

Compassion Story of the Month

With Brattleboro voting overwhelmingly to become part of the international Charter for Compassion, the Reformer and The Commons have agreed to publish a “compassion story of the month.” This is the thirty-eighth. Information on submissions from Brattleboro area residents is offered below.

“Glad We Can Be of Help”

By Toni Ortner

I was already worried when I left Putney. My Subaru was misbehaving, and I wasn't absolutely sure it was up for my journey to Brattleboro Union High School. But I needed to get to the high school. The National Guard was offering a major distribution there for people in need, and I wanted to get some for families in need in the Putney area.

I made it to the high school OK, but then faced a different challenge: The place was jammed – I had to wait two hours and 40 minutes before I even reached the distribution area, meaning that I had to keep turning the engine on and off as I inched slowly forward. The food distribution itself was like a long buffet. But what wonderful food: lots of fresh produce, Cabot cheese, gallons of milk and huge packets of cooked chicken strips. And the men from the National Guard couldn't have been more friendly and helpful. One even guided me in scooting forward a bit at a time to reach each of the distribution points.

My car, however, wasn't at all happy. The engine light went on, the car stalled again and again.

I somehow managed to get back to Putney and make the deliveries, but it was clear my car's engine was in trouble. I phoned Subaru, haltingly explained the problem and was told to bring the car down and drop it off. I had no doubt that the expert Subaru mechanics would be able to fix the car, but I also knew that the bill would total at least \$150 which I could ill afford.

What choice did I have?

The next morning, I got a call from James at the Brattleboro Subaru front desk telling me that my car was ready....and there would be no charge. He said something about an emissions contract. I was speechless. James added....as if it were necessary ... “We know folks are going through hard times right now. We're glad we can be of help.”

Submissions, from Brattleboro area residents, for future publication, not to exceed 650 words, should be emailed to: compassionstory@gmail.com or mailed to: Compassion Story of the Month, PO Box 50, Marlboro, VT 05344. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address. Earlier submitted stories will automatically be considered in subsequent months.