

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

# 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.

## Not all heroes wear capes

Charlotte, NC Branch 545 members **Grady Sharps** and **Jalel Fykes** were delivering to a cluster-box unit on Oct. 13 when “some lady came out of the blue, yelling, ‘Call 911!’” Fykes said.

The woman had been shouting for help after her husband had passed out in his car and wasn't breathing. “He was slumped over the steering wheel,” Sharps said.

Sharps attempted to talk with the man, who was non-responsive. “He was turning real dark,” he said.

The carriers' teamwork kicked in. “Mr. Sharps put his seat back while I started pumping his chest,” Fykes said.

The woman had already called 911. The emergency operator instructed Fykes to get the man out of the car and onto his back on the ground to continue CPR.

“He was gasping every five minutes,” Fykes said, “but then he would stop.”

They continued, switching off doing chest compressions. “He started moving a little bit, but wasn't breathing,” Sharps said.

Firefighters arrived about 15 minutes later and took over CPR until the man regained consciousness.

The man's wife was especially grateful. “She embraced us like we were family,” Sharps said.

Fykes said this was the first time he

had used CPR. “It was an experience,” Sharps added.

They both denied any heroics, insisting their actions were a team effort.

“We're so happy he's alive,” Fykes, a five-year postal veteran, said. “I truly thank God for putting us at that place at that time. I do not believe we are heroes; I believe we are two people with good hearts and who value life.”

Sharps, a 14-year letter carrier and 35-year Air Force and Air National Guard veteran, concurred. “We worked together as a team,” he said. “All in all, we did what was required and the result was to save a life. A part of being a letter carrier in the community is that you are sometimes a first responder.”

## Alert carrier knew something wasn't right

Connecticut Merged Branch 20 member **Timothy Thibault** was delivering mail on a park-and-loop on his route

on Nov. 29 when something drew his attention at a customer's house.

“It's normal for the dog to come to the window,” he said. “I didn't see any activity and [the resident] didn't pick up the mail.” He yelled the customer's name.

A neighbor came outside to ask what was going on, and told Thibault that the resident's car was in the garage, indicating that the man was at home.

Now even more concerned, the carrier tried knocking on the front door. When no one answered, he went around the house and knocked on the back door.

When there still was no answer, and he still did not hear the man's dog barking, Thibault returned to the front of the house. He noticed a broken window and



Charlotte, NC Branch 545 members Jalel Fykes (l) and Grady Sharps helped give their customer CPR until help arrived.



Timothy Thibault



Jason Moss

was about to call in again.

"I thought I caught a whiff of natural gas," Thibault said.

He called 911. Police officers and firefighters arrived and entered the home. They located the owner and his dog on the second floor and took the man to the hospital.

"The house was loaded with gas," Thibault said, adding that the man "wasn't in the greatest of shape."

The carrier later went to visit his customer in the hospital. The man unfortunately died about a week later.

A fire lieutenant told the Register Citizen that there had been an issue with the burners on the stove in the home, leading to the gas leak, and that the situation could have become worse if Thibault had not intervened.

Despite the commendation, the 18-year postal veteran denies being a hero. "That's what we do out there," he said. "It's just part of being a mailman. You see everyone's habits and you get an idea when something's not right. That day I just had a feeling."

## Fire can't stop this carrier

"I noticed smoke and something smelled like burnt tires," Tampa, FL Branch 599 member **Jason Moss** recalled of delivering his route on June 9.

Looking closer, he saw smoke billowing out of a nearby home and the homeowner standing there. Moss asked him, "Is someone in there?" The man responded, "Yeah, my dad is." Two dogs also were in the home.

Moss knew he needed to take action. "The son was in shock," he said. Moss told the son to call 911 and then tried to find a way inside.

He opened some window screens and went inside. The elderly father, Terry Sims, responded to Moss's calls and said that he was bedridden. Overwhelmed by smoke, the carrier said, "I dropped to my knees and crawled back out of the window."

Moss made a second attempt but again was overcome by smoke. He and a responding police officer continued to try to reach Sims, who was trapped in the back of his home. "We were at the edge of the window and helped him out," Moss said.

