



**MY BROTHER'S KEEPER**  
A Christian ministry of loving service and education

**Our Mission:**  
*"To bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve."*

# Along the Way

*We deliver furniture, food, and Christmas assistance free of charge to local families in need with no prerequisites for service.*

OCTOBER 2020



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

## What are we going to do for Christmas? *By Erich Miller, President*

**"Kids have lost so much to COVID-19... school, summer, friendships. We draw the line at Christmas. We're not letting kids lose Christmas!"**

– Anonymous Supporter



COVID-19 has many people asking us, "What is My Brother's Keeper going to do for Christmas?"

In December, our buildings are normally filled with volunteers wrapping gifts elbow-to-elbow. For the safety of our community, we recognize this year can't be like past years.

One thing we will not change, though, is our goal. In the face of the pandemic, our mission calls us to be innovative and do things differently yet still serve families in need with excellence in Christ's name.

Since 2015, My Brother's Keeper has served more than 3,000 families each December. That remains our goal again this year because the need is so great.

One anonymous supporter captured the spirit we'll bring to this year's Christmas effort: **"Kids have lost so much to COVID-19... school, summer, friendships. We draw the line at Christmas. We're not letting kids lose Christmas!"**

So how are we going to do it? Our primary strategy is to **START EARLY.**

Historically, we execute our Christmas Program from late November to December but public health experts continue to predict a "second wave" of COVID-19, a cold-weather surge of coronavirus cases as fall transitions into winter.

To manage this risk, we're pushing the entire schedule forward.

- We started taking calls for Christmas assistance on August 31st. We've already accepted 1,000 requests from parents who are overjoyed and relieved.
- To help with inventory, we're working on a new partnership with Walmart to purchase gifts in bulk.
- **We are strongly encouraging families, businesses, schools, and other organizations to participate in our Adopt-a-Family Program. Sponsor families are available now as opposed to mid-November. See the Adopt-a-Family card in this newsletter. We need your help with this!**
- We will start making no contact deliveries in October and November as soon as Adopt-a-Families are returned. Parents have overwhelmingly told us they have no problem accepting deliveries early and can hold the gifts until December.

Our biggest area of concern is having large numbers of volunteers in our buildings. Unfortunately, we know we will have to drastically cut back—and probably even eliminate—having volunteers come to our facilities to select and wrap gifts this Christmas.

Ultimately, this will be dictated by the course of COVID-19 in November and December. We will need to respect the requirements of our public health officials in terms of crowd size limitations, social distancing, and contact tracing.

For families that are served by My Brother's Keeper in 'Santa's Workshop,' we are strongly considering not wrapping gifts this year.

Instead, we would select personalized gifts and place the unwrapped gifts in labeled bags— 1 bag per family member— and include rolls of wrapping paper, tape, and 'Happy Birthday Jesus' labels in the parents' bag.

Our strategy during the pandemic has been to limit the number of volunteers in our buildings to reduce the risk of COVID-19. It's been overwhelmingly successful.

Since March 16th, we have not had any confirmed COVID-19 cases at My Brother's Keeper and we have not closed either facility. By remaining open, we've been able to make more than 10,000 food deliveries serving 34,000 children and parents with healthy, nutritious groceries valued at \$2 million.

As disappointing as it may be for our devoted Christmas volunteers, we will likely need to maintain this same discipline to keep our facilities operational and most importantly, to keep you safe — our beloved community.

Please keep us in your prayers we as continue our planning.

Yours in Christ,

*Erich*

Erich Miller, President  
My Brother's Keeper

# Welcome Aboard !

## New Faces at My Brother's Keeper

The pandemic hasn't stopped My Brother's Keeper from changing and growing. We are delighted to welcome several new staff and board members. Their time, talent, and hard work will most certainly strengthen our work and mission.



**PAUL KEY**  
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Paul Key has been hired as our Chief Development Officer. He will work to expand our donor base and serve as the lead strategist of our multi-year development plan.

