

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.

Adapting skills to save the day

On Aug. 14, South Macomb, MI Branch 4374 member **Naseem Elias** was on his route when he heard a woman screaming. The carrier followed the sound. "I found a mom carrying a 9-month-old baby, running to me and saying, 'Please call the police! The baby is not breathing!'"

Elias quickly called 911 and stayed on the phone with them until they arrived.

A few weeks before, Elias had met the woman and found out that she was from Egypt and didn't speak much English. "If you need any help, let me know; I will be on this route once a week," the carrier told her at that time. "She was very happy to see a mailman that speaks her language."

The carrier later found out that when the baby had stopped breathing, the woman had run to the street and had seen a man go by. The woman had been trying to tell him to call the police, but the man told her, "Go, go."

She went back home, carrying her baby, and started screaming, "Police! Police!" When officers showed up, Elias said, "They wanted to understand what happened to the baby, so I stayed with her to interpret to the

medical team what happened, answering all of their questions."

The carrier soon checked on the mother and baby after they returned home from the hospital. "When she saw me, she started crying and said, 'You are my hero...thank you so much from the deep of my heart,'" Elias said.

But the second-year letter carrier said he doesn't think he's a hero; he merely used his skills to help in a tough situation. "The Postal Service has a lot of employees, and each one has different skills and experience," Elias said. "This is one of them—when a mailman speaks more than one language—and can help people like this mom."

Carrier keeps calm to save a patron

On July 21, Worcester, MA Branch 12 member **Susan Finneran** was doing a pivot on another route when, she said, "This guy came walking down the street." He was frantic, covered in blood and asking for help.

"He had cut himself with a table saw when it kicked back on him, slicing his arm wide open. We didn't know if it was a main artery," the carrier said. "He had blood everywhere, so I immediately dialed 911."

Finneran also looked for something to control the profuse bleeding. "At first, I was going to take my belt off and wrap it around his arm to stop the bleeding, but then I thought to remove the leather strap from my mail bag instead," Finneran said. She tied the strap around his arm to try to slow the bleeding.

While she was on the phone with the 911 operator, the man began to lose consciousness. "I made him sit down so he wouldn't pass out," she said.

Firefighters soon arrived at the scene. Remarking that without



Naseem Elias

Rockford, IL Branch 245 member **Vick Brown** was interviewed by a local TV station after helping a driver who had crashed a car into a fast-food restaurant.



Finneran's makeshift tourniquet, the man could have bled out, one firefighter commended the 36-year postal veteran's quick thinking. The man received treatment and soon returned home from the hospital.

But Finneran doesn't think her actions were a big deal. "Everybody should help everybody," she said, adding, "I don't like blood so I was surprised I could do any of it."

Taking charge and taking action

Rockford, IL Branch 245 member **Vick Brown** had just pulled up to a fast-food restaurant on his lunch break on June 19. "I was getting out of my vehicle," the carrier said. "A young lady was screaming, 'You almost hit me!'"

He looked over and saw that a vehicle's back wheel had rolled into the door of the restaurant with the driver inside. "She was slumped over and turning blue," Brown said. "I knocked on the window to get her attention."

As the woman looked up, she also

lifted her foot off the brake, causing the idling car to roll. "She was really accelerating toward a pole," he said.

He knocked again on the window. "Then I yanked the door handle," the carrier said. "I got in, threw it in park, and grabbed the keys."

When he looked around the car, he saw three syringes on the floor and a baby in the backseat. "The baby wasn't secured in the seat properly," Brown noted. He quickly took the child out of the back seat to safety.

The woman's cell phone rang just then, and the carrier answered. Brown told the caller—the woman's husband—what had happened and said, "Get here."

Emergency responders soon arrived and treated the woman. The carrier filled detectives and paramedics in on what he knew.

People were standing around watching all of the action unfold, recording video of it on their cell phones, but Brown said, "No one

was trying to help." The carrier said he hoped his story would encourage more people to take action when someone is in danger. Brown said he kept thinking, "Why is everyone looking? Help."

