

Proud TO SERVE

In this modern age, with greed and violence regular staples in the news, examples of courage and compassion are more important than ever. Across this nation, letter carriers are often the first to discover people in need due to accidents, attacks, or fires. The following reports are offered to honor the actions of all NALC members whose quick thinking and sharp reactions have saved lives.

Wandering tot returned

When a four-year-old girl slipped unnoticed out of her grandmother's house, letter carrier Ovidio Duran came to the rescue. The South Jersey Merged Branch 908 member sensed something was awry when he saw the little girl walking alone along a busy street near Runnemede, New Jersey. He carefully approached her and asked her where she lived. When he realized the youngster was lost, he summoned the police, and together they checked houses all along the street until they located the worried grandmother.

Canine's comeuppance

Letter carriers are always on the lookout for dogs misbehaving, and West Coast Florida Branch 1477 member Chris DeQuesada is no exception. The NALC member was working his regular route one morning when he happened upon the daughter of one of his customers who was being menaced by a pit bull. DeQuesada quickly stepped between the child and the dog, whipped out his pepper spray and squirted it at the dog, putting a stop to the animal's shenanigans.

Heart attack in an LLV

Patrick Schermerhorn wasn't feeling well when he arrived at work, but the Northeastern New York Branch 358 member thought he would perk up a little once he got started on his route. When he climbed into his LLV and prepared to leave the post office parking lot, however, he noticed that he was sweating a lot, and he decided to rest his head for a few moments on the steering wheel.

Branch 358 member Mike Burke saw Schermerhorn slump over the wheel, so he asked nearby letter carrier Scott Plumadore to go find help and to notify a supervisor.

Help arrived shortly in the form of another letter carrier, Jim Bellot, who also is a volunteer EMT. When Bellot got to Schermerhorn's LLV, he recognized the signs: the ailing carrier was experiencing a heart attack. Bellot asked a supervisor who had accompanied him to immediately call 911.

Paramedics showed up minutes later and took Schermerhorn to a local hospital. There, an examination found several blockages in the letter carrier's heart, and within an hour, he was in the operating room, having a stent placed in an obstructed blood vessel.

Thanks to the quick response and teamwork of his union brothers, Schermerhorn made a speedy recovery and was soon back on the job.



Pat Schermerhorn (back row, r) thanks his union brothers and co-workers for saving his life. Included in the picture are Northeastern New York Branch 358 members Scott Plumadore (front row, c), Jim Bellot (back row, l) and steward Mike Burke (back row, c).



As **Lynn Vandevander** delivered mail to one of the houses on his route, he heard a man's voice calling for help.

The Central Pennsylvania Merged Branch 22 member checked the house's perimeter until he found the man, who was lying on his patio. "I tried to make him as comfortable as possible and put my coat over him to keep him warm," Vandevander told *The Altoona Mirror*. The letter carrier then used his cell phone to call for an ambulance, and waited for help with the 71-year-old, whom Vandevander knew was a retired postal supervisor.

"I just kept him comfortable and kind of joked with him" until medics arrived, Vandevander said.

This was not the letter carrier's first rescue. A few years earlier, while delivering mail, Vandevander found a woman who had fallen in her home, and climbed through a window to assist her.

"You keep an eye out for elderly people and anything you think is suspicious," Vandevander said. "And it makes me feel good to help people."

John Cohen said he had a "funny feeling" that something was wrong when he noticed two days' worth of uncollected mail in Gladys Hirsch's mailbox and that her car hadn't budged from the driveway in that time.

The New Jersey Merged Branch 38 letter carrier decided to knock on the elderly woman's door to check on her. Through the door, he could clearly hear sound coming from a television, but he also thought he heard the muffled cries of someone on the other side of the door. Not willing to take a chance on being wrong, Cohen went to the house next door and asked to use a neighbor's phone to call 911.

When paramedics arrived at Hirsch's

home, they discovered her lying on the foyer floor. They learned she had collapsed and been unable to move for several days.

The woman spent weeks in the hospital and in rehab before she was well enough to return home. Doctors told her that she was lucky to be alive, and a grateful Hirsch gives all the credit to Cohen, whom she calls her "guardian angel."

An elderly customer usually waited on her porch for letter carrier **Michelle Belanger's** deliveries. But on one particular day, not only was the homeowner not in her customary spot, but as the Presque Isle, Maine Branch 2394 member got closer, she also noticed that the house's front door was open. Arriving at the front steps, Belanger discovered the older woman lying in the doorway. The letter carrier first checked to make sure that the woman was safe, and then rushed to a neighbor's home to call for an ambulance. Once 911 was notified, Belanger returned to the injured woman's side, keeping her calm and comfortable until help arrived. Doctors determined that the older woman had broken her hip when she fell.

