



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

Along The Way

January 2015

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

Glory to God in the Highest!

Glorious! is the best way to describe the last couple of months at My Brother's Keeper.

We started by serving 300 families at Thanksgiving... each family receiving a wonderful, overflowing bounty of food meant for the long holiday weekend, not just one special meal.

We followed that with our 24th Annual Gratitude Mass attended by more than 800 people and celebrated by 15 priests and deacons (see picture back page). Fr. Jim Mahoney's joy-filled Alleluia set the tone for the Mass. Deacon Kevin Martin of St. Mary of the Hills preached a beautiful homily which all present will remember.

At one point, Deacon Kevin instructed us to do "the wave." His message: it can't be done alone. "The wave" can only be properly done in the context of community—dependent upon the willing participation of those around us.

And so it is with Christian service at My Brother's Keeper. As members of the Body of Christ, we serve Him most effectively when we serve together, each contributing in our own special way.

During Advent, My Brother's Keeper was a living manifestation of the Body of Christ. We kicked off our Christmas program on December 5th and the biggest crowds we've ever seen came through our doors over the next 20 days...thousands of children, parents and grandparents.

Saturday, December 13th was a highlight. When we said grace before lunch, 250 people were volunteering in Santa's Workshop, in the kitchen, and on the road making deliveries.

Thanks to so many hearts and hands coupled with the generosity of our supporters and great weather—no snow in December!—My Brother's Keeper delivered gifts and food to a record 3,023 families this Christmas...11,670 children and parents living in 86 communities all over eastern Massachusetts.



Great numbers but the most important thing we did was accomplish our mission one family at a time: delivering the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve. As one parent in Fall River wrote:

To the angels of My Brother's Keeper,

We just want to thank you for all your help. You have blessed our family and I need you to know it warms my heart so much that I cry. It's beautiful to have people like you and a place like yours who help so many. We are forever grateful to all who serve at My Brother's Keeper. God bless you all!

— Love, Gia

Like Gia, we are forever grateful for all you do to help so many. Thank you for choosing to be part of the My Brother's Keeper family and thank you for being a part of our work in your own special way!

2014 Assistance Programs – A Year in Review

Christmas	3,023 deliveries	11,670 served
Furniture	1,630 deliveries	5,518 served
Food	3,834 deliveries	16,471 served



91% of all support goes directly to programs serving those in need.
4.2% Development
4.8% Mgmt. & General

TOTAL: 8,496 deliveries serving 33,659 children and parents ...
all in Christ's name!

My Brother's Keeper Heating Assistance Program

January's cold weather has strained the budgets of local families. Can you help provide heating assistance to local families in need?

See special insert.





To: Everyone at My Brother's Keeper

Thank you for all your help with Christmas. My boys truly and absolutely loved all of their gifts and enjoyed our big Christmas breakfast. Keith and I enjoyed the gifts included for us, as well. (The bracelets are beautiful!) You are all truly wonderful. I could spend all of eternity trying to express my level of gratitude, but it could never equate the joy, wonder, and excitement you brought to my family. So, from the bottom of my heart... Thank You!

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.

A Little Faith and Hope

By Jessica Chaves from Haemonetics in Braintree

Jessica chose to spend a day making deliveries as part of her company's employee volunteer program. It was her first time volunteering with us. Safe to say, though, it won't be her last!

"I don't know what I'm walking into." That's what I kept thinking to myself when we pulled up to the first 3 tenement house. I was nervous and a little scared. We were pulling up to a stranger's house who I never met before... how would this go? So much anxiety. I certainly had no idea that in the next few hours it would change the way I thought about giving, about love and about life.

We climbed the rickety stairs to the second floor. Chipped paint and the smell of stale air filled the hallway. Our driver, staffmember John DeAngelo, knocked on the door... "My Brother's Keeper," he said. No answer. Maybe they changed their mind. Maybe they're scared to open the door. After all we are strangers to them just as much as these families were strangers to us. Again, he knocked...and sure enough the door slowly opened.

We were flooded with the biggest smile that one could even imagine. "PLEASE COME IN," she welcomed us into her small apartment on the second floor. We placed her gifts under the tree and asked if she had just moved in. Looking around where we were standing—there was

only a tree, a small cart of laundry and one mattress in the bedroom. "No I've been here a while," she replied. A little child peeked his head around the corner—he must have been her son. He was curious and just stared with big brown eyes at us and at our big bags.

"We have one more surprise for you," we said. In unison and out of tune we sang, "We wish you a Merry Christmas. We wish you a Merry Christmas. We wish you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!" Her eyes lit up as did her baby's. We exchanged hugs and well wishes and left for our next family.

