



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Volunteer Christian Ministry

April 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.”

Waiting for the Cross

By Josh Smith



Charlene and her six children had been homeless for the last six months. Worse still, there were no rooms at any area family shelter so they’d been staying in a single hotel room the whole time.

You may be surprised to know more than a thousand homeless families like **Charlene’s** stay at a hotel every night in Massachusetts through the state’s Emergency Assistance Shelter Program. What may sound nice at first is anything but a vacation, though. Hotels used by the state are budget-rate, usually located in isolated areas and have no kitchen, stove, living room or play area for guests.

Charlene was grateful to have a roof over her head but it made for an extremely challenging six months— seven people in one hotel room. *“It was so crowded,”* she said. *“I thought I was going to go crazy.”*

Thankfully **Charlene** secured a Section 8 housing voucher and a 3-bedroom apartment in **Brockton**. With freshly painted walls, hardwood floors, and plenty of sunlight streaming in through the windows, it was a nice apartment. You could envision the family having a happy life here.

Except they had no furniture. Not a single item.

Fortunately, **Charlene** was given our phone number by a friend we’d helped. Soon after she called, volunteers **Frank Paul, Bob Hughes, Kevin Brennan, Cheryl Grey** and I were filling the apartment with furniture. There were beds for everyone, dressers, living room furniture, a dining set, and even a refrigerator.

As is often the case though, **Charlene’s** best reaction came from the lightest item: a beautifully arranged wicker basket of towels and toiletries. *“The towels even match my bathroom!”* she exclaimed.

Repeated trips up and down the stairs made it a lengthy delivery but it gave us time to talk with **Charlene** and hear a beautiful story: it started with an emergency food delivery *My Brother’s Keeper* made to her family the previous day. *“The kids were so excited to have food in the house,”* she told us. *“They hung the flyer up right away but they were sad they didn’t get a cross.”*

Touching Hearts, Changing Lives
2011 Mission Appeal

Our mission: “To bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve.”

MY BROTHER’S KEEPER
A Christian ministry of loving service and education

Please respond to our 2011 Mission Appeal “Touching Hearts, Changing Lives” which will be mailed to you in mid-May. My Brother’s Keeper does not accept any state or federal funding. Your private support allows us to offer the gift of a crucifix which touches hearts and changes lives.

The flyer **Charlene** referred to was an image of **Jesus** which *My Brother’s Keeper* includes with every food box. The kids had hung it from one of the kitchen cabinets: it was the only decoration in the entire house.

This story amazed me. These young children—the oldest was just nine—had heard of *My Brother’s Keeper*. They knew we helped people and they knew we delivered a reminder of **Christ** with every delivery. Most importantly, they yearned for it!

*“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”
Jesus hears your prayers
and He does not forget you.*

*Jesus said: “I was hungry and you fed me.”
Matthew 25:35*

Of course, we presented **Charlene** with the crucifix at the end of the furniture delivery. She broke into a wide smile and said quietly, *“Now we have one. Thank you.”*

If we ever needed confirmation of the value of our mission and the crucifix we give, this was it. What a beautiful affirmation!

MY BROTHER’S KEEPER
FAMILY WALK
Building Community One step at a time.

Saturday, June 18, 2011
*Celebrate Faith, Friends,
and Family Fun!*

www.MyBrothersKeeperFamilyWalk.org



My Brother's Keeper Landscapers & Gardeners

My Brother's Keeper has grown tremendously since we built our new facility in Easton in 2002. The building's beauty, especially the grounds, has attracted volunteers like a magnet, allowing us to dramatically increase the number of families served.

The original landscaping was donated by **Joe Ciffolillo** of **Greenscape** in Taunton. Today a special group of volunteers and business owners help care for the property, each making their own unique contribution. Their generosity allows important resources— staff time and money— to be directed where they should be: towards serving families in need.

Throughout the winter, **Kenny Kostka**, owner of **KLK Enterprises** in West Bridgewater, plows and sands our lot as a donation. As reported in *The Enterprise*, he's generously saved *My Brother's Keeper* an estimated **\$100,000** in snow removal expenses over the past nine winters!

Since 2007, his freshman year in college, **Mike Libin** has headed up the spring cleanup through the landscaping company he started in high school, **Michael G. Libin Companies** in Pocasset. **Mike** cleans the parking lot, preps the flowerbeds and applies 25 yards of mulch donated annually by **Rich Lopes Landscaping** in Taunton. Oliver Ames senior **Brendan Jones** of Easton mows the grass and **AllGreen** in Stoughton, owned by volunteer **Lorne Giroux**, donates a lawn care package which includes ongoing fertilizer, insect and weed control applications.

