



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.



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

FEBRUARY 2021

2020 in Review:

Always Focused on What We Can Do, Not What We Can't

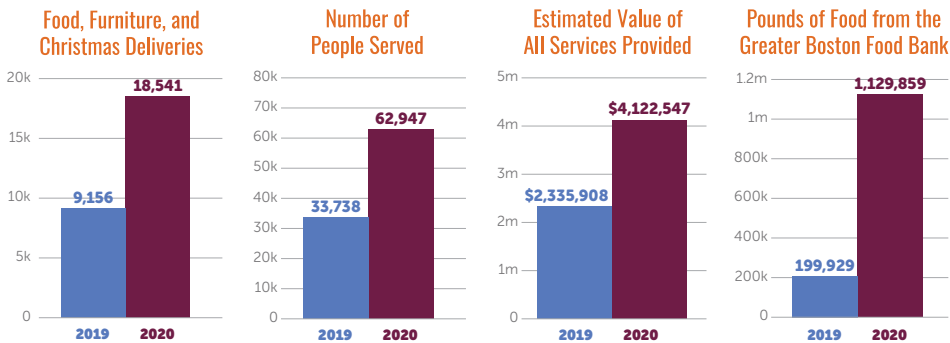
2020 was a year none of us will ever forget as much as we might like to.

One thing about 2020 we can all feel good about, though, is the way My Brother's Keeper responded as a community in the face of tremendous need. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, My Brother's Keeper has always focused on what we can do to help our brothers and sisters in need, not on what we can't do.

Starting in March 2020, amidst all the uncertainty of a new contagious illness, we made some difficult but necessary decisions which re-imagined our model of service. These decisions were rooted in prayer and a desire to best live out our mission "To bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve."

- We shifted our primary focus from furniture assistance which is labor intensive to emergency food deliveries, including launching a brand new Food Assistance Program at our Dartmouth facility. Feeding our neighbors in need is how we could do the most good during COVID-19.
- To protect the health of our community, we significantly reduced volunteer numbers by 90%.
- We moved exclusively to no-contact deliveries to safeguard the health of those we serve, our staff, and our reduced volunteer corps.
- During the summer and fall when infection rates were lower, we adjusted accordingly and resumed our Furniture Assistance Program.
- In December, we successfully carried out a Christmas Program which served 3,150 families by emphasizing our Adopt-a-Family Program and opting not to wrap gifts this year. (see page 2)

Collectively, these decisions helped us accomplish some truly incredible things in 2020:



In 2020, total deliveries increased 102%, children and adults served increased 87%, the estimated value of services increased 76%, and pounds of food from the Greater Boston Food Bank increased 465%!

So instead of backing off in the face of today's crisis, My Brother's Keeper grew its impact tremendously. **Most importantly, all this good work was done in Christ's name.**

As a 100% privately-funded charity, we know these increases would not be possible without you, our generous community. Everyone helps in their own way whether it's volunteer service, financial donations, prayers, or sharing the good news of our work in conversation or on social media. Thank you.

This pandemic is far from over and its effects will be long-lasting for those we serve. We pray that we can count on your continued generous support in 2021 and beyond.



Joanne Maxwell-Barbarito and Catherine Devitt



The Sypek Family

Words of Gratitude

"I cannot believe how unbelievably friendly and supportive your Food Assistance Program is. As a single mother who was working a full time job before the pandemic and is now out of work because of childcare and everything else, I just feel very blessed to have stumbled across this. You all and God are good."

"I am very grateful for My Brother's Keeper. Your name reflects what you do for the community. I love how you call to check up on me and ask if you can assist with delivering groceries. It's brilliant, since a lot of people like me don't have cars. My Brother's Keeper is absolutely awesome!!! You guys are exactly what the love of Christ is about."

2020 Christmas Program: **New Approach, Same Incredible Results!**



The My Brother's Keeper Christmas Program typically serves 3,000 families per year and involves thousands of volunteers at our Easton and Dartmouth facilities – more than 300 volunteers per weekday and 500 volunteers per day on the weekend.

We knew this year's Christmas Program would be more important than ever to the families we serve but social-distancing would require us to approach things differently. Somehow, we'd have to produce the same results with only a fraction of our normal volunteers.