Brown has not heard an update on the situation. "I wonder how [she] and her child are doing and if they are OK," he said.

Still, word has gotten around about the carrier's actions and he has received media attention. The six-year postal veteran said he now receives hugs from members of the community when they see him. Though Brown said it feels "special" to be called a hero, he was "not looking for recognition. You see someone in trouble, and you want to do the right thing, you know?"

Rather, Brown said, "It was just perfect timing. I didn't think anything about it—I jumped into action and did what was natural."

Eye on the elderly



Amanda Schneider
Galesburg, IL Branch 88 member **Amanda Schneider** was delivering one

of her loops on Saturday, May 20, with an inspector and had reached an elderly customer's house. "I realized the mail was piling up," she said. "She always picked up her mail and papers regularly." Concerned because she knew that the woman lived alone and did not have family nearby, the carrier knocked on the door. "I could hear her screaming for help inside," Schneider said. "We had checked to see if the door was unlocked, but there was no way in." The

carrier asked the inspector to call 911 and then they went about the route as they waited for police to arrive. Responding officers broke the door down to get inside and discovered that the woman had fallen down a flight of stairs and had been lying on the floor for a few days. "She was pretty bruised and bloody and dehydrated," Schneider said. The customer was taken to the hospital for treatment of her injuries. Soon after, she went to a nursing home

for rehabilitation and now is back home, where Schneider said she is again picking up her mail regularly. A firefighter on Schneider's route who had knowledge of the situation told her that the woman was "probably hours away from passing away, it was that bad," she said. Still, the fifth-year letter carrier insists she was just in the right place at the right time. "I'm just doing my job," Schneider said. "I just pay attention and am observant to my customers and their patterns."

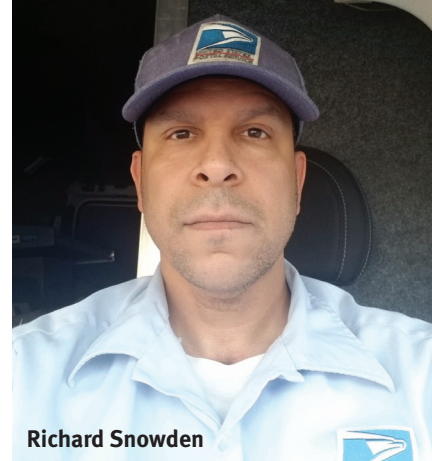
Brother watching out for brother

On June 20, Las Vegas Branch 2502 member **Richard Snowden** had just returned to the post office at the end of the day when someone yelled out to him, “Man down!”

The carrier investigated further, and a woman asked Snowden to check on his fellow carrier, Nate, who was sitting in his postal vehicle. “I went out

to his truck,” Snowden said. He saw the man “looking like he was spaced out. I asked, ‘Are you OK?’ and he mumbled he didn’t feel well. He’d go into slurring words.”

The carrier then saw Nate’s torso, hands and legs clenching. Snowden, along with a few other co-workers, helped Nate into the bathroom. “I soaked his whole body with water and ice—anything I could get my hands on,” the carrier said. “He then blurted out, ‘I



Richard Snowden

want to lie down and go home.’”

Snowden ran to get the station manager and another postal employee went to the store to get some Gatorade. Nate took a sip but said he “felt like he was gonna throw up,” Snowden said.

As two other letter carriers watched Nate, Snowden went to get his vehicle. “I finally got Nate to his car and drove to the hospital,” he said. “I stayed with him until his wife came.”

