



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

Along The Way

September 2017

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 Celebration & Mass of Dedication

Sunday October 8th, 2017
1015 Reed Road, Dartmouth, MA

Principal Celebrant
Most Rev. Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.
Bishop of Fall River

Doors open at 2:30 pm
Mass begins at 3:30 pm
Light reception to follow.

If attending, please RSVP to www.MyBrothersKeeper.org/dedication to help with planning
Priests and deacons, please bring albs & stoles to concelebrate.

Please Join Us! All Are Welcome!

In the early days of My Brother's Keeper, founding board member Deacon John McDonough of Braintree assured us, "If you take up the mantle of God's work, He will always provide for your needs. But God will do more than just provide...He will send you the very best to serve our more humble brothers and sisters."

In keeping with Deacon John's prophetic words, we are delighted to announce the completion of our beautiful new facility in Dartmouth made possible through God's grace and the hard work and generosity of many.

Our new 23,000 SF facility will provide ample space for our growing volunteer community and help us meet the increasing need for our services in Fall River, New Bedford, and the South Coast.

Inside and out, the new Dartmouth building was designed by our friends at Wessling Architects to closely resemble our Easton facility. As volunteers go back and forth between buildings, both places will feel like home. Our goal is to promote a sense of oneness among the My Brother's Keeper community. Though we have two locations, we are one My Brother's Keeper family with

one mission, "To bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve."

As in Easton, the first thing which will welcome visitors to the Dartmouth building is the Divine Servant statue, a life-size bronze sculpture depicting Jesus washing Peter's feet at The Last Supper. It embodies Jesus' message of sacrificial love and humility and its prominent location will be a constant reminder of Christ's example that "To Lead is to Serve."



Dartmouth's **Divine Servant** Statue

Please join us on Sunday October 8th for a celebration and Mass of Dedication. Bishop Edgar da Cunha from the Diocese of Fall River will graciously serve as the principal celebrant.

All are welcome. Please join us and feel free to bring guests.



SPECIAL RAFFLE INSERT **Cruise or Cash!**

7-Day Boston-to-Bermuda Cruise, or \$3,000 Cash

It's your choice! Prize Donated in Full. 100% of Proceeds Benefit My Brother's Keeper



Sasha Lopez joined our full-time staff in July after completing a year of volunteer service at My Brother's Keeper through Stonehill Service Corps (SSC). She splits her time between our Easton and Dartmouth locations as a Direct Service Associate delivering furniture and food to families in need, supervising volunteers, and performing furniture pickups.

Sasha graduated with degrees in Psychology and Sociology from King's College in Pennsylvania, a sister school of Stonehill College and Notre Dame.

"We are the Hearts and Hands of Christ"

by Sasha Lopez, Direct Service Associate



On a rainy Tuesday afternoon, I was taught about the presence of hope and faith in an elderly woman's life.

I drove up to a house in Brockton and let the volunteers know that Maria lives alone on the 3rd floor. A dedicated volunteer named Vincent was "riding shotgun" and he eagerly offered to carry the heavy box of food up to Maria. As a parent of young children, he exclaimed, "These food deliveries are my only exercise for the week!" Vincent and his family are from France and members of a French Catholic community in Boston. He caught on very quickly that service at My Brother's Keeper is filled with joy and humor.

Laughing at his remarks and splitting up bags of food between all of us, we entered Maria's house and began walking up the tight back staircase. When we got inside, I said hello and introduced myself and the volunteers. We took turns shaking her hand and she apologized because she spoke little English. This is not uncommon. Our policy of 'no prerequisites for service' brings us into thousands of homes every year, each with their own story and circumstance.

We set the food on the table and Maria smiled brightly at us. We all smiled back and she graced us with hugs as a goodbye.

Before we left, though, Maria pulled a picture of Jesus from her kitchen drawer and pointed

at Him. Then, much to our surprise, she pointed at each of us and said, "This is you."

Though Maria's use of the English language was simple, her message was profound: we are the heart and hands of Christ to her.

When we meet people for the first time, there are words and phrases we easily fall back on to break the ice... questions like "how are you today?"