Once Sims was safely outside, Moss said, "We realized the dogs were inside." The carrier put a wet cloth over his face and prepared to go inside again, but then firefighters showed up to the scene and saved the pets.

Sims was treated for smoke inhalation at the hospital but suffered no other life-threatening injuries. "I had the man's blood all over me," Moss said. He, too, was checked out by EMTs.

"The neighbors came out and were freaking out," Moss said. "The house burned to the ground."

A fire investigator determined that the fire was caused by an electrical malfunction. The home was considered a total loss.

Sims is now in a nursing home. Moss said he recently ran into the son. "He shook my hand and told me how much he appreciated me," he said.

Despite praise from the family, firefighters and local media, the carrier brushed off any accolades. "It's another person's life," the 13-year postal veteran said. "I'm not going to let someone die. I thought I was just doing what everyone else would do, but everyone thinks I'm nuts."

## Fire and rescue



Karin Provance

While delivering her route on July 17, Kitsap Peninsula, WA Branch 1414

member **Karin Provance** had just done a loop. "As I got back to the van, I smelled smoke," she said. It seemed nearby. She thought it might be coming from the home of a customer who has Alzheimer's, so she ran to the man's house, but it was not the source. Provance soon saw that it was coming from a duplex a few doors down. "I called 911 as I ran," she said. The carrier ran up to the house and began pounding on the door. No one responded at first, but

finally a woman came to the door. "Your house is on fire," Provance told her. "Is there anyone else in the house?" The resident said she and her baby had been sleeping. When the carrier explained there was smoke coming from the lower part of the house, the woman quickly grabbed her baby and left the home. The woman's sister lived in the basement, but she was not home at the time. Provance then knocked on the other side of the duplex, where a

man answered and thanked the carrier for notifying him. Provance waited for the fire department to arrive. "They got everything relatively quickly under control," the carrier said. Once she finished her loop, Provance said, "I came back and gave everyone a hug." The 11-year postal veteran said she's not a hero; she was just in the right place at the right time. "I don't think I did anything everyone else wouldn't have done," she said. **PR**



### Doing what needed to be done

While loading his LLV in the station parking lot on Saturday, Feb. 17, Corpus Christi, TX Branch 1259 member



**Shimon Hawkins** was alerted by his supervisor that sparks were shooting from an electrical box at the back of a store in the shopping center adjacent to the post office.

"It sounded like popcorn going off," he said.

They were going to just stand back to observe, he said, but "then it exploded into flames."

The carrier knew he needed to take action. "The flame was so intense that it burned through the metal enclosure," Hawkins said.

He rushed to get a fire extinguisher from the station and alerted other carriers to call 911.

The box was located on a back alley, facing away from the street. "If it had happened at night, it would have burned the building down," Hawkins said. "It was an intense fire."

But because he was there, the carrier

was able to contain the fire and, by the time firefighters arrived, he had extinguished the blaze. "An electric fire is being fed by current, so I wanted to get out of there," Hawkins said.

Firefighters cut the electricity and cleared the area.

Hawkins doesn't think he's a hero, though. "I just did what I felt like needed to be done until the pros got there," the 13-year postal veteran said.

### Once a hero, always a hero

Cape Atlantic, NJ Branch 903 member **Thomas Logue** was delivering mail on Feb. 20 to the house of an elderly customer who lived alone. It was the day after the Presidents Day holiday, and the man's car was in the driveway.

"I noticed his mail pile up for about two days," Logue said. "I had a gut feeling that something was wrong."

Logue, who delivered the same route for all 31 years of his postal career, knocked on the door, but didn't get an answer. The carrier then tried to look into the front windows, but did not see the man. Logue did, however, notice that all the lights were on inside the house.

He then went to the back of the house. There, Logue peered through the large sliding-glass door and saw that the man was collapsed on the floor, where it turned out he had



Thomas Logue

been for at least three days. "To me, it looked like he had passed," Logue said. He called 911.

After authorities arrived, Logue saw a police officer come from the home who exclaimed, "He's still breathing!"

Logue later went to visit the man at the hospital, where he was listed in critical condition. The man's doctor, who thought that his patient had had a stroke, told Logue, "If he was there any longer, he wouldn't have made it."

The man eventually went to rehab and is recuperating. "He's living and he's going on," Logue said.

