



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

Along The Way

November 2014

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."

A Mother's Plea for Christmas Help

Dear My Brother's Keeper,

I am writing to request help with my children's Christmas presents. It has been a rough year for us. Upon discovering that I have thyroid cancer, I haven't been able to work because of the many treatments and surgeries. It's been an ongoing nightmare!

I am a single mother of three and the struggle has been very hard. Nothing would make me happier than putting a small smile on my children's faces. We will be eternally grateful for anything you can do as the struggle for food, clothing and everything has been difficult.

My children have been very understanding of our situation but what child doesn't expect a little something on Christmas morning?

Anything you can do will be greatly appreciated from the bottom of my heart. God bless you all.

A thankful mother,

Gloria

This heartfelt letter from Gloria says it all about the importance of the My Brother's Keeper Christmas Program. Gloria is fighting for her life but the most important thing to her is her children's happiness: that they might have a little something to make them smile on Christmas morning.

So many parents in our local communities are struggling too. Their challenges may be different from Gloria's but their pain is the same: no greater heartache for a parent than to watch their precious child suffer and go without.

The great joy of My Brother's Keeper is that God gives us the privilege to say 'Yes!' to mothers like Gloria. Because of your generous support, we can lift them up from their pain and bring joy and happiness to their family.

"Love one another": isn't this the true spirit of Christmas? Isn't it what Jesus wants most from us to celebrate His birth?

My Brother's Keeper will serve 2,800+ families this Christmas throughout eastern Massachusetts—more than 11,000 children and parents!

Please help us remove stress from parents and put a smile on children's faces on Christmas morning by returning the enclosed cards for our Adopt-A-Family Gift Program and our Loaves & Fishes Food Program.

A special reminder...the Christmas effort starts in prayer each year with our Annual Gratitude Mass at My Brother's Keeper in Easton on the Friday night after Thanksgiving at 7:00pm.

My Brother's Keeper 24th Annual Gratitude Mass

Friday, November 28th 7:00 PM
My Brother's Keeper, Easton Facility



Please bring one unwrapped gift per family for children to bring to the altar.

Principal Celebrant: Rev. James M. Mahoney
Pastor, St. Bridget and Holy Ghost Collaborative, Abington and Whitman
Homilist: Deacon Kevin Martin
St. Mary of the Hills, Milton

Reception following Mass
Priests, please bring alb & stole to concelebrate

Congratulations to Todd & Kristin Levine of Raynham, winners of our "Cruise or Cash" Raffle.



Special thanks to all who participated and to our Anonymous Prize Donor.

No Coincidence

By Henry Boyer, Volunteer, New Bedford

On September 17, 2014, Josh Smith, Dave O'Connor, Cindy Arnold-Vajgrt and I went on a furniture delivery to a woman named Cheryl who lived in Fall River. We weren't planning on making deliveries that day but this was an emergency— she had lost everything in a fire.

When we arrived at the apartment, we introduced ourselves and Cheryl told us the when, where and how of her fire. After a little more conversation, we began carrying her furniture in. It was a 4th floor apartment... the most stairs on any delivery I'd been on!

When I came up with a load of pots and pans, I told her, "I know what you're going through, Cheryl. On December 16th, 2000, I lost everything in a fire too."



She asked about the location of my fire and when I told her, "381 4th Street in Fall River," she said, "Oh, my God! My brother was in that fire too!" I asked his name and Sandra said, "Anthony." Anthony had lived on the 3rd floor right above me.

I looked at Cheryl totally amazed and said, "If it wasn't for your brother, I would not be standing in your apartment right now. Your brother saved my life. He got me out of that fire. I've searched for 14 years to say thank you to him. Now I have my chance."

The more we talked, the more we realized how small life really is. It turns out Cheryl and I grew up in the same town, Somerset, and we went to the same high school.

