



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Volunteer Christian Ministry

January 2011

Our Mission

To Bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve.

We deliver furniture, household items and food free of charge to those who seek assistance. There are no prerequisites for service.

“We’re just the delivery people, this is the person who sent you the furniture.”

***The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor...
and He Answers Their Prayers Through You!***



Truly, those in need put their faith in the **Lord**. **He** hears their prayers and **He** answers them. As Psalm 34 proclaims: *“The **Lord** hears the cry of the poor. The **Lord** is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit **He** saves.”*

This Christmas, **God** heard the cry of thousands of local parents who had no means of providing gifts for their children on Christmas morning. **God** answered their prayers and **He** answered them through you, the volunteers and supporters of *My Brother's Keeper*.

Through your hard work and generosity, *My Brother's Keeper* delivered gifts and food to a record **2,417** families this Christmas—**9,637** children and adults!—living in **73** communities between **Woburn** and the **Cape** (see *Towns Served*, bottom right).

Doris, a mother from **Roxbury**, thanks **God** for us, her “angels”:

Dear Christian Community of My Brother's Keeper,

There are no words to even get close to my heartfelt thanks. My rent is due the day before Christmas and everything is running out. I thank God for you. May God continue to bless your service and your giving. The Lord sends me ANGELS everyday. He sent me YOU. Merry Christmas and many blessings.

- Doris

Thank you for being part of the *My Brother's Keeper* family and for helping us bring the love, hope, and joy of **Jesus Christ** to so many children and parents in 2010. Know that you and your families are in our prayers for a happy, healthy, blessed 2011!

Gratefully in Christ,

Erich Miller

Jim & Terry
Jim & Terry Orcutt



More than 700 community members gave thanks to God at this year's 20th Annual Gratitude Mass on Friday, November 26th.

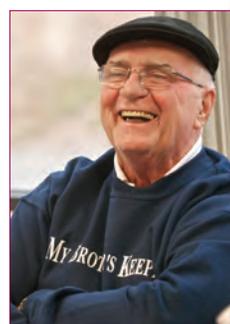
Pictured left to right around the altar, Fr. John Phalen CSC (Holy Cross Family Ministries), Fr. John Currie (St. Joseph), Deacon Dan Sullivan (St. Agatha), Fr. Joe Raeke (St. Thomas Aquinas), principal celebrant Fr. Jim Mahoney (St. Bridget), Fr. Peter Casey (St. Agatha), Fr. Pinto Paul CSC (Stonehill College) and Fr. Paul Sughrue (St. Clare).

73 TOWNS SERVED – CHRISTMAS 2010

Abington	Everett	Plymouth
Allston	Fall River	Quincy
Assonet	Foxboro	Randolph
Attleboro	Franklin	Raynham
Avon	Hanover	Rehoboth
Belmont	Hanson	Revere
Boston	Harwich	Rockland
Braintree	Hingham	Roslindale
Brewster	Holbrook	Roxbury
Bridgewater	Hull	Scituate
Brighton	Hyannis	Somerset
Brockton	Hyde Park	South Boston
Cambridge	Jamaica Plain	South Walpole
Canton	Lakeville	South Yarmouth
Carver	Mansfield	Stoughton
Charlestown	Mashpee	Taunton
Chelsea	Mattapan	Watertown
Dedham	Medford	West Bridgewater
Dighton	Middleboro	West Roxbury
Dorchester	Milton	Weymouth
East Boston	New Bedford	Whitman
East Bridgewater	North Attleboro	Woburn
East Freetown	Norton	Wrentham
East Walpole	Norwood	
Easton	Plainville	

2010 ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS... A YEAR IN REVIEW

CHRISTMAS:	2,417 Deliveries <i>9,637 children & adults served</i>
FOOD:	3,501 Deliveries <i>13,858 children & adults served</i>
FURNITURE:	1,058 Deliveries <i>3,405 children & adults served</i>



“The Privilege of Service”

in the words of the Riske family from Stoughton

“Our family feels so blessed to have My Brother’s Keeper in our lives. It is a way to do God’s work, help families, and it brings out the better angels of our nature.