The customer's niece later sent a letter telling Logue how grateful she was for the carrier's actions.

This is not Logue's first time being recognized for helping someone in trouble. The carrier was named NALC's 2012 National Hero of the Year for saving a young boy from drowning at the beach. His story was recounted in *USA Today*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Time* magazine, and he was featured as a Person of the Week on "ABC World News," along with the other 2012 Heroes of the Year.

Logue has brushed off any superlatives for his efforts, saying that he always felt that doctors are the heroes. "I'm very blessed and fortunate to be in the right place at the right time," he said of his actions.

### Eye on the elderly



Dean Pantis

On Oct. 11, Brick Town, NJ Branch 5420 member **Dean Pantis** was delivering mail on his route in a senior

community, and arrived at the home of 82-year-old customer Mrs. Esposito. "I always see her by the window," he said. When the carrier noticed that the woman wasn't there, he grew concerned and rang the bell. Noticing that the front window was open, Pantis called out her name. Esposito responded, "Dean, Dean, is that you?" The carrier said it was indeed him, and the woman said that she had fallen. Esposito

told Pantis where she kept an extra set of house keys, so he grabbed them, entered the home and found the woman on the ground. "She had tripped over an electric extension cord and had been on the floor for 13 hours," Pantis said. The woman told him that she recently had been told that she needed both knees replaced and, because of that, was unable to get up. She was not injured otherwise, though. The

carrier helped Esposito into a chair and contacted her daughter, who lived nearby. Pantis stayed with his patron until her daughter arrived and was able to provide her medical attention. The Espositos later wrote a letter to the post office praising Pantis for his helpful actions, but the 23-year postal veteran denies that any heroics occurred on his part. "I was just doing my job, like I would for anyone," Pantis said.

## Help on the way



Angelia Knight

On Oct. 17, Mobile, AL Branch 469 member **Angelia Knight** was delivering mail on her route to a curbside box when she saw a customer, Annie Grimes, get off a disabled-accessible transport vehicle. The woman seemed shaky. “When she got up on her porch, something didn’t seem right,” Knight said. “I guess she was trying to open the door and she fell.” The carrier attempted to alert other residents in the household and when there was no response, she called 911. Knight stayed with Grimes, keeping her calm and reassuring her that help was on the way. An ambulance came and took the woman to the hospital. From there, she was flown to the nearest trauma unit. Grimes apparently had had a stroke. Doctors and Grimes’s family members attributed her survival to Knight’s actions. Though Knight said Grimes died about three months later, she remains in contact with the family. “They still tell me, ‘Thank

you for being there at the right time,’” Knight said. The 12-year letter carrier and Air Force veteran brushed off any talk of heroics, though. “I wouldn’t call it [being] a hero,” Knight said. “God just had me at the right place at the right time.”

Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **Ronald Kozub** was delivering parcels on a Sunday in May 2017 when he saw something near the side of the snowy four-lane street. “In the distance, I couldn’t tell what it was,” he said. “I thought it was debris.” As he



Ronald Kozub

drove closer, though, Kozub saw that it was a man lying on the ground. “He was in pretty bad shape,” the carrier said. “There was a lot of blood on the ground. I pulled over and called 911.” Kozub then went to attend to the man. “The guy was cut up and bloodied and had trouble breathing,” he said. “I just made sure the guy stayed on his side. He really seemed out of it, delusional.” Kozub stayed with the man until an ambulance arrived 15 minutes later. Once he saw that the situation was in good hands, Kozub returned to his route. The 30-year postal veteran brushed off any accolades given to him. “It’s just natural to go to help,” he said. “You can’t leave people behind.”

