

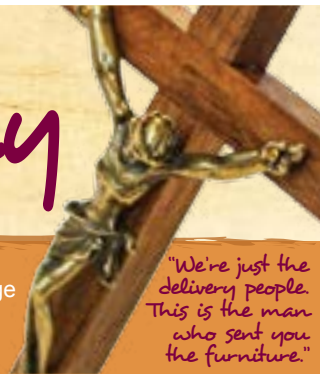


MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

Along The Way

February 2016

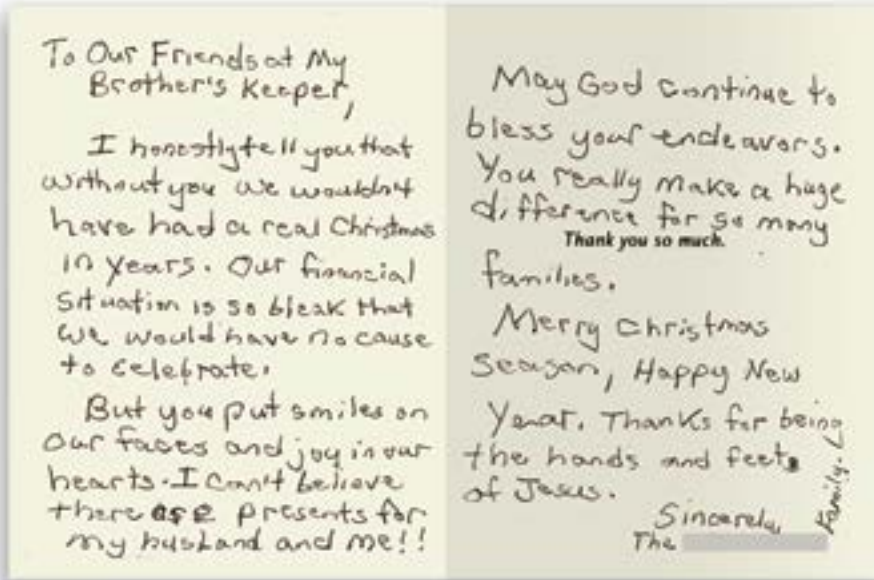


"We're just the delivery people. This is the man who sent you the furniture."

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.

"Thanks for being the hands and feet of Jesus"



This past Christmas, My Brother's Keeper acted as "the hands and feet of Jesus" by delivering gifts and food to 3,006 families living in 92 communities all over eastern Massachusetts — a record 12,192 children and adults. What a privilege to serve so many people in Christ's name in such a short period of time.

None of this would be possible, of course, without our generous supporters and the biggest volunteer crowds we've ever seen at My Brother's Keeper. It's miraculous how we've grown over the years! An example: when we said grace before lunch on Saturday December 12th, 180 people gathered in prayer and they hailed from 55

This thank you note beautifully captures the mission of My Brother's Keeper and the importance of our annual Christmas program.

Christmas is one of the most challenging times of the year financially for our more humble brothers and sisters...sadly for them, hardly a time to celebrate.

Our mission calls us to meet the pain and suffering of our neighbors with love and healing...to put smiles on the faces of those we serve and joy in their hearts.

This is the example Jesus gave us when he showed such love and compassion making blind see, deaf hear, and cripple walk.

different towns, 7 states, and 3 countries. This doesn't include the 60+ volunteers who were on the road making deliveries and those in the kitchen preparing lunch. In total, about 3,800 volunteers helped at our Easton and Dartmouth facilities between December 4th and Christmas Eve.

The families we serve are extremely grateful to us, as you can read above, and we in turn are extremely grateful to YOU, the My Brother's Keeper family. Thank you for all you do and for all you so generously give. May God continue to bless you and your families.

2015 Assistance Programs – A Year in Review

Christmas	3,006 deliveries	12,192 served
Furniture	1,675 deliveries	5,715 served
Food	3,876 deliveries	17,197 served



TOTAL: 8,557 deliveries serving 35,104 children and parents ... all in Christ's name!

My Brother's Keeper Heating Assistance Program

The nights are awfully cold even during mild winters. Can you help provide heating assistance to local families in need?

See special insert.



The 25th Annual My Brother's Keeper Gratitude Mass — A Joyful Gathering of God's Hopeful People

A Perspective by Jim and Terry Orcutt, Co-Founders

See Panoramic Photo
of Mass on Back Page!



We stood greeting them at the door. They came by the hundreds: grandparents, parents and children, beaming, excited to be present. For the majority, it had become an annual tradition. A way to kick off the Christmas season by attending the My Brother's Keeper Gratitude Mass, always

held on the Friday night after Thanksgiving.

