

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.

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 attempts to save gunshot victim

On March 20, **Sharralle Williams-Stanley**, a Chicago, IL Branch 11 letter carrier, worked an overtime route that she didn't usually serve. What started out as a regular workday turned into a heartbreaking scene that she said left her mentally scarred and unable to return to work for weeks.

As Williams-Stanley walked along her route that day, a woman yelled from one of the houses across the street.

"She needed help," the six-year carrier said. "She was frantic and emotional and freaking out. When I ran over there, I saw that a man had brought a child outside the house. They had laid him on a porch."

A group of about six kids had been playing with an improperly stored gun when it accidentally fired. An 8-year-old was hit in the head after the same bullet grazed his 5-year-old brother.

The woman told Williams-Stanley that the child had merely collapsed, not knowing that he had been shot. Once the letter carrier got to him, she realized what had happened and called 911.

She began CPR chest compressions, and the father performed rescue breathing in an attempt to save the child's life. Williams-Stanley told him, "You gotta breathe for the baby."

"I was trying to take my sweater to stop the bleeding from the back of his head and the side of his head," she said. "There was so much happening. My mind went blank, and I was basically, like, ignoring everything around me except for the dispatch."

For about four minutes, Williams-Stanley continued chest compressions until paramedics arrived and took over. The child was taken to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead. She told the police what she had witnessed.

"Then I rushed to go and get my boys, because I just knew he was around the same age," she said. "I was crying so bad. As a mother, this is heartbreaking. There's no words that I can say."

Truck flips and carrier runs to rescue passengers

On Dec. 14, **Steven Blaney**, a Lynn, MA Branch 7 letter carrier, had just delivered to a few houses and was getting in his truck when he saw a large pickup truck lose control and hit a telephone pole.

"The pole snapped in half, and it's being held up by the power lines the moment the truck hit the pole," the eight-year letter carrier said. "I started running over to it, and when I got there the truck was on its side."

Blaney recognized the passengers as a father and a teenage daughter who lived only a few doors down from where they had hit the pole.



Sharralle Williams-Stanley



Steven Blaney



"They were shaken up," Blaney said. "Airbags had deployed. So, when I got the door open, there was all the smoke and powder from the airbags going off in there. They were definitely in shock."

Realizing they were trapped, he "climbed up on top of the truck and opened up the door and helped her out," he said.

A neighbor came over to help Blaney get the dad out of the truck. The father and daughter were unscathed, but the truck was totaled. The father expressed his gratitude to Blaney for helping them.

"He said he was very thankful for that, getting his daughter out of there," the carrier said.

Blaney found out later that there was a mechanical issue with the vehicle that had caused it to lose control unexpectedly.

"Somebody was calling 911 like right after it happened—it was very loud," he said. The emergency response team was there about five minutes after it happened, so Blaney returned to his route once everything was under control.

"It felt nice that they were OK," he said.

This wasn't Blaney's first heroic act, though. The carrier was featured in the February 2022 *Postal Record* for providing CPR to someone while on his route.

Carrier saves house from being engulfed by fire

At the start of a loop on his route in his mail truck, **Pjerin Kita** pulled up to a Worcester, MA, neighborhood on the windy morning of Jan. 2 and saw smoke coming from down the street.

"I don't think it's coming from steam or anything, like, it was very extensive smoke," the Branch 12 member said. "I

drove down there and I see the siding of the house was on fire from the trash barrel."

The 11-year carrier knew that two sisters, Sharon and Cheryl Collaro, lived there—one of them uses a wheelchair and the other helped care for her.

When Kita arrived at the house, one of the sisters "was outside yelling, like, 'Hey! Fire! Fire!'"

Kita moved the bin from the side of the house. "He picked it up with his two hands," Sharon Collaro told the local CBS news affiliate. "Flames were coming out of everywhere and he threw it in the back yard. He saved our lives."

He then went into the house to make sure that everyone was all right, but he noticed a large amount of smoke despite there being no fire inside the home. The siding was still on fire, it turned out, and smoke was entering the house.

"One of the sisters, she gave me buckets with water," he said, which he then threw onto the siding.

After a few minutes, firefighters arrived and finished putting out the smoldering siding, as Kita returned to his route. He's not sure of the cause of the fire. The house was still damaged as of the beginning of April, but the Collaro sisters continue to live there.

Shrewsbury Fire Chief Seth Colby thanked Kita by telling CBS, "In this day and age, it's easy to look the other way and not get involved. It was great he stepped up and was in the right place at the right time."

Carrier helps woman who falls on icy ground

Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25 letter carrier **James Metilinos** was delivering his route one December day in Lowell when he saw his customer, Cheryl Yarosie, standing

outside her house with her dog on a leash. It had recently snowed and the ground was icy.

When Yarosie saw the letter carrier, she turned to go grab her outgoing mail from inside her house. As she did so, the dog pulled her to the side, toppling her. Yarosie fell on her head and arm and lost her handle on the leash, so the dog went running down the street.

"I ran over to her to make sure she was OK," the 13-year carrier said. "You know what you have to do. It's just a reaction."

"The property that she owns, because of the way that it's situated on top of a hill, it tends to be icy and slick over there," he said. "She has a lot of runoff from the roof."

Metilinos told her to use her phone to call 911. The dispatcher told him to make sure she didn't get up, to avoid further aggravating any possible injury.

Then Yarosie told him that her son lived with her, and he called the son. He had just left for a work trip, but Metilinos told him what had happened, so he began driving back.

Then, the letter carrier ran down the street, found the dog, and securely brought it in the house.

The ambulance arrived after about 10 minutes. Soon after, her son got there and Metilinos gave him a run-down of what had just happened.

"I've seen them since," the carrier said. "She had a small fracture in her arm [and] they put a stitch on her head because she did have a nice little split. 'She's doing well.'"

Branch 25 Vice President **Gilbert Paredes** wrote to *The Postal Record*, "James's quick thinking and compassion in this situation exemplify the best qualities of a letter carrier." **PR**