Paul has an exceptionally strong background in corporate relations. He previously worked as the Director of Corporate & Community Engagement at Massasoit Community College and also worked as the Workforce Development Director at Father Bill's & Mainspring.

In October, Paul will be ordained a permanent deacon in the Archdiocese of Boston. He and his wife Cheryl live in Plymouth and have two adult children.



**CELIA DOLAN**  
DIRECT SERVICE ASSOCIATE

Celia Dolan has been hired as a Direct Service Associate in Easton. She will supervise volunteers and perform pickups and deliveries in the community.

Celia grew up in Stoughton, MA. She attended Cardinal Spellman High School and graduated from Stonehill College with a degree in Environmental Studies. She was very involved in Campus Ministry at both schools.

Celia previously worked as the Assistant Manager of The Farm at Stonehill College, an initiative which makes fresh produce available to local families in need and engages students and faculty in food justice issues.



**FAITH KREFFT**  
DIRECT SERVICE ASSOCIATE

Faith Krefft has been hired as a Direct Service Associate in Dartmouth. She will supervise volunteers and perform pickups and deliveries in the community.

Faith previously worked as the Assistant Director of Service and Immersion at Iona College in New York overseeing international and domestic student service trips.

Faith grew up in Plymouth, MA and volunteered regularly with My Brother's Keeper while she attended Providence College. She has a degree in Public & Community Service from PC and a Masters in Higher Education from Merrimack College.



**NICHOLAS BARISHIAN**  
EASTON DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Nicholas Barishian is the newest member of our Easton Development Board.

He works as Vice President of Enterprise Risk Management for Boston Mutual Life Insurance Company in Canton. He has volunteered at My Brother's Keeper over the last 3 years and attended our Family Walk and Hungry Men events.

4-H, America's largest youth development organization, has been a formative part of Nicholas' life. He was a nine-year 4-H member in the Bristol County 4-H Horse and Leadership programs and has served on the 4-H Foundation for 17 years.

Nicholas lives in Rehoboth, MA with his wife, Kristin. They have a small collection of furry friends and they enjoy their company and caring for them.



**KIMBERLEY COON**  
SOUTH COAST DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Kimberley Coon recently joined our South Coast Development Board.

She works as the Executive Director of Hospital and Medical Staff Services for Southcoast Health where she has worked for 28 years. Kimberley also served as the President of the MA Association of Medical Staff Services.

Kimberley and her husband David live in Somerset, MA and they both have deep ties to Fall River and the South Coast region.

Kimberley was inspired to get involved at My Brother's Keeper after hearing a community engagement talk given by a member of our staff. Kimberley has participated in the South Coast Development Board's fundraising events over the past year and is looking forward to joining the team.



**JANICE FOLEY**  
SOUTH COAST DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Janice Foley is a new member of our South Coast Development Board.

She is the principal owner of Jani Communications, a consultancy specializing in communications strategy, public relations, and marketing communications.

Janice is also the former Director of Advancement at Bishop Stang High School, which both of her adult daughters attended.

Janice volunteers at several local organizations, including Mobile Ministries of New Bedford, and by teaching yoga classes.

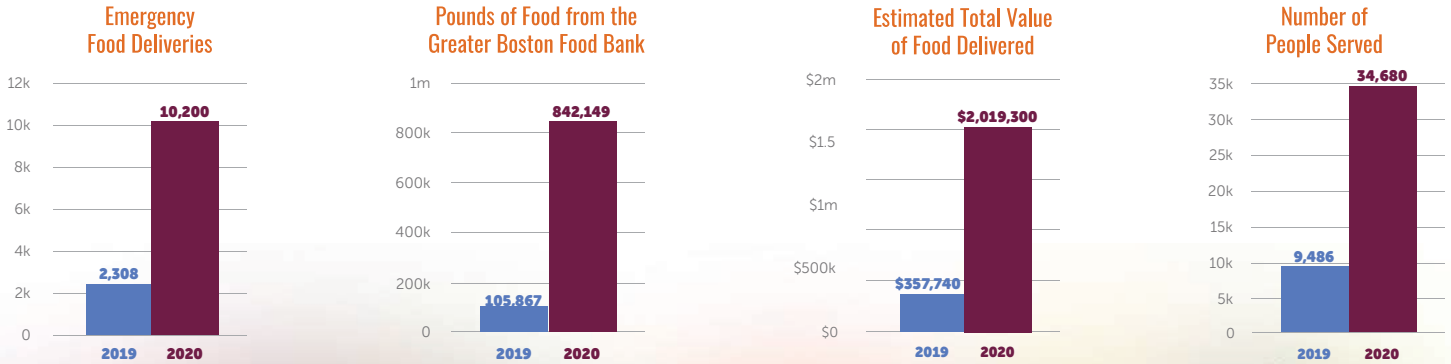
She and her husband Bill live in Mattapoisett. The entire family has volunteered regularly on furniture deliveries since My Brother's Keeper's Dartmouth facility opened.

