



**MY BROTHER'S KEEPER**

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

# Along The Way

June 2013



*"We're just the delivery people. This is the man who sent you the furniture."*

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

**We deliver furniture, food, and Christmas assistance** free of charge to local families in need. We have no prerequisites for service.

## A Second Home for the Ministry!

Last May, we shared our plan to bring the mission of My Brother's Keeper to Fall River and the South Coast.

Today, we are delighted to share wonderful news: our vision recently became a reality when we leased a second home for the ministry in Dartmouth, Massachusetts.

The building is heaven-sent: a 9,800 square foot facility with space in the front for offices, a prayer room and a kitchen plus ample warehouse space in the back.

It's located in a safe, inviting area just 45 seconds off I-195, about 5 minutes from both Fall River and New Bedford. Logistically, it will be perfect for our work and very convenient for volunteers coming to My Brother's Keeper from throughout the region.

When we visited the building for the first time, Terry said, "I think God is tapping us on the shoulder!"

Along with this ideal site, God has blessed this undertaking in many other ways:

- Fundraising has been strong thanks to generous foundations, individuals, and families. We've received more than \$1,000,000 in donations and pledges to help fund operating costs for five years (see related story, page 2). With this base of support in place, we can move forward with confidence knowing our expansion will not impact our Easton operation.
- We assembled a talented, well-rounded staff. Long-time staff member Josh Smith will be the Director of our Dartmouth facility and he will be joined by two recent hires, Jim Whalen and Rachel Smith, both former volunteers (see page 2). Ryan Thorley has been promoted to Operations Manager of our Easton facility.
- We purchased a new delivery van and have ordered two multi-passenger box trucks to help include more students in our work.



Our Second Home! My Brother's Keeper has leased a facility in Dartmouth, MA which will open in July. Coupled with our Easton operation, we will provide furniture assistance and "the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ" to struggling families in 50 towns between Boston and Fall River.

With the building, staff, and vehicles in place, we're in great shape to begin operations in Dartmouth in July.

It's an exciting time at My Brother's Keeper as we grow to shine the light of Christ brighter and in new places. Thank you for your generosity, dedication and caring support which has brought us this far as a ministry.

In the fall, we will have a blessing and open house at our Dartmouth facility. In the meantime, please keep us in your prayers and don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or want to get personally involved in this new effort.

Yours in Christ,

Erich Miller  
President

Jim & Terry Orcutt  
Co-Founders



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

**FAMILY WALK**

Building Community One step at a time.

Please Join Us!  
**Saturday, June 15th**  
Celebrate Faith, Friends, and Family Fun!

If you have not registered on-line, walk-up registration will be available the morning of the event. For details, please visit:  
[www.MyBrothersKeeperFamilyWalk.org](http://www.MyBrothersKeeperFamilyWalk.org)

## \$250,000 Salah Challenge Grant Matched

In our January newsletter, we announced a very generous challenge grant: The Salah Foundation pledged \$50,000 annually for the next five years in support of our expansion to serve Fall River—\$250,000 total — if we could raise matching funds.

We are thrilled to announce that the grant is FULLY matched not just for this year but for all five years!

Since January, 50 individuals have sent gifts ranging from \$10 to \$10,000 earmarked for our expansion. The Building Owners & Managers Association (BOMA) of Boston also awarded a \$12,000 grant for the project, bringing our total raised to \$41,000 for the first year.

Two separate anonymous donors then stepped forward

with major gifts intended to fully meet the challenge grant, not just for the first year but for the next four years too.

Thanks to The Salah Foundation combined with all these generous donors, My Brother's Keeper can count on \$500,000 over the next five years which will be directed to operating costs at our Dartmouth facility.



In addition, The Flatley Foundation, The Yawkey Foundation, and The Lynch Foundation have also collectively pledged more than \$500,000 to our South Coast expansion, bringing the total raised for the

project to more than \$1,000,000. (These grants do not count towards The Salah Foundation challenge.)

With this exceptional base of support, we can confidently move forward with expansion knowing it will not draw resources away from our Easton operation.

