

## 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](mailto:postalrecord@nalc.org). We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.

# Honoring heroic carriers

**H**eroism, 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 comes to aid of disabled vet

"I wasn't even supposed to be where I was" on his route in Mt. Lebanon, PA, in May of 2023, **Eric Ketter** said, "but there was road construction." On a slight detour, Ketter, a member of Pittsburgh Branch 84, happened to see an elderly man lying in the street. While other drivers seemed oblivious to the man, an alert Ketter noticed him immediately.

The carrier stopped his postal truck to block traffic and protect the man and then went to assist him. After ensuring it was safe to move him, "I picked him

up the best I could without hurting him," Ketter said. The man, a disabled veteran, had fallen from the steps of his home and dropped his phone, so he couldn't call for help. He asked Ketter to alert his wife inside. The man's wife took him to the hospital, where he was treated for minor injuries.

"I was very lucky to be in the right place at the right time," Ketter said. "I was happy to help him." While he hadn't met the man before, "now I talk to him almost every day."

## Helping a woman with a broken hip

**Jonathon Rash** was walking his route in Bluefield, WV, on a cold, rainy day in January 2023 when he heard a dog barking somewhere on his left. Being deaf in his left ear, he didn't hear much other than the dog. But on his way back down the street, the Branch 880 member, who has carried the mail and looked out for his customers since 2005, heard something else—a cry for help.

He followed the sound to the backyard of a home and found an 88-year-old woman. "She's laying on the ground with the dog's leash wrapped

around her legs," Rash said. The woman told Rash she thought she had broken her hip. She had been walking her dog wearing shoes without socks, and the shoes had fallen off, leaving her barefoot in the near-freezing weather.

Rash immediately called 911 and went into the house to get an umbrella. He sheltered the woman with the umbrella and his coat.

"This poor lady probably would have laid there and died" if he hadn't found her, Rash said. "I was just at the right place at the right time."

Emergency responders arrived and took her to the hospital, where doctors confirmed she had a broken hip. She recovered and soon returned home.

"I check on her every day," Rash said. "It's just something we do [as letter carriers]."

## Carrier's knowledge helps disabled man

**Andrew DiBenedetto** was closing in on the end his route in Tonawanda, NY, Aug. 5, 2023, when he spotted someone lying on the sidewalk. "I could see that he had a cut on his forehead," the seven-year carrier said, "and his glasses were lying on the sidewalk, broken."



Eric Ketter

## Help on the way

**D**ec. 13, 2022, was just another day on his route in Princeton, WV, for **Paul Felger**, but that would soon change. As the nine-year carrier, a member of Beckley Branch 2420, approached a familiar house, Felger saw the resident standing at the bottom of his front stairway. "I thought that he was just saying 'hi.'" Felger

said. "However, when I got to his house, he was still there. I could see the stress in his face, as he was holding onto the wall at the bottom of his house. He said, 'Paul, can you call 911 for me?'" Felger called 911 and asked if the customer wanted help sitting. "He didn't want to," Felger said. "He was afraid to move." The carrier

stayed with the man until paramedics arrived and helped him, and then continued on his route. Felger later learned from a neighbor that the man had died, but that didn't take the luster off his attempt to help the man. "Being honored as a hero feels



Paul Felger

good in a way as to know that my customers depend on me," Felger said, "not only for the delivering of their mail, but also assistance when

in need. I feel that that is one of the duties of all mail carriers for the USPS." **PR**



Jonathon Rash



Andrew DiBenedetto



Sarah Faulkner

## Fire & rescue

On a route in Westbrook, ME, in March of 2023, six-year carrier and T-6 **Sarah Faulkner** was approaching the front door of a home when she heard a smoke detector beeping inside. The Maine Merged Branch 92 member banged on the door, but nobody answered, and she saw no cars at the home, so she hoped nobody was there and in danger. She called 911 and firefighters came to the home. Firefighters later told her what happened. “It turned out the guy had cooked something on the stove and forgot to turn it off,” and then left the home, she said. If Faulkner hadn’t seen the situation and alerted them, the fire might have spread beyond the stove, they told her, but they were able to put it out with no damage to the home. “It was a ‘right place at the right time’ thing for sure,” Faulkner said. “I’m glad I was there.” **PR**

DiBenedetto, a member of Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3, recognized that the fallen person was a 67-year-old intellectually disabled man who lives with his sister on the carrier’s route.

DiBenedetto kept the man calm and thought about how to help him, and then spotted the man’s phone on the sidewalk. The man was too injured to use the phone, so DiBenedetto picked it up, found the sister’s number and called her. “It was a big help that he had his phone set to call his sister,” he said. She rushed to the scene of the incident and called 911, and then DiBenedetto continued his route.

In a thank-you letter to the branch, the sister wrote that her brother suffered a broken wrist and shoulder and required surgery.

“We thank Andy from the bottom of our heart,” she wrote. “If he wasn’t there at that moment, we’d hate to think that he might have laid there for a while.”

“It was just one of those things—I was out making my rounds at the right place and the right time,” DiBenedetto said. If he hadn’t been there to help, the carrier added, “Who knows how long he could have been sitting there?”

## Rescue wasn’t the end of carrier’s caring

After noticing in July 2023 that an elderly customer hadn’t gathered her mail in a few days, Durango, CO, carrier **Seana Green** checked in on the woman, whom she usually saw on her porch when she delivered there. “I just followed my gut feeling,” the 15-year carrier said.

Green, a member of Pueblo Branch 229, approached the door, which was partly open. “I knocked on the door and I hollered,” she said. She heard the woman calling out in response. After asking if she could come inside, Green searched for the woman and asked her where she was, then followed her voice.

“She was in the kitchen,” Green said, “but she was on the floor of the kitchen.” The woman had fallen a few days earlier. Green, a search-and-rescue volunteer and former EMT, knew exactly what to do. She assessed the woman’s injuries but didn’t try to pick her up. She went outside to call 911, knowing that overhearing the call might panic the stricken woman, and then waited for emergency responders to arrive.

After telling paramedics what had happened, Green continued on her



Seana Green (r) and the party for her elderly patron

route—but she wasn’t done looking out for the woman. After learning that she wouldn’t be able to leave the hospital until after her upcoming 90th birthday, Green got permission to bring a few neighbors to her hospital bed to have a birthday party. **PR**

## Eye on the elderly

A couple on **Mike McNerney’s** route in Buffalo, NY, normally picked up their mail daily, so when it started building up over several days in March, the five-year carrier and Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member was concerned. “They were an elderly couple, one in a wheelchair,” he said. “They were always there” at home,

never leaving town. “Something didn’t seem right,” McNerney said, so he called 911. Firefighters arrived and couldn’t get through the front door because it was blocked, but they heard cries for help and found another way in. They found the couple both lying in a bathroom, unable to stand. One had fallen and the

other fell, too, when trying to help. They had lain there for several days and were taken to a hospital by the responding EMTs. Once the carrier saw that his customers were in good hands, he returned to his route. “The paramedics said they were hours away from death,” McNerney said of the couple. Sadly, the

husband later died in the hospital, but his wife recovered and moved to a nursing home. McNerney said the incident was a reminder that letter carriers really do look out for their customers. “You hear the stories all the time,” he said, but he was surprised when his turn to come to the rescue came. **PR**