



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 2024



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

A Message from Our President Erich Miller



Over the course of time, organizations have their share of joys and sorrows, successes and failures, hopes and despairs.

On July 17, 2024, My Brother's Keeper experienced the most profound grief in our 36-year history. An accident involving one of our trucks resulted in the death of

a beloved long-time volunteer, Jean Revil of Dartmouth, MA and a significant injury to a newer but equally special volunteer, Jim Flynn of Bristol, RI. Thankfully, Jim is slowly recovering with the help of his wife, Beth.

As desperately as we want to, though, we cannot bring Jean back. We know the layers of tragedy are so deep for so many: the devastating loss felt by Jean's family, her many friends, former students and co-workers, all who were touched by her generous, faith-filled life; the great pain felt by Jim Flynn, the other volunteers, and our staff serving on the truck that day; the sorrow felt by the whole My Brother's Keeper family, especially our Dartmouth community.

As a ministry devoted to bringing help, comfort, and the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to others, it has been heartbreaking to be the cause of suffering in this case and we are profoundly sorry.

In the weeks after the accident, people have often asked me, How is everyone at My Brother's Keeper?

As you might expect, the answer is different for each individual based on whether we were present at the accident, how close we are to the people involved, our unique personalities, and how we process grief.

As a ministry, we are doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances. Our faith in God along with three things are helping us move forward.

First is the grace and compassion we have received from the Revil family and from Jim and Beth Flynn. They have been nothing short of extraordinary, as Christ-like as anyone could possibly be in the face of a tragedy like this.

Second has been the outpouring of care, concern, prayers, and support that have been showered down upon us from our community, supporters, nonprofit colleagues, and especially those we serve. To know that we are not alone in our grief has been an enormous consolation.

Third has been getting back to service. We heard loud and clear from our volunteers, especially the Dartmouth community whose loss was so deep and personal, that getting back into the neighborhoods—providing furniture, food, and comfort to our neighbors in need—would be an important part of the healing process.

This has certainly been the case and I truly believe what Jean would want: for My Brother's Keeper to continue being our brother's and sister's keeper.

With that in mind, My Brother's Keeper slowly but surely re-entered the community and returned to providing services. We did so only after taking immediate steps to strengthen safety such as investing in backup cameras in our trucks and requiring all passengers in our vehicles to wear high-visibility safety clothing.

We also implemented thoughtful, rigorous protocols specific to our work and made a deep commitment to ongoing safety improvements that are holistic, comprehensive, and robust.

I believe it would be unwise for us to think we can address safety only from within so we are also utilizing external expertise to help us strengthen safety in the long term. We have engaged with a professional who has decades of experience with safety programs at a large utility company—the work of utilities is most similar to what we do operationally in the community—and we have also scheduled driving safety programs which have both a classroom and on-the-road component.

This has been an extremely difficult time for My Brother's Keeper but the needs of struggling families in our region compel us to keep moving forward. Know that we are doing so while making every effort to strengthen safety to protect those we serve and those who serve with us.

Thank you for your loving support and your continued prayers. They are deeply appreciated.

Peace of Christ,

Erich Miller, President
My Brother's Keeper



A Remembrance of Jean Revil

By Josh Smith, Director - Dartmouth



Jean Revil was one of My Brother's Keeper's first volunteers when we opened a facility in Dartmouth eleven years ago. At our first event, a Blessing & Open House, Jean marched right up to me and exclaimed, "You're going to be seeing a lot of me!"

Jean meant it. She volunteered weekly, then twice a week, then daily during the Christmas season. And Jean did it all at My Brother's Keeper. She moved with ease from one job to the next—preparing bags of linens, packaging food, building box spring foundations, checking countless bags of Christmas gifts—whatever needed to be done.

Jean's most regular assignment was volunteering on furniture pickups. It wasn't uncommon for Jean to pick up a piece of furniture in donation and days later deliver that same piece to the family that needed it.

Furniture pickups always felt to me like one of the most strenuous and least glamorous jobs at My Brother's Keeper. Jean, however, saw it as just another way to accomplish the mission with those she encountered. Jean always found exactly the right words to comfort furniture donors who had recently lost a loved one.

When picking up furniture donations in the community, I would tease Jean by asking whether any of our five stops were someone she didn't know. Her time as an educator at Bishop Stang High

School and volunteering at several area parishes made Jean many, many friends.

Jean was a source of boundless kindness and had the most remarkable gift with people. The days she volunteered it seemed that she would make a heartfelt connection with every person in the building before morning prayer was even called.

Above all else, Jean served joyfully, her laugh unmistakable and contagious. And once everyone was in on the fun, Jean would turn on a dime and—tongue in cheek, of course—boom out: "Let's get to work!"

