

Letter carriers and the mail on social media

Various news stories and interesting anecdotes that celebrate letter carriers and the mail have been appearing on social media. The following are some that have come to the union's attention. If you come across a story you'd like us to consider featuring, send it to social@nalc.org.

Virginia neighborhood celebrates beloved carrier's retirement

Customers of **Robert Gillis**, a member of Northern Virginia Branch 3520, celebrated him for his retirement from the Postal Service after 33 years of service and 18 years on the same route.

His customers, who refer to Roberts as "the best mailman ever," came together on Saturday, April 23, to give him a special sendoff that included mail-themed favors and signs.

"Even [on] some of the coldest days or some of the hottest days, my second family out here always looked out for me," the carrier told WRC-TV, the NBC

affiliate in Washington, DC, adding, "I made sure all of my family out here knew that my retirement was coming up, so I sent like over 200-something cards."

"He just took his job to heart, you know? Even more than that, he always went above and beyond," a resident told News4. "He wanted to make sure that we always got our mail, that it was delivered correctly. He was just good at what he did, and that was more than just being a mailman.

"Especially [in] this day and age, it's rare to find somebody that goes above and beyond in their job and really cares heart and soul about what they do," the resident added. "And he's just an amazing human. He's already sorely missed in this community."

Washington retirees thank their carrier for pandemic delivery

Residents at Avamere South Hill, an assisted-living facility, wanted to thank their letter carrier, **Koby Best**, for keeping them connected throughout the pandemic by delivering their medicine, letters from loved ones and packages.

To do so, they threw a surprise party for the Spokane, WA Branch 442 member on April 21. A group of the patrons waited in the lobby for Best's mail truck to pull up.



Top and above: Patrons celebrate Robert Gillis's retirement with a neighborhood party.

As the two-year carrier walked in, residents clapped and cheered for their favorite mail carrier.

"I just thought it was just another day," Best told *The Spokesman-Review*.

During most of the COVID-19 pandemic, no visitors were allowed inside the building except for Best.

John Derrick, president of the resident council committee, told the gathered group that postal carriers faced a variety of obstacles during the pandemic. "At least we still got our mail," Derrick told the newspaper.

"I think it's neat," resident Don Jacobson said of the celebration. "Say thank you to somebody, what could be nicer?"

Best said he was shocked by the show of thanks. The pandemic was difficult for him, he said, with a major increase in packages to be delivered while people were housebound—but seeing people get the items they desperately needed or the medicine



Washington's *Spokesman-Review* featured the surprise "thank you" party that residents of an assisted-living facility threw for their letter carrier, Koby Best.

they count on made it all worth it, he added.

He told *The Spokesman-Review* that, on his route, he's closest with residents of the retirement communities, because he gets to go inside and chat with them each day.

"I really do appreciate you," Best told them. "It's awesome seeing your guys' smiling faces."

Rhode Island carrier helps young writers spread joy through mail

On April 21, Providence, RI Branch 15 member **Courtney Cacchiotti** helped a group of elementary school students she delivers to send some special mail through its annual event called "Messages of Love."

After learning about writing a kind message, the joy of receiving a handwritten letter, and the logistics of delivering mail around the world, the young writers worked with their teachers to create some mail of their own.

Each student thought of a loved one



Above and right: Courtney Cacchiotti visits some young customers while helping them mail art through a special school project.

who might enjoy a surprise in his or her mailbox. Each envelope, addressed to friends and family members across the country, included a handmade drawing along with a note, and was carefully decorated.

When Cacchiotti pulled up in her mail truck, the youngsters excitedly greeted her. Lining up, each student came and placed his or her packages into the USPS bucket the carrier was holding for them.



To the students' surprise and delight, Cacchiotti also gifted each student with a USPS coloring book that she had personally made for them. **PR**

When an active letter carrier dies...

- Notify the employee's immediate supervisor, postmaster and Human Resources Shared Service Center (HRSSC) at 877-477-3273. HRSSC will advise about any benefits payable, and how to apply for them. It will provide and render assistance in completing the application for death benefits under the employee's retirement system, as well as the claim for death benefits—Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) and claim for unpaid compensation.
- Notify the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) at 877-968-3778.
- Notify the letter carrier's NALC branch.
- If the employee was a veteran, notify Veterans Affairs at 800-827-1000.
- Call the Social Security Administration at 800-772-1213.
- Notify banks and other financial institutions.
- Notify insurance companies (life, health, home, automobile, etc.). If the employee had a policy with NALC's Mutual Benefit Association (MBA), call 202-638-4318 between 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. EST, or write to MBA, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20001-2144.
- If the employee had health insurance through the NALC Health Benefit Plan, call 888-636-6252. If the employee had health insurance through a different Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plan, call the number on the back of the insurance card. Health insurance coverage for a surviving spouse and dependent children continues automatically if the employee had family coverage at the time of death and if a monthly survivor annuity is payable.
- Obtain a sufficient number of death certificates for your needs from the mortuary.