In addition to these generous businesses, a dedicated corps of volunteers provides the tender loving care needed to make everything come together. Throughout the spring, summer, and fall, **Ruth Riske** and **Maureen Toscano** prune perennials, plant annuals, weed, water, fertilize, and finish with a pre-winter cleanup. They are helped by friends like **Deborah Sovinee** and **Kathy Endriunas** and their hard work is generously supported by local businesses like **ICS Inc.** in Randolph which donates a wonderful variety of flowers, shrubs, and even trees as needed.

Ruth and **Maureen** often make it a family affair bringing their children along to lend a hand. They welcome any community members who'd like to help. Remember the old saying, "*Many hands make light work.*" If you're interested in helping out, please call **Erich Miller** at **508-238-7512**. No green thumb required... you can learn on the job!

*"Ministries within
The Ministry"*
2,000 volunteers serve at *My Brother's Keeper* annually, each offering their special gifts and talents to serve others in Christ's name.
Over the years, this has led to many 'Ministries within the Ministry': small groups of dedicated volunteers who joyfully work together in community on special tasks.
This is an ongoing series sharing the beauty and impact of our volunteers' work.

Stonehill Student Appointed to the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of *My Brother's Keeper* has appointed **Alex Ogozaly**, a junior at **Stonehill College**, as the first student volunteer to serve as a member of the board.

Alex, the son of **Wayne** and **Emily Ogozaly**, is an Accounting major who hails from **Hollis, New Hampshire**. He first came to *My Brother's Keeper* during his sophomore year to fulfill a class service requirement and has since become one of our most dedicated student volunteers.

"My Brother's Keeper changes lives— not only mine but, most importantly, those we have the privilege of serving," said **Alex**. *"It is an honor and a blessing for me to serve on the Board of Directors. I look forward to humbly using my gifts to help My Brother's Keeper continue to achieve its mission."*

Alex will bring an important student perspective to the board as well as the hands-on experience he has gained making hundreds of furniture, food, and Christmas deliveries to families in need.



Board chair Deacon Dan Sullivan with Stonehill College junior Alex Ogozaly, the first student volunteer to serve as a member of the My Brother's Keeper Board of Directors.

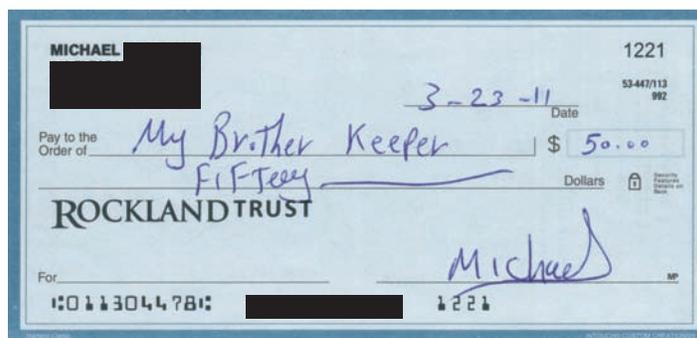
Stonehill College is our primary educational partner, with about 130 students volunteering at *My Brother's Keeper* each year under the direction of Campus Ministry or a professor.

His 'brother's keeper'...

Last August's newsletter included a story about a furniture delivery to **Mike**, a deacon in the **Coptic Christian Church** who moved to Massachusetts from **Egypt** to escape religious persecution. **Mike** was an accountant in his country but could only find work at a gas station here to support his family.

Mike received his delivery during **Deacon Plunge**, a 3-day service retreat we host for men in the **Archdiocese of Boston's Diaconate Formation Program**. One of the men in formation, **Brian**, is a long-time volunteer at *My Brother's Keeper* and he took a special interest in **Mike's** struggles. We recently received the following letter from **Brian**:

"As you may remember, Michael is the Coptic Deacon our diaconate class delivered furniture to last spring. Saturday my wife Marcia and I had dinner at Michael's apartment with his wife and two young children. We had a wonderful time and ate some delicious Egyptian food."



Michael has been working at my employer's company for the past six months and is doing an excellent job. He gave me the enclosed check for \$50 — he is now giving, no longer in need."

What a generous gift from **Mike** and what a great update, **Brian!** Thanks for sharing and thanks for truly being your 'brother's keeper.'

This year's **Deacon Plunge** will be held from May 19th–May 22nd. Please keep its success in your prayers, that it may be as Spirit-filled as last year's retreat.

