



**MY BROTHER'S KEEPER**

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

# Along The Way

June 2019

**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."



God has blessed the My Brother's Keeper Family Walk tremendously over the past decade—in 10 years, we've never had rain during the event— but this year's walk was truly perfect: a high of 76 degrees, low humidity, and not a cloud in the sky. God is good!

The day began with a prayer service in the new parking lot adjacent to our Easton facility. Fr. Tony Szakaly, CSC, head of Campus Ministry at Stonehill College, offered the blessing. Recent Stonehill graduate Rebecca Merkel shared how the mission of My Brother's Keeper profoundly impacted her college experience, so much so that she committed to a year of post-graduate volunteer service at My Brother's Keeper starting in August through Stonehill Service Corps.

New this year, the walk route began by going right through our Easton facility so guests could see firsthand the day-to-day work of My Brother's Keeper. They continued past the Holy Cross Retreat House, strolled through the beautiful campus of Stonehill College, and ended at a Family Fun celebration with free amusement rides, games like corn hole, touch-a-truck provided by Sullivan's Tire, music, and great food including BBQ from Morrell's in Stoughton.

The Family Walk is a celebration of the My Brother's Keeper community and it's also our single biggest fundraiser of the year. This year's event raised more than \$200,000 in support of our work delivering furniture, food, and the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve (see sponsor list, back page). Over the past 10 years, the event has raised more than \$2,000,000.

Special thanks to the lead sponsors of this year's Family Walk: Boston Mutual Life Insurance Company, Wessling Architects, Dropkick Murphys Claddagh Fund, and an anonymous friend.



# "The Gift of a Few Extra Seconds"

By Jim Coppinger, Stonehill Class of 2019



I began volunteering at My Brother's Keeper at the beginning of my sophomore year and I had no idea the blessings in my life that would come from it. I met so many amazing families through this opportunity, some of whom didn't speak my language. I met so many amazing volunteers I've become good friends with

over time – and I've gained a new community in the process. But sometimes there are these 'moments' that remind you what this is all about.

One morning, we set out from My Brother's Keeper to meet Vanessa, a single mother living in Randolph. She had three beautiful kids between the ages of 9-12, two boys and one girl. Some time ago, Vanessa's mom needed help so Vanessa moved down to Baltimore with her kids to help her. When it was time to come back home, she had a very hard time finding low-income housing and had to live in a homeless shelter for several months. She was one of MANY applicants for the apartment we were standing in. "I'm so grateful and blessed we were selected for it," she kept repeating to us.

The home, though unfurnished, was everything to them. We had two Keeper trucks rendezvous at the delivery that morning so a small army of a dozen of us began bringing in what these children have either never had or have not had for a very long time in their lives...like beds. It was so gratifying to know that these kids were going to sleep in beds that night that they could call their own.

Anyone familiar with My Brother's Keeper knows that our mission is to bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve and we offer a crucifix as the last gift of the delivery. Our message: "We're just the delivery people. The furniture comes from Him."

When all the volunteers stand around the family at the end of the delivery to give this last gift, this usually provokes an emotional, heartfelt thank-you from the receiving family.

And this probably happened here too, but on this particular delivery, I was still upstairs with another volunteer named Sam, working hard to get one of the drawers back into Vanessa's new bureau. Being such a big group of volunteers that day, they probably had no idea we were still up there working as they presented Vanessa with the crucifix.

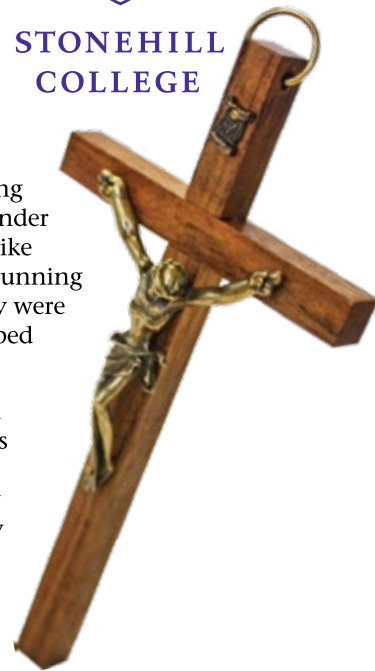
It was taking Sam and me a good while to get this silly drawer into its opening and we could hear everyone hugging downstairs, but Sam and I truly just could not get this thing to budge. But the odd misfortune of a stubborn drawer provided us with a gift I won't forget.