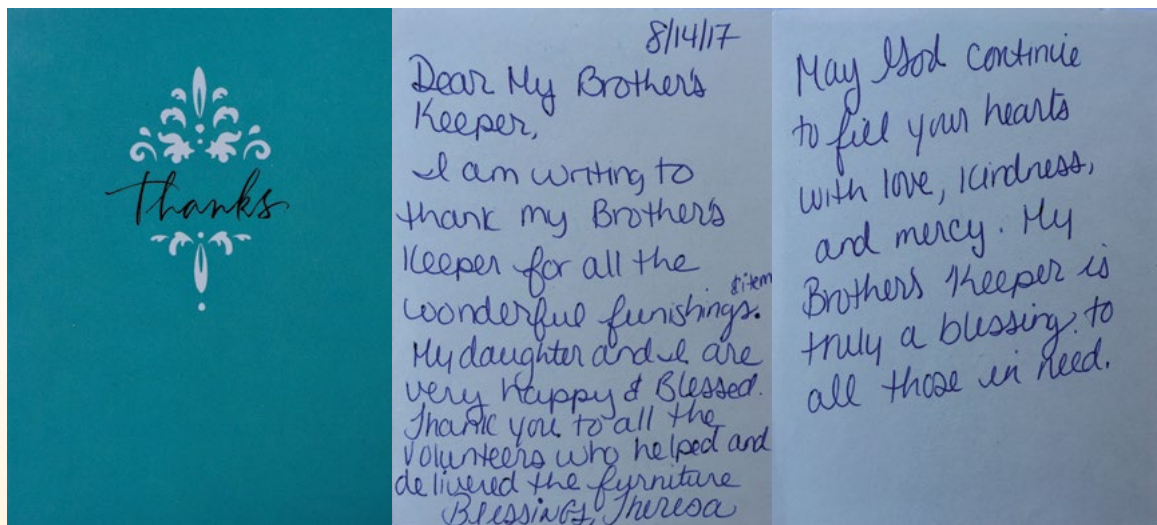
When the other person speaks another language, though, these words are of little help. Over the past year at My Brother's Keeper, I've learned a few things about the importance of body language:

- To make a personal connection, look a person in the eye and shake their hand while you say hello
- When you smile at someone and they smile back, that small interaction takes you from strangers to friends
- When you ask someone where to place the food and they pull you further into their home, further into their personal life, it is a gift and a privilege
- When you go to shake a person's hand goodbye and you are graced with a hug instead, you know our mission "To bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve" has been accomplished and I am a better person for it.

A Heartfelt Thank You

We are grateful to Theresa in Dorchester for her heartfelt affirmation that My Brother's Keeper is a blessing to all those we serve.

We thank **YOU** for making deliveries like this possible!



A Love Ministry by Maureen Strong



I recently returned a phone call from a woman named Margaret who left a message about a furniture delivery she was expecting. By the time I could call her back, the truck and our delivery crew had already come and gone. Margaret

let me know she was thrilled to get my call, though, because it gave her the chance to share her excitement and express her gratitude.

She couldn't say enough nice things about My Brother's Keeper and our work: "God has turned my apartment into a home! I am so blessed. It was hard to be the receiver, but God has showed me He loves me and cares for me."

She went on to say, "Everything My Brother's Keeper gave me is all so beautiful—down to the sheets, comforter, tablecloth, even the dishes and pots and pans. This is a "Love Ministry," you can tell. I am so grateful. You can feel and see the love in my home!"

To say Margaret was thrilled is putting it mildly. It was a pleasure to talk with her and be able to let her know that there were so many people involved in her delivery—staff, people donating furniture and household goods, volunteers who do so much—help with pickups, prepare and package household goods, and deliver the items to her home. My Brother's Keeper is truly a Christian community in action.

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Maureen Strong began volunteering at My Brother's Keeper in 2009 and joined our staff in 2014 as a Program Associate. She provides invaluable support to our Furniture, Food, and Christmas Assistance Programs and to our volunteers.

Maureen has a degree in Accounting from Boston College and works as a tax preparer in the spring. She is also working toward a Masters in Holistic Leadership at Salve Regina University.