The man’s kidneys apparently had

Help on the way



Quiana Whitehead

On Saturday, Feb. 18, Gulf Coast Merged, MS Branch 1374 member **Quiana Whitehead** was going about her route delivering a parcel when she saw kids frantically come out of a house next door. “They said their brother wasn’t breathing,” the carrier said. Whitehead quickly secured her mail and ran to the home. They led her inside to the back bedroom, where the 2-year-old boy lay with his eyes rolled back in his head. “He was choking on something, but we didn’t know what,” the carrier said. She listened to the boy’s chest and heard faint but restricted breath. “I started the Heimlich. He

started to cough and his color returned,” Whitehead said. “I called paramedics and police.” Whitehead continued to try to clear the child’s airway while waiting for EMTs. Police were first on the scene and took over for the carrier. The other officer later told Whitehead, “You saved that child’s life,” and that the child also had had a fever of 106 degrees. Whitehead called the situation “so surreal. I didn’t have time to panic [at the time], but I did afterward.” Despite receiving praise, the third-year letter carrier denied heroics and said it was her motherly instincts that caused her to jump into action. “I have small children myself,” Whitehead said. “I wasn’t looking for recognition.”

On July 21, Southeast Pennsylvania Merged Branch 725 member **Frank Dudley** was delivering mail on one of his routes as a T-6 in a cul-de-sac when he looked over to one house. “There was a car running in the driveway,” he said.

The driver’s-side door was open and Dudley saw that a man in the driver’s seat was slumped to the side. Concerned, Dudley approached the vehicle. “I could tell right away he was in distress,” the carrier said. “He was unconscious and having trouble breathing.” Dudley quickly ran to a neighbor nearby and asked her to call 911. She did so, and the woman came back to Dudley and handed him her phone so that he could speak with the dispatcher. Dudley went back to stay with the man until emergency personnel arrived. “I talked to him, but I don’t think he regained consciousness,” Dudley said. “I prayed with him.” The carrier sadly found out that the man had in fact died later that night, but Dudley was commended for his caring actions. Dudley, who is a 24-year letter carrier as well as an Army and Army National Guard veteran, doesn’t believe he was a hero. “It’s something anyone would do,” he said.

Rochester, NY Branch 210 member **Sandy Wilkinson** was in her mail truck on her route on Saturday, July 29, when she heard people screaming outside a home, with their focus on a bleeding man. “I could see down to where he was,” she said. The carrier secured her mail in her postal van and then ran to the yard to help. “He got in a fight with his sister’s boyfriend,” Wilkinson said. “The boyfriend [allegedly] stabbed him in the back.” The carrier helped another person apply pressure to the wound while the sister called 911. Wilkinson also tried to help calm her customer until police and EMS arrived on the scene. The man’s wound punctured a lung; he received treatment and returned home soon after. “He gives me a hug every time he sees me,” Wilkinson said. Still, she doesn’t want any accolades for her actions. “I used to be an EMT and I’m a volunteer firefighter,” the fourth-year letter carrier said. “I just consider it helping and doing my job.” **PR**

failed due to dehydration. It had been 117 degrees in Las Vegas that day, and Nate's car registered at 140 degrees. After spending three days in the hospital, the carrier recovered and returned to work.

Snowden, who called the situation "scary," has since taken the opportunity to get training for emergency situations. But the 20-year postal veteran doesn't see himself as a hero. "I would do it for anybody," Snowden said.

'Sheriff' carrier helps stop porch poacher

While doing a park-and-loop one day in March, Lexington, KY Branch 361 member **Lauren Faulconer** was deliver-



ing mail walking through her customers' yards. "This lady was walking parallel to me on the sidewalk," she said.

Faulconer dropped off her package at a house

and kept delivering her route. "I veered off on a side street," Faulconer said.

When she returned to the previous street, the city carrier assistant noticed the woman again. This time, she was just a short distance from where she had first seen her. "I thought that was a little weird," she said. Faulconer said she thought that the woman should have been farther along down the street.

Taking a moment to discreetly look a little more closely, the carrier noticed something else. "She had a tote bag that was empty," she said, but it wasn't empty now. Faulconer checked the last home she had delivered a package to and, sure enough, it was missing.

The carrier knocked on the door of the

home to see if the customer had already picked it up, but no one was home. Faulconer suspected the woman was porch poaching and jumped into action.

