

The Wheels On The Bus Will Go Round and Round

THANKS TO THE KINDNESS OF OTHERS

By LISA PEARSON
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Thanks to the help of some very generous donations, some transportation issues for the children of Wimauma have been run over.

A new, 25-passenger 2007 Ford Starcraft, loaded with air conditioning, heat, seat belts and all the safety features needed to secure passengers, is the answered prayer for the owners and workers at the Good Samaritan Mission in Wimauma.

Earlier this year, the Hillsborough County School Board made a decision to cease transporting students from Wimauma and Summerfield Elementary Schools to the Good Samaritan Mission to be tutored at their after school program. After a plea for help in the monthly newsletter, Bill and Dora Cruz said their prayers were answered.

"Our after school program nearly faded away after that decision from the school

board," said Pastor Bill Cruz.

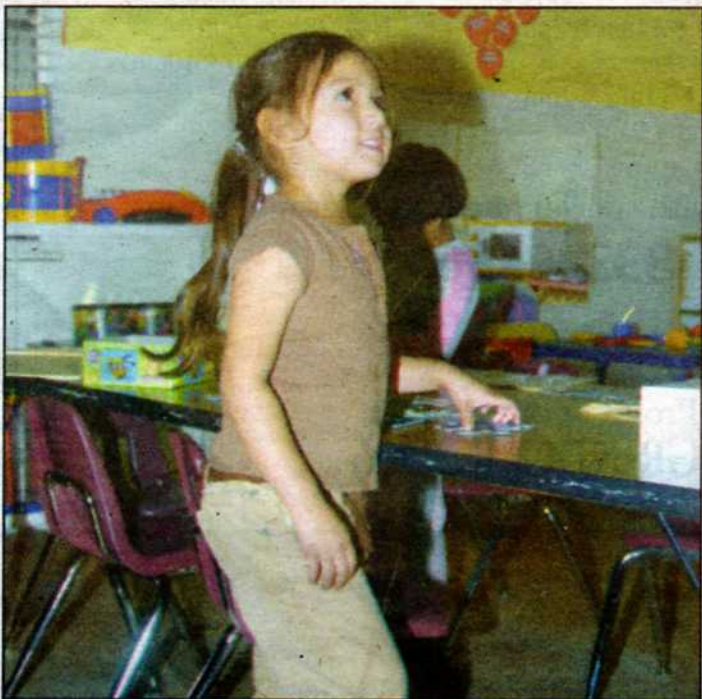
The bus almost became a necessity when Wimauma area school children were unable to attend after care because of a lack of bus transportation due to budget cuts at the county level. It particularly hit Wimauma children because many of their parents work in the fields. The bus will allow children to be picked up and brought to the mission's after school program.

It was important to the employees of the mission that the children be able to continue to receive tutoring.

"Literacy and remedial classes that we provide will help the students improve their school performance," said Dora Cruz.

The new bus will also be a vehicle to bless the children with field trips, take the youth group to special events, and assist in transportation to Sunday church for area families.

Ray and Nancy Murray were



Four-year old Keila Maldonado puts a puzzle together during her voluntary pre-kindergarten class (VPK). She's just one of the many children that will be provided bus service to the mission if desired.



LISA PEARSON/Staff photos

Above, Pastor Bill Cruz of The Good Samaritan Mission in Wimauma proudly shows off the facility's new bus. The funds to purchase the \$51,000 vehicle were provided by the Community Foundation of Sun City Center, The Community Foundation of Tampa Bay and several private donors.

eating dinner one evening when Nancy happened to read an issue of the mission's newsletter that discussed the problems of transportation.

"I just knew we had to help them," said Nancy Murray.

The couple had given large sums of money on several other occasions, both privately and through the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay.

"I have a special fondness for women and children and being able to help them," said Nancy Murray.

Ray Murray is the former treasurer of the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay. Residents of Clearwater, the Murray's decided to take a trip out to the mission recently so they could observe the facilities and view the new bus.

"We are just tickled that they came all the way here to see us," said Dora Cruz.

"We are so grateful to have the Murray's involved in our mission," added Cruz.

Also present to take a ride in the brand new student-toting machine were representatives of the Community Foundation of Sun City Center. Sally Erath, Evelyn Lundsford and Rosalie Hennessey were on hand for the tour and ride. Their organization donated \$20,000 toward the cost of the bus.

"Their consistent concern for the needs of the people in



Members of two different community foundations made a visit to the mission recently to receive a special tour of the facility from co-founders Bill and Dora Cruz. Shown are members of both the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay and the Community Foundation of Sun City Center. From left are: Ray Murray, Rosalie Hennessey, Evelyn Lundsford, Sally Erath and Nancy Murray.

the community is unequalled," said Bill Cruz.

Others also contributed to the bus fund so the kids could continue to thrive. They are: Susan and Drew Peloubet, Robert and Mary Peters, Jane Davidson, Georgia Bragdon and Cheryl Wilson, Barry Witzgall, Freeman Irrigation and Repair Service, Robert

and Jacquelyn Holsopple, Marian Sharer, Marilyn Mulcahy, Jennifer Sullivan, Ernest and Lois Spinelli, William Richards and Edith Willett.

"Really, seriously, the generosity of these people has fulfilled our children's desire to continue their educational pursuit uninterrupted," said Dora Cruz.