"The Echo is Gone"

By Ryan Thorley

It was a cold, snowy afternoon in **Brockton** when we pulled up to our last stop. Stonehill students **Ashley O'Donnell** and **Jake Wood** (right) and I were reminded of the excitement that comes with having place of your own.

We were greeted at the door by **Will**, a 45-year old veteran who had spent the past two years living in hospitals and shelters. **Will** was already thanking us before we had brought a single piece of furniture into his apartment. *"Man, am I glad to see you! When I saw the snow I was afraid that you might have to cancel,"* he said.

Will showed us into his apartment saying, *"I've been here two weeks and, as you can see, there's not much here."* We looked around and saw an old patio chair and small television on the living room floor. We assured **Will** that within a short amount of time we'd have his place looking much better.

As we headed out the door **Will** said, *"Wait for me, I want to help you guys."* So he laced up his boots and gave us a hand bringing the furniture up to his second floor apartment. It was no easy task as we climbed the tall snow banks and shoveled sidewalks to move everything into his place.

When we asked **Will** how he wanted to arrange his new furniture, he paused for moment and said, *"I was so excited about actually getting furniture that I hadn't thought of where I was going to put it all."* We worked together to set up his bed, dresser and kitchen table. **Will's** mother called while we there and we could hear him tell her, *"Mom you won't believe the great stuff they brought... it's awesome!"*

Will continued thanking us with each additional piece of furniture that came into his apartment saying, *"You have no idea how much this means to me. This place has felt so empty and lonely too. Thanks to your help it feels like home—the echo in here is finally gone."*

That's when we presented **Will** with our final gift, the crucifix, saying, *"This is the man who sent the furniture for you; we're just the delivery people."* He stared at the crucifix with a big smile and said, *"This is incredible... I am so blessed!"*

We were all moved by **Will's** humility and his excitement to be in his newly furnished apartment. We left his place that day with a much greater appreciation for the many things we often take for granted, the greatest of which is the **Love** that **Christ** has for each one of us.



The Lovely Ladies Dinner

...A Friend-Raiser & Fundraiser

On Thursday March 10th, a record crowd of "Lovely Ladies" gathered at **Thorny Lea Golf Club** in **Brockton** to enjoy each other's company and celebrate the work of *My Brother's Keeper*. How the event has grown over the years, simply by word of mouth! What began as the '100 Lovely Ladies Dinner' in 2007 included more than 200 local women this year, 80 of whom were first-time attendees.

The evening raised **\$25,000** and is planned and coordinated by a volunteer committee: **Patti Boucher, Stephanie Coose, Lori Grant, Kathy Jones, Donna Lane, Deb Murray, and Sue Vatalaro**, all of **Easton**.

The hallmark of the night each year is the committee's careful planning to incorporate the mission of *My Brother's Keeper* into the event. "As a committee, our goal is to make the evening spiritual and inspirational in addition to being fun," said **Lori Grant**, also part of the *My Brother's Keeper* Development Board.

Some examples: the first course of the dinner was a tasteful but simple bean salad. During a festive night, it served as a reminder of the more humble lives of the families we serve. And instead of flowers, the centerpieces were beautiful arrangements of fresh vegetables. They were not given away to event-goers as is often the custom. At the end of the night, they were returned to *My Brother's Keeper* and delivered to local families served by our **Food Assistance Program**.

The highlight of evening was the guest speaker: **Sister Bridget Haase**, Spirituality and Wellness Coordinator at **The Boston Home** in **Dorchester**, published author, and a featured guest on **NBC Nightly News 'Making a Difference'** series. **Sr. Bridget** spoke beautifully about her challenging upbringing in New Orleans and her life of service in Boston, Appalachia, and the Sudan. **Sr. Bridget** inspired the women in attendance to touch the lives of the people around them: family, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances. "One-on-one is how it's done," **Sr. Bridget** reflected. "That has become a model for my entire life."

If you have not attended the **Lovely Ladies Dinner** in the past and are interested in receiving Save-the-Date information for next year's event, please contact **Lori Grant** by phone at **(508) 238-6011** or e-mail at **lzgfff@comcast.net**



Three lovely ladies... Luzann Noonan, Kathy Jones, and Sheila Feeney.



Guest speaker Sr. Bridget Haase with co-founders Jim and Terry Orcutt.



Arrangements delivered to families in need.

"Starting A New Life"... a gracious thank you



To all those at
My Brother's Keeper :

We recently transitioned into permanent housing after living in the Edwina Martin House for the better part of the past year.

On February 23rd your team of helpful gentlemen delivered a houseful of much needed and oh, so appreciated furniture and household goods to us at our new apartment.