As a ministry, we took Matthew 19:26 to heart – “with God all things are possible” – and we held our first formal

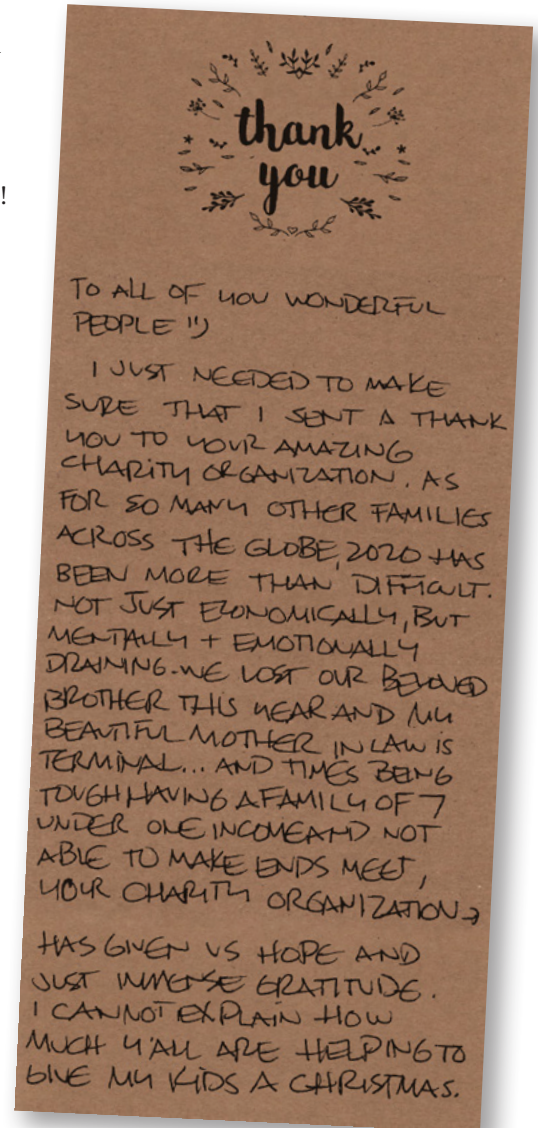
Christmas planning meeting on a hot summer day in July.

Thanks to YOUR GENEROSITY coupled with some good planning, My Brother's Keeper served 3,150 families this past Christmas – 13,374 children and adults – living in 95 different communities throughout eastern Massachusetts. It was a true Christmas miracle!

Here's a recap:

- We started everything earlier. We accepted our first Christmas calls in August, began purchasing high-need gifts in September, and opened our Adopt-a-Family Program in October. Holding a virtual Gratitude Mass allowed us to set up a modified Santa's Workshop in early November. We made 450 Christmas deliveries before Thanksgiving!
- Local churches like St. Agatha's in Milton who host Giving Trees are typically our #1 donors of clothes and toys. Because in-person attendance at all churches has been affected by COVID, we had to rely more heavily on other sources for gifts this year. In mid-November, we hosted a “Pop-Your-Trunk” toy drive at our facilities which generated 14 pallets of gifts. Southcoast Health, Coop's Troop Foundation, Easton Police Department, and Toys for Tots were a big help. In addition, many supporters generously shipped high need items directly to us using our Amazon Wish-List.
- To reduce work inside our facilities, we gave out unwrapped gifts to families sponsored by My Brother's Keeper. These families received rolls of wrapping paper, tape, and “Happy Birthday Jesus” labels. About 30 volunteers per day spread out over an eight hour period helped select gifts. This represents just 5-10% of our traditional Christmas volunteer numbers.
- The tremendous response to our Adopt-a-Family Program was a HUGE part of our success story. 1,900 families were sponsored this year vs. 691 families in 2019 – an increase of 175%! – which means we had to select gifts at our facilities for 1,200 less families. This was a real game-changer given our COVID-related volunteer limitations and a great way to involve new families and businesses in our work (see article, page 3).

Receiving powerful thank you notes like this one from the families we served made all the effort worthwhile.



New Adopt-a-Family Sponsors Help Us Bridge the Gap

First-time supporter, Viking Bridge Club, sponsors 10 families this Christmas & more!

Our Adopt-a-Family Program was a HUGE part of the success of this year's Christmas Program with many new supporters joining the effort. With their help, 1,900 families were sponsored this year vs. 691 families in 2019, an increase of 175%! This was a real game-changer given our volunteer limitations related to COVID-19.

As it was for so many others, March 2020 was a tough month for Susan Miguel of Tiverton, Rhode Island. For thirty years Susan has run the Viking Bridge Club, a fun, social group that shares a love of the popular card game.

The Viking Bridge Club traditionally met in the hall of a Portsmouth, RI church but COVID-19 shut down Susan's operation in the blink of an eye. She quickly adjusted her operating model, though, and moved the business to an online platform.

