



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

Along The Way

September 2012



"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.

"WE WERE THERE TO DELIVER MORE THAN FURNITURE"

By Ed Churchill, Volunteer, Brockton

I went on a delivery in Quincy with two of our young volunteers, Sam Duke of Easton and Luke Bernasconi of Hanover, both high school freshmen. Our first stop of the day was a delivery to a woman named Maria. Maria was born here in the United States to Greek immigrants but as a young adult, she moved to her parents' native town in Greece. She lived there for 15 years, had a good job, and was doing well raising two sons.

Unfortunately, as many saw in the news recently, the economy in Greece took a serious downturn and the government fell into financial turmoil. As a result, Maria lost her job and returned to the United States to provide for her children, now 16 and 11. *"It's difficult to find work here,"* she said, *"but the chances of getting a job are much better than they are in Greece."*

We delivered 2 beds and dressers for her sons as well as a couch, coffee table, some lamps and household items. Maria was very friendly and obviously very family-oriented. She had gotten to know her new neighbors, including one who helped us with the move even though the temperature was in the 90's.

As we carried furniture and set up the beds, we had the opportunity to speak with Maria some more. She told us how difficult it was starting over but better than what they had left behind. *"For awhile now, my boys have been sleeping in the same bed. I'm so grateful that they can each sleep in their own beds tonight."*

She also told me that coming back to the U.S. had a hidden blessing. It gave her the opportunity to spend time taking care of her grandmother. *"I was very close to her—my grandmother was so loving, such a big part of my childhood."*

Maria was smiling through tears: her grandmother had died that very morning.

Suddenly I realized we really were there to deliver more than furniture. Maria needed the love and hope of Jesus during this difficult time. She needed to feel His presence in her life that day. When I handed her the crucifix and told her, *"We're just the delivery people...He's the one who sent you the furniture,"* she began to sob.

I asked Maria if she wanted to say a prayer together. With a tear-filled smile, she said "of course." I said a simple prayer asking that God give her and her family peace and comfort during this difficult time. She was overwhelmed with gratitude and gave us all a big hug before we left.

As we drove to our next delivery, I did my best to explain to Sam and Luke that we truly are God's voice and His hands in the world.

President's Note



My Brother's Keeper is a beautiful reflection of the light of Christ, profoundly touching the lives of those we serve and those who serve with us.

What is the root of our success as a ministry? It's our constant focus on mission in every activity we undertake.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter which shares the many different ways we bring the love and hope of Jesus Christ to others—not just on furniture deliveries but also on food deliveries, furniture pickups, when we provide meaningful volunteer experiences and even at our fundraisers which always seek to build Christian community.

None of these successes would be possible without you, our committed supporters. Please know that you always have our deepest appreciation.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Erich
Erich Miller



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THE LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM KIDS

10-year old Matthew Sullivan from Milton sent this letter and donation earlier this summer. During the Family Walk, he read signs about our work along the route and remembered that it costs My Brother's Keeper \$100 to buy a brand new bed for a child in need. Matthew told his parents, Brendan and Adrienne, that he'd like to help a kid his age who was sleeping on the floor. What a generous, thoughtful gift from a 5th grader and what a lesson we can learn from him! Matthew is the grandson of Ann Louise and Deacon Dan Sullivan, our long-time board member.

I found this money on the ground at a store! No one claimed it so I decided to donate this money to My Brothers Keeper. It never was my money so I thought it should not become my money. It should go to someone in need.
from Matthew Sullivan



“FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, WE LOCKED TEAR-FILLED GAZES”

By Beth Sheehan, Staff, and Elaine Ojala, Volunteer, Taunton

My Brother's Keeper makes 3,650 food deliveries each year serving 15,000 children and parents. With such big numbers, it could be easy to forget the sacredness of each single delivery.

