

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.

Carrier helps free injured child from car wreck

On June 7, New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member **Armando Pedreira** was sitting in his postal vehicle on



Armando Pedreira

his lunch break when he “heard a loud crash,” the 21-year carrier recalled. He jumped out of his vehicle to investigate and was immediately confronted by a horrific sight.

A short distance away, a logging truck had smashed into an SUV. “The truck had flipped, and diesel [fuel] was pouring out,” Pedreira said. The carrier rushed over to the vehicles, along with a police officer who happened to be nearby. While the officer went to check on the truck driver, Pedreira stayed to assist the occupants of the SUV.

The driver of the SUV was an elderly woman, who was clearly injured— “[she] had cuts all over her,” the carrier said. She was speaking urgently in Portuguese, and Pedreira, who is fluent in the language, realized that she was asking about her grandchildren. He checked the back seat and found a young girl buckled in her car seat. “I told [the woman] her granddaughter

was OK,” the carrier said. “And she said, ‘My grandson, my grandson.’”

The carrier looked back in the vehicle, and saw that the young boy had been sitting next to the crushed door—the child was not even visible through the wreckage. “Me and some other people were able to pull the door off,” Pedreira said, but once they got the car door off of the child, the situation appeared grim. “I thought he was gone,” the carrier recalled.

The child’s father appeared on the scene and pulled his son out of the wreckage. After a few scary moments, it became clear that the child was still alive. EMTs and other emergency personnel had arrived by this time, and the boy was rushed to the hospital along with the other SUV passengers.

The grandmother was released from the hospital later the same day, and the young girl was soon released as well; she is still undergoing therapy for her injuries. While the boy’s injuries were so serious that he ended up losing a leg, he is recovering.

“There is no question that Armando’s efforts were critical in saving the life of the young boy,” Branch 38 President **Michael O’Neill** wrote in a letter of commendation praising the carrier for his actions. But Pedreira downplayed his role in the rescue. “It wasn’t

anything out of the norm,” he said. “I was there to help, just like anyone else would.”

Quick thinking prevents traffic accident

In June, “I had pulled up at 7-Eleven to get a beverage,” Camden, NJ Merged Branch 540 member **Jose Delvalle** said, when he looked up and noticed something odd happening in the nearby intersection. The first vehicle at the intersection, a pickup truck, should have been stopping for the red traffic light, but it was still moving.

“I waited to see if it would stop, but it kept going,” the two-year carrier recalled. Looking closer, Delvalle could see that the driver didn’t appear to be conscious. “He looked like he was overdosing or intoxicated,” the carrier said.

Leaping into action, Delvalle rushed up to the truck and was able to open the door. A young woman was in the passenger seat, but she appeared to be in shock and did not speak English. The carrier asked her in Spanish what had happened; she told him she didn’t know and that she didn’t know how to drive.

“I pushed [the driver] over and got control of the vehicle,” Delvalle said. He then drove the truck safely to the corner of the intersection, where he put it in park. Another bystander already had called 911, and the driver was taken to the hospital. The carrier then returned to his route.

Delvalle, who formerly had worked as a police officer, said that the experience was “like another day” at his old job. “This type of thing was pretty common,” he added. “I’ve done it before.” **PR**



Camden, NJ Merged Branch 540 member Jose Delvalle (l) is presented with a pin in recognition of his actions.