The club went from operating 175 live bridge tables per month to over 750 tables in the new, virtual format. Throughout the country, people who found themselves stuck inside during the quarantine turned to Viking Bridge Club as an outlet for entertainment and camaraderie.

While Susan celebrated her newfound success, she also saw an opportunity to make a difference. She remembered a time in the past when people instinctively took care of their family, neighbors, and all those around them – especially during difficult times.

Susan recalled a service project her son, Jonathan, worked

on at My Brother's Keeper when he was a student at Bishop Connolly High School. Our Christmas Program seemed like the perfect way to help local families in need.

Viking Bridge Club started with a challenge to adopt 10 families. Susan, her husband Greg, and Jonathan shopped, wrapped, and delivered hundreds of Christmas gifts to My Brother's Keeper. When that challenge was met they asked: how else can we help? They learned that My Brother's Keeper gives a \$50 grocery gift card to each family served to help with a nice Christmas meal. Susan and her club set a challenge to donate thirty \$50 gift cards and ended up donating forty.

In a year darkened by the effects of a global pandemic, Susan Miguel and the Viking Bridge Club shined the light of humble generosity. They saw the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of their neighbors and never looked back.

"Our Christmas project was all about connection and we were so blessed by participating," said Susan. "During this time of social isolation, working together and watching our progress drew us together as a community while connecting us to so many other people we'll never meet. Though we've often felt helpless in this time of pandemic, we came to realize the power we wield as community - both offering and receiving the gift of hope that life will soon be better."



Builders • Construction Managers

Haynes Group Lends a Big Helping Hand

One of the biggest keys to our successful Christmas Program was starting everything earlier.

No one was a bigger help with this than Mike and Bryan Haynes, owners of the Haynes Group, a family-owned company in West Bridgewater which specializes in construction and project management services.

The Haynes Group gave My Brother's Keeper free use of 5,000 square feet of prime warehouse space to store furniture from October 2020 through February 2021.

The Haynes Group building is located just 2.4 miles from our Easton facility — incredibly convenient. Their generous donation of auxiliary storage space allowed us to begin converting our Easton facility into a modified Santa's Workshop 6 weeks earlier than normal AND continue making furniture deliveries throughout the holidays.

"As a community, we always talk about people helping in their own special way," said Ryan Thorley, Director - Easton Facility. "The Haynes family and the Haynes Group are perfect examples of this. They helped us make a big difference in the lives of local families in need and we are deeply grateful."

Sweet Innocence

By Celia Dolan, Direct Service Associate



When we make deliveries, we call folks ahead of time to make sure they're home and find out at which door they'd like us to drop off their gifts. On this particular delivery, we couldn't reach the family we were serving on the phone. Knocking on the front door left us with no answer. While my colleague tried calling their phone number again, I walked down the driveway to check the back door. I saw that it was slightly ajar and inside looked cold and deserted.

Hoping someone would hear me through the open door I called out, "My Brother's Keeper." After a few seconds, I heard a quiet, sweet voice say back, "Who?"

I smiled and repeated, "My Brother's Keeper."

"Your Brother's Keeper?" the gentle voice responded inquisitively and a young girl poked her head around the door.

"Yes," I replied. "We have a delivery for you. Is your mom home?"

She turned to head up the stairs and I heard her mom yell down to her, "Who is there?"

"Your Brother's Keeper!" she called as she darted away.

With sudden realization at what her daughter meant, the mom came downstairs and greeted us joyfully. As so many of the people we serve do, she thanked us for bringing some comfort and peace to her family during such a tumultuous year.

The sweet innocence of this young girl was so unexpected to find in a seemingly deserted place, perhaps similar to when our Savior was born. After knocking on the front door of many an inn, Mary and Joseph seemed out of luck until they were led another way to a manger. Jesus was born in a humble place, bringing love and sweet innocence into the world.

Jesus was not delivered in a way you'd expect, in a place you'd expect, and neither were these Christmas gifts. No Santa, no sleigh with reindeer, nor mom hiding gifts until Christmas morning. Just a couple of ordinary people from My Brother's Keeper bringing bags full of gifts to each family. And even the ordinary means of delivering gifts for My Brother's Keeper has changed with COVID, as so many things have.

The world, like the driveway to this family's backdoor or the manger in Bethlehem, may seem bleak and dark and cold right now. But moments full of unexpected joy, like on this delivery, indicate there is an abundance of love to be had.