For eight years, letter carrier **Annette Dozier** delivered to Leola Dickerson's home by simply opening the screen door and slipping the mail into the door slot. But on one Saturday, Dozier found the screen door locked, so the member of Cape Atlantic, New Jersey Branch 903 simply left the mail bundle on the 86-year-old woman's porch.

By Tuesday's delivery, however, the screen door remained locked, so Dozier decided to peek into one of Dickerson's windows. Inside, she could see that the older woman was lying on the floor.

Dozier immediately used her cell phone to call 911. She was prepared to put her freshly learned CPR training to use if necessary, but rescuers quickly showed up, pushed open a side window and entered the home.

When the medics reached Dickerson, they found her conscious but unable to move. After they took her to the hospital, one of the EMTs called Dozier to report that her vigilance had proven valuable.

"I felt warm inside," Dozier told *The Press of Atlantic City*. "I was crying. I saved someone's life."

"Thank God [Dickerson] locked her screen door," the carrier said. Otherwise, "I would have just kept opening [it] and putting the mail through the slot."

Delivering on his route near Abilene, Texas, **Ron Eudy** thought it was odd that one of his older customers was not waiting for him as usual when he got to her house, so when he reached her front door, he called out. Getting no answer, he peered into a window and saw her lying face down on the floor. The door was unlocked, so Eudy went inside, helped her up, and got her a glass of water. She told him that she had been there for three hours, unable to stand up and call for help. Later, as he made his way through the neighborhood, Eudy enlisted the help of some of the woman's neighbors to keep an eye on her.

Good deeds come naturally to Eudy. Several days earlier, he found an unmarked envelope laying on the ground along his route. Inside it was \$400 in cash. As he traveled the neighborhood, he asked around until he was able to return the money to its rightful owner.



South Florida Branch 1071 member Michelle Thornton's quick thinking helped alert the authorities to a hostage situation.

Mother-to-be skips breakfast, needs letter carrier rescue

On a cold January day, Eric Krug, a member of Long Island Merged, New York Branch 6000, discovered a young woman lying on the side of the road while he was carrying mail along his route near East Hampton. Bethany Trowbridge, who was pregnant with twins at the time, had skipped breakfast before she decided to take a mid-morning stroll through her neighborhood. As she walked, she grew unsteady and finally collapsed. She was still lying next to the road, too weak to stand, when Krug found her. He instantly called 911 and stayed with the young mother-to-be until a team of medical responders arrived. Satisfied that the professionals had the situation well in hand, Krug continued on his route.

As it happens, Trowbridge's parents work for the local fire and rescue, and arrived in the second wave of help after Krug left the scene. Trowbridge described Krug's actions to her grateful parents, who then related the story to the East Hampton postmaster, calling Krug a "special man" who helped save the life of both their daughter and their unborn granddaughters.

Home invasion thwarted thanks to wily carrier

The noise behind the door was the first thing that alerted Michelle Thornton to a problem.

The South Florida Branch 1071 member, delivering a certified letter, approached a house and rang the doorbell. While she waited for an answer, she heard what sounded like several people struggling toward the entrance.

When the door finally opened, a man and a woman appeared. At first, the man reached to sign for the letter, but the woman cut him off, insisting that she would take care of it.

It was clear to Thornton that the man's presence was causing the woman some distress, so the quick-thinking carrier asked the woman to follow her back to the LLV under the guise of needing to have her sign for the letter there. Once they reached the vehicle, the woman told Thornton that the man inside the house had broken in the night before and was holding the family hostage.

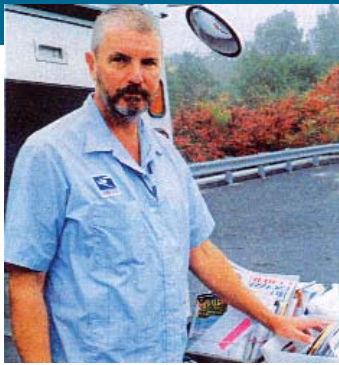
Thornton immediately called 911 and related the customer's story to an emergency dispatcher. The two women waited by the LLV until police arrived and arrested the home invader.

While delivering mail on his route, **Robert Metzler**, a member of Erie, Pennsylvania Branch 284, discovered an elderly woman who had fallen and injured her hip. Metzler used his cell phone to call 911, and then waited with the woman until paramedics arrived.

On a cold February day, **Michael Scheffler** was out delivering mail when he came across an elderly woman who was wandering around, clearly not dressed for the frigid weather. The Milwaukee, Wiscon-

sin Branch 2 member tried to talk to her and find out her name, but in her confusion she wouldn't let him come near her. Scheffler remembered that a nursing home was located nearby, and it occurred to him that this woman might have somehow slipped out of the facility undetected. He took out his cell phone and called the home's office to try to piece together the situation. It turned out he was correct, and relieved staffers soon showed up to escort the woman back to her warm apartment.





