lily said to Hawkins, "Don't leave me," and the carrier assured her that he was right there with her.

An ambulance soon came to take the customer to the hospital; after recover-

ing, she returned home. "He went above and beyond the call of duty and I feel that God put him here to save me at the right time," Lily told KIII-TV. "I got a new best friend here."

"I was just glad to be there," Hawkins said of his actions.

"The 'Hawk' flies in any weather' is what I tell my customers," the Army Reserves veteran joked to the TV station.

This is not the first time the carrier has been recognized for his heroics. Hawkins also was featured in the May 2018 *Postal Record* for helping to put out an electrical fire in his post office's parking lot.

Observant letter carrier saves a life

Dallas, TX Branch 132 member **Clubber Targton** was going about her route on June 20 when her customer, Misty Adari, came to her truck to get her mail.

The carrier noticed that the woman didn't look well and asked if she was OK. "I could tell something was wrong," Targton said.

Adari responded that she was fine; however, Targton was concerned. She asked for the woman's husband's phone number, which Adari freely gave to her, while continuing to insist that she was all right. Targton told the customer, "Go back in the house and I'll call your husband."

As the woman headed to her home, she collapsed on the lawn.

Targton rushed over to her, kept her head up and began checking her vital signs. The carrier had water with her, so she splashed some on the woman to try to get her to wake up—but she received no reaction.

She continued to monitor Adari's vital signs and knew that she needed to start resuscitation attempts. "I hit her twice in the chest," said Targton, who had received CPR training during her previous



Corpus Christi, TX Branch 1259 member **Shimon Hawkins** was recognized for getting medical help for his customer who couldn't breathe.



Clubber Targton

job working at a federal prison.

“It was scary,” she added of the situation.

Adari regained consciousness, and the carrier called 911. Targton stayed with her customer as they waited

for the ambulance. Upon the EMTs’ arrival, Targton asked them to call Adari’s husband. He later updated the carrier, informing her that his wife had since undergone a battery of tests and may have had a heart attack.

Targton, a 17-year letter carrier, said she appreciated the acknowledgment of her actions but denied she did anything heroic. “I was there at the right time,” she said. “Life, to me, is precious. It’s just God’s grace.”

Help on the way



Juan Chavez

On July 13, San Diego, CA Branch 70 member **Juan Chavez** was approaching a home to deliver mail when he noticed that the front door was open. “Knowing that this customer had dogs, I honked my horn, hoping someone would react and secure the door,” the carrier said. Suddenly, the resident came through the front doorway carrying what appeared to be a toilet. The man then lost his footing and fell over the object as it broke into pieces. Chavez ran to see if he was OK. “I saw that he was bleeding heavily with severe cuts to his hands and a major wound on his arm. You could see inside his arm,” he said. “It was bleeding and bleeding and bleeding. It appeared he was going into shock.” The carrier removed his own belt, wrapped it around the man’s arm as a tourniquet to try to stanch the bleeding, and called 911. “While we waited,

I reminded him to stay calm and sat him down,” Chavez said. “I began yelling for others to help. Nobody came out.” The 911 operator told the carrier that help was on the way. After several minutes, the paramedics arrived and assisted the customer. The customer later recovered and returned home. He thanked Chavez for saving his life, the carrier said. But the 14-year letter carrier doesn’t think he’s a hero. “I am grateful I was at the right time to help my customer,” Chavez said. “I was just helping—he was in need.”

On Saturday, May 19, Independence, KS Branch 1035 member **Jonathan Walker** was carrying mail on a walking loop and saw a man in a vehicle at a stop sign a block away. “He was revving up his pickup truck,” the carrier said. The truck then took off and went out of control, rolling over a few lawns, taking out a mailbox and finally coming to a stop just before hitting a large tree. The carrier ran to the pickup and saw a customer from the route and his two small children inside. “He was having a seizure,” Walker

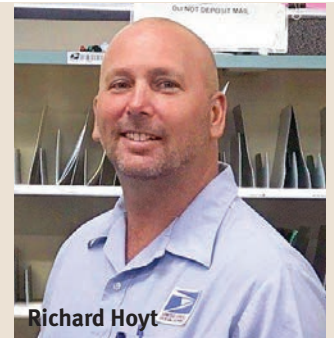


Jonathan Walker

said. The carrier placed the vehicle in park and shut off the engine. He held the man’s head up and was trying to slap him to stop him from seizing. “He fell asleep and started snoring,” Walker said. “He was slumped over, drooling.” Walker ran to a house nearby and had a customer call 911. The carrier then went back to the truck and stayed with the unconscious driver and his children until emergency personnel arrived. Fortunately, none of the family members seemed to be injured, and the pickup barely had a scratch on it, Walker said. “He has some good guardian angels,” the carrier added. After the situation was in good hands, Walker went to a local barber shop and had the owner call other family members to let them know what had happened, since he knew the barber was a friend of the family. The four-year letter

carrier said that “hero” was not the proper term for him. “I think anyone would have done that as a civic duty,” Walker said.