In particular we are touched by the Christmas effort. Every year a miracle occurs . . . ordinary people work in concert and achieve extraordinary things with God’s help. And the miracle keeps growing. From 14 families to over 2,400 families.

On the second week of Advent, we are called to rejoice. We rejoice in having the privilege to help “the Keeper” serve others and most importantly, to bring God’s light to those who struggle in darkness.”

*Peace,
Frank, Ruth, Brendan & Ari*



† A Grandmother's Thank You † "I don't have much time left . . ."

Dear My Brother's Keeper,
Yesterday you made my Christmas for my grandchildren I was so overcome with emotion I just had to hug the 3 young people who delivered the things to my house. I don't have much time left to be with my grandchildren but I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for making this Christmas not only memorable to them but you have made my Christmas so happy. I have never been able to afford gifts either for their birthday or holidays but because of your organization not only will they be extremely happy but will all be able to sit down + have dinner together (that was my wish) and again because of all of you it's happening. I hope I am around next year and if I am I hope I'll be able to buy them some things. I will contact you just to say "merry Christmas" (I hope) but if you don't hear from me, just remember you put the biggest "smile" ~~on~~ my face and "joy" in my heart this year (2010).
God Bless you all and thank you,
Grace

Faith, Hope, and Love... My Most Precious Christmas Gift

By Nicki Kirwan, Braintree



For many years, I've had the privilege of serving others in **God's** name at *My Brother's Keeper* during the Christmas season. For the last few years, I've helped as a 'floor manager'—wearing a red apron, greeting my fellow volunteers and guiding them through the process of shopping and wrapping.

I thoroughly enjoy welcoming "first timers" and seeing the expressions of awe on their face as they look around "Santa's Workshop." Most years I find myself saying on December 24th "next year, I'll get out on a truck and help make a few deliveries." Thankfully, this year, **God** made good on that promise.

On December 22nd, only 3 days before Christmas, I responded to **God's** gentle nudge and went out on a truck to deliver gifts. I knew no one except our driver, **John DeAngelo**, but as is always the case, our delivery crew quickly became friends.

All of our stops were in **Taunton** and the first was to a woman named **Rosa**. She welcomed us into her second floor apartment in a single family house. To say the house was in disarray would be an understatement. **Rosa** said, "My apartment was robbed yesterday for the second time in two weeks!"

As she spoke of their belongings taken and her kids' sadness at the losses they suffered, her voice grew strong and resilient. She repeated over and over again, "We'll be fine." I was struck by the **Faith** she held in the face of adversity and I knew **God** had given me a precious gift.

Later that morning, we met **Maita**. She too, welcomed us warmly with a tremendous smile. She told us about her 17 year-old son **Eddy**. **Eddy**, at that moment, was undergoing his 14th and final chemotherapy treatment for brain cancer. A year ago, they had no Christmas because **Eddy** was in the hospital but there was no sadness in her voice. Instead **Maita** exuded **Hope**. Anyone speaking with her could see the tremendous hope in her eyes and hear the hope in her voice as she spoke of **Eddy** and the lifetime of endless possibilities before him.

On our last stop of the morning, we met **Jessica**, a mother of 3. She showed us pictures of her children and introduced us to her youngest, a bright smiling toddler who was happy to "high five" us all and impersonate Santa with a mighty "Ho, Ho, Ho!" We placed the bags under the little tree they had decorated and **Jessica** began to cry. I can only imagine the stress she felt this Christmas and her relief at seeing those bags. She hugged us all tightly saying over and over again, "Thank You!" I saw the beauty of **God's Love** in **Jessica's** eyes and I felt it in her embrace.