Alert to an elderly patron's accumulating mail, Springfield, Massachusetts Branch 46 carrier Gary Glover knew that it was time to get help.

Home alone—for two days

Shortly before noon one day, Dave Kardasz stopped at a home on his route in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, and discovered five young children between the ages of five months and nine years home alone, with no adults anywhere to be found. The nine-year-old girl at the door told the Pittsburgh Branch 84 member that her parents had had an argument, and then simply left the house, leaving the youngsters to fend for themselves—without food—for over two days. Kardasz noticed a serious-looking rash on the face and arms of the five-month-old, and it appeared to him that the one-year-old was in desperate need of a diaper change. Concerned for their safety, Kardasz called the police, who placed the children in protective custody. Later, Kardasz learned that although the father remained at large, the mother had been located and arrested.

Carrier steps in to help runaways roughing it

A teenage boy came up to Chevanda Miller as she attempted to deliver a certified letter at an apartment complex on her route near Columbia, South Carolina. The boy said he had found a girl

wandering the neighborhood, and took the Cayce-West Columbia Branch 4616 member with him to see her. In talking with the girl, Miller found out that she and a female friend were runaways from a local children's shelter who had left the facility after they were threatened by some boys. The two girls had decided it was better for them to try to hide in some nearby woods. Out of concern for the girls' safety, Miller called the police, who identified them both as the subjects of an Amber Alert. An officer came and escorted the girls back to the children's shelter.

Timely assist for clerk

Weatherly, Pennsylvania postal clerk Lori Lattin was enjoying some steak fries on her mid-morning break when one of them went down her throat the wrong way and became stuck. Choking and unable to speak or breathe, she stood up and attempted to perform the Heimlich maneuver on herself, but couldn't budge the offending fry. Paul Miller, a member of Weatherly Branch 2248, was nearby and noticed the emergency taking place. He rushed to Lattin, stood behind her, and tried the Heimlich maneuver again. After several tries, the potato wedge finally became dislodged, bringing a safe end to a dangerous situation.

Gary Glover noticed the mail was starting to pile up at the home of his customer, a 96-year-old man who lived by himself. The Springfield, Massachusetts Branch 46 member voiced his concern to a lady who lived nearby, since he knew that she sometimes looked in on the older gentleman. The woman used the elderly man's house key to let herself in. Once inside, she discovered him lying on the bathroom floor, disoriented and dehydrated. Glover

later learned that the man had fallen a few days earlier and had been unable to summon help.

Mankato, Minnesota Branch 90 member Daryl Steffen realized that mail was building up in an elderly customer's mailbox. When he looked inside her house, he saw her motionless figure lying on the floor. Unable to get her attention, the carrier used his cell phone to call 911 and then waited there until paramedics arrived.



FIRE & RESCUE

Alonzo Deleon heard a fire alarm coming from one of the houses on his route, and as the member of Dallas, Texas Branch 132 drew closer he was confronted by the strong smell of smoke. He immediately used his cell phone to call 911. When fire fighters arrived, they found a pot that had been left unattended on the kitchen stove. They contained the fire in the kitchen and promptly put it out.

Michael Hughes was delivering mail in Oakland, Missouri, when he saw smoke rising from the roof of one of the homes on his route. Once the St. Louis Branch 343 member determined that the owner of the house was not inside, he used his cell phone to call 911. Fire fighters were able to confine the blaze to a closet and the kitchen, and to extinguish it quickly.

As Xavery Hutcherson stepped onto the porch of a house on his route to deliver the mail, he thought he heard the sound of a smoke alarm coming from somewhere inside. It didn't appear to the Houston, Texas Branch 283 member that anyone was at home, but when he looked in a window, he saw smoke. He quickly located a neighbor and asked them to alert the fire department.

Because of Hutcherson's keen observation, fire officials merely had to contend with a two-story house filled with smoke coming from a pot of food that had been left neglected on the stove instead of a full-blown house fire.

Late November is an odd time of year for someone to be burning leaves, or so thought **Maurice Jackson** when he saw black smoke coming from the next street over as he delivered mail on his route. But when the Shawnee Mission,

Kansas Branch 5521 member made his way onto that street, he noticed that the thick smoke was not coming from a burn pile but rather from under the roof of a customer's home. Immediately, he called 911, and when fire fighters arrived they were able to put out the fire before it totally destroyed the house.

By the look of the heavy smoke coming from the attic of a Glen Cove, New York home, Long Island Merged Branch 6000 member **Ian Regan** was certain that the house was on fire, so he immediately used his cell phone to call 911. A neighbor, who also happened to be a Glen Cove fire fighter, had heard the dispatcher's call to the firehouse, and when he realized that the address given was for the house next door, he went outside and confirmed Regan's observations. Because of Regan's timely call, the sole resident of the house, who had been on the home's first floor and unaware of the fire burning above him, was safely evacuated.