We cannot begin to express our gratitude to you

and the compassionate work you do.

Thanks to you, we were able to quickly turn this bare space into a home - sleep on comfortable beds - sit on comfortable chairs - eat good food - and start our new life with a smile thanks to your helping hands and the grace of God.

Thanks again for your quick response to our need. We'll keep you in our prayers always.

Gayle and
Kelly



Honors From Two Local Catholic Non-profits Catholic Charities South & The Society of St. Vincent de Paul



Catholic Charities South and the **Archdiocese of Boston's Society of St. Vincent de Paul** have both recently chosen to recognize the outstanding work of *My Brother's Keeper* and our co-founders, **Jim and Terry Orcutt**.

On Sunday March 13th, the **St. Vincent de Paul Society** celebrated their **62nd Annual Communion Breakfast**, a meeting of representatives from the groups working at parishes throughout the archdiocese. The morning began with Mass at **Our Lady of Victories Church** in **Boston** followed by breakfast at the **Park Plaza Hotel**. **Jim Orcutt** gave the keynote address and spoke about *"the privilege of serving others in Christ's name which our organizations share."*

On Thursday June 2nd, **Catholic Charities South** will be honoring **Jim and Terry Orcutt** at their **Annual Spring Gala** at the **Shaw's Center** in **Brockton**. Each year, **Catholic Charities** honors individuals from the community who have shown a deep commitment to the mission of "building a just and compassionate society rooted in the dignity of all people." The theme of this year's event is "Delivering Hope."

"I met Terry and Jim Orcutt over fifteen years ago when I spent several months of my sabbatical working with My Brother's Keeper," said Dr. Jerry Burke, chairman of Catholic Charities South advisory board and president emeritus of Massasoit Community College. "That experience made a profound impression on me that has lasted to this day. Terry and Jim truly see Christ in the least of our brothers and sisters and extend their generosity towards them. I can't think of a better way to recognize the truly wonderful work of My Brother's Keeper than to honor this amazing couple."

If you are interested in attending the event to honor **Jim and Terry** on Thursday, June 2nd, please contact **Nicki Meade Draves** at **Catholic Charities South**, nicki_meadedraves@ccab.org or 508-587-0815, ext. 264. Tickets are \$100 and program book space is available until May 1st.



Partnering to Improve the Lives of Kids My Brother's Keeper & The Children's Museum in Easton

My Brother's Keeper and **The Children's Museum in Easton** began a new collaboration this spring: making free **Children's Museum** passes available to families in need served by *My Brother's Keeper*.



"Joyous, creative, and safe play in a warm and nurturing environment is a gift that all children deserve," said Paula Peterson, Executive Director of The Children's Museum in Easton. "We are so pleased to partner with My Brother's Keeper to make our educational, cultural, and social learning center more accessible."

Here's how it works: three days a week at 12 o'clock noon, *My Brother's Keeper* staff answers food assistance calls from residents of Brockton and Easton. As a regular part of the intake process, we ask for the date of birth for all family members. If a family has a child between the ages of 1-8, they are offered free museum passes. The passes are dropped into the food orders which are delivered the same afternoon between 3-5 p.m.

The Children's Museum in Easton generously charges no fees for the passes so there is no cost to *My Brother's Keeper* or to the families who receive them.

"We are delighted to help make such a wonderful community resource like The Children's Museum in Easton available to the families we serve," said Erich Miller, Executive Director of My Brother's Keeper. "We are a ministry of action and loving service. Anything we can do to improve the lives of parents and their children helps us accomplish our mission so we are grateful to Paula and her staff."

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY	3rd Annual Mission Appeal Mailing
MAY	Thursday, May 19th – Sunday, May 22nd Deacon Plunge
JUNE	Saturday, June 18th 2nd Annual My Brother's Keeper Family Walk – Easton www.MyBrothersKeeperFamilyWalk.org
JULY	Monday, July 18th My Brother's Keeper Golf Tournament – Foxborough Country Club Call Vince Shea at (508) 238-7512 for information



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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My Brother's Keeper Prayer

Lord...

When I have food, Help me remember the hungry.

When I lie in my bed, Help me remember those who sleep on the floor.

When I have a warm home, Help me remember the homeless.

When I have work, Help me remember those without jobs.

When I experience the joy of giving to my children,

Help me remember the agony of those who must watch their children go without.

By remembering, Help me destroy my indifference and arouse my compassion.

Make me concerned enough to act in your name, to help those who cry out to you
for that which I so often take for granted.