The work of My Brother's Keeper – Your Brother's Keeper – does the work of the one who keeps us all: the Lord our God. And there is nothing more full of sweet, innocent, unending love as that.

We print this beautiful thank you note to honor the wishes of the writer. She asked that we share her words of appreciation with our whole community.

I would first ask that this letter be shared with all staff and volunteers as it is their spirit, integrity, and determination that has helped not only my family but countless others in sharing a small part of what Christmas is. You help those like my husband and myself exemplify to our children the true meaning of the spirit of Christmas. So many in today's world think only of themselves and their loved ones, which makes it difficult for some to have positive examples to show and educate their children in thinking of others before one's self. And though this was the first time my family has had to ask for assistance during the holiday season, we could not let it pass without expressing our sincere gratitude for all you have done and continue to do for those in need. My husband often says the word HERO has been overused and lost some of its inherent honor and nobility due to its misuse. It's folks like yourselves he points to that toil tirelessly in the aide of others that he says retains the righteousness of the word HERO. You were a godsend when we needed one most and your care and devotion is not lost on us. We, the M. Family, want to extend our hopes of not only a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you but our deepest gratitude.

Respectfully Yours
The M. Family, Cambridge, MA

NEW FACES AND A NEW ROLE

Holy Cross Seminarians Serving in Christ's Name

During a year when we've had to purposely limit volunteers, it's been a special joy to welcome two seminarians for four weeks of service this winter: T.J. Groden from Chicago, IL and Keenan Bross from St. Louis, MO.

Both men are graduates of the University of Notre Dame and are currently living in Colorado Springs, CO as part of their formation for the priesthood with the Congregation of Holy Cross.

T.J. and Keenan flew to Massachusetts in January and are helping 5 days a week with food and furniture deliveries as well as in-building prep work.

They are staying with the religious community at Stonehill College which was founded by the Congregation of Holy Cross. From a COVID-standpoint, they are among our safest volunteers because they are getting tested for the virus twice a week compliments of Stonehill.

T.J. and Keenan are halfway through their novitiate year, often described as a year-long retreat dedicated to prayer and deep reflection about their vocation to religious life.



An interesting part of the novitiate experience is that the novices enter a period of silence each evening after night prayer at 8 p.m. and it lasts until after lunch the next day.

It's little surprise, then, that T.J. and Keenan have enjoyed lots of conversation, making new friends at My Brother's Keeper, and serving local families in need in Christ's name.



T.J. Groden, C.S.C.

"Working at My Brother's Keeper has given me a special opportunity to serve God's people as I begin my religious life. I am honored and grateful."



Keenan Bross, C.S.C.

"The staff and volunteer community of My Brother's Keeper has become a new home for me. This place is a wonderful image of the heavenly kingdom we are called to become."

Marty Reynolds Joins Board of Directors



Volunteer Marty Reynolds from Mansfield has become the newest member of the My Brother's Keeper Board of Directors.

Marty lived Cursillo at the Holy Cross Retreat House in 2017. During the weekend, he heard My Brother's Keeper mentioned in several talks and he decided to get involved himself. He's

been a weekly volunteer ever since.

Over the past four years, Marty's daily involvement in our work has grown tremendously. He started out at our Easton facility by helping on the trucks with pickups and deliveries. Over time, he made a special effort to get involved at our Dartmouth facility too.

In 2019, Marty began driving our vans and leading furniture and food deliveries. In 2020, he made an especially big impact to our COVID-19 response. Marty often came in multiple times per week to pack non-perishable food boxes, fresh produce,

frozen meat, and personal hygiene products as well as making no-contact deliveries.

Professionally, Marty was a successful medical device executive who retired from Johnson & Johnson in 2017. His career there spanned two decades and he held a variety of positions such as Director of Business Development and Director of Research and Development.

"I am really looking forward to serving My Brother's Keeper in this new capacity," said Marty. "As a regular delivery volunteer, I have the privilege of witnessing firsthand the effect Jesus' love and hope has on the people we serve. I passionately believe in our mission, and I'm excited to join the dedicated and talented folks currently serving on the Board of Directors who feel the same way."

As Marty steps onto the Board, we offer our deepest thanks to two long-time board members who have ended their terms of service: Luzann Noonan of Easton and Mary Milligan of Braintree. Both Luzann and Mary generously gave of their time and talent for more than two decades on our Board.

Our Facilities



EASTON



DARTMOUTH

My Brother's Keeper Heating Assistance Program

This winter, you can help
local families stay warm.

Visit our website or see the
special reply card attached.



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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