Jean's faith was positively inspiring. I knew that whatever my question about Catholic doctrine, Jean would not only have an answer but explain it in a way that made absolute sense to all who heard it. Hers was the gift of someone who had spent a lifetime examining and growing in her faith.

Without question, Jean embodied the mission of My Brother's Keeper. She loved this place—the work, community, friendships, joy, faith—all of it. She is deeply missed. Our call now is to honor Jean by following her path of service and faith as she no doubt watches over us accomplishing our mission.

So as Jean would say, Let's get to work!

*Above all else,
Jean served
joyfully.*

Jim Flynn, our injured volunteer, and his wife Beth have been nothing short of extraordinary in their concern, compassion, and generosity to My Brother's Keeper. Less than two weeks after the accident, they sent My Brother's Keeper a donation and this beautiful heartfelt card. Though Jim cannot physically volunteer right now, he and Beth are most certainly accomplishing our mission through their love and grace.



July 30, 2024
Beth and I would like to make this donation to My Brother's Keeper - in honor of Jean Revil. I have been honored to be able to volunteer with Jean - and many other people at MBK. I love you all, love what MBK provides to our community, and how MBK carries itself. I look forward to continuing to volunteer at MBK, interact with all of you, and learn and grow from you all in my faith.
Love Jim & Beth Flynn

Accomplishing the Mission By Andrew Staiti, Volunteer



On an early June afternoon, I was part of a 4-man crew on the road making furniture deliveries. We had a light afternoon—just a couple of stops—and we arrived at our second stop right on schedule.

I knocked on the front door of a small brick townhouse in Brockton and was greeted by a man in his mid-40s whose warm smile and friendly demeanor communicated more than his limited English could. Through my own broken version of Spanglish, I learned that his name was Mateo, and he was the husband of Erica, whose name was on our delivery slip. Their two adorable little girls were running around the bare hardwood floors of their house and jumping with glee once Erica told them we were bringing some furniture for them.

Mateo immediately offered assistance in carrying the furniture and we soon discovered that in his native country of Peru, he was a furniture mover for more than a decade. Safe to say he had more experience lifting and moving furniture than any of us on the crew that day! He explained how he had been in the country for a little over a year and all of his family was back home. His wife had some family here and they had been staying at her aunt's house, using borrowed furniture. They just moved into this townhouse—their first home as a family in

the United States—a couple of weeks ago.

Mateo was more than happy to help and was already taking great pride in ownership of the beautiful new bedroom and living room furniture we had brought. With every new piece that came in, his 2-year old daughter would exclaim with joy the Spanish name of whatever item had just come through her door.

“Mesa!” (Table)... “Silla!” (Chair)... “Sofa!” (you might be able to figure that one out!)

Her joy was infectious and with each new item that came in, what was once a barren house was quickly becoming a very full home. Shortly before we finished, Mateo offered us all bottles of water which we gladly accepted. He didn't just offer—he insisted—that we take them. In my time on staff at the Keeper, I distinctly remember Jim Orcutt advising us to always say “yes” in situations like this. It doesn't matter what the people we serve offer us: saying “yes” dignifies them in a way that goes beyond mere words.

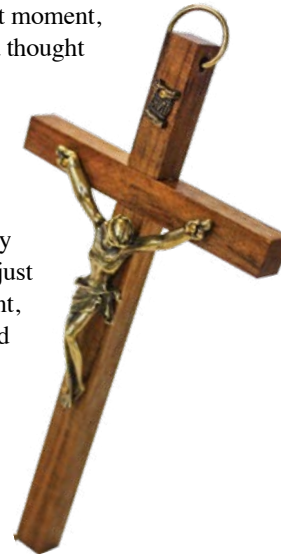
In rusty Spanish, I told Mateo that we had one more item for him, something more important than all the others. I reached into my back pocket and presented him and Erica with the crucifix, telling them that everything was not from us, it was from God.

Mateo—who for the past half-hour was full of jokes, helping to teach us the names of some furniture items in Spanish, and all the while trying to tend to his pregnant wife and two little ones—was rendered speechless. His eyes began to well up with tears and he offered a quiet, dignified “Gracias.”

Andrew volunteered at My Brother's Keeper as a Stonehill student from 2012-14 and worked as a full-time employee from 2015-2017. His time at My Brother's Keeper was profound and he has remained connected to our ministry as both a financial supporter and volunteer. This summer, Andrew devoted extra time to My Brother's Keeper during his professional transition between two area nonprofits, from The Labor Guild to Spoonfuls.