Many parents know that it often takes a lot of effort to wake a teenager, but a letter carrier's knock might be the one truly effective sound that cuts through even the deepest sleep. San Angelo, Texas Branch 1203 member **Bradley Kitten** was delivering mail along his route when smoke coming from a house across the street caught his eye. Kitten ran to the house, rang the doorbell and knocked, trying to ensure that no one was home. He walked around the house to assess the situation, and as he passed one of the windows, he saw a fire inside. Noticing a neighbor watching, Kitten asked him to call 911. The letter carrier continued to the back of the house, where he saw a teenage boy standing inside the back door. The boy had been home alone and asleep, and

didn't realize there was a problem until he heard Kitten's knocks at the door. The boy told responding fire fighters that he was the only one home, which allowed crews to focus their efforts on containing and extinguishing the blaze.

When letter carrier **Scott Pomana** noticed a home on fire on his route, his first instinct was to use his cell phone to call 911. But the Buffalo, New York Branch 3 member also knew the couple who lived there and remembered that the wife was confined to a wheelchair. After he called for help, Pomana ran to the house and made sure the pair could safely escape the burning building before fire fighters arrived.

Washington, DC Branch 142 letter carrier **Eugene Washington** saw black smoke coming from a garage attached to one of the homes on his daily route. He rushed to the front door, knocked, and determined that the house was empty. Washington then used his cell phone to call 911, and fire officials managed to arrive quickly enough to put out the fire before it could spread to the main part of the house.

Roy Scott, an eight-year member of Melbourne, Florida Branch 2689, was delivering on a park and loop when a customer bolted out of her house, screaming that her laundry room was on fire. Without a second thought, Scott ran inside to check out the situation. Recognizing that the fire was coming from the gas dryer, he first shut off the gas, then found a garden hose and doused the flames. When fire fighters arrived, the blaze was nearly extinguished. The grateful homeowner said that Scott's speedy reaction kept the fire from spreading further and prevented a possible explosion.

FIRE & RESCUE

Five-year letter carrier **Wayne Swisher** was delivering along his route one winter afternoon when he saw smoke coming from the second-story window of a house down the street. The Toledo, Ohio Branch 100 member ran to the house and pounded on the front door for several minutes until two young boys, who were home alone, answered. Swisher coaxed them out, then took them to a safe location nearby before he called 911 from his cell phone.

The fire ended up only doing minor damage, but Swisher's rescue efforts didn't end there. Soon afterward, the letter carrier started up a clothing drive to help the family replace some of the items destroyed by the blaze.

John Toohey was working overtime, covering part of another carrier's route, when he saw smoke coming from one of the homes in a nearby retirement community.

"I heard the smoke alarm going off, and from my experience, I knew it wasn't something burning on the stove," Toohey, a member of Freehold, New Jersey Branch 924 and a semi-retired volunteer fire fighter, told the *Asbury Park Press*. "I dropped the mail and ran over."

The carrier helped two women out of the burning home, then kept them calm until the local fire department came to put out the flames.

The newspaper later recognized Toohey as one of its weekly "Hometown Heroes," not just for his life-saving actions while on duty as a letter carrier, but also for raising his four children as a single father.

Alert carrier aids patron gasping for air

Paul Pickett was just getting into his vehicle to head to the next part of his South Salt Lake, Utah route when he thought he heard a weak gasping sound coming from nearby. He got back out of his LLV and looked around for the source of the noise. It didn't take him long to find a woman standing on her porch, clutching a rail and looking as if she were about to collapse.

Pickett quickly made his way to the porch and helped hold the woman upright. Still gasping for air, the woman was unable to speak, so with a free hand, the Salt Lake City Branch 111 member dialed 911 on his cell phone, then waited with the woman until help arrived.

Pickett later learned that the woman was suffering from a severe case of pneumonia, and doctors had determined that she probably would have died if Pickett had not heard her gasps.

Pickett's supervisor, David Fitzjarrell, had nothing but praise for the letter carrier. "It's just the sort of thing you'd expect from Paul," he said. "He's a great guy."

"I'm just glad I was there," remarked Pickett. "It's nice to be able to make a difference."

Garden hose quenches laundry blaze

Bob Puckett was delivering mail down a street on his route when he noticed a commotion coming from a house across the road. Suddenly, above the din, he heard someone inside the house yell, "Travis started the house on fire!"

The member of Ashland, Ohio Branch 721 knew that Travis was autistic, so he dashed over to investigate. Inside the house, he found Travis' mother both talking on the phone with the fire department and carrying a pan of water from the kitchen sink to Travis' bedroom. Travis, she explained, had been playing with a lighter and had set his bed and a pile of laundry ablaze.

