



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 5, 2017

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The Goodness of America

Get By With a Little Help From My Friends

Firefighters are regularly regarded as heroic, but what firefighters in New Britain, Connecticut, did for one of their fellow fighters proves they are not just brave but kind.

Firefighter Scott Johnson of the City of New Britain Fire Department is fighting for his life to stop his stage 4 colorectal cancer, which has already spread to his liver. As he prepares for a long and difficult battle, Johnson's colleagues banded together to do something that would make Johnson's fight just a little easier. They pooled together their sick days and donated them to Johnson.

The *Hartford Courant* reported that Johnson returned to full duty at the firehouse in May after spending almost a year on light duty. However, his treatment is going to be aggressive, involving time-release chemotherapy, and he will need all the sick days he can get.

To help pay for the cost of Johnson's care, the firemen have also hosted numerous fundraisers, including an upcoming June 4 pasta dinner. They also donated to an online fundraiser, which raised over \$3,000.

Firefighters from the department also painted Johnson's house and installed central air conditioning to make the summers a bit more comfortable.

The outpouring of support from the community has been overwhelming, says Johnson. "We've gotten so much support," he said. "It means so much. It would be so much harder if we didn't have so many people helping."

T-shirt sales and other campaigns have raised \$11,000 for Fight Colorectal Cancer, and a GoFundMe page has raised more than \$23,000.

Others have donated frequent-flier miles for the necessary trips to the Block Center in Skokie, Illinois, where Johnson will receive his treatments.

Johnson and his wife say that their faith is giving them strength to get through these tough times. The show of generosity from the department and the community has surely helped.

Twice in 24 Hours

Steve Smith was driving in his vehicle when he saw some people in need. Not only did he stop to help them, but he returned the next day to give even more aid.

Don Austin had had his leg amputated below the knee, and after a long hospital recovery, he was finally able to return to his home in April. It did not occur to him that he would struggle to make it up the concrete stairs in front of his house until he and his wife made the effort. It was then that Smith happened by.

Smith reportedly picked up Austin in his arms and carried him into the house, where he set him on the couch.

Austin's wife, Jennifer, said that even with that one action they were already grateful for Smith's intervention, but then they were even more touched when Smith returned the next day to build a ramp for the Austins' home.



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"This stranger saved the day for us twice within 24 hours. He also brightened our spirits that had become increasingly dimmed over the difficult months," added Jennifer. "Like a breath of fresh air he is, and there is a sense of optimism back in our home because of his kindness. This stranger is now a friend."

Call 911 — or UPS?

It takes a lot of guts to run toward a burning building. Fortunately for the Lavender family, UPS driver Paul Pereira had plenty!

Pereira was on his route in Haverhill, Massachusetts, on April 10 when he noticed smoke billowing from the porch of a nearby household. He saw neighbors idling outside watching the scene and capturing videos of the blaze on their cellphones and decided that he would take action.

He began to bang on the door in an effort to alert the residents inside. As it turns out, the entire family — Brian Lavender, his wife, and daughters — were all upstairs when the fire started but did not know their home was ablaze. They assumed the smell was coming from their neighbor's barbecue.

The *Daily Mail* reported that Pereira grabbed a hose and began putting out the fire. In fact, he did such a good job that the worst of the fire was extinguished by the time firefighters arrived.

Video footage shows the family coming out of the house, and Pereira rushing them to safety.

According to Pereira, he didn't quite know how serious the fire was at the time because he was focused on doing what he could. It was not until he saw video footage of his heroics that he realized just how much danger he was in. "I didn't realize how big the flames were until I saw the video myself," he said.

The Lavender family credits Pereira with not only saving them but saving their house. Tracy Lavender said, "If it wasn't for him, I think the house would have been totaled."

"Serve and Protect"

Police officers are often known for their heroic actions, typically while on duty, but a police officer at the Milton Police Department in Wisconsin has taken heroism to a whole new level by donating a kidney to an eight-year-old boy she hardly knew.

Lindsey Bittorf happened upon a Facebook post by Kristi Goll in Janesville, Wisconsin, about her son, Jackson, in which Goll pleads for potential kidney donors.

"Social media has the ability to go a long ways, and Jackson's transplant social worker assured me of this," she wrote. "Please help me get the word out and please contact me if you would be interested in being a living kidney donor. This would be the very best gift we could receive."

According to Sunny Skyz, despite having never met Jackson, Bittorf was moved. She got tested and learned she was a very good match for Jackson. In early May, she surprised the family with the good news.

WISN reports that Bittorf told the boy, "I took an oath to serve and protect our community, and now my kidney's going to serve and protect you."

The transplant surgery is scheduled for June 22, ABC News reported.

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