## Our South Coast Staff is Complete!

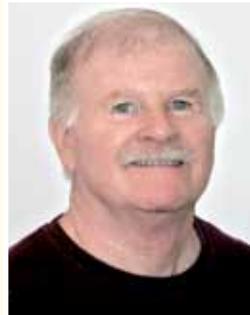
We've always believed our expansion to the South Coast could only be successful if led by the right people... people who view service as a privilege... people who believe deeply in our mission "To bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve."

Over the last 25 years, God has always provided for My Brother's Keeper and He has blessed us with three very special people who will be our core staff on the South Coast.



Josh Smith will be the director of our Dartmouth facility. Josh joined our staff in 2007, currently manages our Furniture Donation Program and is our chief grant writer. He began

volunteering at My Brother's Keeper during his freshman year at Stonehill College in 2000. After graduating in 2004, he worked with the homeless in Portland, Oregon and served in Africa before returning to Massachusetts to work as a community organizer in Fall River. Josh feels incredibly privileged to help bring our unique model of service to such a struggling part of the state: "I never cease to be amazed at just how many lives My Brother's Keeper profoundly impacts— both those we serve and those we serve with. It will be incredibly exciting to see this community continue to grow!" Josh and his wife Kelly live in Bridgewater.



Jim Whalen will perform direct service supervising volunteers on furniture pickups and deliveries. He began volunteering at My Brother's Keeper in 2011 and joined our staff in February

2013. His hard work at our Easton facility has made a big difference the last four months: he'll be fully trained when the Dartmouth facility opens in July and his presence has allowed Josh to work on South Coast preparations. Jim graduated from Boston University and spent the last 25 years working in information technology. Earlier this year, he was contemplating a career change and prayed about it in church one Sunday. "God answered my prayers just two days later when Josh called about a position," Jim said. He and his wife, Janet, live in Lakeville and they have two sons, Sean and Tyler.



Rachel Smith will also perform direct service supervising volunteers on furniture pickups and deliveries. Rachel began volunteering at My Brother's Keeper in 2011, participated in our Urban

Plunge retreat and worked as a summer intern in 2012. During her senior year, she contributed an impressive 700 hours of volunteer work at My Brother's Keeper. She graduated from Stonehill College last year and is doing a year of post-graduate service working with the homeless at Andre House in Phoenix, Arizona. Rachel will join our staff in August when she returns to Massachusetts. After she was offered the position, Rachel said, "I feel so blessed to be a part of the ministry of My Brother's Keeper for the long-term. I'm still in disbelief. I have to remind myself each morning that it isn't a dream!"

Thank you for your passion, Josh, Jim, and Rachel,  
and thank you for saying "yes" to God and My Brother's Keeper!

Celebrating **25** years of service in Christ's name.  
**1988-2013** MY BROTHER'S KEEPER



To help celebrate our 25th Anniversary, we are reminiscing by reprinting articles from past newsletters. The ones shown here originally appeared in 1992 and 1994 but it's easy to imagine they were written in 2013. As much as we've grown, we're still the same My Brother's Keeper bringing the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve and those who serve with us.

**Christmas Morning  
 One Year Ago**

by Jim Orcutt



I walk up the steps, to the last of eighty families that we've delivered gifts to in the past three days. This family had not asked for furniture, only help for Christmas. I knock and after I answer, "My Brother's Keeper", a woman opens the door. I step into the "living room"...it's empty, except for a coffee table. She has her coat on. Immediately, I realize that I can see my breath. "Martha" accepts the bag of gifts with a smile. I turn to put the food basket in the kitchen but there is no table, chair or refrigerator. A young man comes out of the bedroom. He has his coat on too. "Martha" whispers, "this is my boy, "Tommy", he is a little slow." "Tommy" gives me a beautiful, gentle smile and quietly says, "Hello." At a loss for words, I say, "I have a small Christmas tree in the truck, would you like to have it?." "Tommy's" face lights up and "Martha" says, "That would be wonderful." I bring in the little artificial tree and plug it in. It looks lost sitting on the coffee table in the empty room. "Tommy" looks a little nervous as his mother wipes away a tear. Then he smiles and says, "Hey Ma...Its Christmas"...As I drive off, I think, "That's what Christmas really is to all of us...Hope. That's what Christ's birth was to the poor two thousand years ago..Hope..of better things to come." Within two days My Brother's Keeper met all of "Martha and Tommy's" needs for furniture. Including a small heater that was giving off warmth as we left.