## COVID-19 Response Milestone:

# 10,000 Food Deliveries Completed

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, My Brother's Keeper suspended our Furniture Assistance Program and focused all our efforts on our Food Assistance Program. In the past six months, we've completed more than 10,000 food deliveries serving 34,000 children and adults with groceries valued at \$2 million. By comparison, My Brother's Keeper typically makes 4,200 food deliveries per year.

All chart data relates to food deliveries completed from March 16 – September 15 in 2020 vs. 2019.



## All This is For Me? *By Josh Smith, Director, Dartmouth Facility*



When Massachusetts locked down in March, our Dartmouth facility had never actually made a food delivery on the South Coast. Six months later, our community is incredibly proud to have delivered healthy, nutritious groceries to the doorsteps of 3,500 area families.

Answering the prayers of our brothers and sisters is always a privilege and has proven especially important in this time of acute need. Many of those who request our help are out of work, providing more meals with children home from school, reliant on public transportation, or unable to leave home given health issues and an elevated risk of COVID-19 being fatal.

When I think of our food program's impact, one recipient comes to mind in particular: Edwin from New Bedford. On my first visit, I had a hard time finding the back entrance with shrubs growing up around the house. Ducking below a branch, I tested a rotting board with my foot before starting up the outdoor ramp. "I'm back here!" a voice called out.

Edwin is middle-aged and in a wheelchair after a lifelong struggle with diabetes. He lives alone but is seen by a visiting nurse. Edwin wasn't getting out of the house much in the early days of the pandemic but to say his spirits were good was an understatement.

"All this is for me?" he exclaimed, looking at the box and four bags of food we stacked on his patio table. "I can't believe all this!" We visited for a while in the backyard that day and with our encouragement, Edwin promised to call again when he was running low on food.

While Edwin wasn't always on my route, I saw that he did indeed call every couple of weeks like clockwork. One visit, we gave Edwin a crucifix since he had never received furniture assistance and the reminder of who really sent the help to him. On another, he was over the moon upon seeing that we included two packages of ground beef in the meat bag that week.

There were two constants in each of our visits: his positive attitude and an update on his wheelchair ramp. Ever so slowly, Edwin was fixing it up and repainting it. He finished by the end of the summer and it was truly hard to recognize it from my first visit. "What do you think?" he cried out as soon as we came into sight. You could tell he'd been looking forward to sharing his accomplishment with us.

Typically, when someone calls for help with furniture or Christmas, we don't get to see them again for a long time. So for me, the opportunity to see and serve Edwin with regularity was a ray of sunshine in a time that challenged so many of us. And next time I'm back, I'll be sure to double-check our freezer for that extra package of beef.



## Events Update

Over the years, special events have purposely been a big part of the My Brother's Keeper annual calendar. Events are fundraisers but equally important to us, they are "friend-raisers." ... wonderful opportunities for new people to get involved and for long-time friends to reconnect.

Sadly, events like this year's Family Walk have been a casualty of COVID-19. Here is an update on our event schedule for the rest of the year — what we are and aren't able to do.