As volunteers started saying their goodbyes, Vanessa's three precious kids flew upstairs, screaming in excitement, and in a burst of wonder ran towards their new beds. It was like Christmas morning but instead of running downstairs to a Christmas tree, they were running upstairs to hop up onto a bed they could finally call their own.

Sam and I looked at each other and were almost brought to tears, as this silly little drawer bought us a few extra seconds to witness something that delivery people don't normally get to see. I am so grateful, one, to have a bed that I call my own... two, to have the privilege to serve others... and three, for My Brother's Keeper, availing me of this opportunity and others like it week after week.



STONEHILL  
COLLEGE



## My Brother's Keeper Receives the Easton Lions Club Outstanding Humanitarian Service Organization Award



Left to right, Easton Lions Club 1st Vice President Dr. David Mudd presents the Outstanding Humanitarian Service Organization Award to Erich Miller along with Easton Lions President Ram Penumathy and My Brother's Keeper volunteers Joe Kennedy, Maeve Paul, Peg Malpiede, and Frank Paul.

In April, the Easton Lions Club recognized My Brother's Keeper with the Outstanding Humanitarian Service Organization Award.

The award was accepted by Erich Miller, president of My Brother's Keeper, who said, "We work hard to serve our neighbors in need and we also try to inspire our volunteers to live lives of service—to be lifelong humanitarians themselves—to be people who give back to the community like the members of the Easton Lions Club."

"We often tell our volunteers you don't have to be at our building at 534 Washington Street to be your brother's and sister's keeper. We can all do that in our own way and in our own lives."







A Ministry of Education .....

## 10th Annual Deacon Plunge

Every May, My Brother's Keeper hosts 'Deacon Plunge,' a 3 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.



## I Left a Changed Man by Luc Lambert, Westford MA

I recently had the privilege of experiencing the Deacon Plunge at My Brother's Keeper in Easton. I was warmly welcomed, given a tour of the impressive facility and operation and made to feel like one of the family. Most noteworthy, though, I witnessed the hands and feet of Christ in action through your ministry.

In trying to explain what this experience means to me, let me start by sharing with you an observation which I believe you already know. For many of the people you serve, English is not their first language. By trusting only their eyes, they get the gist of what is happening; but only on the surface.

They see a group of joyous women and men hauling furniture and they must wonder what makes you smile and why do you seem to be enjoying each other's company so much. They hear you conversing in English and understand basically what you're saying because they've had to learn a little English to get by. But without hearing the words in their own tongue, there's always that inner voice of doubt. "Will I

really be able to sleep in my own bed tonight? Will I be inviting my family over to break bread around my own table? Are they going to ask me to prove my inability to pay or to sign something? What's the catch???" All this because the cold, hard world has taught them that nothing is free.

But Jesus speaks to them in their own language. And when they hear or read in their own tongue that the furniture is a gift from Jesus, with no strings attached, only then can they truly comprehend the 'Message'— they are loved and respected and they are certainly not forgotten. Tears flow, thanks are raised, and Jesus smiles! They also understand why these crazy delivery people are so happy— they work for the best Boss ever!

On our very first encounter, we met with Edgar and his adult daughter Julia. The first realization of what was happening hit Edgar in the elevator ride up to his empty apartment and he fought back tears. Upon entering his apartment, Edgar proudly showed us around and motioned where he wanted his furniture placed. We were especially

blessed to have someone on our team who could speak to Edgar in his own language. Not only was our translator able to establish that all-important rapport with Edgar, he also presented the crucifix to him along with the Message, and lastly, he translated a blessing from Jim Orcutt. There was no doubt that Edgar understood and the beautiful vision of him kissing Jesus and smiling widely is forever etched in my heart.

