

Subject: GOOD NEWS MOUNTAINEER GARAGE PUTS DRIVERS ON ROAD TO SUCCESS

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The road to economic recovery, for some, may begin with a reliable automobile.

The nonprofit Good News Mountaineer Garage began serving low-income families throughout West Virginia toward this goal in 1999. The garage accepts donations of cars, which are then given to eligible drivers/families on public assistance who are enrolled in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program at the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

Through grant funding from the DHHR, the Good News Mountaineer Garage assists TANF families with the transportation for parents to travel to and from jobs or job-training programs.

Eligible families must be referred by their DHHR caseworkers before the garage can assign them a vehicle, and families receiving food stamps and/or Medicaid only do not qualify for vehicles.

Good News Mountaineer Garage also provides vehicles to referred clients of the Division of Rehabilitation Services to assist individuals with temporary and permanent disabilities.

The Good News Mountaineer Garage accepts vehicles which are repairable for a reasonable amount of money and roadworthy.

Vehicle donors may be eligible for federal income tax deductions and qualify for a direct state tax credit, if available, for half the value of your vehicle.

In the past decade-plus, the Good News Mountaineer Garage program has assisted more than 1,000 families in becoming self-supporting. According to the Good News Mountaineer Garage website, a follow-up study found that a year after receiving a vehicle from the garage, 70 percent of the families were no longer on public assistance, 80 percent were working and 13 percent were undertaking job training.

Along with vehicle donations, volunteers are integral to the garage's continuing success.

Several volunteers participated in the fourth annual Good News Garage Ball Car Auction at the Capitol Market on the evening of Nov. 6. Among the vehicles on the auction block were a 1998 Range Rover, 1989 Mercury Grand Marquis, 1996 Cadillac Eldorado, 2000 Honda Insight, 1990 Cadillac Brougham,

1984 Toyota Pickup and 1982 Toyota Cressida.

According to Good News Mountaineer Garage Executive Director Barbara Bayes, "We sold everything - we sold all of our art, sold a boat and sold all of all cars.

"A week after the auction," said Bayes, "we got a camper. Had we had it in time for the Garage Ball, we would have tried to sell it there, but we'll probably take it to the auction in January in Morgantown.

"We have auctions periodically around the state, including two or three in Charleston every year," she explained.

Bayes added that the garage is looking for people to promote its cause.

"One of the things we're always looking for and need are volunteers, spokespeople for our program. We have people who will do church bulletins about us. Some people speak to their Rotary groups. We have people all over the state doing that, but we sure could use some others."

The Good News Mountaineer Garage offices are located at 2211/2 Hale St. in downtown Charleston. The garage facility itself is located on the West Side at 1724 Bigley Ave.

For more information, to volunteer or to donate a vehicle, contact the Good News Mountaineer Garage at 1-866-GIVECAR (448-3227) or 304-344-8445 or visit the garage's website, www.goodnewsmountaineergarage.com

On Nov. 6, the Good News Mountaineer Garage held its fourth annual Garage Ball vehicle auction fundraiser at the Capitol Flea Market in Charleston. Along with six cars and trucks, a boat and artwork were sold during the evening to benefit the program that helps low-income state residents acquire means of transportation. Volunteers who took part included Sheila Timmons of Gallagher (left) and LeAnna Edgell of Dunbar (right), seen here with Good News Mountaineer Garage Director Barbara Bayes of Alum Creek between them.