Smiling and laughing, we shook hands, said hello and exchanged hugs, but my mind flashed back twenty-five years.

In 1990, nine people gathered for our first Mass on that same Friday night after Thanksgiving. Two Holy Cross priests, a newly ordained deacon and six laymen and women celebrated Mass around a make-shift altar in a three car garage. It was a simple affair. We asked God to bless our efforts to bring His love and hope to those who felt lost. God put His faith in us and we brought food, gifts and the love of Christ to fourteen Brockton families that Christmas.

Now, in 2015, we were astounded at the number of people surging through the front door of My Brother's Keeper, I thought of the old saying, "Man plans and God laughs." I had to laugh at that myself because 25 years ago, we had no plan except to try to help people and bring them the love of Christ. Then I thought of another saying that more accurately fits what has happened over the last 25 years, "We live life forward, but God teaches us about life when we look backward."

How wise of God, for who would have the courage to move forward if we could see the challenges that lay ahead? It is only through faith in Christ that we can confidently walk into an unknown future. And, what a journey it has been.

As I stood at the podium preparing to offer a warm welcome to Bishop Edgar da Cunha, the newly ordained bishop of the Fall River Diocese, I looked out over the massive crowd of over 900 people. In a flash, I saw the work of God's hand. The parable of the Mustard Seed (Luke 13:18-21) had truly come to life. The small seed that had been planted by a handful of people around a make-shift altar twenty-five years ago, had blossomed into a massive community of individuals and families filled with the love of God and a desire to share it with all in despair.

Father Jim Mahoney, Pastor of St. Bridget, in Abington, and Holy Ghost in Whitman, introduced the Gospel with his unique "Alleluia," a community favorite. As



people happily shook hands and scratched each other's backs, the massive crowd of laypeople, deacons, priests and Bishop da Cunha, came alive and the joy of Christ filled the hall.

In his homily Bishop da Cunha captured the reason why so many embrace the mission of My Brother's Keeper when he lovingly told the people, "These gifts and talents we have received are not only for our personal use, but are given for the common good, to be shared with those less fortunate. We all need to discover that the happiest and most fulfilling moments of our lives are those when we are being loving, generous and serving each other."

During the offertory, tears spilled from the eyes of clergy and laypeople, as children brought hundreds of gifts to the altar for the Child Jesus to share with the children of the poor. Following Mass, a priest who served communion happily told us, "I thought the line for the Eucharist would never end."

In the coming year My Brother's Keeper will construct a second building in Dartmouth, to expand our mission of spreading Christ's love, hope, and help to the people of Fall River and New Bedford. My Brother's Keeper will continue to grow and new volunteers, young and old alike, will "discover that the happiest and most fulfilling moments of our lives are those when we are being loving, generous and serving each other."

As always, we go forward in faith, prepared to face the challenges of the future, confident that in years to come, a new generation will once again look back and learn how the plan of God unfolds.

Jim + Terry

Our Assistance Programs Work Together Hand-in-Hand to Improve Lives, Build Relationships & Accomplish our Mission!

Joy to the World By Ben Williams, My Brother's Keeper Staff



One of the main things I love about our Christmas program is that we can reconnect with families we delivered furniture to earlier in the year.

My delivery to Charlotte was a perfect example. When we met her in July, she was starting over after a messy divorce. She had nothing when we arrived and her stress was apparent: she was tired, short-

tempered, and rarely smiled.

But at the end of the furniture delivery, when we presented her with the gift of a crucifix, there was a brief glimmer of happiness in her eyes. I remember her saying, "It's because of Him that I've made it this far." With that moment on my mind and presents in hand, I knocked at her door in December.

The door opened and I was immediately surprised. Charlotte greeted us and she seemed like an entirely different woman. She was happy! She welcomed us in, smiling the whole time, and accepted the Christmas presents with a gasp of delight. I was eager to hear how things were going and she was equally eager to tell me, "Things are looking up!"

Proudly, she opened her son's report card to show us all A's and B's. "He's such a good boy," she said. "He keeps saying, 'Mom, I want to get them higher!'"

She then pointed out the furniture we had brought this summer and explained how she had built off it to make the apartment her home. Festive lights shone brightly throughout her warm, inviting home and a beautiful Christmas tree was the centerpiece of her living room. The burden that had weighed heavily on her shoulders earlier in the year was gone, replaced now by the joy of the Christmas season.

Our visit with Charlotte reminded me how My Brother's Keeper can impact someone's life. Yes, we filled Charlotte's apartment with furniture but, more importantly, we brought her the love and hope of Christ during the hardest of times. This impact can be even greater at Christmas, when the pressure to provide for one's family can become overwhelming, when bringing bags of presents goes far beyond alleviating a financial hardship. Our presence brought joy and happiness to Charlotte, allowing her celebrate the holy season with her children.