While delivering mail to her first stop at an apartment complex on Jan. 17, Denver Branch 47 member **Evelyn Pisani** noticed something strange outside. “I saw a bunch of stuff,” she said. “It looked like someone threw all the trash in the parking lot.” As Pisani walked closer to the pile, she realized that an elderly woman had slipped on the ice, and spilled her groceries around her. “She couldn’t move,” the carrier said. The woman, Shelly Blaco, told Pisani that she was in pain, so the carrier called 911 and stayed with her until help arrived. “I saw people peeking out their curtains and no one helped,” the carrier said. “It was sad.” Pisani gathered Blaco’s groceries and personal items and helped officers put them inside her apartment. Medical personnel later confirmed that Blaco had broken her shoulder. The customer’s son later reached out to the post office to let the carrier know how grateful the family was for her actions. Pisani



Evelyn Pisani



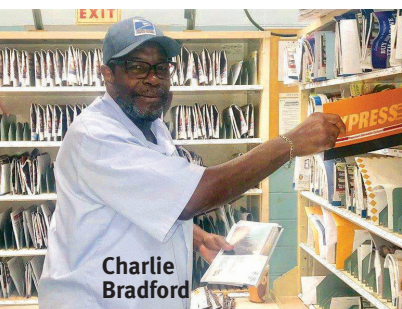
Kun Kim

said that it’s the little things letter carriers do for their customers that mean a lot. “I just feel good that I could help her,” the 20-year postal veteran said.

San Antonio, TX Branch 421 member **Kun Kim** was delivering mail on the morning of Dec. 22 when he saw a customer, Mark Hencke, collapse in his front yard. “I called him four to five times, and he didn’t respond at all,” Kim said. The carrier rushed over to him. “He was barely moving,” he said. Kim called 911 and waited with Hencke until paramedics arrived. The man spent nearly three weeks in the hospital before returning home. Kim later spoke to the man. “He was very thankful to me,” he said. Hencke also soon wrote a letter to the post office. “I was diagnosed with the triggering of a previous traumatic brain injury. I recently had food poisoning which caused a bacterial infection and swelling of my brain. I had a knock-down seizure and was told by the medical staff I would have probably died without such a quick trip to the hospital,” Hencke wrote. “Further, I would like to commend Mr. Kun B. Kim.... He deserves the highest award that could be received from the Postal Service, as he literally saved my life.” Kim said he was proud to be called a hero. “We’re not just carrying mail,” the 24-year postal veteran said.



## Neighborhood watch



**Charlie Bradford**

As New Orleans, LA Branch 124 member **Charlie Bradford** was delivering mail on June 23, he saw “a car coming out of a one-way street the wrong direction.” The speeding car then crashed into three parked vehicles and a telephone pole before coming to a stop. Bradford ran over to help, but the doors were locked. “[The driver] kicked the window out on the driver’s side, but couldn’t get out,” the carrier said. “I helped him out of the car.” As Bradford pulled the man, he asked him if he was all right, but got no response. Once the driver was freed from the wrecked car, he turned around to grab something from the car and then took off. The carrier later found out that the person was a suspect in a nearby home invasion during which the man allegedly had robbed a resident at gunpoint, taking the victim’s wallet and car keys before escaping in the stolen SUV. The suspect eventually was apprehended and is now convicted on several charges and is serving time. Bradford said he was just trying to be a good

citizen. “I don’t think I’m a hero, because this individual robbed someone,” the 25-year letter carrier and Army veteran said. “But I felt good about getting him out of the vehicle. I was just trying to help someone.”

Sacramento, CA Branch 133 member **Karen Hughes** was on her route delivering mail on May 25 when she saw a customer who used a wheelchair splayed on a front lawn. “When I came around the



**Karen Hughes**

corner, I saw him stuck,” she said. “I helped him get his wheelchair back on the sidewalk.” The carrier made sure he was all right before continuing on with her route. Hughes denied being a hero for her actions. “Somebody needed my help, and I was going to help them,” the 28-year postal veteran said. “It’s just being a person who cares about people.”

On Jan. 11, Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **Kevin Westphal** was delivering parcels when,

he says, a customer approached him. “[They] told me some kids were taking parcels off doorsteps,” he said. Westphal reported the incident to his manager, who contacted the local police. When the carrier saw the teenagers, he decided to take action as well. “I followed them as they were walking down [the street], but they disappeared into an apartment complex,” he said. Officers responded and arrested the two teenagers and recovered the packages. Westphal provided a statement to the police about what he had witnessed. Though the three-year letter carrier was credited by police for thwarting package theft, Westphal said his actions were just part of watching out for his route.