To the women and men who volunteer at My Brother's Keeper, thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the work you do. I close with a quote from St. Theresa of Avila:

*"Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes with which Christ looks out His compassion to the world. Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now."*

Your Brother in Christ,

*Luc*



## Dominican Summer Service at My Brother's Keeper



My Brother's Keeper is delighted to welcome two Dominican seminarians for 9 weeks of summer ministry as part of their formation for priesthood. Brother Zachary Sexton is a Providence College graduate who is originally from Westerly, Rhode Island and Brother Cyril Stola is a graduate of New York University who grew up near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

They will help with furniture pick-ups and deliveries four days a week at our Dartmouth facility and also assist one day a week at St. Pius V Parish in Providence.

Both men are in formation at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC and are staying with the Dominican community at Providence College this summer.

# — NEW FACES & NEW ROLES AT — *My Brother's Keeper*

One of the great strengths of My Brother's Keeper is our community: our volunteers have such a depth and breadth of gifts and talents. As time passes, new people are willing to take on new leadership roles. We are grateful to the following community members for taking on new responsibilities in support of our work and mission.

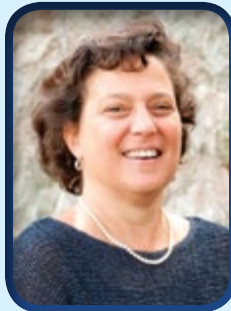
## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Jim Philbin, CPA from Foxboro joined the Board of Directors. He is a partner at Marcum LLC and will serve as Treasurer of My Brother's Keeper. He has served on our Easton Development Board since 2017. Jim is taking over from Donna Lane who served with excellence in this role since 2010.

"I want to take

this opportunity to thank Donna for her outstanding work as our Treasurer during these past nine years," said Brian Concannon, chair of the My Brother's Keeper Board of Directors. "We saw significant growth during her tenure including the construction of our new Dartmouth facility and her leadership in this important role was key to the success of this important project." Donna is remaining on the Board of Directors.



companies could learn so much from My Brother's Keeper's clarity of and focus on mission."

Julie Huggins-Lofton also works at State Street Corporation where she is an Officer and Executive Assistant. She lives in Brockton with her husband James Lofton and they have two sons.

After watching the movie 'God Bless the Child' that inspired the founding of My Brother's Keeper, Julie said, "I find myself grateful and thankful for the many blessings that have come my way and that I am able to bless others. I am also grateful to My Brother's Keeper for opening facilities that are willing to assist anyone who needs help regardless of their situation, their religion, or beliefs. To have a mission statement that states 'To bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve' says it all!"



Fr. Tony Szakaly, CSC, has joined the Board of Directors of My Brother's Keeper. He is Director of Campus Ministry and Alumni Minister at Stonehill College as well as Superior of the local Holy Cross community in Easton. Fr. Tony is originally from South Bend, IN and is a 'Triple Domer' with three degrees from the University of Notre Dame: a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Business of Administration,

and a Master of Divinity in 1991. He is also Chairman of the Board of Ave Maria Press, the publishing company that the Congregation of Holy Cross runs at Notre Dame.



Bill Morse recently joined our South Coast Development Board after retiring from his position as President and COO of Mutual Bank in Whitman. He and his wife Louise have been involved at My Brother's Keeper as volunteers and supporters for over a decade. Bill has also lived Cursillo at the Holy Cross Retreat House and has been on team. They are now living in Mattapoisett and Bill is enjoying helping out at our Dartmouth location.

## EASTON DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Rich Wade and Julie Huggins-Lofton have joined our Easton Development Board.