Visit the New Website Timeline!

Take a walk down memory lane with our new interactive timeline and enjoy milestones, fun facts, and photos from the last 25 years. Visit [MyBrothersKeeper.org](http://MyBrothersKeeper.org) and click the timeline button on the left of the page.



**Let Your Light Shine**

This issue's "Shining Light" is written by  
**Ginny Motta, St. Agatha Parish, Milton**

When I first started volunteering at *My Brother's Keeper*, my understanding was that it was a Christian ministry that collected and delivered furniture to those in need. I have since found *My Brother's Keeper* delivers a whole lot more than furniture. It is a ministry of hope, compassion and love.

As I sit in the office, I hear **Terry** gently ask the questions necessary to discover the best way to serve those who call. Quite often she finds the adults will not ask for anything for themselves, their only concern is for the needs of their children. You see they do not want to ask for "too much".

As she hangs up the phone I'll hear her say, "I have someone special." The first time I heard her say this I wondered - "why is this person special?"

Over time I have come to realize that everyone is special and as the women volunteers put the boxes of household items together, they do so with loving care and attention. They work very hard to personalize, as best they can, the packages that will be delivered. This is how *My Brother's Keeper* does everything ... with love and care.

When I have had the occasion to answer the phone, it strikes me that the need is not just for furniture, but for respect, dignity and compassion. I think of the seventy-five year old great grandmother who has custody of her thirteen year old grandson. She needs someone to listen and reaffirm her. Then there is the young teenage mother who is scared and trying hard to do her best. Again, she needs the word of hope just as much as the furniture.

Some days, as I sit and read the thank you notes, I cry. Not from sadness, but from the realization that for some of these people, the faith they put aside has been renewed for them. And this is what they are most thankful for. I remember one woman who wrote, "I thought **God** had forgotten my name, but now I know that isn't true."

*My Brother's Keeper* also fills the lives of the people involved with a special peace and love. So many people are involved in many different ways. At *My Brother's Keeper*, the volunteers start each day with a prayer. As we stand around the prayer table, we pray in thanksgiving for the privilege of service and we pray for all those whose intentions are on our prayer board, which is now more of a prayer wall.

We pray before we break bread together and, as we close the day, we pray in thanksgiving. As I drive home at the end of the day and think of the peace felt at the warehouse, I realize maybe our "Mansion in Heaven" will really be a warehouse filled with love.

# Special Angels

Tom, Daisy, and their daughter Kim are originally from Massachusetts but they left the state two years ago when Tom was transferred for work. When he lost his job unexpectedly, the family had to move back to the area. Starting over was an enormous struggle: they spent months in family shelters unable to find a place of their own.

After finally getting an apartment in Brockton, Tom and Daisy connected with My Brother's Keeper for our help with furniture. After all they'd been through, receiving the crucifix was particularly emotional for them. Tom wrote this beautiful poem afterwards to express his thanks:

God has special angels  
there called my brother's keeper

By Tom

You are Gods special angels  
You have been wonderful to my family and me  
God is so proud of what you do.  
helping his needy children where ever they may be.

I wonder if God ever feels  
that his sons death on the cross was in vain  
But if there were more of Gods children like you.  
then God could smile again.

We'll never forget that day  
when you walked through our door  
It was like God himself and his angels were there  
we got such a feeling like there was no ceiling or floor.

All those beautiful smiles and that sound of laughter  
if that is what heaven is like.

Then we urge all of Gods children  
to be just like you and tell satan to take a hike.

This poem is to all the wonderful people  
who made us feel so loved and teary eyed that day  
our thanks goes to our lord Jesus Christ  
and for you who do his will thanks and for you we will pray.