A few days ago I went out on afternoon food deliveries with volunteers Elaine Ojala, Christine Kelleher, Jean Connor and her son Alex. We made stops at nine Brockton homes and each one touched me more than the one before. Our first stop was to Brent who has diabetes. He said how grateful he was that he got through on our Helpline which is very busy because, sadly, so many people need our help. At another stop, Patricia told us how hard things are right now and gave each of us a kiss on the cheek in appreciation. Two of our stops were to recipients who didn't speak any English but showed their appreciation in other ways – like Antonio who smiled and flicked on the lights in the stairs for us as we left and Marcelina with her hugs and her contagious laugh.

The stop that moved all of us, however, was to Anabel. We were first greeted by her six year old daughter who came down from their second floor apartment to let us in. We followed her up the stairs to the kitchen and said hello. It took all five of us to carry in the delivery – a food box, milk, orange juice, eggs, margarine, meat, cheese, bread and several bags of fresh produce because farm vegetable donations are especially abundant in the summer.

Anabel, overcome by such an outpouring of generosity, began to cry as we put the items on the table. She was unable to say anything. She just stood there, quietly wiping away tears.


Elaine, a long-time volunteer, later reflected that when she left Anabel's home she had difficulty composing herself, wiping away tears in her eyes as well. *“I guess that delivery triggered a tender spot in my memory, one that I could relate to on a personal level.”*

She explained: *“Back in the late 60s when I was a new mother and a young college student, we had great difficulties making ends meet. But, somehow, we were blessed to always have food on our table for all 3 of us. We lived in a third floor attic apartment (probably illegal) with a narrow, winding stairway, but we were fortunate to have a small income from my then-husband who worked 2 jobs while going to school full-time. It wouldn't have taken much, though, for us to have found ourselves in the same ‘predicament’ as Anabel, having to rely on someone else to put food on the table for her children. Anabel's tears brought tears to my eyes, and for a brief moment, we locked tear-filled gazes. Neither of us could say anything for a few seconds. As I shook her hand upon leaving and choked out a ‘God bless you’, the grateful look in Anabel's eyes said all that needed to be said.”*

It's special deliveries like Anabel's that remind us how truly blessed we are, and what a privilege it is to meet and serve those who struggle with the most basic needs.

“PLEASE PROMISE THAT YOU WILL PRAY FOR MY KATIE”

By Ryan Thorley, Staff

 On a recent donation pickup, I was reminded that our mission can touch the lives of all we meet, not only those seeking assistance. For this special pickup, I was joined by volunteers Judy Fargo (Brockton), Nick Staley (Stonehill College), and Samantha Gignac (Boston College). As we left our facility in Easton, I explained the circumstances that made this donation unique.



The previous day, I received a phone call from a woman named Lauren. She tearfully explained that her teenage daughter, Katie, had tragically died in a car accident just a few days earlier. Lauren told me over the phone, *“I know you’re a Christian ministry and I’m hoping that you can help me. I want to give Katie’s belongings directly to young girls in need.”*

I explained to Lauren that My Brother’s Keeper doesn’t generally use donations of clothing and shoes; however, given the tragic circumstances, we would pick up the items and work with other local charities to find the best possible home for them. I made arrangements to pick up the donation the next day.

When we arrived at Lauren’s house, there was a black cloth hanging on the front door, an old funeral tradition mourning a death in the family. I rang the bell and when the door opened, Lauren stood sobbing before us. We went inside and gave her our deepest sympathy for the loss of her daughter. Through tears, she thanked us and showed us several large bags filled with Katie’s belongings. We assured her these items would be greatly appreciated by many other young girls, hoping that it offered this grieving mother some small measure of peace and consolation.

As we were leaving, I told Lauren that we would keep Katie and their entire family in our prayers. I was a bit taken back by her response. She looked at me very intently and said, *“Will you? Will you really? Many people say that they will pray, but I fear they don’t. Please promise that you will pray for my Katie.”*

I assured her our staff and volunteers had already prayed for Katie that very morning at our opening prayer and that we would continue to pray for her: Katie’s name would be added to our Book of Remembrance. I then offered her a crucifix for her family. Lauren, still crying, said very quietly, *“Thank you for all that you do.”* We thanked her for her thoughtfulness and generosity in the midst of her pain and again expressed our sympathy before exchanging hugs.