He gave us all a hug as we bid him, Erica, and their two little girls farewell. On our ride home we all said how great of a delivery that was. That was one of the ones that stick with you in a good way, compared to some of the more challenging situations and stories we encounter on the road. That crucifix makes all the difference.

Before that gift, we were just a bunch of helpful, friendly guys delivering furniture. But when we gave Mateo and his family that crucifix, God entered the picture in a very real way. In that moment, perhaps Mateo and Erica thought back to prayers they had prayed many years ago. Perhaps they thought of the family and friends they had left behind to start this new life. I firmly believe, though, that for just that small, sacred moment, they knew that God loved them and He hadn't forgotten them. If that isn't accomplishing our mission, I don't know what is.



Andrew sent the following email after his last volunteer shift of the summer:

I wanted to say thank you for the opportunity to once again serve our brothers and sisters in Christ's name. What a blessing it has been these last months to reconnect with you all in a new part of life, but to still share the same mission and ministry that I hold so close to my heart. Serving at My Brother's Keeper is and was one of the great privileges of my life.

I know these are incredibly tough times for our community, and I don't know if I have anything to offer to ease that burden. However, I do know that I have the perspective, the attitude, the love and concern for my fellow man, and so many tremendous

memories, sacred encounters, and close relationships due to My Brother's Keeper. I pray for all of you that your mourning may turn into dancing in its right and proper time, and that you all may know the great impact you have on all those who enter through those doors.

Before leaving today, I took a long look around the warehouse and I wept. They were not all tears of sadness, but also tears of joy. I am not sure I know who I might have been without My Brother's Keeper in my life, but I certainly know who I am with it.

Did You Know? 1 in 3 households with children in Massachusetts report child-level food insecurity. That means a child went hungry, skipped a meal, or didn't eat for an entire day because there wasn't enough money for food.
— Greater Boston Food Bank

The Greater Boston
FOOD BANK
Feeding Eastern Massachusetts



Thank You and God Bless You! by Julie Carchedi

Residents of Fall River, New Bedford, Dartmouth and Westport in need of food assistance can call our Food Helpline Tuesday through Friday starting at 10AM.

Answering the Helpline today, I was struck by how many callers were experiencing “life” and a normal workday as they tried to schedule a food delivery.

One caller was working in a nursing home. I could hear residents chatting with each other, discussing the time of day and wondering what treats would be offered at lunch.

Another woman was calling from the front office of a medical center. I could hear multiple phone lines ringing and elevator doors opening and shutting.

A third caller was clearly working in a daycare or preschool. I could hear a group of children in the background laughing and singing “E-I-E-I-O.”

A young woman was calling from the waiting room of a medical facility. While she was confirming her contact information with me, she was politely asking an annoyed nurse to wait one minute as we completed our conversation.

A local counselor called in for a Portuguese speaking client. At the end of our conversation, she quietly asked me if she, too, could receive a delivery of food and diapers for her newborn.

My last call of the day was from a woman who calls regularly. She sounded as if she was working in a loud and crowded laundry room. Her demeanor was kind and pleasant, as it always was. There was a lot of commotion in the background. I could hear a stern voice speaking to the caller, “No phones allowed!” The caller continued; she never lost her cool. Two hours later she reached out via the business line to apologize for the confusion with the previous call.

Answering calls from our families in need continues to offer teachable moments.

LESSON #1: God gives us the privilege to serve. We are not here to judge.

LESSON #2: Many people in need are working full time. They are members of the workforce that just cannot make ends meet. They are doing their best to stay employed while utilizing local resources

to help keep them afloat. They are working while watching the clock, anxiously waiting for the Helpline to open at 10am.

Far too often the general public assumes “those people” receiving services are unemployed, unmotivated, looking for handouts, etc. This is just not the case with so many families we serve. Many of our families are putting their pride on the back burner for a minute in order to make the call. They are multi-tasking, often staying on hold for longer periods of time than we’d like because the need is so great. They are working overtime, mentally and physically, doing whatever they can to put food on the table.

LESSON #3: The families we serve are deeply grateful. I can hear the joy in their responses as a sigh of relief comes over them once the request is completed. “Thank you and God bless you” are often the final words I hear on Helpline calls.

They are feeling blessed and we are, too!

Christmas IN JULY Toy Drive



Even during the hot summer months, Christmas is never far from thought for My Brother’s Keeper and the families we serve. Every year, we are shocked to receive calls from worried parents in June and July inquiring about Christmas help!

To get a jump start on this year’s Christmas Program, My Brother’s Keeper conducted our 1st annual Christmas in July Toy Drive. Supporters were invited to drop gifts off at our facilities or buy on Amazon or Walmart and have them shipped directly to us.

