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## Good News Mountaineer Garage Gives The Gift That Keeps On Giving

By RONDA GREGORY  
News & Journal Staff Writer



A mother of two children recently received a 1993 Toyota Camry through the Good News Mountaineer Garage program. The Terra Alta woman wrote a note of thanks to the Morgantown donor, saying, "This can help my family and me in so many ways. I will take good care of it, and I hope to better myself and my family with this car. I greatly appreciate everything."

Reliable transportation is needed to carry out the basic business of everyday life, from grocery shopping to doctor visits. Good News Mountaineer Garage exists to make that available for many in need in West Virginia. The private nonprofit agency helps low-income people obtain donated, used, roadworthy vehicles so they can be self-sufficient getting to their jobs, taking their children to school and conducting the other myriad tasks of daily life.

Regional Director Ron Wiles from the Masontown office, Ron Wiles with the agency since 2005, said receiving a needed car, truck or van can be the difference of success or failure for people.

Giving someone a 15-year-old car with 150,000 miles can absolutely change their life," he stated. "Many West Virginians live in remote areas that have no public transit system. In these little counties it can be especially rough if you don't have family or friends around to help."

In November, the Westover office relocated to Masontown because of logistical reasons. But no change in service to the clients was affected, Wiles said. The agency takes the vehicles to the recipient.

The Good News Garage program began in Vermont, with West Virginia coming on board in 2001 and being the only other

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state taking on the same blueprint. In addition to Masontown, the state has sites in Charleston and Hedgesville.

Since it began, the Good News Mountaineer Garages have given more than 2,500 vehicles statewide to those West Virginians in need who qualify, said state Executive Director Ashley Orr, based in Charleston. In one year, approximately 160 state families received a donated vehicle.

Some of the qualifications include having a job or going to school and having a child or children under the age of 18. "Our program is directed to helping families," Wiles said.

The program is partially funded by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources through the West Virginia Works Program and with the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services.

Vehicles are accepted from anywhere nationwide, but most are donated statewide and regionally. If an independent garage estimates a donated vehicle will cost less than 70 percent of its Blue Book value, that vehicle will be repaired, if necessary, and then given to a qualified needing individual.

Vehicle (based on the Blue Book value) or monetary donations are tax deductible.

"Not only do we rely on donated vehicles, but we also have people who may not have a car to donate but who want to contribute in some way," Orr said. "We certainly appreciate monetary donations as well. We're forever grateful to our donors who understand our need and share our vision to have access to reliable transportation to help people move toward economic independence."

For more information about Good News Mountaineer Garage if you are in need of a vehicle or if you want to donate one or make a financial contribution, call the Masontown office at (304) 980-2084 or 1-866-GIVECAR, or visit [goodnewsmountaineergarage.com](http://goodnewsmountaineergarage.com).

Orr said West Virginians are a particularly generous and caring people. "As West Virginians, we're a close-knit state... neighbors helping neighbors... that's who we are. If we can help someone, we do it," she stated.

Wiles agreed by saying, "It's a great feeling you're making a difference in someone's life. You can feel like Santa Claus."