Clearwater, FL Branch 2008 member **Richard Hoyt** was



Richard Hoyt

delivering his route on June 28 when he saw a customer who uses a wheelchair. “She was in a panic,” he said. “I saw her wiping her legs.” The carrier exited his truck and rushed over to the woman, Ms. Gregg. Hoyt asked his customer if she was OK. The woman had been carrying chlorine for the pool and had accidentally spilled some on the diabetic socks she was wearing, causing her skin to burn and form sores. Gregg had been unable to reach her garden hose, but Hoyt grabbed it from the front lawn and washed her legs off. After it appeared that the chemicals had been rinsed off of the patron, Gregg called her son to come over, and she went to be checked out by a doctor. The woman later left the 22-year USPS veteran a thank-you note in her mailbox. “She says, ‘You’re my guardian angel without wings,’” said Hoyt, who downplayed his actions. “I just helped her out. I don’t think I’m a hero.” **PR**

Watching out for those most vulnerable



John Maldonado

One day in August 2017, Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 member **John Maldonado** was delivering his route when he noticed that an elderly customer, Lynda Yu, did not greet him at the door. He also saw a package from the day before.

"I usually see her almost every day," he said. "I was really concerned."

The alert carrier also noticed that, despite having her own driveway, she had parked on the street and had a parking citation on her car due to street sweeping. "She wouldn't allow herself to get a ticket," he said.

"I lifted up her door slot and could hear music playing," Maldonado said, so he called in, but didn't receive a response. He then went across the street and asked the neighbors if they had seen the woman, and when it became apparent that no one had spotted her for a few days, he contacted emergency services.

Responders found Yu on the floor of her home. She had been in and out of consciousness after falling a few days earlier. An ambulance soon arrived to take Yu to the hospital; she has since recovered and moved to an assisted-living facility.

"I am writing this letter on behalf of my family to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to John Maldonado for going above and beyond his duties and responsibilities as a Postal Service employee," Yu's daughter, Jessica, wrote to the local postmaster. "My mother is alive today because of his incredible thoughtfulness and generosity. If it were not for Mr. Maldonado's initiative...my mother, Lynda Yu, would have perished, as she was unable to call for help nor reach her phone because of her serious medical condition."

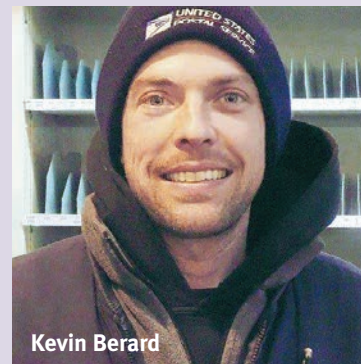
Maldonado, a 15-year carrier, said he's not a hero—he's just a people person who tries to get to know his customers. "It's something we all should do," he said, "look out for our neighbors and look out for our friends." **PR**

Eye on the elderly

One day in early April, Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 member **David Rhoades** was on his route and, after making a turn in his LLV to get to his next delivery, "I heard someone yelling from their garage," he said. He approached the home and found his longtime customer, Pamela Tannyhill, on the ground. "She was in a very awkward position," the carrier said. The elderly woman had fallen in her garage on the way to get her mail and had been unable to get up by herself due to knee problems. Her purse's contents were spilled, and she could not get to her phone. The woman's neighbors were not home to hear her call for help. "I can't move my legs," Rhoades said she told him. He responded, "I'll get behind you and pull you up." The carrier did just that, and was able to help Tannyhill up to a standing position and then back into her house. "Are you going to be OK?" the carrier asked her. She said that she would call her husband, who is a doctor. Tannyhill had broken her knee cap in the fall. The customer told USPS, "If he hadn't come along, I don't know what I would have done but lay there on the ground." The 29-year letter carrier said that it was nice to be honored, but that he doesn't think he's a hero. "I truly believe any carrier who had been there would have done it," Rhoades said. "I was fortunate to be there to help her. I feel good that she's in better condition now."

On Saturday, March 24, Warwick, RI Branch 3166 member **Kevin Berard** noticed

that, after a couple of days, the mail still was in the mailbox at his customer Robert's house. There was no response to his knocks on the door. "I would see him religiously every day," the carrier said. Berard's uncle lived kitty-corner from the house, so Berard quickly went over and told his uncle, "I haven't seen Bob in two days. Can you check on him?" The uncle was able to get inside the man's home and found him on the kitchen floor. Robert apparently had suffered



Kevin Berard

a stroke and had been there for several days. Another neighbor in the multi-level unit also came by and called 911. First responders soon arrived to take the man to the hospital. EMTs commented that, had the resident not been discovered at that time, he could have died. While Berard said that being called a hero is a "huge honor," he said he just watches out for his route. "I'm so close with my customers, they're like my family," the 13-year postal veteran said. "I try to make sure everyone's safe while I'm out there." **PR**