

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.

'If you can help, you should help'

Rochester, NY Branch 210 member **Justin Russell** was going about his route on April 22, 2017, and had just pulled up to his park point when, "about 50 yards away, a couple was arguing," he said. The woman involved began running toward him yelling, "Help me! Help me!"

Because a situation like this wasn't unusual for the neighborhood, Russell quickly grabbed his phone and called 911 before the woman reached him. The man she had been with followed. "They're arguing back and forth," Russell said.

The letter carrier, a former department of corrections employee, wasn't scared. After speaking with the 911 operator, he didn't hang up, trying to let them hear the background noise of the situation.

Russell tried to calm them down and waited with them for police as they continued to argue. "He was grabbing her by the throat at one point," he said.

Russell quickly put himself between the two, telling the man, "You don't want to do this. Settle down. It's not worth it."

After police did not arrive within 10 minutes, the carrier turned on a police scanner app he had on his cell phone to see if he could hear anything about the scene. Russell said he heard police chatter about his call, and how they believed

it might be a prank.

The carrier called 911 again, telling the operator that it was certainly not a prank and that police should get there as soon as possible. "I'm standing between these two," he told them. The man was yelling at Russell, who was trying to deescalate the situation.

"I tried keeping her talking and relaxed," he said.

Officers soon responded to the scene. Russell explained that the man had grabbed the woman by the throat. Once police saw the marks on her neck, they had enough to arrest him. The suspect is now serving time for assault, as well as for violation of probation and possession of stolen property.

Russell said his actions were just part of the job. "I was just doing what anyone else would do," the 13-year postal veteran said. "If you see someone in danger and you can help, you should help."

Just part of the community

On April 3, Little Rock, AR Branch 35 member **James Llewellyn** was making his daily rounds when he was approached by some workers in the neighborhood, who asked him to call 911. They had seen a man who was walking down the street pass out and fall.

The workers had propped the man up against a utility pole. The carrier looked over and recognized the man as his customer Ed Baskin. "He was totally out of it," the carrier said.

A few neighbors also came to see if they could help. Llewellyn called 911 and then drove directly to Baskin's daughter's home a few blocks away to let her know what had happened. The daughter had just returned home from vacation. After checking on her dog, her father had been walking back to his house a mile away. He had collapsed a quarter-mile from his home.

Within a few minutes of being alert-



Rochester, NY Branch 210 member Justin Russell was commended for stepping in to help during a domestic dispute on his route that led to an arrest by police.

ed, a fire truck responded, followed by five police vehicles and an ambulance. The first responders helped to stabilize Baskin and then took him to the hospital. Doctors said Baskin had suffered a seizure or stroke; he was released a couple of days later.

"This neighborhood sincerely appreciates Jim's quick response," Baskin's neighbor wrote to the post office. "We also appreciate having a mail carrier who knows everyone on his route and regularly visits with us as he makes his rounds. That is how Jim knew Ed's family members and where they lived. Jim doesn't live in our neighborhood, but he is a member of it."



James Llewellyn

But Llewellyn doesn't think he's any sort of hero. "It's just being a part of the neighborhood," the 31-year letter carrier and Air Force veteran said. "I did what anyone else would be expected to do."

Keeping calm to save the day

Chattanooga, TN Branch 62 member **Mike Parker** was driving on one of his routes as a T-6 on Sept. 22, when "I heard screaming," he said. "I couldn't really see anything."

As he pulled up to a mailbox, he located where the sound was coming from. "I just calmly trotted up there to see what was going on," the carrier said.

He saw a car on top of a customer, Ms. May. The woman apparently had gotten underneath her vehicle to change a part. She had used two car jacks and had been going under and out without any issue when one of her buttons got caught on the undercarriage of the car. May had scooted herself back and felt the vehicle move slightly, but soon both jacks had fallen over and the car was on her mid-section.

The woman had been screaming for her friend, Betty Collins, who tried to get



Mike Parker

the jack back up, but couldn't. Collins shouted for help when Parker came by.

"The woman was panicking so much," the carrier said. "[May] was almost unconscious when I got there."

"I remember looking to the side," May later wrote to the post office, "and seeing the postman driving up and laying down on the ground asking me how he could help."

"All I did was close the valve on the quick jack and jacked the car off of her," Parker said. Meanwhile, a neighbor who had come by helped May scoot out from under.

An ambulance Collins had called for soon arrived, and paramedics checked on May's condition. They took her to the hospital. She apparently had stopped breathing because the car had been on her lungs. She eventually developed pneumonia, but returned home soon after to recover.

"To my hero: Thank you," May wrote in her letter. "I appreciate you and will forever remember this day."

Parker said he doesn't consider himself a hero. "It was just perfect timing, I guess," the 26-year letter carrier and Navy veteran said. "I'm just glad I was there." **PR**

Eye on the elderly

On March 16, Cleveland, OH Branch 40 member **Garrett O'Conner** had just delivered to a hardship address and had noticed a small accumulation of mail. As he was walking away, he noticed that the garbage cans that were usually there on a Friday were not out. The carrier would normally bring them back up the driveway for his elderly cus-

tomer. Concerned, O'Conner began walking back up to the porch and called out to her. "She started yelling," he said. "I stood up on the ledge and looked in." From that vantage point, he could see her lying on the floor. The woman explained that she had fallen two days earlier and was unable to get back up. The carrier tried to get inside to help, but all the doors were locked. O'Conner called 911, and

EMS soon arrived and was able to get to her. The woman had lost her balance and fallen due to complications from diabetes. The next time she saw O'Conner, she gave him a hug. The carrier insists that he was just in the right place at the right time to help. "I'm not a hero—the paramedics are the heroes," the fourth-year letter carrier said. "I was fortunate to be able to help her." **PR**

Garrett O'Conner