"She was about to pass out from the smoke," Puckett said, so he told her to take Travis and get out of the house. The letter carrier then went to the back yard. "I grabbed the garden hose and started spraying the fire," he said. The fire was under control and nearly extinguished by the time fire fighters arrived.

Traffic control, evacuations all part of day's work

Mobile, Alabama Branch 469 letter carrier Don Smith was returning to the post office after completing his route when he noticed a fire coming from the middle house in a row of townhouses not far from his station. He realized that emergency crews had not yet arrived on the scene, so the letter carrier drove toward the houses and parked his LLV sideways across the street in an attempt to keep non-emergency vehicles from coming down the block. Next, Smith called 911 and gave the dispatcher detailed directions to the house. Once the letter carrier determined that the burning home was empty, he helped evacuate the residents of the other attached homes. When the fire department arrived, Smith climbed into his LLV, drove back to the station, clocked out, and modestly kept the story of his detour to himself.



Eye on the ELDERLY

Tom Haborek, a member of Utica, Michigan Branch 4374, delivers mail to the post office boxes in the front lobby of the Sterling Heights Post Office, a normal part of his route assignment that gives him a view out of the building's front window to the customer parking lot.

One morning, Haborek noticed an elderly gentleman in the lot walking slowly to the back of his truck to get out a walker. As he shuffled along, the truck began to roll backward toward other cars in the lot, as if the truck's transmission hadn't been shifted into "park." Feebly, the customer tried to get back into the truck's driver seat to engage the brake.

Haborek quickly dashed out of the post office to the truck, reached past the elderly gentleman, and managed to safely bring the vehicle to a stop.

Floretta Cooper says that letter carrier **Polly Kilgore's** actions saved her life.

One morning, Cooper, an elderly resident of Marion, Ohio, had fallen in her home and twisted her ankle. Unable to pull herself up, she lay for three hours on the floor, with both her phone and the nebulizer she needed for breathing treatments well out of reach—until the Marion Branch 280 member showed up, saw her, and called 911.

"I was in bad shape," Cooper later told *The Marion Star*. "I was already turning gray by the time the paramedics got here."

Kilgore stayed with Cooper until medical help arrived.

"I think she saved my life," Cooper said of her letter carrier.

Mildred Craig credits the thoughtfulness of her letter carrier, **Tracy Livengood**, for giving her an Easter miracle.

The 82-year-old Kingwood, West Virginia woman was cooking in her kitchen when she passed out and fell on the floor, just before noon on the Thursday before Easter. Craig told *The Preston County Journal* that when she awoke, she couldn't stand up, so she decided to scoot to her bedroom telephone to call for help. As luck would have it, her phone was out of service, and she couldn't make or receive phone calls.

The elderly woman managed to pull a blanket down from her bed for warmth, but she was unable to get to any food or water for nearly four days.

On Monday, Livengood, a member of Bridgeport Branch 4458, noticed that Craig hadn't picked up Friday's mail from her mailbox, so he knocked on her door.

"I thought I could hear [Craig] calling for help," Livengood said, "and it didn't take long to determine we needed to check on her."

The letter carrier called 911, and when local sheriff's deputies arrived, they forced open Craig's door to let EMS personnel inside.

Craig ended up spending several days in a local hospital before she returned home.

"I can't say enough about Tracy," Craig said. "Everyone was really nice, and I know they saved my life."

Returning to his LLV after tapping a collection box last winter, Akron, Ohio Branch 148 member **Mike Mullen** was startled to see one of his customers, a 90-year-old man, lying in the middle of the road.

"It looked like he'd slipped while shoveling snow," Mullen said. "He couldn't get up, and he was bleeding pretty badly from a cut over his eye."

"It scared me," the carrier added.

Mullen immediately called 911, helped the man out of the street, and found a towel to apply pressure to the wound to stop the bleeding. The carrier stayed with the older gentleman until paramedics came.

On a warm spring day, **Ray Petrosky** was walking along his route when he noticed someone lying under a parked car.

"I thought the guy was working on his car door," Petrosky said, "[but] as I got closer, I heard someone softly crying out for help, [and] I realized it was that guy."

The man, 89-year-old Maynard Murch, told the Cleveland, Ohio Branch 40 member that he had been shopping at a nearby business. When he got back to his car, he fell and couldn't get up.

"He was scared and pretty shook up," Petrosky said. "I lifted him up and sat him in his car. That's when I realized he couldn't stand."

After he made sure the man was safely seated, Petrosky went to a nearby business and asked the owner to call 911. The carrier then went back to the injured man and waited with him until paramedics arrived.

"I don't think I did anything that anyone else wouldn't have done," said Petrosky, "but I'm glad I could help the guy out."

Murch, who required surgery on a broken leg, was grateful. "You certainly went above and beyond the call of being a postman!" he wrote to Petrosky. "I cannot thank you enough, and only hope that some day, if you should need help, someone who cares as much as you did will be there to help you."