There's an old Portuguese saying: "God writes straight with crooked lines." I have a much better understanding of what that means now. God's plan is so much bigger than our own and there are no coincidences. I was meant to be on that delivery on September 17th, 2014.

A Mother's Love: Made in the Image and Likeness of God

By Erich Miller, President



Joe Palladino (Stonehill) and Nick Bianchini (Oliver Ames / Easton) joined me on a couple of furniture deliveries in Brockton on a recent Friday afternoon. We drove through some pretty tough neighborhoods to get to our first stop, a modest but nice single-family home on a quiet street. The contrast between the neighborhoods was striking.

As we approached Thomasina's front door, we weren't too encouraged to see the lights off in the house and no car in the driveway. Sure enough, no one was home when we knocked so we moved onto to our second delivery. It was only about a mile away—3 beds for a mother, son and grandson named Tasha, Perry and Alex. It was a joy to meet their family because they clearly shared a great love for one another.

When that delivery was done, we took one more shot at reaching Thomasina. She was home! When we pulled up in front of the house a second time, there was a Lexus in the driveway. It would have been easy to make a judgment that she didn't really need our help but, as a matter of policy, My Brother's Keeper serves without prerequisites. Our work for the Lord is to serve— not to judge.

We knocked on the door and Thomasina opened it up...about 50 years old...a nice woman but quiet and subdued. She showed us around her home and told us about her family: 5 boys ranging from 14 years old to 25. We were delivering a crib and a dresser to the oldest son who recently had his first child and moved back in with his parents.

After we moved in the furniture, Nick did a wonderful job presenting Thomasina with the crucifix and BOOM!!!!... at the sight of Christ, this reserved mother broke down into tears, hugged Nick, and shared how difficult things really were.

Her oldest son had been on the path to success...a good student in college...before drugs and alcohol took over his life. He left school, was hanging out with the wrong crowd, had been in a number of car accidents and was clearly headed down the wrong path. In a fit of rage one night, he even destroyed all the family's furniture in their basement. His life was out of control and Thomasina knew she was powerless to stop him.

It broke Thomasina's heart to see her son make such poor decisions but it didn't change her love for him. Her love remained constant, unbroken, unconditional. It was profound to witness this love.

On the way back to My Brother's Keeper, Joe, Nick and I talked about a mother's love for her child...how it may be the clearest example of what it means to be made in the image and likeness of God. It certainly gives us good insight as to how we should love as ministry...what it really means to be our brother's and sister's keeper.

Our job is to Love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. That is not our business and, in fact, it is nobody's business. What we are asked to do is to Love, and this Love itself will render both ourselves and our neighbors worthy. — Thomas Merton

Be Your Brother's Keeper This Christmas!

Looking for ways to help this Christmas? Here are a number of things you can do for My Brother's Keeper:

- Help with building set up (early December) and breakdown (late December)
- Sponsor a family in need
- Wrap gifts with your family
- Help make deliveries
- Make a financial donation
- Make cookies or soup for our volunteers
- Help with kitchen clean-up (3-6pm) or building cleanup (8-10pm)
- If you work in a high-traffic business like a bank or a store, host a Christmas Gift Drive bin (see sign to the right)
- Buy high-need gifts off our Amazon Wish List which you can access from our website www.MyBrothersKeeper.org
- If you make other purchases on Amazon, start at AmazonSmile and name My Brother's Keeper as your charity of choice. Amazon donates .5% of your purchases. When we all do it, it really adds up!
- Encourage a gift collection by your church, school, office, gym or any other organization you belong to
- Donate \$50 supermarket gift cards to be given to families in need along with their Christmas gifts
- Pray for no snow in December!

Top 10 Gift Needs

1. Anything "Frozen"
2. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
3. Despicable Me / Minions
4. Winter Coats
5. Pots & Pans
6. Video Games
7. Ride-on Toys / Infant Toys
8. Axe or Old Spice Gift Sets
9. Art Supplies / Sketch Pads
10. Remote Control Cars



Any questions? Please call us at 508-238-7512 and we will be happy to help.