"I called the police and my postmaster and then followed her in my postal vehicle about 100 feet behind her," the carrier said. Police quickly came to the scene and arrested the woman, whom they found with other allegedly stolen goods. Faulconer's customers got their package redelivered shortly thereafter.

"They call me the sheriff at my post office now," the second-year letter carrier said. "But I wouldn't call myself a hero. It's just good training. I try to keep my eyes open and notice my surroundings."

A carrier's watchful eye

"The day prior, I had left a package for the gentleman," Indianapolis Branch 39 member **Glenn Bass** said of delivering to an elderly customer on Sept. 20.

The man had an affinity for cigars, and the two had bonded over it previously. The man was particular about his parcels of cigars. "He would be tracking the packages and meet me at the door," Bass said.

So when the box was still there a day later, and there was three days' worth of mail in his box, the carrier became concerned.

"I went to get a state police officer who lived on my route," he said. Bass continued on his route as the state trooper called for backup from another trooper.

"They went over and did a door-kick and inspection," Bass said. They heard muffled sounds and found the man in a back bedroom, injured and disoriented after being stuck for a few days, wedged between his bed and a wall.

Responding EMTs took the man to the hospital. "They thought he was already dead," the carrier said. But after eight days in the intensive-care unit, doctors believed the man would make a full recovery. The patron soon went to an assisted-living facility for rehabilitation.

Police commended Bass by recogniz-



Glenn Bass

ing him at a press conference. Lt. Jeffery Payne, Indianapolis District commander, said his efforts to help law enforcement are "a testament to the good that comes when the community and police work together."

The 23-year postal veteran said this situation was a humbling experience. "I don't go out searching for accolades," Bass said. "There are a lot of people who do what I did."

Instincts help save a life

On Aug. 7, Staten Island, NY Branch 99 member **Lisa Sweeney** was alarmed when she returned from a week's vacation and saw some things out of the ordinary for her 87-year-old customer Marie Boyer.

"I was just driving past her house," she said. "The garbage pails were in front. All the mail was in the box." Trash pickup had been days earlier, her car was there on the day she usually went out to shop and the woman picked up her mail daily.

The carrier tries to keep an eye out on her route. "It's a very quiet, quaint area that I deliver the mail, so anything out of the ordinary, a light bulb goes off in my head," Sweeney told the local ABC TV station.

After knocking on the woman's door and getting no response, the carrier went to a neighbor's house. They had just gotten back from vacation and had not seen Boyer. Sweeney called 911 and continued on delivering mail, stopping at the home of a police officer on her route. The officer reported what Sweeney had observed.

"I just had this feeling that she was in the house," the carrier said.

As she delivered, she did a few drive-bys of Boyer's home. Six police cars eventually showed up at Boyer's home. EMTs broke a back window to gain entry to the house.

"No one came out right away," Sweeney said.

Proud to Serve

Saginaw, MI Branch 74 member Beverly Kosin received media attention after helping to reunite a lost youngster with his family.



But the officers inside discovered that Boyer, who lives alone, had been stranded in her bedroom after falling four days earlier. She could not get to her phone but had tried to call out for help.

"The windows were closed and I kept on calling out and telling people to call 911," Boyer told the local ABC TV station. "But nobody could hear me. So that went on for, like, three days. That's when I was getting dehydrated. I didn't want to die that way."

Boyer told the *New York Post* that she said to Sweeney, "I knew you'd know I was in the house because the mail was all there," adding, "If it weren't for her, I wouldn't be here right now."

After recovering from her ordeal, Boyer moved to a senior living facility.

Sweeney called her customer a "spit-fire" and said, "We talk almost every day; we have a friendship now." The carrier went to visit Boyer at the hospital and the rehab center, and they spent Thanksgiving together.

The customer now considers the 30-year postal veteran to be her hero. "I think she's very special," Boyer told ABC. "I don't think she just thinks about herself. She thinks about others."