Eye on the ELDERLY

One morning, an 88-year-old man slowly made his way to his garage when he became lightheaded and fell in his driveway. **Dominic Robinson**, a member of Washington, DC Branch 142 was delivering mail on his route at the time and watched with dismay as the man dropped. The carrier rushed over to the man and discovered that he was too weak to get up on his own. Robinson spotted a chair inside the open garage and helped the man into it. Several neighbors who witnessed what happened assured Robinson that they would keep an eye on the elderly man, so the letter carrier confidently returned to his delivery duties.

Letter carrier **Kyle Ruman** had noticed a build-up of mail in an elderly customer's mailbox, so the carrier knocked on the woman's door. The Niles, Ohio Branch 800 member heard a voice inside yell, "Call the police! Call 911!" Ruman used her cell phone to summon help, then tried to open several doors, but found none that were unlocked. The carrier stayed at the house until the first-responders arrived and entered the home, where they found the injured woman and took her to a nearby hospital.

When Cleveland, Ohio Branch 40 member **Brian Shelton** heard a loud snap and a thud coming from customer Al Whitney's garage, he rushed over to investigate.

"He fell from his garage attic," Shelton related. The carrier saw that one of the man's feet had been badly hurt in the fall, so he administered first aid, called 911, and then waited with the elderly gentleman for the EMTs to arrive.

Soon, Shelton heard the sirens of an approaching ambulance, so he went to the front of the house to direct the responders to where Whitney lay injured.

Once the carrier knew the emergency crew had the situation under control, he went back to complete his route.

Letter carrier **Sharon Sutton** noticed that mail had not been removed from an elderly customer's mailbox for two days, so she knocked on his door. Getting no response, the Washington, DC Branch 142 member went next door and shared her concern with a neighbor. The neighbor called the police, who arrived shortly and entered the elderly man's home. Inside, they found him lying unconscious in his bathtub. Paramedics soon came and took him to a local hospital. Sutton found out later that the man had suffered a stroke, but was expected to recover.

When Margaret Broadbin fell after opening her garage door, she found she was too weak to get up again. The elderly woman, who was recovering from a brain cancer treatment, cried out for help, but soon realized that no one could hear her. Her one hope was that her regular letter carrier would soon make his delivery.

Sure enough, it wasn't long before Bridgeport, Connecticut Branch 32 member **Joe Vega's** LLV made its way down Broadbin's street. Once Vega was close enough to Broadbin's house, the woman called out for him. The letter carrier heard her, helped her back into her house, and stayed with her until she regained her strength.

Kevin Williams, a member of Maine Merged Branch 92, was delivering on his route when he realized that George, one of his elderly customers, was not outside waiting for his mail as usual. The letter carrier knew the man was diabetic, so he went up to the man's front door and knocked. George answered the door,

but Williams noticed that the older man seemed weak and disoriented. Williams went inside and asked George for his daughter's phone number, but the elderly man was too confused to remember it.

The letter carrier checked the caller ID unit and saw that the daughter had called earlier in the day, so he took down her number, then called her and told her that he was going to call 911.

Later, Williams learned that George had been suffering from dangerously low blood sugar levels, and that he might have slipped into a diabetic coma had the letter carrier not taken the time to check on his welfare.

It was the height of the holiday mail season when **Traci Williams**, a member of Galesburg, Illinois Branch 80, noticed Art Fish lying in his driveway while she carried mail on her route.

"I just squatted down and started talking to him," Williams told the *Galesburg Register-Mail*. It was 10 degrees outside and the ground was snow-covered, but Fish had decided he only needed to throw on a cap and trench coat to make the short trip to his curbside recycling bin. On his way down the driveway, though, Fish's cane slipped on some ice. He fell and lay there helpless with what felt like a broken leg for nearly a half-hour before Williams came along and called 911.

"The adrenaline was flowing," she said.

"I told her she could leave if she wanted," Fish remembers. But "she said, 'I'll stay here until they take good care of you.' And she did."

Fish's leg was indeed broken, and he had to stay in the hospital through the holidays, but Williams came to visit him there several times.

"It made me feel good that I helped him," Williams told the newspaper.

Unconscious patron pulled from burning apartment

Luis Espinosa was delivering mail in a Dayton, Texas housing development on a Saturday afternoon. When he reached David Dunn's apartment, he saw smoke pouring out of the open front door, and heard the sound of a smoke alarm piercing the air.

"After reporting the fire [to 911], I went to the open door and began calling for Mr. Dunn," Espinosa told the *Dayton News*. At first, he heard no response.

"I knew he should be home at that time of day," the member of Houston Branch 283 said, but he figured that since the door was open, Dunn must have left to get help. Suddenly, Espinosa heard Dunn "yelling and screaming" from somewhere in the back of the apartment.

