

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.



Edward "Lee" Craft

Carrier alerts neighbor of piled up mail

Edward "Lee" Craft has been a Columbus, OH Branch 78 letter carrier for about 35 years and has been on the same route for the last six or seven years, so he has come to know his customers.

One elderly woman on his route picked up her mail from the mailbox almost every day. One March day last year, Craft returned from vacation and noticed that the woman hadn't picked up her mail for a few days.

"I knew this particular lady, and I know she got her mail every day," Craft said. "So, I knocked on the door; I rang the doorbell—no answer."

Finding that odd, Craft went to speak to Karen, who lived across the street. She told him that just a week earlier she had been given the phone number of the elderly woman's daughter.

Karen called the daughter, who arrived and found her mother on the floor, where she had been for nearly three days after falling.

"She had nothing to eat or to drink—nothing for the whole time she was on the ground," Craft said.

The elderly woman had sustained a few minor injuries, including bruises. Her family employed a day nurse to come in to keep watch of her. A few months later she moved to a senior-living facility.

Craft is glad that he was there to help, and said he thinks that if "she laid there a little longer or another day or whatever, she probably could've passed away."

Letter carrier rescues elderly woman

Nine-year letter carrier **Jared Matesic** was two hours into his route in Blasdell, NY, on Jan. 2 when he pulled up to a home in a mobile home community. His customer was elderly, so he usually brought her mail up to the door and knocked. As the Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 letter carrier did so, he thought he heard a faint, "Help me," but he wasn't sure.

"So, I knocked again, and I definitely heard her yelling, 'Help me.'" Matesic said. He opened the door and found her on the ground. He asked her if she was OK. "She was a little disoriented and wasn't really giving me straight answers, so I picked her up and put her on the couch," he said.



Jared Matesic



He wrapped a blanket around her and got her a glass of water. When he told her that he was going to call 911, the elderly woman didn't seem to understand. Matesic just sat with her for the next few minutes and kept telling her that everything was going to be all right, until the paramedics arrived. But when EMTs started to take her blood pressure, she fell off the couch.

"She was having a hard time, I think, staying lucid at that time," Matesic said.

He hung around and made sure she got into the ambulance. Then, he went back to his postal vehicle.

"[Going back to his truck] was kind of a hard reset. It's almost like a whirlwind of feelings," Matesic said.

Matesic talked to the owner of the trailer park, who regularly checks on the elderly woman, and he said that she had had a stroke. As of late January, Matesic heard from the trailer park owner that she was still receiving treatment.

Carrier raises alarm for absent resident

Framingham, MA Branch 334 letter carrier **Robert Quinlan Jr.** has delivered mail for about 20 years and has been on the same route for the last eight of them.

One of his customers is a retired schoolteacher named Sally who has mobility issues, and her mailbox is at the end of her driveway. Quinlan regularly goes up to her side door, which she would leave unlocked, opens it and puts her mail down on a table just inside. Sometimes, they would briefly chat. Sally would inform Quinlan if she wasn't going to be there the next day so he could put the mail in the mailbox on those days.

One hot day last June, Quinlan went up to the house and noticed that the garage door was open, the lights were on in the house and the side door was locked, which was unusual for Sally.

"I just said 'OK, maybe it's nothing,'" he recalled.

The next day when Quinlan arrived, the house was in the same state, which made him suspicious.

Quinlan asked a neighbor, Carol, if she had seen Sally recently. Carol had Sally's phone number and tried calling her, but there was no answer. While Quinlan returned to his route, Carol alerted another one of Sally's neighbors, who had a key to Sally's house. They went into the house and found Sally on the floor, lying in a pool of blood.

Quinlan found out the next day that Sally had fallen and had been on the floor for almost two days.

"She had hit her head, and she was bleeding," Quinlan said. She was taken to the hospital, where she stayed for about a week and a half. She then went to a rehab facility.

Quinlan visited Sally, who thanked him. The neighbors told the letter carrier that Sally is recovering slowly, but they are unsure whether she will return to her home.

He said that he missed their chats but was glad that he had been able to help her.

"[Sally was] one of the customers that I was really quite friendly with," he said. "She was one of the friendliest people on my route. I talked to her almost every day."

Carrier investigates piled-up mail

In late October, **Joie Morgan**, a 25-year letter carrier, returned from a long weekend and after a couple of days,

noticed that her customer, who normally emptied her mailbox every day, had a pile of accumulated mail.

The Findlay, OH Branch 143 member decided to go up to her door and ring

the doorbell. "Then, I knocked, and I could barely hear, 'Help. Help me,'" Morgan said. "It was crazy. I knocked again and I heard it, and I said, 'Ma'am, do you need me to call 911?' and she said, 'Help me' again."

Morgan called 911 and the woman asked her to stay there until the ambulance arrived. But the door was locked,

"I could tell she was super weak and I asked her, 'Do you have a key someplace?'" Morgan said.

She heard the woman say something about the air-conditioning unit. When the carrier walked around to the AC unit, she saw the resident through a sliding-glass door. Morgan stayed next to her until the emergency responders got there.

"She had fallen and broken her wrist and couldn't get herself up, and had been there since Saturday and this was Wednesday morning," Morgan said.

Emergency responders found her dehydrated and weak from lack of food. They took her to the hospital, and she has since moved into an assisted-living facility.

Morgan gave her a card and went to see her, but her customer wasn't awake during the visit. The woman's daughter expressed her gratitude and said that her mother was grateful that her letter carrier had come to see her.

"I felt like it was divine intervention, because something told me to go to the door," she said. **PR**

Joie Morgan

