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GOOD WORKS THAT 'WORK'

'The Good News Mountaineer Garage'

The Good News Mountaineer Garage, serving low-income people in West Virginia, is literally putting wheels under a great idea that addresses transportation problems as a barrier to employment.

Transportation is one of the two most cited barriers for folks who want to work; the other is child care, in the experience of the West Virginia Council of Churches, which initiated the program. In a state that is largely rural and that lacks public transportation, not having a car or a truck is a great impediment to employment.

In response, the West Virginia Council of Churches has partnered with the state Department of Health and Human Resources (WV DHHR) and other organizations to provide donated vehicles to low-income people who otherwise could not get to a job. Recipients obtain the vehicles for the cost of repairs.

As a partner in the program, the Council acts as fiscal agent and promotes the project to the faith community statewide. WV DHHR provides funding and client referrals. Other groups help with marketing and outreach, including the WV Automobile and Truck Dealers Association, whose members donate many of the vehicles.

A relatively new program, the Garage exceeded its initial target, to turn over 40 vehicles by summer 2001. As the program develops, plans call for the addition of a component to train low-income persons to become auto mechanics, thus extending the impact of the Good News Garage.

The beauty of this program is its simplicity, say its organizers. It's a win for the donors, for the recipients and for those who will be trained in job skills— perfect fit for everyone.

For more information contact: www.wvcc.org