Judy, Nick, Samantha and I left the house and got back in the van. Everyone was quiet as we processed the emotions of what had just happened and the pain and anguish that Lauren was experiencing. She needed our mission during this difficult time as much as any family that we serve with furniture or food. On this donation pickup, a group of seemingly strangers were united in Christ’s Love and Hope, just like the thousands of deliveries we make each year.

HAWKS SHOW “TO LEAD IS TO SERVE”



8 rising seniors from Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood volunteered on Thursday August 9th as part of Xaverian Leadership Institute (XLI), a five day Servant Leadership retreat held annually at Stonehill College.

With the help of these student and their retreat leaders, My Brother’s Keeper made 12 furniture deliveries that morning serving 52 children and parents in need.

In just a few hours, these young men helped us deliver 12 beds, 14 dressers, 5 kitchen sets, 3 living room sets, 2 cribs, and a refrigerator. The saying *“Many hands make light work”* was certainly appropriate.

Thanks, Hawks, for making a difference in the lives of our more humble brothers and sisters. Have a great senior year!

PARTING WORDS FROM OUR NOTRE DAME SUMMER INTERN



To the My Brother's Keeper Family,

Thanks to each and every one of you for making my eight weeks at My Brother's Keeper so fulfilling and incredible. Each day provided me with new knowledge and perspective and I have never seen God at work more clearly. The work and those involved never cease to amaze me and I am so grateful to be part of such a wonderful ministry.

Since day one, I always felt so welcome and on the last day of my internship, I was told that I would forever be part of the My Brother's Keeper family, a promise that has brought me great comfort and joy. It is wonderful to know that there is a group of people in Easton who love and support me and will always welcome me back. In reflecting on the idea of the My Brother's Keeper family, however, I have realized that being a member also comes with great responsibility. As an eternal part of the family, I have an unconditional obligation to serve those around me. This should not come as a surprise though— as a permanent member of the "My Brother's Keeper family," it is only right that I commit to forever being my brother's keeper.

Sincerely, Meghan Krueger

A BEAUTIFUL LETTER OF THANKS...

To all of you at My Brother's Keeper,

This is a letter to say what I feel about what you've done for me in times of need. This effort may take awhile but I feel a desperate need to explain myself and my feelings of gratitude in a complete manner.

When I first received food deliveries from you in May, I was floored by the fact there were people like you giving their time and effort to bring me much of what I needed so badly. I felt relief, well-fed and full of feelings I wasn't familiar with.

About a year and ½ ago, I first made a relationship with God. I was raised by loving wonderful parents, but in the case of religion, there was none. There is no blame here whatsoever, that's just how it was. If good things came my way, I attributed them to either hard work or luck and I probably took some things for granted more than I should have.

The first time you touched my life, I gladly made the effort to connect, in a deeper fashion, my true faith that God brought you into my life. Who else could have done this for me?

As life went on, your help continued unabated and I've begun to apply it to aspects of my being. I've begun to trust more and have more faith in myself. I've managed to consolidate my belongings to create more space to live in, I'm trying to take better care of myself and I'm trying to care more for those who matter most to me. I even make my bed upon waking every morning which is something I almost never did!

Getting to the bare-bones here: all I had to keep my food cold was a miniscule fridge on loan from a friend. When I say it held a ½ gallon of milk or water, hot dogs, cold cuts and a couple of sodas, I'm not kidding. But it was better than nothing at all. When I found out that there was a possibility that you could maybe provide a large-type fridge, I called your Helpline with fingers crossed and a prayer in my head. When I got through, I was told so graciously that this would be possible. I couldn't really believe what I was hearing; my prayers had been answered! I would've waited forever to get it because a REAL refrigerator is quite simply nothing within my grasp. When I received your call just 3 weeks later saying you had a large fridge for me, I almost jumped through the roof!

