

The gift



**James D.
Henry**

The job of a letter carrier is very demanding, both mentally and physically. Everyone recognizes it as an important job. If ever the aforementioned is put to the test, it's during all sorts of calamities, times of national emergencies and the holidays. Yet letter carriers are always there and never fail to meet the moment. Rain, sleet or snow—and might I add “pandemic”—are just the tip of the iceberg of dedication and devotion to duty displayed regularly. Letter carriers are truly a gift that keeps on giving to the nation.

This is the time of year where the United States Postal Service's volume of mail and packages increases dramatically, thereby increasing the workload of letter carriers. However, despite the demands of performing their duties, most see it as a labor of love and willingly accept the challenges. As letter carriers, we recognize that our customers are depending on their letter carrier to deliver their normal mail, and yes, that highly anticipated Christmas gift in some instances. With the emergence of e-commerce and the huge role the USPS is playing, carriers are responsible for an inordinate number of packages these days destined to be delivered as holiday gifts.

Not only do letter carriers deliver the physical packages during this time of year, but they also deliver a hello, a smile and a familiar face that provides a bit of comfort for the families and communi-

ties they serve. They deliver messages that convey the gift of good news, and expressions of love. It is a gift to be able to serve others, and letter carriers are the epitome of gift giving. The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away. Every single day, letter carriers give the gift of service.

The most precious gift of all, for anyone, is the gift of time. Time is something that we should never take for granted nor can we ever get it back. It often seems like we spend more time at our jobs than with our families. The demands of the job may cause us to not take the necessary time for rest, recreation and wellness as needed. We'll reflect over our careers on how we should have heeded the call of our bodies to rest, the request of our friends and loved ones to spend more time with them, and to have a wellness day to recharge.

The holiday season is a time to take time and be grateful for our family and friends. To provide expressions of care and love. To not allow anything to deprive us of our most precious gift to each other, and that is to spend time with one another.

Another year is ending, and another year is approaching fast, and I do not want to end the year without expressing my sincere gratitude for your letting me to serve you in any way. Moreover, I thank you for the friendship and shared love of letter carriers. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “Life's persistent and most urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’ ” Your gift of service is what you are doing, and it is immensely appreciated.

Be safe and enjoy your holidays. Merry Christmas and happy new year to all!