Special thanks to our Development Boards and event committees for their creativity, determination, and tireless work to reimagine these events. We are deeply grateful to our generous sponsors and donors who have continued to support our mission so that we can serve more families in these unprecedented times.



The 3rd Annual South Coast Soiree was originally scheduled for Saturday, October 3rd. We will not be having an in-person event but we sent out a mailing encouraging past attendees to support our Food Assistance Program in Dartmouth. Our message: "We typically feed you at the South Coast Soiree. This year we need your help feeding others."



The 10th Annual Hungry Men Dinner was scheduled for Monday, November 23rd. We will not be having an in-person event but we will send out a mailing encouraging past attendees to support our Christmas Assistance Program. An anonymous donor has very generously issued a \$100,000 challenge grant to the Hungry Men attendees!



The 14th Annual My Brother's Keeper Golf Outing on September 21st was the one in-person event we were able to hold this year. The tourney has always been headed up by Bill Lane Sr. from Superior Plumbing and attended by supporters in the construction industry. COVID required significant changes to the day. To avoid gatherings, we switched from a shotgun start to split tee times and served a BBQ lunch outdoors on the course instead of a buffet dinner inside. The results were the same despite the changes: the day was sold out with 130 golfers and it raised more than \$100,000.

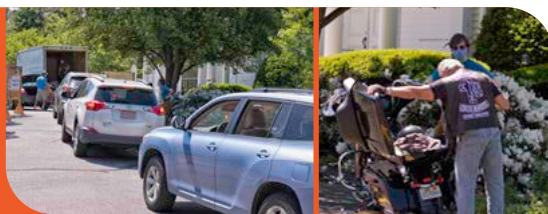


The 30th Annual Gratitude Mass will most certainly be a virtual Mass. In keeping with tradition, the Mass will be broadcast the Friday night after Thanksgiving on November 27th. The video platform we will use is still to be determined. Based on the state's Gathering Size Limits, we expect only the primary Mass celebrants, some My Brother's Keeper staff, and the video team to be present at our facility.

## INFORMATION & INSPIRATION

We realize how much our volunteers miss their connection to the work, mission, and community of My Brother's Keeper. We are working on a virtual event to be held sometime in October which will offer "Information & Inspiration." We envision it as a free event streamed online and open to all as opposed to a fundraiser. More details will be shared on our website and Facebook page.

## "Pop Your Trunk" Food Drives



COVID-19 has called for innovation and creativity. One of the things we've done successfully is "Pop Your Trunk" Food Drives at our Dartmouth facility and at Holy Cross and Immaculate Conception Parishes in Easton.

The no-contact drives met an important need for food donations and also gave the community a tangible way to participate in our COVID-19 response.

To help encourage a strong turnout, corporate partner MassDrive generously offered to donate \$5 for every non-perishable item donated to our Dartmouth food drive, up to \$5,000.

During Christmas, we think "Pop Your Trunk" Toy Drives have great potential. If your church, school, or business would like to coordinate a no-contact toy drive, please contact Ryan Thorley at [rthorley@mybrotherskeeper.org](mailto:rthorley@mybrotherskeeper.org) or 508-238-7512.

### SPECIAL RAFFLE INSERT



# The Widow's Mite

by Trevor Wakefield, Theology Major, Providence College

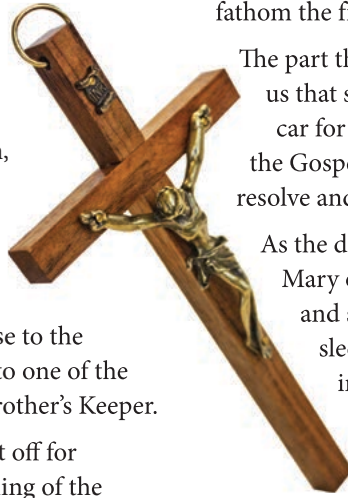
I am always struck by the Gospel parable of the poor woman who donates her two coins. In Luke chapter 21, Jesus witnesses a woman giving alms at the temple. While watching others give large amounts of money, Jesus declares that this woman, who has given of her whole livelihood, has done something truly special.

