



How this Forsyth County business partnered with the community to get a single mother back on the road

September 9, 2022



Jackie realized once she became a single mother that she would no longer be able to attend school.

The Lanier Technical College student, who asked that her last name not be published to protect her identity, suddenly didn't have reliable transportation to get to and from campus, and she knew that meant she would have to drop her classes.

But when the team at Families Embracing Grace and Love heard Jackie's story, they knew they needed to help.

Renee Stevens, an employee with the nonprofit that helps to support young girls, mothers and families in the community, went to the Christian Brothers Automotive shop in Cumming to see if their team would be willing to offer some help.

And from there, the community came together to ensure Jackie had exactly what she needed to stay in school.

“This is what Christian Brothers is all about — loving our neighbor and paying it forward to our community,” said Tom Burgess, the owner of the automotive shop.

Burgess said he talked to Jessica Di Blasi, a Christian Brothers customer, who offered to donate her 2003 Jeep Cherokee to the shop to help get Jackie back on the road.

His team put 16 hours of labor into fixing up the Jeep, replacing the engine, testing the transmission, updating the radiator and spark plugs and more to make sure it was ready to drive again.

In the meantime, customers and other community members who had heard what Christian Brothers was doing for Jackie decided to chip in. They donated vehicle parts and baby supplies, and other local automotive shops donated their services. Discount Tire provided new tires for the Jeep, and Eco Car Wash detailed it to get it looking brand new.

Another Christian Brothers customer, Jill Lopez, also donated a car seat, stroller and clothes for Jackie’s daughter.

“I’m grateful for Families Embracing Grace and Love for bringing this opportunity to us, and am so proud of the Cumming community,” Burgess said. “Those who heard about her story were eager to help ... Jackie and her daughter. This type of good will just goes to show how contagious kindness really is, especially in this community.”

Burgess and his team surprised Jackie with the car at their shop, and now she’s ready to take care of her baby before getting back to Lanier Tech’s campus to follow through on her plans to get a college degree.

Christian Brothers works with the community every year to provide vehicles to those in need of transportation, with Burgess and his team giving away six cars to community members so far this year.

They recently also donated a 2009 Dodge Grand Caravan to a family of refugees who were forced to flee from their home in Ukraine.

To learn more about Christian Brother’s dedication to community involvement, visit <https://www.cbac.com/about-us/community-involvement/>.

Christian Brothers is located at 5960 Bethelview Road in Cumming, and they are open Monday-Friday at 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

Link to the online article: <https://bit.ly/3qtcR0s>