The carrier put his satchel down, dropped to his hands and knees, and crawled toward the sound of Dunn's voice. When at last he reached the man's bedroom, he found Dunn, now unconscious, with his clothes on fire.

"Flames were visible on his legs, from the knees down," Espinosa recalled. The letter carrier first swatted out the fire on Dunn's legs, then quickly assessed his options.

With the heavy smoke above, Espinosa realized the only way to get Dunn out of the apartment was to drag him out while staying as far below the noxious fumes as possible.

Once the pair made it safely outside, Espinosa was ready to administer CPR, but he found that Dunn was still breathing on his own. The paramedics and fire fighters soon arrived, and when

Espinosa saw that the professionals were taking care of both Dunn and the fire, the letter carrier went back to his route.

Later, Dayton Housing Authority Executive Director Janet Wilmeth praised Espinosa not only for saving Dunn's life, but also for making the 911 call that very likely saved the lives of Dunn's neighbors as well.

Comfort for hysterical teen

Louis Galloway, a member of Scranton, Pennsylvania Branch 17, was working his route one afternoon when he saw a teenage girl on the front steps of her home, talking hysterically into a cordless phone. The girl told Galloway that her father was lying on the stairwell to the house's second floor and that she was unable to awaken him. She had a 911 dispatcher on the phone, but Galloway could see that the girl was far too emotional to be able to follow the operator's directions, so he took the phone from the girl and went inside the house to where her father lay.

Galloway bent down to determine what kind of medical assistance the man needed, but the carrier quickly realized that the girl's father had died. Galloway then went back outside and sat with the girl, all the while staying in contact with the 911 operator, until fire and rescue authorities arrived. Galloway explained the situation to the responders, then returned to his route.

The grief-stricken girl later told fire department officials that she was extremely grateful for Galloway's assistance in her time of need.

An elderly man on letter carrier **Michelle Howard's** route had fallen and cut himself in several places. When Howard found him, the member of Westchester Merged, New York Branch 693 helped the man get up, then escorted him back into his house. Once they were safely inside, she applied some bandages to help stop his bleeding, and then called both 911 and the man's son-in-law for further assistance.

For several days, the mail had gone untouched in the mailbox of an elderly woman on **Thomas Lang's** route, so the concerned Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Branch 84 member peered into her window and saw that she was lying on her living room floor. When he called out to her, he saw one of her hands move, so Lang tried her front door and found that it was unlocked. When he got inside, she told him she had fallen and broken a leg, and couldn't get up to call for help. Lang used her phone to dial 911, then waited with the woman until help arrived.

When New Haven, Connecticut Branch 19 member **James Nemeth** noticed that mail was accumulating at the home of one of his elderly customers, he decided to check on him. Nemeth got no response when he knocked, so he called his supervisor to have the police stop by the house to check on the older gentleman. When the police entered the house, they found the man lying on the floor, hungry, dehydrated and suffering from a hip injury.

HELP *on the* Way

The only thing **Lew Glintz** could hear when he came to Don Zipern's door to deliver a package was a barely audible cry that the customer couldn't open the door to sign for it. The letter carrier, a member of South Florida Branch 1071, knew that his customer was diabetic and suspected he was having some sort of insulin reaction, so he used his cell phone to call 911. Because of Glintz's quick thinking and knowledge of his customer, EMS responders were able to revive Zipern with a life-saving injection.

When he found mail from the previous day still in his customer's mailbox, Toledo, Ohio Branch 100 member **Dan Guba** knocked on her door. He thought he heard a faint cry for help, so he walked to the back of the house to see if he could get a look inside. From the patio door, he could plainly hear the customer calling out that she had fallen and broken her leg. Guba promptly called 911 and summoned help.

Pittsburgh postal customer Helen **Groff** had fallen down steps inside her apartment building. Injured, she was only able to pull herself back inside her apartment, but couldn't get to a phone to call for help. It wasn't long, though, before Branch 84 member **Craig Guenin** stopped by the building to make his usual deliveries. Groff managed to call out to Guenin to get his attention. Once inside Groff's apartment, the letter carrier helped her up and called 911. After paramedics arrived, he continued his route as if it was just another day on the job. But after a two-week hospital stay, Groff

sent a thank-you note to Guenin's supervisors, praising her "super-helpful mailman."

Cheryl Miller thought the customer on her route was working on his car when she found him lying on his garage floor. However, when the Buffalo, New York Branch 3 letter carrier greeted him, she got no response. Getting closer, she discovered he'd been injured in some type of household accident. She quickly dialed 911 from her cell phone, and then went to the front door of the house to alert the man's wife to what had occurred. Miller waited with the couple until the ambulance could get there, trying her best to keep the injured man comfortable.

Independence, Missouri Branch 827 Vice President **Rex Moon** was driving along his route when he noticed a slow moving car rolling toward him from the opposite direction. Moon pulled his LLV over, got out, and waited for the other car to come to a complete stop.