Despite the fact that Sweeney recently was designated as a recipient of a Liberty Medal, the highest honor bestowed on an individual by the New York State

Senate, the carrier was quick to downplay her actions.

"As a letter carrier, you're aware," Sweeney said. "If you see something, say something. I was just happy I could help her."

The eyes and ears of the neighborhood

Saginaw, MI Branch 74 member **Beverly Kosin** was delivering the walking part of her route on Aug. 9 when, she said, "A sheriff came up to me in his car."

He showed her a photo of a missing 7-year-old child named Jourdano, who had been at home with his mother when he climbed through a window and wandered away a few hours earlier. When the boy's mother reported this to police, a community-wide search ensued.

The sheriff described the boy's clothing to the carrier. "He said if I saw him, call 911," Kosin said, and she agreed to do so. "They had the whole town alerted. They were combing the area."

When the carrier got to the driving section of her route, she got out of her LLV to deliver a certified letter. She then heard someone knocking on a window from inside the house across the street.

"There was the little boy," Kosin said. She asked Jourdano if he was OK, and he backed up. The carrier quickly went

to her postal vehicle and called 911. The boy stayed inside the house.

"Within two minutes, the cops were there," the carrier added.

Jourdano apparently had entered the house through an unlocked sliding-glass door. No one was home at the time and he was unharmed. He had been missing for about two and a half hours.

"You just feel terrible about little kids who are lost," Kosin said. "I was just so happy he was found. It was a good ending to a bad situation."

The carrier reunited with Jourdano and his mom a week later, and both gave her a big hug.

Word got around fast about Kosin's actions. The 34-year postal veteran has received a lot of attention from residents and from the media.

"That story touched so many people," she said. Months later, people are still sending her cards, and giving her hugs.

Saginaw County Sheriff William Federspiel told MLive, "(Mail carriers are) like the true community police officers in our community."

But Kosin doesn't think she's a hero; it's just all a part of what letter carriers do. "I think it was a good thing I got out for that certified," she said. "We're the eyes and ears of the community. That's exactly why we need to continue house-to-house delivery." **PR**

Neighborhood watch

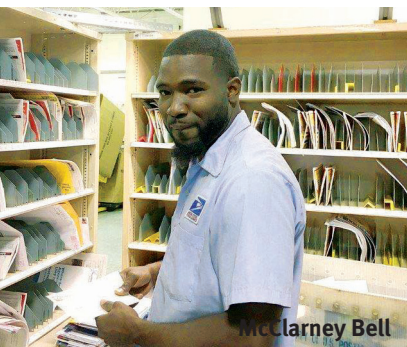
On Sept. 1, Toledo, OH Branch 100 member **Nick Davis** was going about his route when he saw a vehicle in the middle of the street and some commotion. "A guy and girl were kind of yelling at each other," he said. The man had a baseball bat in his hands. The man soon had the woman pinned against the vehicle. "He came after her

with the bat and hit her in the back," Davis said. The carrier, along with two other bystanders, ran over to the scene. Davis also called 911 and his supervisor. "The guys had him pinned up against the side of the truck," Davis said. "I grabbed my dog spray and sprayed him." The man wrestled his arm loose from the two men. "He sucker-punched her

[in the face] against the side of the truck," the carrier said. "He came after me with the bat." The man threatened to hurt Davis before getting into his car and driving away. One of the men at the scene used his smartphone to record the man's car and got a license plate number. The man was arrested the next day, charged with felonious assault and

aggravated menacing, and is awaiting trial. Davis was commended for his actions, but the carrier insisted he was not a hero. "I just happened to be in the right place at the right time," the 12-year postal veteran said. "A lot of people try to make it a big deal. I hope any other carrier would do the same thing." **PR**