Rich is a Vice President at State Street Corporation working in Information Technology. He and his wife Patti have three boys. As a family, they have volunteered regularly at Christmas with wrapping and deliveries. Rich has helped at and attended our events such as our Family Walk and Hungry Men dinner. "I love the mission of My Brother's Keeper," said Rich. "For-profit



## STAFF

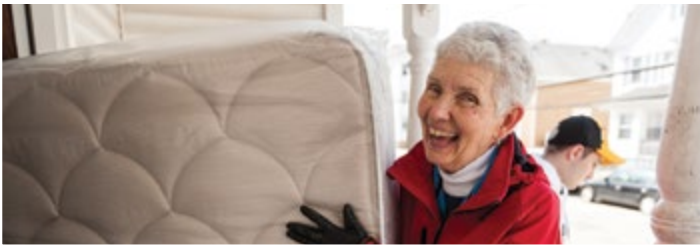
Joe Tenaglia joined our staff full time in April as a Direct Service Associate at the Dartmouth facility. Joe is from Weymouth and first became involved with My Brother's Keeper as a student at Xaverian Brothers High School. He went on to attend the University of Notre Dame and graduated in May 2018 with degrees in Theology and American Studies. While in college, Joe was involved in Campus Ministry, volunteered at several community service sites, and was an intern at My Brother's Keeper in 2017 as part of Notre Dame's Summer Service Learning Program.





## Recent Grant Awards

As a 100% privately-funded charity, My Brother's Keeper must have a well-rounded development approach. We are blessed with generous individual, family, and corporate donors as well as successful fundraising events. In addition, we regularly submit grant requests to local foundations. Here are a few of our recent successes.



### BEDS

Beds are the single most requested furniture item at My Brother's Keeper. We spend about \$250,000 annually purchasing mattresses, frames, cribs, blankets and materials to assemble box springs.

We recently received two grants to help purchase bedding in support of our Furniture Assistance Program: \$10,000 from the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation and \$5,000 from the Robert F. Stoico / FIRSTFED Charitable Foundation.

The goal of the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation is to remove and eliminate barriers that prevent youth from succeeding. They support programs throughout the country but have a special emphasis on the Boston area.

The Robert F. Stoico / FIRSTFED Charitable Foundation has given and pledged nearly twenty-five million dollars to the communities of southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island since 1998. In addition to their recent program support, the Stoico Foundation was a \$50,000 donor to our Dartmouth Building Project.



The Robert F. Stoico /  
FIRSTFED  
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Mark Wahlberg  
Youth Foundation



### NEW DELIVERY VAN

All our assistance programs have a very important service learning component. This requires us to have safe, reliable delivery vehicles that can carry multiple passengers.

We recently received grants from four different funding partners to replace an aging 2006 van with 110,000 miles. Together, the funders teamed up to purchase a low-mileage 2018 Ford Transit 350 XL van for My Brother's Keeper.

St. Thecla Parish kicked things off with an "Empty Bowl" fundraiser which raised \$8,900. The Greater Boston Food Bank approved a \$9,900 capacity-building grant and the Community Foundation of Southeast Massachusetts' Alleviate Hunger & Homelessness Fund donated \$8,700 for a total of \$27,500.

Bourne's Auto Center in Easton then generously discounted an available van by \$2,600 so My Brother's Keeper had no out-of-pocket cost.

An estimated 12,000 households with 38,000 children and adults will be served with food assistance over the life of the vehicle.

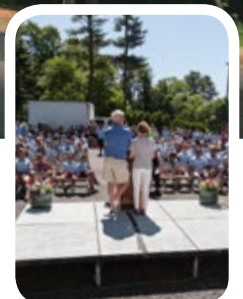
## UPDATE

### Easton Parking Lot

The new 29-space parking lot at our Easton facility is almost complete!

The drainage structures are installed and the accompanying retention basin has been built. The base course of asphalt was poured in late May and the site lights are operational. The final coat of asphalt is scheduled for installation this summer.

In the meantime, the lot is fully usable for volunteer parking and it was the perfect location for our Family Walk prayer service.





# Special Thanks to All Our 2019 Family Walk Sponsors

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