

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 202-662-2489 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 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.

Carrier's early visit saves woman from assault

"It was the first part of my day, and I was delivering to the apartment building," Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **Peter Farrell** recalled about the events of Saturday, Feb. 15. He had walked into the lobby and started unloading the mail into boxes, when he heard an unusual sound coming from one of the first-floor apartments. "I heard a woman crying," the 25-year carrier said, "and then I heard her calling, 'Help! Call the police!'"

The woman came running out of her apartment, and Farrell was stunned at her appearance. She appeared to have been severely beaten—"She had cuts on her face, and I later found

out she had broken ribs," he said. Farrell quickly called 911.

He waited with the woman, who was terrified, given that her assailant was still in the apartment. Fortunately, police responded rapidly and took control of the scene. Later, after learning more information, Farrell said he realized how desperate the woman's situation had been. "I was the only person that was going to go near that door that early in the morning," he said.

The carrier added that he had seen the woman several times since then, and she has always thanked him for rescuing her. But Farrell is more modest about his role. "I just did what I had to do," he said. "How could I do anything else?"

Smoke spotted, a house saved

On Feb. 19, New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member **Kelly Hahn-Richards** had just begun her deliveries when she smelled something burning nearby. The smell was unusual, and she didn't think it was from wood smoke or a fireplace. As she came around the circle in the neighborhood, "I saw white smoke coming out of a window" of one of the houses on her route, Hahn-Richards recalled.

The 25-year carrier knew that most of the residents would not be in the house, but she was concerned about the family's grandparents, who occasionally visited. "I didn't know if they were there," she said—and she was particularly worried when she saw a car in the driveway. Hahn-Richards rushed up to the home and banged repeatedly on the front door, hoping to wake any potential occupants, and then called 911. Emergency service personnel promptly responded and discovered that the house was unoccupied.

Though Hahn-Richards's timely call may have saved the house from being destroyed, it was temporarily vacated by the family due to the smoke damage. The carrier later was told that one of the homeowners had left the self-cleaning oven on, which had sparked the fire.

Hahn-Richards was modest about her involvement—"I was just afraid that somebody would get hurt," she said—but other customers on her route praised the carrier's actions. One wrote to the post office that "our neighborhood is lucky to be on [her] route... At a time when customer service seems not to mean much, we have the best of the best." Another neighbor wrote, "Often people who go above and beyond go unnoticed. Kelly Hahn-Richards should truly be commended for her efforts and quick response and for her continued concern for the people she serves."

"Everyone on the block was really sweet," Hahn-Richards added. "[At the time,] I was so nervous, but it felt good to help."

Alert carrier aids unconscious woman

Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **Jen McCracken** was driving up the road to begin her route on June 2



Peter Farrell

when she saw something unusual in the distance. “I thought it was a blanket,” she said, “and then when I got closer, I thought it was a mannequin.” She closed the distance even more, and then, to her shock, she realized that she was looking at a woman, who was lying in the middle of the road.

The 30-year carrier quickly stopped and placed her postal vehicle in park with the hazard lights on—“I was worried that she was going to be hit,” she explained. She got out and ran over to the young woman, who was lying face-down and breathing erratically. McCracken dialed 911 and explained the situation to the dispatcher.

While the carrier was on the phone, the woman gradually became more responsive. “I asked her, ‘Do you know where you are?’” McCracken said, “but she was really confused

and started crying.” McCracken soothed her, reassuring the woman that she was OK. “I was just trying to keep her calm,” she said. She waited with the woman until paramedics arrived.

McCracken later found out from one of her customers that the woman had had a seizure and then had been hospitalized.

The carrier was shaken by the events, but said that she is proud of herself for keeping cool in a scary situation. “I tried to remain calm and speak to her calmly,” she said. “It felt great to be able to help.” **PR**



Jen McCracken

Eye on the elderly

While delivering mail as a T-6 on March 16, Asheville, NC Branch 248 member **Paul Arcaro** became concerned after one of his customers, an elderly woman named Alma Lamb, did not respond to his knock on the door. The 26-year carrier had recently started delivering Lamb’s mail directly to her door, after the regular carrier told him that she couldn’t walk to the mailbox anymore. “I opened the door and called out [her name],” Arcaro recalled, but there was no response. He looked inside and saw her lying face-down on the floor. The carrier rushed to her side, and after repeated attempts to rouse her, she finally regained conscious-

ness. Arcaro asked Lamb if she wanted him to call the paramedics, but she declined. “I asked her, ‘What can I do to comfort you?’” he said, “and she asked me to roll her over [onto her back].” He did so, but then saw that her right eye was swollen shut and badly bruised. “I could tell she was still out of it,” the carrier said, so he insisted on calling 911. Afterward, Arcaro waited with her until an ambulance arrived. The carrier said that he persisted because “I didn’t want anything to happen to her on my watch.” Arcaro, who also served in the Army, insists that he does not merit

special recognition for his actions. “It’s my job—it’s my duty,” he said. “I’m not a hero.”

On Dec. 19, 2019, New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member **Zachary Garb** could tell immediately that something was wrong with customer Ann Fogan. “I could see her through the door,” he said, and the elderly woman was lying on the floor. Fogan had fallen and fractured her arm, which made it difficult for her to get up. To make matters worse, Fogan was babysitting her 2-year-old granddaughter. The car-

rier called Fogan’s daughter to tell her about the situation—when the daughter did not pick up, he texted her and waited with Fogan until her son-in-law arrived at the house. While they waited, Garb reassured the little girl, who was scared about her grandmother. In a subsequent thank-you letter to the post office, Fogan wrote, “I just wanted you to know what a kind-hearted professional you have in your employ, who handled an emergency with calm efficiency.” She continued, “I am so grateful he came to our rescue that day.” Garb downplayed his actions, stating that he “was happy to help,” adding, “I just did what anyone would have done.” **PR**



Zachary Garb