Eye on the elderly



On June 5, Racine, WI Branch 436 member **McClarney Bell** was delivering mail to an elderly customer's house. "She had just pulled into the driveway," the carrier said. He went to give the woman her mail and then continued to talk to her as he went to the next house. "I was watching her to make sure she got to the porch," Bell said. "While I was talking to her, she collapsed. She fell face-first." The carrier called 911, then rolled the woman over and held her until first responders arrived. "I made sure she was breathing," he said, but then, "She stopped breathing. She 'died' in my hands. I was kind of shaken." Bell was about to begin CPR when a neighbor who was a nurse came over to help. The carrier steadied the woman as the neighbor started the life-saving procedure until paramedics arrived. Bell received a phone call the next day saying that his actions had probably saved the woman's life and that doctors were able to revive the woman at the hospital. The first-year letter carrier brushed off any superlatives, however. "It wasn't a 'hero' action," he said. "Just an instinct."

Cleveland Branch 40 member **Sarah Kent** was delivering mail one day in the spring of 2017 when she became concerned that a longtime customer had not greeted her at the front door as usual. "He didn't come to the door, but his dog did," the carrier said. "He usually sits in his recliner by the window, and I didn't see him in his chair." Investigating further, the carrier peered through the front window and spotted the elderly man's legs sticking out from behind a couch. "I ran over to get the neighbor," Kent said. The carrier knew this particular neighbor had a key to the man's home, so they got inside quickly and found the man lying on the floor and called 911. Emergency responders discovered that the man had low blood sugar and had fallen. The patron received treatment for a broken arm and leg. "His whole family was so appreciative," Kent said. Still, the nine-year postal veteran insisted that "hero" is a strong word. "I was in the right place at the right time," she said. "I just think I did the right thing."



Asheville, NC Branch 248 member **Robin Burgin** was driving on her route on June 15. "On the side of the road, there were a lot of bushes, so you don't get a good view of the sidewalk," she said. "I'm coming back up the road and as I start toward the box, I see her on the sidewalk in a puddle of blood." The carrier's elderly customer Mrs. Senechal had fallen and appeared to have suffered a head injury. Burgin quickly pulled over, secured her LUV and went over to Senechal. The woman asked Burgin to help her up, but the carrier said she needed to call 911 before she tried to move her, in case there also had been a neck injury. The woman continued to tell Burgin, "Get me up," but the carrier was instructed by 911 to hold her up a little but to not move her until help could arrive. "She was kind of out of it and stirring," Burgin said. "The more she was stirring, the bigger the pool of blood became." A neighbor who had come over to help went to get some towels. Senechal had been lying on the sidewalk for a while before the carrier found her. Paramedics soon arrived. "I told them that I was pretty sure she had hit her head somehow," the carrier said. Burgin later found out that the woman had stubbed her toe while headed for a neighbor's house and went face-first into the sidewalk. The 26-year postal veteran said her actions weren't any big deal. "Anybody would do that," Burgin said. "I was just somebody who happened to be there."



On a warm July 14, Lorain, OH Branch 583 member **Paul Callahan** was delivering his route when he noticed his customer, Rosemary Jones, outside. "She was sitting in the front yard," the carrier said. "She usually sits inside and waves." As Callahan knew this was not the elderly woman's normal routine, he went closer. When Jones indicated that she did not know who he was, he explained he was her letter carrier. She then asked him why he was coming back to deliver again. "She was totally out of it and distracted," Callahan said. "She started talking about lights in the sky." Callahan also noticed the woman's feet were a blackish color and she had a white film around her mouth. "I asked if she wanted help into the house," he said, but she was not sure what was going on. From their previous interactions, Callahan knew the woman was diabetic, so he went to his truck, got her a bottle of water and called police. When the patrolman arrived, Callahan explained the situation and they called an ambulance. When the carrier thought the situation was in good hands, he continued delivering his route. After Jones was taken to the hospital, the officer found Callahan on his route and told him that Jones had gone into diabetic shock. "He said I saved her life," the carrier said. Still, the 14-year postal veteran denied being a hero. "I would do what any other carrier in the country would do," Callahan said. "You treat them like they're family—we're there [at least] six days a week." **PR**