Cautiously approaching the errant vehicle, Moon saw that the man in the car was having some sort of seizure and that the car, though stopped, was still in drive. While he dialed 911, Moon asked a bystander who had come over, to assist him in putting the car into park. Moon then waited with the driver for the few short minutes it took for emergency crews to arrive.

A man was lying face down in his garage and appeared to be in serious medical distress when West Memphis, Arkansas Branch 4189 member **Keith**

Ashcraft found him. Ashcraft, who is also a volunteer fire fighter, first called 911 to summon help, then performed first aid on the man until paramedics came to the rescue. Once the man was safely on his way to the hospital, Ashcraft completed his route. Later, the man's grateful wife credited the letter carrier's life-saving action and effort in helping doctors successfully stabilize her husband's condition.

Neal Thomas was delivering mail on his route when an hysterical woman came out of one of the houses and begged for his help. She told the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Branch 458 member that her husband was in some type of medical distress—he was having either a stroke or a heart attack. She had tried to call 911 herself, but she told Thomas that she was far too panic-stricken to answer the dispatcher's questions. The letter carrier went inside the house and took the phone. He spoke with the 911 dispatcher and gave them as much information as he could, and then waited with the couple for the medical personnel to show up.

As **Ted Peterson** approached a house on his route, the Waterloo, Iowa Branch 512 member detected a strong odor of natural gas. Peterson knocked on the customer's door and asked the homeowner to get in touch with the local gas company. The utility crew that arrived found that the house next door was the actual source of the gas leak, and they were able to evacuate that home's residents safely. ☒

Alert carrier spots kid criminals at work

During school hours, David Franklin doesn't usually see the school-age children who live in the homes on his route because they're in classrooms learning the "three Rs." So when the Flint, Michigan Branch 256 member noticed a group of teenage boys roaming one specific neighborhood over the course of several days, it got his attention. Several houses in the neighborhood had recently been burglarized.

Franklin caught sight of the youths one day trying to break into a house at the other end of the street. Unnoticed, the carrier took out his cell phone and called 911 to report what he had witnessed. In a matter of minutes, authorities arrived and apprehended the boys. Later, because of Franklin's testimony and descriptions, the older burglars were sentenced to jail time, and the younger ones were placed in a juvenile detention facility.

Crash doesn't stop car

Donald "Butch" Hawkins was walking his route when he watched a speeding car slam into one that was parked on the side of the road just a short distance from where he stood. But while the offending vehicle was now stationary, its wheels continued to spin and squeal against the pavement, as if the gas pedal were still depressed. Drawing closer, Hawkins, a member of Richland, Washington Branch 3877, could see that the driver of the now-stopped car was slumped over its steering wheel, motionless. Carefully, Hawkins approached the car, opened the driver's side door, and

managed to snap the dazed driver out of his stupor long enough to have him shut the engine off, thus ending the danger that the vehicle would again run out of control. Hawkins then waited with the driver until he could receive emergency medical attention.

Dangerous gas leak leaves patron groggy

With fall well underway, Matt Hintz was growing accustomed to the shorter days, cooler temperatures, and the various scents associated with the autumn months in Dolton, Illinois. But as he walked toward one particular house on his route, a smell caught his attention that set off warning bells in his head. It was the odor of natural gas, and it was strong.

The South Suburban Merged Branch 4016 carrier raced to the door and began knocking and shouting to get the homeowner's attention. As time ticked by, Hintz worried that the gas had already claimed the customer's life, but his persistence paid off—a woman eventually appeared at the door. Hintz quickly explained the situation, escorted the groggy woman away from the house, and then notified both the local fire department and the gas company. While he waited for help to arrive, Hintz located the faulty pipe and tried to seal off any further leakage by wrapping a cloth around it.

The grateful homeowners notified Dolton Mayor William Shaw, who in turn issued a proclamation recognizing the 12-year veteran letter carrier's lifesaving efforts.

Help for the homeless

While **Matt Thomas**, a member of Kansas City, Missouri Branch 30, was loading his LLV one morning, he spotted eight young men attacking a homeless man in the street behind the post office. Thomas immediately went to the aid of the victim, and as he approached, the miscreants fled the scene.

A week full of action

Every week is a busy week for St. Cloud, Minnesota Branch 388 member **Mary Jo Schaaf**, but one week in particular stands out as unusually eventful.

First, while she was carrying mail on her route, Schaaf was called upon to assist an elderly woman who had fallen as she left a grocery store. The letter carrier took time out from her deliveries to help the lady get to her feet and re-bag her groceries, then helped the woman get a ride home.

That same week, Schaaf noticed a fire on the back porch of one of the houses she delivered to. Fortunately, the house was empty at the time, and the carrier's quick call to 911 helped prevent the fire from spreading to the rest of the house. ✉