## A Ministry of Formation

My Brother's Keeper has long been 'a ministry of education,' providing transformative Christian service experiences to more than 500 student-volunteers annually.

In recent years, we've also become 'a ministry of formation' offering retreats and ministry opportunities for future priests and deacons.

Every May we host 'Deacon Plunge,' a 2½ day service retreat for men in the Diaconate Formation Program of the Archdiocese of Boston. Each day begins with Mass and is filled with prayer, direct service and evening reflection. At night, the men sleep on mattresses on our warehouse floor to live in solidarity with the poor and homeless.



Pictured with our staff, ten men studying to be deacons in the Archdiocese of Boston came to My Brother's Keeper for a 2½ day service retreat.

In a letter of thanks, formation director Deacon Dan Burns wrote: "The work of My Brother's Keeper is truly diaconal and such a beautiful lived-experience of serving Christ and meeting Christ in each person we meet during a delivery, and also within the My Brother's Keeper community itself. The plunge has become such an important part of our formation program, one that leaves lasting impressions on each of the men."

My Brother's Keeper also provides summer and winter ministry opportunities for men studying to be priests with the Congregation of Holy Cross (CHC). Their full-time ministry lasts from 4-8 weeks and focuses on direct contact with the families we serve. Their time at My Brother's Keeper includes a weekly reflection period led by co-founder, Jim Orcutt.

We look forward to hosting 3 CHC men in formation this summer: Tim Mouton from Texas, Dan Cruickshank from Michigan and John Whittaker from Georgia. All three are graduates of the University of Notre Dame.

My Brother's Keeper is ideal for formation because our work is Christ-centered, rooted in prayer and upholds the dignity of each person, a core principle of Catholic Social Teaching.

*"I Hear the Birds Sing Now...  
Not Sirens All the Time."*

By Erich Miller

During this year's Deacon Plunge, I went on deliveries with diaconal candidates Tim Booker from Abington and Jim Kearney from Wrentham along with Marina Fagone, a senior at Ursuline Academy.

Tim, Jim, Marina and I had the privilege of serving Annette, a 50-year old grandmother who lives alone in Brockton. Unbelievably, Annette had been without a home of her own for 6 years. During that time, she moved frequently between shelters and the couches of family and friends.

Annette was understandably excited for her delivery and she met us on the front porch. After five decades on this earth, she owned only two things: a TV which was a gift from her father and a living room set from her deceased mother's home.

Annette proudly showed us her beautiful, spacious but empty apartment. As we passed through the kitchen, she looked out the window and said with a smile, "I've never had a yard like this. When I wake up in the morning, I hear the birds sing now... not sirens all the time."

Tim, Jim, Marina and I began moving in the furniture. Annette wouldn't just watch, though. She insisted on helping us carry her new things: a bed, dresser, nightstand, refrigerator, kitchen table and chairs, dishes, pots, pans, sheets, towels and blankets. Everything she needed to make her empty apartment a home.

As we worked together, we learned more about Annette's life: she has a sister who lives in Alaska, a daughter and grandson in Everett, and a son graduating from Penn State. Tragically, one of her sons had been murdered when he was just 24. His widow and daughter live in Arkansas.

Life had been hard for Annette. We were so impressed by her joy, optimism and resiliency despite all she had endured.

At the end our delivery, Annette graciously thanked us but we told her, "The privilege is ours." We presented her with the crucifix and our message, "We're just the delivery people, Annette. This is the man who sent you the furniture."

She flashed her beautiful smile and said, "I'll be putting it right up on the wall."

# Upcoming Events



## MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

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**June** **Saturday, June 15th**  
4th Annual My Brother's Keeper  
Family Walk  
[www.MyBrothersKeeperFamilyWalk.org](http://www.MyBrothersKeeperFamilyWalk.org)

**July** **Monday, July 15th**  
My Brother's Keeper Golf Tournament  
Foxborough Country Club  
Contact Vin Shea at 508-238-7512 for  
more information

**Sept** **Date TBD**  
Blessing and Open House  
Dartmouth Facility



508.238.4416 Furniture Assistance  
508.238.7512 Donations & Business  
508.238.3613 Fax

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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.



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