And that joy didn't stop with Charlotte. Hearing her say, "Things are looking up!" was a joy to me... by far the greatest gift I received this Christmas.

A Special Thank You...

Dear My Brother's Keeper,

I just want to take this time to say THANK YOU to you and all the wonderful people that have been helping us during these tough times. The gifts we received for Christmas brought a smile to my son's face and joy to my heart because he was happy. To be honest, I do not know how Christmas would have turned out if you had not come to my rescue and I thank you for that. As a young mom, things are already twice as hard as they can be and you have done things for me that my own family members would not do for me. I honestly appreciate it.

Not only did you help with gifts for Christmas, but you also helped me obtain my driver's license. It was not easy but I DID IT! WE DID IT! Thank you sooo much for not giving up on me as I failed my road test twice and needed more practice. Thank you for being here for my son and me. With God anything is possible— you just have to believe and have faith in Him.

I am currently enrolled in college and I just recently got a job for a financial data company in Quincy. Things are finally starting to fall into place. I will soon be moving into my own place as well which is one of my goals.

One day I will give back to you as you have been and continue to be so generous to us.

So thank you, HONESTLY, to whom ever is reading this... to Beth who is awesome and truly an angel sent from above... thank you to all those who took their time to help wrap our wonderful presents. We appreciate all of you.

SINCERELY,
Rose



DID YOU KNOW?

My Brother's Keeper has a program called 'Credentials for Credibility' managed by staff member Beth Collins. It helps homeless adults get their driver's license, one of the strongest predictors of self-sufficiency.

It's just one more way we accomplish our mission to bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve!

My Brother's Keeper Earns 4-Star Rating!

Charity Navigator, the leading charity evaluator in America, recently announced that My Brother's Keeper earned a 4-star "exceptional" rating, their highest possible designation.

According to Charity Navigator, receiving four out of a possible four stars indicates that My Brother's Keeper demonstrates sound fiscal management, adheres to good governance, possesses a commitment to accountability and transparency, and consistently executes our mission in a fiscally responsible way.

"It's an incredible honor to be recognized by such a prestigious institution for our good stewardship and hard work," said Erich Miller, president of My Brother's Keeper.

"Without question, this is an affirmation of our entire community and our commitment to mission from top to bottom. Our volunteers, staff, and board members serve with excellence because we share a love for Christ and a deep concern for our brothers and sisters in need. It's this dedication from so many people on a daily basis that makes My Brother's Keeper so effective and worthy of a 4-star rating."



Update – Dartmouth Building Project

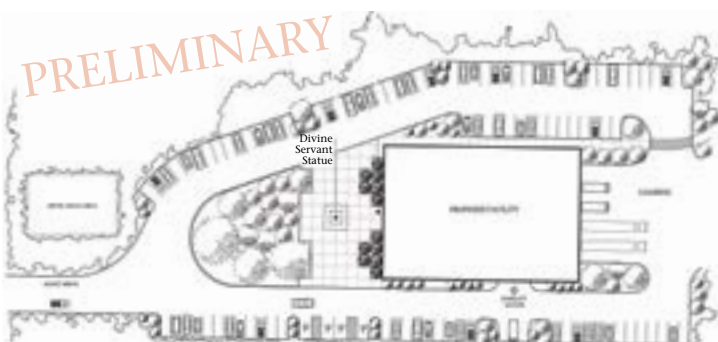
Despite the busy holidays, My Brother's Keeper made important progress on our efforts to build our new facility in Dartmouth. With the invaluable help of Steve Wessling, Bob Cala, and Linda Works at Wessling Architects in Quincy, we developed preliminary design concepts for the site and the facility as shown below.

Here are some of the key design points:

- Total size will be approximately 30-35% larger than our Easton facility
- Full circular drive around the building to promote good, safe traffic flow
- Parking capacity will be significantly greater than the Easton facility
- *Divine Servant* Sculpture (Jesus washing Peter's feet at the Last Supper) will be prominently placed near the entrance as a statement of mission
- The office/admin space will closely resemble the layout in Easton
- Prayer room and kitchen capacity will be significantly increased
- Building height will allow for a mezzanine above the office/admin space
- 4-bay loading dock
- Rosary Walk will start near the back of the building to best utilize the natural beauty of the land to the east

Along with the current plan, the Wessling Architect team is creating a master site plan to provide a clear road map for possible future growth on the site.

Know that we will keep you informed as the project progresses. Please keep us in your prayers!



If you would like to be a part of this project by donating construction goods or services, please contact Vin Shea at 508-238-7512 vshea@mybrotherskeeper.org
We need & welcome your help!