What quality makes her so special? It is the fact that she sacrifices and gives to the point where it hurts. In this sacrifice, she finds herself very close to the Kingdom of God. I offer this passage as a preface to one of the most humbling experiences I've ever had at My Brother's Keeper.

In early July, staff member Jimmy Doulos and I set off for Rockland. We were both excited. Since the beginning of the pandemic, furniture deliveries were put on hold so we could focus our resources on food deliveries. This was going to be one of our first furniture deliveries since March.

We were helping a woman named Mary and her teen-age daughter. Shockingly, they had been homeless and living in a car for four months during the height of the coronavirus pandemic.

I know many people who have really struggled with simply staying inside during these trying times. I couldn't begin to



fathom the frustration and pain of trying to survive in a car.

The part that most humbled me, however, was when Mary told us that she and her daughter had taken a young boy into her car for a time. I could not help but think of the widow in the Gospel that gave of her whole livelihood. I saw in Mary a resolve and a strength I'm not sure I could match.

As the delivery came to a close, I had the privilege of handing Mary our most important gift, the crucifix. She held it up and stared at it, most likely in shock, with the reality of sleeping in her new home so much on her mind. Yet in that shock, there is the cross and the image of our Lord in her mind. And as we walked away, I noticed her admiring her new furniture, almost in a daze, but still clinging tightly to the cross.

As volunteers at My Brother's Keeper, we may be the ones offering our service in Christ's name, but more often than not, I find that those we serve are the ones pointing me to the Kingdom of God.

## Bloom Where You Are Planted

By Beth Collins, Manager, Food Assistance Program



I lived my Cursillo during a challenging time in my life and I was gifted a beautiful little window cling with stained glass that reads "Bloom Where You Are Planted".

When I was out on food deliveries the other day, that phrase kept crossing my mind. We were making record time on

our 15 stops thanks to our seasoned veteran-volunteers Holden Petersen and Amanda Gately, but we also made it a point to chat with recipients (from a safe distance) and to "stop and smell the roses" along the way.

I've always admired the beautiful home gardens in Brockton. Amanda mentioned a home they delivered to recently — an older couple that grows grapes every year. It is always one of my favorite stops because I enjoy the sight of the trellis and the vines.

I paused on our route to show Holden some beautiful white flowers growing near the fence at one of our stops. I could smell the delicious Cape Verdean food cooking inside.



Trevor Wakefield from Hanover, MA served 8 weeks this summer at My Brother's Keeper – Easton as part of Providence College's Veritas Distinguished Internship Program. The goal of the Veritas Program is to keep students engaged with their fields of study during the summer and give them wonderful learning experiences outside the classroom.

We chatted with Maria at one stop and admired all the plants on her front porch. She smiled up at us, barefoot, tending to her vegetable patch. She showed us a bit of hope. Despite so many plants that were scorched from the summer's lack of rain, she lifted some big green leaves up to reveal her latest plant almost ready to harvest — a beautiful butternut squash!

At our last stop, the woman we delivered to wore a flowered dress and she waved and blew us kisses behind the door. She made our day!

The folks who call us for food assistance are indeed blooming where they are planted. Sometimes the soil is rough or the rain is sparse. But they bloom all the same. They care enough about themselves and their families to humble themselves and reach out for help.

Anyone who has been on food deliveries knows that those we serve are making their own sunshine— evidenced by the beautiful, grateful smiles we see at every stop.

# Our Facilities



**EASTON**



**DARTMOUTH**

## 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.*



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**Theresa Orcutt** | Secretary, Co-Founder, My Brother's Keeper

**James Philbin, CPA** | Treasurer, Partner, Marcum LLP

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### Easton Facility

PO Box 338  
Easton, MA 02356

**508.238.4416** Furniture & Food Assistance

**508.238.7512** Donations & Business

**508.238.3613** Fax

### Dartmouth Facility

PO Box 70273  
N. Dartmouth, MA 02747

**774.305.4590** Furniture Assistance

**774.305.4577** Donations & Business

**774.305.4578** Fax