As he was delivering mail on Sept. 21, Flushing, NY Branch 294 member **Andrew Steves** observed some commotion outside an apartment building. He saw a man with a broken leg waving his arms. Steves noticed a woman who had a number



**Kevin Westphal**



**Andrew Steves**

of children with her. “They were screaming,” he said. All of a sudden, one child went running off, headed toward a busy street. “He started zig-zagging” and made it about 20 yards away, the carrier said. The woman was calling out the child’s name while the babies in the stroller were screaming. Cars were coming up the street quickly, and the man had been waving his arms in hopes that the cars would stop before they got to him. Steves knew he needed to take action. “There was no way she was going to catch up to him,” he said of the woman. He ran and scooped up the child and brought him back to his group. The woman still had her hands full and gratefully took the child back from Steves. “Few notice when people do something outstanding and I think that this man is a great asset to your organization,” the bystander, David Rosenthal, wrote to the local district manager. “He took an action to save that child’s life while others stood by. Mr. Steves is the type of person that, seeing a situation, can assess it and take an immediate action to save a life. He should be commended for it.” But Steves brushed off any accolades. “I think anyone would have done the same thing,” the 30-year postal veteran said. **PR**

## Springing into action to help a child

As Flushing, NY Branch 294 member **Eric Berga** was nearing the end of his route one day last summer, he spotted a man walking into the street crying and holding what appeared to be a lifeless girl in his hands. The man was flanked by two other people, and all were shouting for help.

The city carrier assistant parked, got out and ran across the street to the man.

A woman who was with the man was screaming, “The baby’s not breathing!”

The man handed his unconscious daughter to Berga, who is a volunteer firefighter. The carrier placed her on his forearm and checked her airway. “She was bleeding from the mouth,” he said. But Berga saw nothing blocking her airway.

He checked for breathing and, with no sign of respiration, gently passed her over to his other forearm and

began palm thrusts to her back. He checked again and “a lot of blood and mucus came out of her throat.”

Berga cleared the girl’s throat but was unable to feel a pulse, so he began compressions. After his first set of compressions, he placed his ear to her chest to listen for a heartbeat and heard a gurgling sound. He assessed that the girl’s lungs were filled with fluid, mucus or blood, so he turned her over again and began more palm thrusts, hoping to clear her lungs.

It worked. “The child’s eyes began moving and she was responsive,” Berga said. More mucus and blood came out, and the carrier heard a weak attempt to breathe.

“When I heard a slight breath, I told them to go to the hospital [right away],” Berga said.

The parents listened and took their child to the hospital, where Berga later went to check in. She was in the pediatric emergency area and the carrier was told by the parents that she was doing fine and that the incident



Eric Berga

might have been caused by an allergic reaction. The father thanked Berga for saving his daughter’s life.

Berga simply said that he tries to be an example to others. “Most heroes will tell you that it’s not about being a hero; it’s about helping,” the second-year letter carrier said. “It’s just a reaction. It killed me to see this happening to a child. I think anyone would do this.”

He added, “My advice to all who read this is to go take a CPR class, help someone, volunteer. Because it’s not about karma and getting it back tenfold, it’s about leading with a positive demeanor, being a positive role model and leaving everything better than it was just because you have the power to do so.”

## Help on the way



Dany Mam

Fort Collins, CO Branch 849 member **Dany Mam** was nearing the last mailbox on her route on Jan. 2 when she noticed something unusual on the street. “There was a vehicle coming north, and he stopped kind of right next to me,” she said. Mam thought that the driver had been waiting for her. When she looked a minute later, “He was still in the same position,” she said. “There were a lot of cars coming. Everyone had to move around him.” She began watching

the driver and he appeared to be shaking uncontrollably. “All of a sudden, he went in reverse and hit the mailbox I was just at,” Mam said. The carrier quickly pulled her LLV over, waited for cars to pass by and then approached the vehicle to check on the man. “I see a silhouette and something isn’t right,” Mam said. “I asked, ‘Are you OK?’ He turned toward my voice, but he wasn’t really there.” The carrier called her manager, who in turn called 911. Mam also went to the door of the

house where the accident had occurred to let them know. She stayed with the customer until an ambulance arrived. Paramedics determined that the driver had low blood sugar and that he had had a seizure. “I don’t know how he did, unfortunately,” Mam said. But the first-year letter carrier doesn’t think she’s a hero. “I was just helping someone in need,” she said. “I was happy I was there and got the call in. Who knows what could have happened?” **PR**



### 'Taking care of one another'

One day last fall, Marietta, GA Branch 1119 member **Scott Wilson** was going about his route when he saw something out of the ordinary at the home of his octogenarian customer, Mr. Barmore.