It was much like this for the rest of the morning. People so grateful that they were even thought of. Some people who just wanted to be remembered.

I must have given about a million hugs today. Throughout the day I wondered if sometimes that's all people need... just a hug to be reminded that it'll be ok.

We are all human and we are all in this together. Even if you've only got a mattress and a tree...it doesn't matter as long as you have a little faith and hope.



Emmanuel...God is with Us

By Lisa Edwards, Easton Staff



One December afternoon, I found myself standing at the front door of a three family home on the South side of Brockton. With two wonderful volunteers, three bags of Christmas gifts

and a \$50 gift card to Stop & Shop in tow, I rang the bell. Within a few seconds a young man in his late teens flung the door open. He introduced himself as Emmanuel and welcomed us inside.

Our volunteer Steve asked Emmanuel if he knew the meaning of his name. "God is with us," he responded. Steve complimented Emmanuel on his prompt answer. The exchange was a beautiful and appropriate start to a Christmas delivery.

I stepped into the apartment and introduced myself to Monique, Emmanuel's mother. After placing the gifts under the tree I noticed a young boy, perhaps six years old, perched on the edge of the sofa. I approached him and asked his name.

"Isaac," he told me. Another biblical name.

I was so distracted by delivering the gifts that I did not see the two electric pianos next to each other in the room. Our volunteer Kristen, however, noticed right away and asked Isaac if he played piano. He simply nodded his head yes. "Will you play for us?" Kristen asked with a smile.

"No," he responded, yet Isaac nodded his head and started walking towards the smaller of the two pianos. He sat on the chair then shyly turned and smiled at his older brother.

"Here Isaac, I'll play with you," Emmanuel said with a kind grin as he sat down at the larger of the two pianos.

Nothing could have prepared me for what happened next.

The two brothers sat with their backs to us, gave each other a quick smile, then let their fingers dance across the keyboards. Emmanuel's hands moved fluidly producing intricate melodies while Isaac struck harmonizing chords. Together, they produced music that could only be described as joyful.

They played perfectly in time with each other for a few minutes as the volunteers

and I stared in awe at the talent pouring from their hands. I glanced at their mother Monique—she was leaning lightly against the doorframe of the room with a small smile on her face as she proudly watched her boys make music together.

All too soon the song came to an end. Isaac turned around with a winning grin on his face, knowing he had completely impressed us. "Isaac," Emmanuel said, "Let's play the one that we wrote for them." And so they were off with a heartfelt composition.

Our private concert felt like a sincere thank you for bringing Christmas gifts to their home—but the privilege was all ours to witness such a loving, pure picture of camaraderie and mentorship within family.

The love and hope of Jesus Christ flooded through their music into our hearts. I knew in that moment that God was with us.

Lisa is a member of our Easton staff through a post-graduate volunteer program called Stonehill Service Corps. She graduated in May 2014 with degrees in Marketing and Studio Art.

A Christmas Thank You.

"When the delivery men arrived, I could immediately feel God's presence."

Happy Birthday, Jesus!



to Karli

This is the gift label / name tag which Karli refers to in her thank you note. My Brother's Keeper printed 80,000 this year—one of the ways we keep Christ in Christmas. It provides a wonderful teachable moment for thousands of parents like Karli to talk with their kids about the true meaning of Christmas.

Additional words of thanks:

Thank you for making our family's Christmas special through your wonderful and caring support. In these hard times, you make life a lot brighter.

Thank you for giving our family a Christmas. I have been struggling the past two years but didn't reach out for help until I was let go from my job three days before Thanksgiving. I am blessed to know that there is a Christian organization to help those of us who are less fortunate.

Thank you so much for your help and for all your hard work answering the phones, putting the gifts together and dropping them off. Everything you do is so greatly appreciated. Thank you so very, very much!

We really appreciate your kindness more than words can say.

May God bless each and every one of you for the joy you bring to all the children and their families. We will always pray for you.

I would like to thank everyone at My Brother's Keeper for all you do year round, not just at Christmas.

You all have given me Faith!

✕ Dear My Brother's Keeper,

12/30/14

We want to extend our love and gratitude to you for helping us this year. First and foremost we have thanked our Lord for our lives and yours. He has placed His Spirit inside of you and has given you the desire to serve your brothers (and your sisters!) Wow.

✧ I wish I had more room ✧
✧ to thank you ✧

We were hoping for just a couple gifts this year and boy was our wish granted. All three of our children were ecstatic to jump on top of the ride-on bulldozer. "We" are still learning to "take turns," but I will say that my husband and I were glad that the bulldozer could accommodate two with the trailer on the back!! Surely I will run out of room trying to thank you for every thing you have done. Our little girl loved her "Skye" puppy and all of them were excited about the blocks. The boys were overjoyed to see the familiar Cars-themed gifts.

