

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 202-662-2420 or at postalrecord@nalc.org. We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.



Lindsey Nolte



Misty Hernandez

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 their 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.

Carrier gives customer chance to say goodbye

In April, Hutchinson, KS Branch 485 letter carrier **Misty Hernandez** was delivering to a group of mailboxes outside an apartment complex on her route when she heard a woman's voice asking if anyone was there.

"I just thought she was on the phone, so I just ignored it and then I kept delivering the mail. And then I heard her voice again," the three-year carrier said. "She said, 'I need help. Can you call 911?'"

Realizing that the woman was talking to her, Hernandez went to the door, which was only about 10 feet from where she was delivering mail. While calling 911, she knocked and got permission to enter the home, where she found 77-year-old Sheila Park lying on the kitchen floor.

Park told the letter carrier that she had been there for three days after falling. While they waited for emergency personnel to arrive, Hernandez got her some water, put Park's cat in the bedroom and put a sheet on top of Park, as she was only wearing a nightgown.

"She just kept saying, 'Thank God you're here,'" Hernandez said.

Park was taken to a local hospital, then transferred to a hospital in Wichita, where she died about two days later due to a previously existing condition.

"They [Park's family] thanked me for helping her and just kind of explained what happened," Hernandez said, and added that she takes some solace in the fact that "she didn't die alone."

Carrier rescues elderly customer

Four-year letter carrier **Lindsey Nolte** has spent the last two years on the same route, during which time she has established relationships with some of her customers, including Terry.

So, when two days in January went by and Terry hadn't collected her mail, the Bellevue, NE Branch 4128 carrier became concerned. She also noticed that she didn't hear the barking of Terry's small dog.

Trusting her instincts, Nolte knocked on the door and rang the doorbell. To her shock, she heard Terry yell, "Help me! Help me! Call 911!"

She tried to get in through the doors, but the house had reinforced doors, so it wasn't possible.

"I was trying to voice-to-text 911 and my phone wasn't listening, and I was freaking out," Nolte said. Eventually she got through to a 911 dispatcher and informed them that emergency personnel would have to break open the door.

It turns out that Terry had been on the ground for four days after breaking her femur. She used all her strength crawling from her bedroom in the back of the house to the front.

"I'm really glad I trusted my instincts and just thought to knock," Nolte said. "I feel extremely grateful that I was just there at the right time."

Nolte hasn't seen Terry since but has spoken to her on the phone. Terry recovered at a rehab facility and is now in an assisted-living facility. Nolte has seen Terry's family members since, and they have expressed their gratitude to her.

"Her sister gave me a big, huge hug when she saw me," Nolte said.

"Lindsey's actions truly highlight the dedication, care and vigilance that make her such an invaluable member of our team," Branch 4128 Secretary **Diane Smock** wrote to NALC.

Carrier lends a hand to fallen women

On Oct. 24, San Francisco, CA Branch 214 letter carrier **Joseph Kornack** was walking to drop off a package on his route when he came across a woman in her 90s, Wilma Chin, lying on the ground as her daughter Cathy knelt next to her.

The two-year letter carrier asked, "Are you OK? Do you need help?" Cathy told him that Wilma frequently has dizzy spells during which she faints, but she wasn't sure whether this was something else. Cathy hadn't called 911, because she was holding Wilma's head, so Kornack took her spot while Cathy called an ambulance.

She wasn't unconscious, Kornack said: "She was, like, there, but she wasn't there."

Paramedics arrived quickly, and after they had the situation under control, Kornack continued with his route. He has seen the mother and daughter since.

"I was just asking how she was, and she said she was doing much better and then she just thanked me again," he said of Wilma.

Further showing her family's gratitude, Cathy wrote about Kornack to the local postmaster, as well as in the neighborhood's newsletter. "Thank you, Joe, for your kindness and heroic actions!" Cathy wrote. "The U.S. Postal Service and Miraloma Park are very lucky to have such an admirable carrier!"

Letter carrier comes to customer's aid after fall

One January day in Bridgeport, CT, 12-year letter carrier **Ryan Thompson** was preparing the mail in his truck for a loop he was about to start when he saw his elderly customer, Mr. Russell, on the ground. To the Branch 32 letter carrier, it appeared that Russell was looking for something, but upon closer inspection, Thompson realized that his customer had fallen.

"It occurred to me that something must be wrong," Thompson said. "I got out of the truck, and I started walking over."

It turned out that Russell had bent down to pick up an Amazon package delivered earlier that day when the wind pulled the storm door open, hitting him and causing him to lose balance and fall.

Thompson wondered, "Would I be able to get him on his feet by myself?"

Thompson wrapped his arms around Russell's middle and helped him up while his customer used his cane.

Thompson is glad he saw Russell when he did. "It could have been a lot worse because it was cold [that day]," he said.

Russell and his wife expressed gratitude to Thompson. "She was telling me how grateful she was that I was there at the time to help him," he said.



Carrier helps patron having seizure

Casey Roubidoux was on his route one April day in Weiser, ID, when he came across something unusual.

"Barb is one of my customers who I rarely put the mail in the mailbox for," the Branch 1703 letter carrier said of his elderly customer. "She watches for me every day, so I usually hand the mail directly to her."

On this occasion, the door was ajar, but her screen door was shut, and there was no Barb in sight at first. Once she reached the door, Roubidoux could tell something was off.

"She was having a seizure," he said. "She was kind of losing control of her body. Then she just kind of collapsed, and when she collapsed, she fell on her head, banging it against the wall. I think it knocked her out."

He immediately rushed inside and noticed that her condition was worsening. "Her eyes were kind of doing funky things. She started foaming at the mouth a little bit. I could hear gurgling sounds. That's pretty terrifying, to be honest," the carrier said.

He called 911 and tried to get the customer to sit up. He started yelling Barb's name and telling her to wake up. She started to regain consciousness, so Roubidoux held her hand and comforted her until emergency services arrived.

Roubidoux talked to Barb the morning after the incident, and she told him it was one of the worst seizures she has had. Barb was all right, but had sustained injuries to her head and arm.

"She was sad that she put me through that, but she was grateful that I was there, and I was glad that I was there for her," Roubidoux said. **PR**