

Transporting

HOPE

By Cynthia Fodor

“YOU CAN’T GET AHEAD IN LIFE WITHOUT TRANSPORTATION.” -CATHY RAINE

David Johnson knows what it’s like to be homeless. After a series of misfortunate events, he ended up at the Bethel Mission.

“I’m lost. I’m scared. I don’t know what I’m going to do. My money was running out. They put up a flyer for a job and a ride share. It turned my life around,” Johnson said after he hopped on the Job Rides van waiting to take him home from work at Dee Zee Manufacturing.

Others on the van include a refugee from Haiti, a refugee from Congo. Some riders have been incarcerated and stay in a halfway house. They are all trying to get back on their feet. Finding work and getting there is the first step.

“I’m trying to save for a car. I could be in a shelter, under a bridge or who knows where without this,” one says. “I could not do this job without them. Uber would take all your money. And I’m never late for work.”

The driver of the van understands.

Bill Raine picked up the employees at 5:30 AM and is back at their workplaces to carry them home at 3 PM.

Raine is behind the wheel not just of the van but

of the non-profit he and his wife Cathy created. They came up with the Job Rides idea to provide people with equal access to employment through transportation, realizing work is one of the keys to a better life. The unique program has the potential to lift Iowans out of poverty.

“Bill is always looking to help people. And I was raised in a very service oriented home as well,” Cathy explains. “My parents did a lot of things to show me that it’s not just about consuming life. It’s about what you can give back in life as well and Bill and I have that philosophy.”



“It’s a hand up program not a handout,” Bill said. “We’re a newly married couple and Cathy said she’d love to start a 501c3 and I said I’d love to take a

big swing at some big issue.”

That led to a complicated, time-consuming and expensive endeavor. Two years later, they are setting schedules for eight vans to transport 150 daily riders to and from work, three shifts, seven days a week at 32 pickup locations. The logistics of masterminding the routes are mindboggling. The wheels are always spinning.



“We’re both risk takers.” Cathy said. “We both came from not much and have been blessed with education and good jobs. We recognize that. It’s so rewarding to help others.”

Cathy is a social worker and mental health therapist with children. Bill is a manufacturing recruiter and owner of Raine Recruiting. They saw the need and became the driving force behind an idea to help change lives and make a difference in their corner of the world.

“There are people who want to work, to provide for their families. They want to be able to be on their own without the social safety net. They just need a hand to start the wheels of success turning again,” Bill said.

The Raines believe the workers do need to have some skin in the game. Each rider pays \$50 a week for the service which helps Job Rides pay the bills but the couple says it is costly to keep the wheels turning.

“We have vans that need tires. I just fixed the brakes on another one. We pay nine drivers. Insurance, gasoline, maintenance is expensive.”

They have received support from employers, friends, private and corporate foundations but invested a significant amount out of their own pockets. As they transport hope, they hope to receive more support to keep their services rolling. Yet with servants’ hearts, the Raines understand the vital role they play in helping people with nowhere to go become productive citizens with a paycheck and a goal. It is a life changing ride.

Dee Zee, Inc, contracts with Job Rides for multiple shifts. Talent Recruiter Sarah Tighe says it has been a lifesaver for the manufacturer. “We have been working

with Refugee Services to provide arriving refugees with job opportunities. These employees have become amazing assets to our company, but after a few months, if they do not have a license and car, they have no way to get to work due to no longer being eligible for transportation through government services.”

The demand continues to grow with a wait list of companies seeking workers and individuals seeking work and rides.

“We have contributed \$2.4 million to the economy with these folks working,” the Raines said.

Sarah R will tell you how the service gave her a second chance after being released from the Iowa Correctional Institute for Women.

“I had little but my prison sweatsuit to my name. They made sure I got to my job everyday. I’ve accomplished a lot. I’ve purchased a new car, am going back to school and just got approved for a mortgage to buy my first home.”

Seeing how they are changing lives everyday keeps Job Rides and the people they serve moving toward a brighter future down the road.*



Job Rides, Inc

Helping people get to work

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