I knew right then and there the toys and clothes in those bags were only a means to an end. Someone said to me later "you brought **Jessica** that love" and she gave that love to me in return.

Each of these women gave me a special gift this Christmas. They reminded me of the three most powerful forces in our world: **Faith, Hope, and Love**. I thought of them all on Christmas morning and offered a prayer that I never forget this most precious gift.

Ministering on the Phone

Mom says, "I'm so ashamed I can't give them a good Christmas..."

By Liz (Danehy) Zaccardi, Pembroke



My Brother's Keeper accepts Christmas requests primarily by phone. As the number of Christmas deliveries has grown over the years—now more than 2,400 families—so has the work processing thousands of calls in a very personal way.

I've volunteered at *My Brother's Keeper* for nearly 20 years with my family but was invited to try something new this year and help answer calls. It was a tremendous privilege because I got to speak to moms like 'Kate.'

Kate called on the evening of Thursday December 9th and said she felt like **God** answered her prayers when **He** connected her to *My Brother's Keeper*. "I've always been able to provide Christmas for my family but this year I can't. A friend suggested I put aside my pride and call you." "I'm glad you did call," I said.

Kate was concerned *My Brother's Keeper* wouldn't be able to help her family because her children are teenagers and most organizations don't provide gifts to kids older than 12. She was so relieved to learn *My Brother's Keeper* thinks differently. In keeping with our mission, we serve the whole family ... children, teens, and parents too.

Kate shared her fears of not having anything under the tree this Christmas. As she told me about her children's interests, she began to cry. "They're such great kids. They work so hard and they're on full scholarships at a private school because they've done so well academically. I'm so proud of them and I'm so ashamed I can't give them a good Christmas in return for their hard work."



Liz Zaccardi holding daughter Olivia with husband Dan in the background (Christmas 2009).

As I listened, I thought of the *My Brother's Keeper* prayer and my own daughter... "When I experience the joy of giving to my children, help me remember the agony of those who must watch their children go without."

I reassured **Kate** she would have gifts for her kids, that calling *My Brother's Keeper* was the right thing to do, and that her children's success was her success as a mother.

Kate said, "I know there are many people out there who make sacrifices to provide the gifts my kids will receive. I'm so grateful to them. Some day, when things are better, I'd like to return the favor to a family in need."

What a beautiful call... what a privilege for me!

"I'll Never Forget Urban Plunge"



One of the many miracles of the *My Brother's Keeper* Christmas program is how quickly we resume normal operations. The entire building must be reset for our Furniture and Food Assistance Programs.

On January 4th—just 5 working days after Christmas—we welcomed 12 students from the **University of Notre Dame, Stonehill,** and **Providence College** for a 3½ day service retreat called 'Urban Plunge.' Along with our staff, the students slept overnight at *My Brother's Keeper*, celebrated daily Mass, delivered furniture and food, volunteered at local homeless shelters and soup kitchens, listened to guest speakers, and reflected each evening on their service.

Some feedback from our students... "I am in awe. *My Brother's Keeper* is so much more than I could have imagined"... "It exceeded all my expectations"... "The experience was transformative"... "You prompted so many new thoughts and ideas regarding poverty, service, and faith"... "Your philosophy of service will improve the way I interact with **God** and others"... "I'll never forget Urban Plunge."

It's a great example of why we call *My Brother's Keeper* a 'ministry of education' as well as a ministry of service. We recognize **God** gives us a wonderful opportunity to touch the lives and hearts of young people who will be our world's future leaders.

“Words of Gratitude from Those We Served for Christ”

Dear Brother's Keeper,

I would like to take the time to thank you for helping my children out this year. It brought tears to my eyes that someone would take the time to help us the way you did.

I pray that God will bless the shoppers and the delivery people who came with a smile that made me feel so good. I am praying that God will send a special blessing for all.