NEW PROGRAM Cards for a Cause



Does your company send out holiday cards to your customers and associates? Would you like to support the good work of My Brother's Keeper at the same time? If you answered yes to these questions, please consider ordering your cards through My Brother's Keeper and our new Cards for a Cause program. Here's what you need to know:

- Multiple formats are available: cards, electronic distribution, or both
- Features artwork from actual thank you's sent by children served by My Brother's Keeper
- Includes your corporate logo, a custom message, and this acknowledgement to your customers: "A donation has been made in your honor to My Brother's Keeper in support of their annual Christmas Assistance Program which provides gifts and food to 12,000 children and parents who would otherwise go without."

Our Cards for a Cause program is a **Win-Win-Win.**

- It demonstrates your company's concern for the community and those less fortunate
- Raises awareness about My Brother's Keeper. The more people who know about our work, the better!
- Provides much-needed support for our Christmas Program which serves 3,000+ families annually

For more information, please visit www.MyBrothersKeeper.org or contact Heather Byrnes at hbyrnes@mybrotherskeeper.org

Christmas Comes Early at My Brother's Keeper



Volunteer Joanne Delaney from Easton answering Christmas Assistance calls.

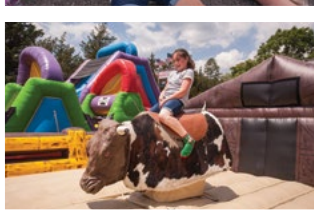
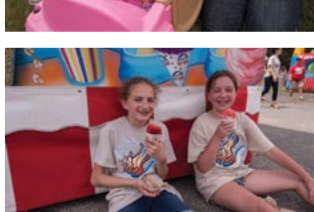
You may be surprised to walk into stores in September and already see Halloween and Thanksgiving decorations on the shelves. We're way ahead of them at My Brother's Keeper. We're already thinking about Christmas!

This year we began accepting calls for Christmas help in late August and we've already accepted requests from 500 families.

Why do we start taking calls so early? First, in keeping with our mission, we're

committed to making the enrollment process a very personal experience. Processing 3,000 calls is a long, time-intensive endeavor which helps us do the best job possible serving families in December.

Second, once parents submit their request to My Brother's Keeper, their stress about the holidays totally disappears. Moms always tell us it's a tremendous relief—one less thing to worry about—so the earlier, the better!



Summer...

Our (2nd) Busiest Time of the Year!

Years ago, summers at My Brother's Keeper were quiet as volunteers went to the Cape and spent extra time with family. How things have changed!!!

Today, summer is without a doubt one of our busiest times of the year, second only to Christmas. Here's a little of what happened at My Brother's Keeper during the summer of 2017:

- We completed 1,450 deliveries serving 6,000 children and parents in Christ's name.
- We made great progress on our Dartmouth Building Project and took delivery of the Divine Servant statue which will grace the front of the new building.
- We hosted two major fundraising events— our 8th Annual Family Walk, our 11th Annual Golf Tourney. Together, they brought 1,000 supporters together to celebrate the work of My Brother's Keeper and raised more than \$300,000.
- We raised awareness of our work on the South Coast by hosting a Business After Hours meeting of the South Coast Chamber of Commerce and appearing on "CU Wednesdays" radio program hosted by Fall River Municipal Credit Union.
- We included 175 student volunteers from 50 schools in our work along with 3 college summer interns from Providence College, Stonehill, and Notre Dame, a high school intern from Bishop Stang, and a seminarian from the Congregation of Holy Cross. Together, these students volunteered more than 2,200 hours.
- We completed 500 residential furniture donation pickups plus we picked up 250 twin mattresses and 400 dressers from local colleges and 100 refrigerators from hi-rise remodeling projects in Gardner and Boston.
- We hosted more than 20 group volunteer experiences in partnership with area schools, churches, and businesses including the Mandela Fellows from Africa (see story on fold).

My Brother's Keeper Goes Global with the Mandela Fellows



In early July, My Brother's Keeper had the great pleasure of hosting 25 of Africa's brightest emerging public administrators for a day of service.

They came to us through partnership with Bridgewater State University and a program called the Mandela Fellowship for Young African leaders run by the US State Department.

These special visitors were chosen for a six-week academic and leadership program in the United States because of their proven record of accomplishment in promoting innovation and positive change in their organizations, institutions, or communities in Africa.