Sharing Our Story—2014 National Furniture Bank Conference

By Josh Smith, Director, Dartmouth facility and Ryan Thorley, Operations Manager, Easton facility



In September, we represented My Brother's Keeper at the 2014 Furniture Bank Conference in Tacoma, WA.

About 50 staff and volunteers from furniture banks across the US and Canada attended as well as representatives from furniture manufacturers and the North American Home Furnishing Association.

Two days of seminars covered topics as diverse as assembling furniture to partnering with furniture retailers to effectively using social media. We were also given time to network with the other attendees and tour the conference host's facility, Tacoma's NW Furniture Bank.

In addition to being participants, we had the honor of presenting on Volunteer Management best practices to our peers. After all, with over 3,000 amazing volunteers walking through the doors of My Brother's Keeper each year, our model of service is markedly different from most other furniture resources.

Our talk focused on the intentionality with which My Brother's Keeper seeks to build Christian community and our special focus on engaging student volunteers.

A participant from Missouri was particularly struck that our young volunteers are tremendous assets to My Brother's Keeper in the present and are poised

to become our ministry's leaders in the future. We shared a powerful student reflection and he told us afterwards, "It was like hearing God's voice telling me which direction our organization needs to go."

We learned so much which will strengthen the work of My Brother's Keeper but the opportunity to inspire God's helpers at other furniture resources, considered alone, made the cross-country trip worthwhile.

Did you know there's a national furniture bank association?

A furniture bank is commonly defined as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose work is to provide free furniture to families struggling with poverty and other severe life challenges. There are about 80 furniture banks in the US and Canada.

The Furniture Bank Association of North America was founded in 2001 to encourage furniture banks to share best practices, to facilitate national publicity of the furniture bank concept and to act as a clearinghouse to facilitate major furniture donations from hotels & motels, colleges & universities, furniture retailers and manufacturers.

Upcoming Events



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

November

Monday, November 24th

Hungry Men Event
at Black Rock Country Club,
Hingham

Friday, November 28th

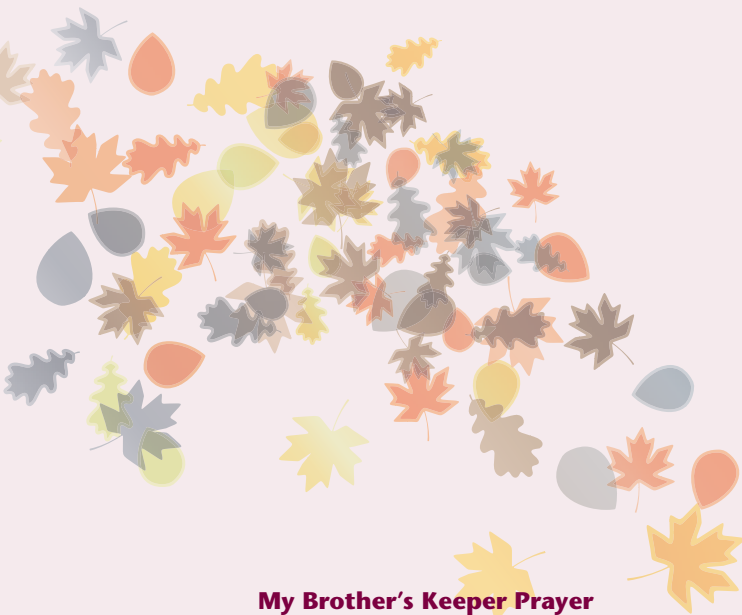
24th Annual Gratitude Mass
7:00 PM, Easton Facility

December

Friday, December 5th

Christmas Volunteering Starts

**Have a question about one of our events?
Please call Vin Shea at 508-238-7512.**



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.

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
774.305.4578 Fax

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