*Sincerely,
Theresa, Quincy*



To all of you at My Brother's Keeper,

I do not know how to thank you for your kindness at Christmastime. You are all so wonderful. May all the kindness that you show to me and others be returned back to you always. Thank you for caring.

Doris, Brockton



Just want to say thank you to everyone at My Brother's Keeper. This year has been an extremely tough one for not only me but for a lot of people and you guys are right there to help. And with that being said, thank you and God bless you!!!

The Mendes Family, Dorchester



I wanted to take this time to thank My Brother's Keeper for all the wonderful gifts you provided for my family at Christmas time. I was not sure what I was going to do for Christmas because our car broke down, my husband is on unemployment and times are hard. So thanks again from the bottom of our hearts and God bless you all.

Ginny, East Boston

Thank you and may the Spirit of Love and Joy rest, rule, and abide in your lives throughout the New Year.

♥ The Rogers Family, Weymouth



Dear very kind people,

Thank you so much for opening your hearts and giving time from your families to help us on Christmas. It's people like you that are what Christmas is about. You define the holidays with your loving and caring souls to help us, to make our Christmas better. We thank you very much from our hearts.

Mary, Michael, and Paul, Taunton



To All:

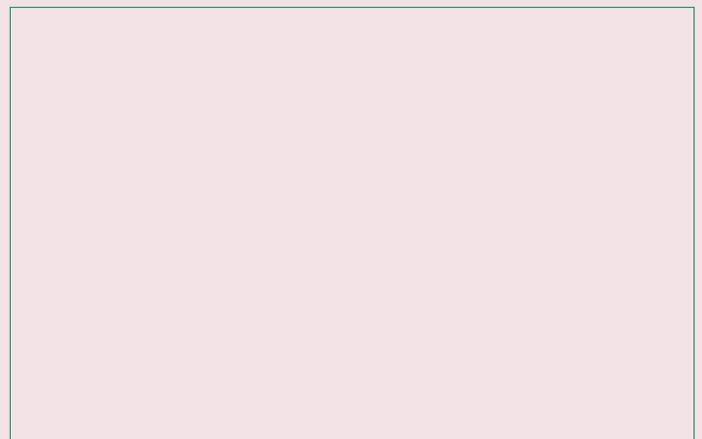
Thank you so very much for helping my daughters with Christmas. We are moving in order to be close to the "T" to get my daughter to her treatments at Children's. I would not have been able to put anything out for them Christmas morning so please accept my sincerest thanks. Merry Christmas! Thank you again,

Catherine, Boston



We as a family want to thank you for giving us gifts. Thank God there are great people like you guys. Our Christmas will have a happy ending after all and it's all thanks to you!

The Fernandes Family, Fall River



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH	Thursday, March 10th – 6:00 p.m. 100 Lovely Ladies Annual Dinner – Thorny Lea Golf Club Call 508-238-7512 for information
APRIL	3rd Annual Mission Appeal Mailing
JUNE	Saturday, June 18th 2nd Annual My Brother's Keeper Family Walk www.MyBrothersKeeperFamilyWalk.org
JULY	Monday, July 18th My Brother's Keeper Golf Tournament – Foxborough Country Club

SPECIAL KNITTING PROJECT:

Do you like to knit or crochet?

If so, you can join a group of women who are knitting winter hats and scarves to give to mothers as gifts for our 2011 Christmas Program.

If interested, please call Beth Sheehan at 508-238-7512.



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

P.O. Box 338, Easton, MA 02356-0338

Furniture Assistance... 508-238-4416

Donations / Business 508-238-7512 – Fax 508-238-3613

(501 (c) (3) tax-exempt)

www.mybrotherskeeper.org

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The Work of Christmas

By Howard Thurman

*When the star in the sky is gone;
When the Kings and Princes are home;
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins.
To find the lost; To heal the broken;
To feed the hungry; To release the prisoner;
To teach the nations; To bring Christ to all;
to make music in the heart.*