When the truck showed up, John introduced himself along with Nick and Sam and within 10 minutes the fridge was perfectly in place. When all was said and done, there was little I could do to keep my composure. I was elated. John said the fridge wasn't new but you could've fooled me: clean as a whistle! I've owned it now for 4 days and the natural high I've got hasn't dwindled a bit. Every time I come home or wake up in the A.M., the smile on my face is immovable. The joy of knowing I can do so much more with what I can keep cold or frozen feels eternal.

I'm a guitarist and have played for 35 years. It's the only thing I've ever been good at. Music has always been my source of solace, my guiding light for life. I've owned several guitars in my life and each one is like my child. They all have different personalities and souls. When I acquired each one, they were the greatest gifts I could imagine.

Your refrigerator (or should I say mine?) equals a new guitar to me: a true possession of love. All I can say is thank you from the bottom of my heart. God bless you all.

Bob

Jesus said, "I was hungry and you fed me." Matthew 25:35



On Saturday, June 16th, 800 people turned out for the 3rd Annual My Brother's Keeper Family Walk to celebrate faith, friends and family fun. The day began with a prayer service led by two board members, Father John Denning CSC, Vice President for Student Affairs at Stonehill College, and Alex Ogozaly, a 2012 Stonehill graduate who shared his experiences as a student volunteer.



New this year, North American Amusement from Weymouth ran the family fun activities. Kids and parents both enjoyed rides like Tubs of Fun, Viking Ship, Kiddie Ferris Wheel, and Rapid Slide along with moonwalks, pony rides and several game booths. "Wake the Neighbors" provided live music and they certainly lived up to their name!



One walker, Matthew Wessling from Whitman (top left photo with daughter Madison) perfectly summed up our hopes for the Family Walk: *"What a wonderful day! I was so happy that my kids, my family, my friends and I were a part of it. Thinking about it brings a smile to my face and reminds me what life is all about."*



In addition to building community, the Family Walk was an incredible financial success thanks to our Development Board and committee members: 100 sponsors donated \$160,000 and walkers raised another \$25,000. A list of sponsors and corporate supporters of the Family Walk as well as our 6th Annual Golf Outing appears on the back cover.



SOLD OUT!!!... THE 6TH ANNUAL MY BROTHER'S KEEPER GOLF OUTING

144 golfers, primarily from the plumbing and construction industries, joined us at Foxborough Country Club on July 16th to have fun and raise a record \$85,000 for My Brother's Keeper.

The event was planned by a dedicated volunteer committee which includes Gary Cedrone, Leo Cooney, Frank Monroe, Glen Schlager, Rick Shaw, and Bill Lane Sr., the event chair.

"It's almost unheard of to net \$85,000 on a golf event and that really speaks to the outstanding leadership of our golf committee," said Erich Miller, President of My Brother's Keeper. *"They've done a tremendous job of introducing new people to our work over the past six years. We couldn't be more grateful to Gary, Leo, Frank, Glen, Rick and Bill: they're a big part of the 7,500 deliveries we make each year to local families in need."*



Mary Lombardi and Sheila Martin get a ride to their volunteer assignment. Extra carts were in short supply because of the sell-out crowd!

A list of sponsors and corporate supporters of the Golf Outing as well as the My Brother's Keeper Family Walk appears on the back cover.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 6th in French and Sunday, October 7th in English from 1:00-4:00 p.m. both days
Healing Mass and Blessing with Saint Brother Andre's Relic
Father Peyton Center – St. Joseph Chapel, 500 Washington Street, Easton
www.FamilyRosary.org/GetInvolved/RosaryNewsEvents

OCTOBER

Thursday, October 18th
Jenny Boston Fundraiser at My Brother's Keeper
Call Vin Shea at (508) 238-7512 for more information

NOVEMBER

Monday, November 19th
Hungry Men Event
Call Vin Shea at (508) 238-7512 for more information



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

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