"As a grassroots charity in Massachusetts, it is a privilege to welcome talented leaders from halfway across the world and show them what God has accomplished through our dedicated community of volunteers," said Jim Orcutt, co-founder of My Brother's Keeper. "Our guests could clearly see that with God, all things are truly possible. We hope their time at My Brother's Keeper will in some way positively impact the contributions they make to their own communities in Africa."

In our experience, international visitors often come to the United States with the incorrect assumption that our streets are "paved with gold" and there are no families in need. It was quite eye-opening for them to enter into the homes of those we serve and see that families in America encounter similar struggles with the essentials of life too.



One Mandela fellow, Tshepo Mahlare from South Africa, shared these thoughts after his visit to My Brother's Keeper: "Our life experiences may be absolutely different in many ways but our paths have been equally similar. I have never in my entire life imagined that people so similar to me resided so many thousands of miles away. Each character, belief and passion you have seemed so like everything I am. It is astounding how we as human beings connect. I guess this is exactly that which makes us all relatives."



"Today you have brought me a second miracle"

by Ryan Thorley

On August 4th we were joined by students from the senior class at Xaverian Brothers High School

as part of their Xaverian Leadership Institute retreat. A total of 20 students were divided between our Easton and Dartmouth facilities. I was fortunate to lead six of these students on a very special delivery to Carol.

Carol lived in Abington with her three year old daughter, Faith. Carol thanked us repeatedly before we even brought a single item through the door. It was clear how grateful she was that people cared enough to help.

Carol explained that she had a debilitating back injury that prevented her from working. Her daughter, Faith, was born two months premature but thankfully had no permanent health issues. She showed us her small, second-floor apartment,

with only a mattress and a chair loaned from a neighbor.

We quickly got to work filling her apartment with some beautiful furniture. We brought in beds and dressers and a small kitchen set. Although she was shy at first, Faith couldn't hide her excitement for the overstuffed recliner chair! It rocked in addition to reclining which made it even more fun.

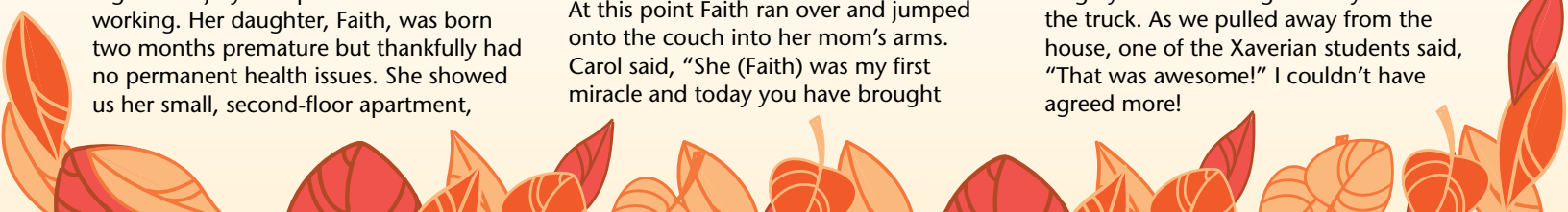
The sofa we brought in was a cream color and matched the carpet perfectly. Carol "tested" the couch and said how much she appreciated the firm cushions. She had back surgery a month ago and had to stay in the hospital for 4 days. "The most difficult part was being separated from Faith. We've never been apart for that long before."

At this point Faith ran over and jumped onto the couch into her mom's arms. Carol said, "She (Faith) was my first miracle and today you have brought

me a second miracle. I can't tell you how thankful I am."

It was the perfect time to present the crucifix to Carol with our message "We're just the delivery people; this is the man who sent the furniture for you." Carol fought back tears as she held it in front of Faith and said, "Do you know who this is?" Faith whispered, "God." Carol then asked her, "And where does God live?" Faith pointed with one finger at the ceiling and whispered, "Heaven." It was a priceless moment we were privileged to witness.

We exchanged hugs with Carol and wished her a successful recovery from surgery before making our way back to the truck. As we pulled away from the house, one of the Xaverian students said, "That was awesome!" I couldn't have agreed more!





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Thank you to our 2017 sponsors who helped make these events the most successful yet!

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