My Brother's Keeper Hosts 20th Annual Urban Plunge



Each January for the last 20 years, My Brother's Keeper has hosted a 3-day service retreat called "Urban Plunge." 15 students joined us this year from Notre Dame, Stonehill College, Providence College, Salve Regina and BU. They slept at our Easton facility, attended daily Mass, delivered furniture and food, volunteered at a homeless shelter, and reflected on their service each evening.

A Reflection by Katie Salley, Holliston, MA & University of Notre Dame

I had never been in a box truck, but we loaded furniture and ourselves into the cold cab and embarked on our deliveries. As we drove through the streets of Brockton, I tried to picture what the people we served would be like—how they dressed, how they acted, how they would react to our deliveries. The expectations I conjured up were sorely mistaken.

Our first delivery was to a woman named Karen who had many people living with her in a small, second-floor apartment— 5 adults, a one-year-old child, and a baby on the way. They had been kicked out of their Boston apartment in October and lived on the streets and in shelters until December when they finally moved into this place. They worked but still could not afford their apartment in Boston.

Their home was unlike anything I had ever seen before; it was completely empty—no furniture in sight. Their clothes were in piles and their other belongings on the fridge, on the stove, and even on the ground. Will, Karen's son-in-law, was so eager to help. He jumped right in and lifted furniture and mattresses up the narrow, winding staircase of the triple-decker. After we delivered their beds, I felt something I've never felt before: I was overjoyed knowing that they will not have to sleep another night on hard, wooden floors, and that they will have warm blankets to cover them through winter.

At our second delivery, I had the privilege of presenting the crucifix—a My Brother's Keeper tradition—to Amanda who had a newborn named Savannah. They had no place to sleep so we brought them a crib and a bed. Amanda was very talkative and boisterous up until I gave her the crucifix, saying "We are just the delivery people. This is the person who brought you these beds." She fell completely silent and hugged each of us. I felt the same thing I felt at Karen's. I cannot put it into words but it was an amazing feeling I wish everyone could feel.

The final part of our Urban Plunge involved volunteering at another nonprofit to keep in mind that charities work together to eradicate poverty. I went to Father Bill's Place, a homeless shelter in Quincy, where we helped check people in for the night. One guest named Bob turned my view of homelessness upside down. He wore a Red Sox hat, which naturally sparked a great conversation, as I am an avid Boston sports fan. He presented me with a piece of paper and asked me to give it to a staff member named Elliot. Looking at the paper, I saw that it was his paycheck as a deli worker at Star Market.

During the Urban Plunge, our group talked about how the urban poor were not just

unemployed but working people as well—I just could not grasp that concept until I was holding that paycheck in my hand. I wondered about all the customers Bob served throughout the day. Did they know that he didn't have a home, that he stayed in a shelter at night? Did they even know that he was poor?

It is a startling fact that you can be working and still succumb to poverty and homelessness.

My Brother's Keeper changed my views of poverty. I will forever remember the names and the faces of the people we served because they have had such an enormous impact on my life.

I had never previously considered a year of service following my undergraduate years, but after only three days at My Brother's Keeper, I am very interested in serving for a year. I am so thankful to have been a part of Urban Plunge at My Brother's Keeper. It taught me more than any class-based experience could have and it inspired me to make service a more prominent part of my life.

Students are deeply moved by volunteering at My Brother's Keeper but does it remain with them in the long run? Does it affect how they choose to live their lives? Here's an email we received out-of-the-blue last month:

Jim, Terry, and Erich,

I'm sure you guys don't remember me. I graduated from Stonehill in 2003 and volunteered at My Brother's Keeper a couple of times each year. I remember the trips with Erich in the van, loading up the truck with Jim and seeing Terry in the office. I just wanted to quickly thank you guys for all that you've done and continue to do.

I'm sure you get emails and cards all the time from families and individuals you help, but I just wanted you to know that you've also had a huge impact on your volunteers. I had never really done any volunteer work until I got to Stonehill. I feel so fortunate to have gotten involved at MBK and it has played a big role in the person that I am today.

I'm currently a high school teacher. Running our school's community service club is one of the most important things to me. I never would have started it if not for my fond memories of MBK. So thank you for everything and realize that you not only impact those in need, but your volunteers as well.

Best Regards, Dave Forster

Christmas 2015



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

EASTON FACILITY
PO Box 338
Easton, MA 02356-0338

508.238.4416 Furniture & Food Assistance
508.238.7512 Donations & Business
508.238.3613 Fax

DARTMOUTH FACILITY
PO Box 70273
N. Dartmouth, MA 02747-0273

774.305.4590 Furniture Assistance
774.305.4577 Donations & Business
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