

Why It Works – St. Croix Valley Christians In Action – Car Care Saturday

- Began May 1993. We are a small group of volunteers.
- We have been helping about 500 families a year. About 200 of these receive free car repair, a free car or a repaired vehicle sold at a reduced price. Through a combination of classes, mentors and vehicles their lives are changed.
- Within months of starting we found that repairing or giving a free vehicle was not accomplishing our desire to help the person. They frequently came back needing more help within 6 months or were coming from being helped by other organizations. Their struggle in life hadn't improved.
- Volunteers and contributors wanted to see lives changed rather than providing temporary fixes with continued misery for the person.
- Some of our board members and volunteers lives had been changed by completing a Crown Financial Ministries Bible based budgeting program. We added the requirement that a person (recipient) complete this course before they could be given a free car or second time free car repair.
- This began to really change lives for about 1/3 of the recipients. Normally it would change lives for nearly all class participants. We asked the recipients and professionals "why?"
- Why? Because nearly all of our recipients came from or live in a poverty or serious trauma experience (serious accidents, life-threatening illness, separation and loss, neglect, witnessing violence and a variety of abuses including physical, sexual, emotional and familial substance abuse).
- During the classes and after a mentor works with the recipient as the class material is applied in their lives and "secure attachment" issues addressed. Now we see over 75% of the lives changed. The others clearly choose not to change and we are OK with that. It is their choice. Interestingly some of these later begin changing, based on what they had learned in the classes.
- People come for help with their car needs but leave with the resources to keep their car repaired & maintained and their lives improved. Many get jobs and we now see some come back as volunteers and mentors, rather than in vehicle need again.
- We serve people in the Stillwater school district, Oakdale, Woodbury and referrals from Christian churches from many miles away.
- The number of low income families in need of reliable vehicle transportation greatly exceeded what we had anticipated.
- Program costs average \$125,000 a year with another \$75,000 in professional guidance, shop use and lot rent support.
- Currently we are short of donated cars. We need about 200 more cars a year as well as more cash donations. We are volunteers, so donations go to directly help people, not fundraising, salaries, etc. St. Croix Valley Christians In Action, PO Box 225, Lake Elmo, MN 55042-0225 651-773-3083.

"Let us stop just saying we love people; let us really love them, and show it by our actions".

1 John 3:18 (TLB)