

May 2003

Good News Mountaineer
Garage is on a Roll

By Pat Lawrence

photo - Linda has some Good News about her new Nissan 240SX.

Linda was the first person from Mingo County to get a car from the Good News Mountaineer Garage and it didn't come a minute too soon. Linda and her fourteen year old son live in Williamson and she is in training to be an EKG technician. Three days a week she drives 27 miles each way to Logan to attend classes. Her Geo Metro died and she had no way to get to school. Debra Sammons, her caseworker at the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) picked up the phone and called the Good News Mountaineer Garage.

The Good News Mountaineer Garage is a non profit organization that fixes up donated cars and sells them for one dollar to families who need them to make the transition from welfare to work. In October 2001, they began giving out cars to families in Kanawha and Lincoln counties as a pilot program funded by the DHHR. Since then the GNMG has given out 175 cars and recently expanded to cover eight additional counties: Cabell, Putnam, Wayne, Logan, Boone, Jackson, Mason and Mingo counties.

"I had just sent in the referral because we knew Linda's car was on its last leg. I never expected that they could find her a car in less than a week." Sammons reported.

But the Good News Mountaineer Garage had just the car for Linda. A Charleston lawyer and her husband had donated their car: a 1990 Nissan 240SX with 136,000 miles on it. This car had been his hobby for some time and he had just rebuilt the engine, put on new tires and replaced the brakes.

Still, this was a sporty car and it would need a mature person with some mechanical know-how to take care of it. Linda's dad was a mechanic and she grew up working on cars. She was sure that between the two of them they could keep this car in good working order.

Debra Sammons said that Linda was thrilled to get the car. "She came right over to the office to show it to me. She made me take her picture with the car. The most important thing is that she's still in school and when she finishes her training, she'll get a good job and get off public assistance."

The family that donated the car was equally pleased with the tax benefits. Car donors can take the value of the vehicle as a charitable deduction from their federal income taxes if they itemize. In addition, the GNMG receives a limited number of state tax credits from the West Virginia Economic Development Office's Neighborhood Investment Program (NIPS). Qualified donors can deduct a portion of the value of the vehicle directly from their state taxes owed if the NIPS tax credits are available.

If you would like to learn more about how you can help a family get on the road to work, call 1-866-GIVE CAR or check out their website at www.goodnewsmountaineergarage.com.