Scott Wilson

"I've gotten to know the customer and I knew he had Alzheimer's," the carrier said. "I noticed he hadn't picked up his mail in a few days, which was unusual."

The carrier knew that the man lived alone and he thought something might not have been right. Wilson knocked on a neighbor's door, and learned that the man who lived there, Mr. Hunter, was Barmore's landlord. "Fortunately, he had a key," Wilson said.

Both entered the home and found Barmore, who had fallen backward into the tub a few days earlier and had not been able to get up. "He had no way of getting help," Wilson said. Barmore was dehydrated, starving and bruised.

Hunter called 911, and the carrier helped the man contact his family, which was grateful for Wilson's actions.

"Since he lives alone, he was there for several days and the only reason he was found was because of his postal carrier," Barmore's nephew, Russell Clayton, wrote to his congressional representative. "My family and I are grateful beyond words for this exceptional, caring and alert person. I can only imagine the worst if this carrier just cared about delivering mail."

Barmore was taken to the hospital and now is in an assisted-living facility.

Despite receiving a great deal of praise from the family for his actions, Wilson said he doesn't like being called a hero. "I try to be conscientious on my route," the 33-year letter carrier said. "That is just something

we should all do—taking care of one another. I just did what was right."

### A hero in any language

On Saturday, Sept. 16, Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 member **Antonio Colon** had just finished delivering parcels to his customers at a senior apartment complex and was walking back to his vehicle. Suddenly, "I heard someone yelling, 'Help! Ayuda!'"

The carrier ran toward the sound to an apartment. "The screen door was closed, but the door was open," he said.

The carrier rushed inside to find a man with his pants down and heard the 90-year-old woman who lived there continuing to cry out for help in both English and Spanish.

"He didn't turn around but he started fixing his shorts," Colon said. "The lady [had been] lying on her back underneath him. She said, 'Call the police—he's trying to rape me.'"

The man started to walk out, but Colon told him, "You can't go anywhere." The man said that the woman had fallen and that he had been trying to help her. Colon called 911 and then told the man that he could tell police his story when they got there and to wait in the corner.

The man again tried to escape, so the carrier grabbed his pepper spray and



Antonio Colon



Nicholaus Collenburg

warned him that he would spray him if he did not comply. The man moved to the corner.

Colon waited at the apartment until police officers arrived to help the woman and question the suspect. "I didn't want to touch anything in case it was evidence," the carrier said. He returned to delivering his route. Police officers arrested the man for disorderly conduct.

The woman's son later contacted the post office to thank Colon. Despite receiving praise for his actions, the 14-year postal veteran insists he is not a hero. "I think it's normal that if anyone needs help, you help them," Colon said.

### When instinct kicks in

On June 27, Milwaukee Branch 2 member **Nicholaus Collenburg** was delivering his route when something caught his eye. "There were a couple of joggers going by," the carrier said. "They were trying to flag me down."

The runners told Collenburg that they had seen a man who collapsed into some bushes while mowing his lawn, and was lying unconscious. "They didn't have cell phones on them," the carrier said.

Collenburg quickly went over to the man, pulled him out of the bushes and began administering CPR while calling 911.

As a former lifeguard, the carrier previously had done the life-saving maneuver more than a dozen times. "It was kind of instinct," Collenburg said.

He continued CPR until paramedics arrived. EMTs stabilized the man and rushed him to the hospital. "They were able to get a heartbeat back," the carrier said, adding that he unfortunately learned later that the man died about a week after that. The customer apparently had had a heart attack.