The inaugural effort was a tremendous success. Thanks to the generosity of many individuals and organizations, we collected 1,088 toys and gifts with an estimated retail value of \$23,010.

“I’m Forever Grateful”

by Denise Queally, My Brother’s Keeper volunteer and President of New England Connection for PKU and Allied Disorders, Inc.

I am a firm believer that there are no coincidences. Jesus places us where we need to be, when we need to be there. He gently places His hands on our shoulders and says, “You’re needed, and I’m right beside you!”



It’s what I love most about the My Brother’s Keeper community too – simply put, caring people coming together to answer the call to help another. To me, responding to the needs of another is the epitome of Jesus’ greatest commandment to “Love one another as I have loved you.”

There are also instances where nonprofits can work together and join resources to answer the call to serve. I would love to share a recent experience to highlight an amazing nonprofit collaboration.

On a late Friday afternoon in early August, during one of those super-humid, 90-degree plus heatwaves, I received a call from our daughter’s doctor at Boston Children’s Hospital. She was reaching out to me as a “last resort” to help a family in need who has the same rare medical condition as our daughter, phenylketonuria (PKU, for short). The family of six—mom, grandma and 4 children all under 16 years old—were recently burned out of their apartment in a terrible fire in western Massachusetts. The family recently moved here, had no relatives, no insurance, and limited financial resources.

Local, state and federal agencies assisted the family immediately after the fire. They also provided a wealth of contact information for local resources but Shay, the mom, was reaching a lot of dead ends. Homeless shelters in the area offered to take in Shay and her mother but they could not accommodate the children. Housing was not readily available and required a hefty security deposit which they couldn’t afford. Shay had nowhere and no one else to turn. She was terrified of sleeping in her car again due to the intense heat.

When I took the call from Children’s Hospital, my arms were filled with goosebumps and my eyes full of tears. My heart ached for this family as I imagined myself in their position.

Over the past 23 years since our Caroline was born, I have been blessed to volunteer for a nonprofit called The New England Connection for PKU and Allied Disorders (NECPAD). NECPAD supports individuals and families in New England who have rare metabolic disorders such as PKU. In short, individuals living with PKU must follow very strict diets during their lifetime to avoid brain damage and other complications. Bottom line for Shay’s family: they needed a place to stay with a kitchen to be able to properly feed her child with PKU, as well as the rest of the family.

I reached out to Shay and had the most beautiful conversations. While scared and frankly still in shock, all she cared about was her family. She was a mom on a mission, a warrior, in the best sense of the word,

resourceful and intent on taking care of her family. I assured her that NECPAD would do all we could to support her, and also told her about My Brother’s Keeper which my husband Desi and I have been blessed to be a part of for over 30 years. I had faith that between

NECPAD and the community of My Brother’s Keeper, we could help her family address their very basic needs, essential to their physical health and emotional well-being. Shay was so grateful. I cannot explain her relief but she knew all was going to fall into place. Every conversation we had ended with “God bless you”—very simple and very comforting from both our perspectives.

Short-term, NECPAD was able to arrange for hotel rooms in Springfield with kitchenettes and even a pool. We wanted to give the family a much-needed respite after the tragedy they had sustained from the fire...they lost EVERYTHING but the clothes on their backs. Living in a hotel, however, is not sustainable. Shay pounded the pavement every day trying to secure a more permanent housing situation. One of the children’s teachers started a “Go Fund Me” but it was not raising much. NECPAD circulated the “Go Fund Me” on social media and it took off, allowing the family to get just enough money to put a deposit down on housing. On Tuesday, August 20th the family moved into their new apartment with nothing but a few bags of clothes. They slept on the floors but were so happy to have a place to call their own.

Once housing was in place, I reached out to My Brother’s Keeper. They answered the call with a resounding YES! Their newly renovated facility in Easton was stocked with brand new beds, gently used bureaus, couches, desks, a gorgeous kitchen table where all could have a seat, and even a lovely rocking chair for grandma. My Brother’s Keeper also provided comfortable bedding, dishware, cookware, and even an air fryer to help Shay’s family prepare special medical foods.

This was a rather large move to the western part of our state, an area far outside My Brother’s Keeper’s normal reach. Despite that, the organization stepped up to answer the call. By Friday of that same week and just a few weeks after the devastating fire, Shay’s family was so very excited to have a formidable fresh new start.

The impact of nonprofits working together answering the call, in this instance—Boston Children’s Hospital, NECPAD and My Brother’s Keeper—all within a 3-week timeframe, can best be summed up by Shay’s exact words, “Wow, everything is perfect and new I can’t thank you guys enough! This is truly a blessing. My children are so happy. God bless you and your team and everything you have done for us. I’m forever grateful.”

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.*



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

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