



Baltimore Nonprofits Partner to Transition Homeless from Unemployment to Employment

HALETHORPE, Md. (January 30, 2014) - Two Baltimore-area nonprofits have partnered together to transition homeless Baltimore city residents from unemployment to employment. Vehicles for Change (VFC), which awards donated cars to families with financial challenges and trains Maryland residents in detailing through its Center for Automotive Careers (CAC), and Back on My Feet (BoMF), a nonprofit organization that uses running to help those experiencing homelessness change the way they see themselves, began collaboration in January 2014. The partnership was a natural fit as both organizations focus on providing individuals training and job placement. Joshua Hock, the first individual to benefit from the partnership, will graduate from the Center for Automotive Career's detailing program on Friday, January 31st.

"To succeed as a runner, you have to be focused and filled with grit, the exact qualities needed by auto detailers," said Phil Holmes, Director of the Center for Automotive Careers, "We're thrilled to have Back on My Feet as a partner and look forward to helping their participants get back on their economic feet."

The Center for Automotive Careers trains low-income residents in automotive detailing and helps place them in jobs in the car wash/detailing sector. In order to be eligible to participate in the CAC, individuals must complete job-readiness training at a participating program, such as the training provided by Back on My Feet.

Back on My Feet, which uses running to build self-sufficiency, confidence and self-esteem in individuals living in residential outreach programs, provides financial literacy and skill-building classes to residents who maintain a 90 percent attendance at weekly BoMF team runs. BoMF teams run at 5:30 am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

"Back on My Feet is excited to be partnering with Vehicles for Change in working to build a better Baltimore," said Jaclyn Range, BoMF's Regional Director of Communications and Corporate Relations, "It is an honor to work alongside an organization who places the same priority on workforce development, providing individuals the tools they need to feel empowered to move their lives forward."

Joshua Hock, 32, the first BoMF resident to benefit from the partnership, graduates as part of the CAC's 4th cohort on Friday. Hock credits running with BoMF in preparing him for the Center for Automotive Career's detailing program; he has run more than 430 miles since joining BoMF last July.

"I'm looking at this like it's a race," said Hock, "And I have never not finished a race. It's so close to the finish line right now. What's the point of getting to the finish line if you are not going to cross it?"

Prior to joining the CAC, Hock completed several job-readiness programs through Back on My Feet, including their “Next Steps” program, which focuses on goal-setting, and “Tools for Success,” which offers mock job interviews and an intense resume critique. Hock has also participated in BoMF’s financial literacy classes.

After graduation, Hock will participate in a four-week paid apprenticeship at Vehicles for Change, where he will practice his newly acquired skills on vehicles donated to the nonprofit. Afterwards, the CAC will assist Hock in finding employment. Since the program launched in September, 7 trainees have been placed in employment; 3 are currently participating in VFC’s paid apprenticeship and 3 more will join the apprenticeship on Monday.

VFC and BoMF have also partnered together to promote car donations to benefit both organizations. BoMF will earn a 40-percent profit on cars that are donated to Vehicles for Change on their behalf. BoMF will use these funds to directly assist their residential members.

VFC accepts donated cars from the public, repairs them, and provides these vehicles to families with financial challenges in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. In its 15 year history, VFC has awarded more than 4,600 cars and impacted more than 16,000 families. In November 2014, VFC expects to award its 5,000th car.

About Vehicles for Change, Inc.

Vehicles for Change, a nonprofit organization committed to providing donated and repaired cars to families at minimal cost, was founded in 1999. Vehicles for Change awards cars to families with financial challenges throughout Maryland, Washington and Virginia, so that they have reliable access to employment.

For more information about Vehicles for Change, or to donate a vehicle, visit www.vehiclesforchange.org or call (410) 242-9674.

Follow the organization on Facebook at www.facebook.com/vehiclesforchange and Twitter @vehicles4change.

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