The three-year letter carrier doesn't consider himself a hero, though. "I was just doing what I needed to do," Collenburg said. **PR**

## Eye on the elderly



Michelle Binda

One Tuesday last October, Boston Branch 34 member **Michelle Binda** noticed an accumulation of mail outside the home of an elderly customer with whom she was friendly. The woman normally waits for her mail daily and the two speak often. Binda became worried when she saw the weekend's mail piled up. "The minute I got there and was opening the mailboxes, I saw it and said there's definitely something wrong," Binda told the local NBC TV station. The carrier immediately went to the community manager. "I alerted them and they did a wellness check," she said. They found the customer alone in her apartment under a piece of furniture. "She had fallen in her bedroom and couldn't get up," Binda told NBC. "And when she tried to reach for her dresser, she had actually pulled the dresser down on top of her. She had been there at least three or four days." The patron was taken to the hospital for treatment and then went to a rehab facility to recuperate. But the 32-year postal veteran rebuffed any praise directed her way. "I certainly don't consider myself a hero," Binda said. "I honestly

was just doing my job, being conscientious."

On Jan. 16, Oak Brook, IL Branch 825 member **Josh Griffith** heard a yell for help as he delivered his route in below-zero-degree weather. Following the sound, the carrier found a 92-year-old customer who had fallen on the icy sidewalk outside her home after she had apparently taken her trash out. "She was kind of dazed, but at least coherent enough to speak," Griffith said. Worried about her condition, he asked if he could call an ambulance. "She told me to go ahead," the carrier said. Griffith saw a neighbor drive by, and he yelled out to ask him to call 911. The man did and then came to help the carrier. Griffith stayed and comforted the woman until the ambulance arrived. "We found out later that she had broken her hip," the carrier said. The customer's daughter went to the post office a few days after the incident to tell Griffith how much the family appreciated his help. The woman is recovering in a nursing home. The fourth-year letter carrier doesn't think of himself as a hero, though. "I was just doing my job," Griffith said.



Josh Griffith

On Saturday, Dec. 9, Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126 member **Christopher Palmeri** was delivering mail on one of his routes as a T-6 and had dropped letters through the door slot of a house where an octogenarian customer lived. The resident, Margaret Warner, had a friendly dog that normally greeted Palmeri. "I didn't hear the dog barking," the carrier said. He called in through the mail slot. "I heard a faint-like whisper," Palmeri said. Warner was calling for



Christopher Palmeri

her regular carrier. "Help! I need help!" the carrier said the woman called out. "I've had a massive stroke; I need help." She had crawled to her living room and then lay down by the mail slot. "It took her hours," Palmeri said. "She waited there until the next day when I heard her." The carrier asked if she wanted him to call 911, and she said yes. "I made my way down the walk and the neighbor was outside," Palmeri said. He sought the help of the man and his wife until EMS arrived. The carrier filled in paramedics before continuing on his route. The woman soon had a full recovery and returned home. "Had Chris not been attentive or listening, I would have had to wait another 25 hours before anyone was scheduled to come to my home," Warner wrote to the post office. "He is indeed a hero and needs to be recognized as such." Palmeri describes Warner as an "amazing woman" and said, "She wanted to thank



Stephanie Rudasill

me and give me a hug." The carrier said he is humbled and honored to be called a hero, but does not consider himself one. "I was just doing my job," the 25-year postal veteran said. "Thank God I heard her that day."

Delivering her route on Dec. 8, Northeast Florida Branch 53 member **Stephanie Rudasill** went up to the home of an elderly customer. "His mailbox was by the door, so I heard 'Help me! Help me!'" Concerned, the carrier knocked on the door. "I heard 'Help me! Help me!' again," Rudasill said. The man explained that he had fallen and was unable to get up. "Can I come in?" the carrier asked. The man gave his consent, and the door was unlocked, so Rudasill entered. "He had prosthetic legs," the carrier said. "He fell from his wheelchair. He was very talkative when I helped him." The carrier tried to get the man back into his chair but, unable to, asked her customer if she could call 911. He said yes, so Rudasill used the man's phone to call 911. Because the man was lying on his stomach, he asked the carrier if she could help position his torso against the wall as they waited for paramedics to arrive. Responding EMTs lifted the man back into his wheelchair. The carrier said the man later was moved to a nursing home. Rudasill brushed off any accolades for her actions. "I was just doing my job," the third-year letter carrier and Army Reservist said. "I was there at the right time. Who knows how long he would have been on the floor if I hadn't heard him." **PR**