I was especially appreciative to see the gift-name-tags that each depicted a merges scene with the words, "Happy Birthday Jesus." Christmas morning we all took a moment to remember to sing to Jesus. I explained to the kids about how gifts, everything, and even our lives are possible because of God and Jesus. They don't quite understand yet but they do know that God sent you to us. Even when the "delivery men" arrived, I could immediately feel God's presence. I felt that they must have prayed so before knocking at our door. Thank you more than words can express + Lovingly, Karli + Family

Christmas was wonderful this year!! Thank you!!

A New Series...

Weekday Gospel Reflections by Jim Orcutt

Do you love hearing Jim Orcutt tell stories about God, faith, and the people we serve? Has he brought the gospel to life for you?

If so, here's good news: in 2015, Jim's Weekday Gospel Reflections will be available to us all by e-mail and on our website, www.MyBrothersKeeper.org

How did this come to pass?

"I started writing reflections as a means of clarifying my thoughts on how the gospel stories apply to my life and relationship with Christ," Jim said.

"I shared my reflections with a few friends and Erich suggested we post them on the website. My hope is that they will inspire others to reflect and write as well."

Jim's reflections are posted every weekday at 5:30am and also sent out to a special opt-in e-mail list (separate from the general My Brother's Keeper newsletter list.)

To sign up to receive Jim's Weekday Gospel Reflections by e-mail, visit our website and look for the box above on our home page (www.MyBrothersKeeper.org).

Sign-up to receive
Jim's Weekday Gospel Reflections.

Email:

First Name:

Last Name:



Jim's Weekday Gospel Reflections

By Jim Orcutt, Co-Founder of My Brother's Keeper

These personal reflections on the weekday gospel represent my insight of Christ's message as viewed through the lens of my life experience. It is my hope that others will be inspired to reflect upon their views as well.

Luke 21: 12-19

"You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance, you will secure your own lives."

Reflection by Jim Orcutt:

Jesus never minced words. He never gave anyone the impression that following Him would be a cake-walk. He wanted to be sure those who chose His way understood they could expect ridicule and persecution. But, He also promised the prize at the end of the journey would be everlasting life.

History is filled with those who have devoted and even forfeited their lives for a cause to which they were committed. Every country has its heroes and heroines to whom its citizens are indebted. Although most of us will never be called to offer our lives or suffer death in defense of Christ, still, the trials of life may test our faith. The agonizing loss of a child or grandchild to illness or accident may challenge our ability to accept that which is beyond our understanding.

The masses of poverty stricken people throughout the world, starving in the face of great abundance, may leave us questioning.

I once had a prominent politician, from a city where we serve, tell me: "You people at My Brother's Keeper are contributing to the problems of this city. If you would stop helping these people, they'd move away." His remark saddened me because I remember what it was like growing up poor, sleeping five in a bed, and eating ketchup sandwiches for days and watching my mom's unselfish struggle to provide for us.

But, as Jesus said, both praise and ridicule will come your way when serving the poor. We find compassion by remembering our own suffering and we are called to service by the words of Jesus: "I was hungry and you fed me." Matthew 25: 35. Elie Wiesel, who suffered in a German concentration camp said, "Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future."

Irrespective of skeptics: in our souls and minds we remain a people of faith. Faith is the degree to which we believe that which we hope for will come to pass. As we continue to offer our hearts and service for Christ, take courage from the words of Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

2015 Urban Plunge... Another Way We Serve as "A Ministry of Education"



From January 6th – 9th, 16 college students from 5 different schools joined us for "Urban Plunge," an intensive service retreat we've hosted for the past nineteen years.

Along with our staff, the students slept overnight at My Brother's Keeper in Easton, attended daily Mass, delivered furniture and food, volunteered at local homeless shelters and soup kitchens, and reflected each evening on their service.

This year's students attend Notre Dame, Stonehill College, Providence College, Salve Regina and Fairfield University.

In the words of Shannon Grady, PC '18, "The entire Urban Plunge was a growth experience for me—a period of learning about the local poverty around me, learning true empathy, learning how to accept and love one another, and how to deepen and develop my Christian faith. Thank you so much for a life changing experience!"

Upcoming Events

April	Monday, April 13th, 6:00 pm Lovely Ladies Dinner Granite Links Golf Club
June	Saturday, June 20th 6th Annual My Brother's Keeper Family Walk www.MyBrothersKeeperFamilyWalk.org
July	Monday, July 13th My Brother's Keeper Golf Tournament Foxborough Country Club Call Vince Shea at 508-238-7512



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