

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **NORTHWEST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE “CHARITABLE CHARIOTS” HELP SPENCER FAMILY**

NCC’s Charitable Chariots program, a SkillsUSA Service Learning Project, donated a 2008 Chevy Uplander to a family that had been identified by the Auto Assistance Committee (AAC) on Friday, March 17. The AAC is a group of service agencies from across Northwest Iowa who have joined together in order to make the best possible selections for the recipients of the cars donated from NCC. The applicants must fill out a form and complete an interview with the committee to be eligible for consideration of the car give-away.

The recipient of this car was Nichole Burch, Spencer, Iowa. She is the mother of five and she has custody of 2 - Evie (1) and Alyssa (16). Burch said, “This is surreal and a huge blessing. The car is gorgeous. I am a single mom with two children at home with no means of transportation. This will help me with everything from everyday tasks like getting the kids to school and doctor appointments. Now I will be able to drive to a job. That opens a lot of opportunities for employment that I didn’t have before. Thank you to everyone who worked on this car. They did an amazing job!”

Burch identifies herself as a recovering addict who is originally from California. She came to Iowa as a result of an invitation from a lifelong friend, Schnicka Heal, to gain support/mentorship for her recovery process. Burch has recently joined Living Word Outreach Ministries church in Spencer and has been involved with the startup of a women’s recovery house in Spencer called the Victory House.

Paulette Karolczak, Director – Early Childhood Iowa Lakes Region, is the AAC Committee Chairperson was also at the presentation. Karolczak commented, “The Charitable Chariots program is an amazing opportunity for our 4 county area. We took a needs assessment of our services that we provide in the area and one big gap was transportation. It is a real barrier in rural Iowa to our families to improve themselves. Our clients need transportation to get to their jobs, counseling sessions, and to help their kids. This program is a real blessing and offers a real solution to a big problem for them.” Karolczak continues, “The fact the NCC stresses community service to their students is another huge win for the community. It’s great they teach the importance of service and that it takes a community working together to make a healthy environment.”

Austin Honkomp, Diesel Technology student from Sheldon said, “Working on the car made me feel good. It is a really good feeling to pay it forward. I’m glad we passed the hat among the students and were able to give her a Casey’s gift card for gas too.”

The Charitable Chariots Program is a service learning component of NCC's Diesel Technology and Automotive Service Technology programs. Students from the two programs join together along with Iowa based businesses to repair and service automobiles for the purpose of donating back to area families in need. To date, nineteen vehicles have been donated to needy families in Northwest Iowa.

Mark Steinle, NCC Automotive Instructor, explained the reason Charitable Chariots was started. "The instructors in the two programs wanted to stress to students that they not only participate in community service, but community service in their given professions. When our students graduate we want them to be well-rounded professionals and that includes giving back to their communities." Steinle continued, "So we added a service learning component to the curriculums of both of the programs. We are trying to teach that life is not all about a paycheck. Giving back to the community you live in is a good life lesson."

Larry and Marcia Hoekstra donated the 2008 Uplander for this give-away. Hoekstra said, "Marcia and I donated the car because we wanted to bless someone and offer them some encouragement along their journey." Larry is also the President of the NCC Board of Trustees representing District VII. He thinks the service learning component of the curriculums at NCC is very important and necessary. "Service learning is good for the students and the community." stated Hoekstra. "Being a community college is more than just words in a name. It's important to teach our students how and what it means to be a good citizen of the community."

Area sponsors of this vehicle include: Iowa Auto Recycle Association, Johnston Automotive, and Arnold Motor Supply.

If you are interested in donating to the Charitable Chariots program please contact Mark Steinle at Northwest Iowa Community College. You can call him at (712) 324-5061 or email him at [msteinle@nwicc.edu](mailto:msteinle@nwicc.edu).

For information on any of NCC's 40+ programs or to receive your free copy of the NCC Viewbook, contact the Admissions Office at: [studentservices@nwicc.edu](mailto:studentservices@nwicc.edu), (712) 324-5061, 1-800-352-4907, or visit our website at [nwicc.edu](http://nwicc.edu). At NCC – Your Success is Our Story.

**Photo - Charitable Chariots2: L-R: Larry Hoekstra, NCC Board of Trustees President, Nichole Burch, her daughters Alyssa holding Evie**