

NEWS RELEASE ON JULY, 2017

RECYCLED RIDES™ VEHICLE GOES TO SINGLE DAD

The gift of a Recycled Rides™ vehicle will make life a little easier for a single father who is juggling working full time with taking care of a young daughter.

Aaron Bankson unexpectedly found himself in the role of single parent about a year ago when he was left to take care of his then one-year-old daughter. Aaron quickly went through many life changes to become a reliable and responsible single parent. One of those changes included getting involved with the Sixpence program in Seward. Sixpence is a program that works with parents and soon-to-be parents to help them become their child's first teacher. Sixpence provides at-home visits for families and holds bi-monthly Play and Learn events, where parents and their children come to play and do activities in the Sixpence room at Seward Elementary School.

Bankson, who lives in Utica, works at Tenneco in Seward. Struggling to find a reliable vehicle, Bankson often rides to work with a family member. Another family member drives Bankson to the grocery store and to other errands as needed. When Bankson heard about the Recycled Rides program, he thought it wouldn't hurt to submit an application through Seward County Bridges. And with support from his advocate Katie Radcliffe at Sixpence, that's what he did.

On July 4, Bankson will ride on a special float in the Grand Parade in Seward. The float was designed and coordinated by the Southeast Community College (SCC) Collision Repair and Automotive Program in Milford. After the Parade, at the 4th of July Awards Celebration at the Bandshell, Bankson will be presented with the keys to a fully-refurbished 2006 Honda Accord.

Bankson said it's awesome that he was selected to receive the vehicle. "It is a great opportunity, and it is a blessing. This will help me become more independent and will give me reliable transportation to become more financially secure." He was planning on trying to fix up a "lemon" that he bought earlier this year with his income tax refund, but now he can put that money towards better things.

For now, Bankson is focused on his daughter, who he describes as a happy and fun kid, and he continues to work towards providing her with all the things she needs. And he's thankful for the gift of the Recycled Rides™ vehicle. "I am so grateful and happy to be selected," he says. "It is going to really help me out."

Recycled Rides™ is a community service program of the National Auto Body Council where body shops repair and donate recycled vehicles to families in need.

The Honda Accord, which had been totaled because of severe hail damage, was donated by Nationwide Insurance to the Recycled Rides™ for Schools program. Students enrolled in the SCC Collision Repair and Automotive Program in Milford repaired and then donated the vehicle to Seward County Bridges, a local nonprofit organization, that facilitated the giveaway in partnership with the Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership. Bridges works to enhance the quality of life for all people in Seward County through empowerment and engagement within the county and community by networking, connecting, and coordinating. After all the applications to the Seward County Bridges/Recycled Rides™ program were reviewed by the Bridges Committee, Bankson was selected to be the recipient of the car. This is the first year for Southeast Community College in Milford and Seward County Bridges to be involved with Recycled Rides™ for Schools.

“The students really enjoyed restoring the car,” said Bill Vocasek, Program Chair of the Auto Collision Repair Program at Southeast Community College in Milford. “They were especially motivated to help support a family in need. We hope to continue partnering with Recycled Rides™ for Schools in the future.”

“Seward County Bridges was a perfect partner for Recycled Rides™,” stated Jonathan Jank, Board Member with Seward County Bridges. “Bridges serves as a dot connector for people and charitable causes in Seward County. We celebrate with Aaron and his daughter the gift of a reliable vehicle.”

Many other businesses and organizations donated to the project. Recycled and aftermarket parts were donated by Auto Body Supply, PPG, and Safelite Auto Glass.

- 30 -

For more information, contact: Suzanne Gligorevic, Marketing & Communications Coordinator, Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership at 402-643-4189.