



Courtesy of the Literacy Council of Southwestern PA
Literacy Council of Southwestern PA tutors work with students.



Courtesy of Memories in the Makin'
Memories in the Makin' provides equine therapy lessons at Sugar Run Stables in Avella.

DRIVEN BY HOPE: WASHINGTON AUTO MALL'S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

By Natalie Gloady

In today's business landscape, corporate social responsibility is more than just a buzzword — it's a crucial element of a company's ethos. Washington Auto Mall, a key player in the local automotive industry, exemplifies this commitment through its innovative Driven by Hope program. This initiative combines philanthropy with employee engagement, significantly impacting the community.

"An important part of our mission as a group has always been to support our community," said Jennifer Trapuzzano, advertising and marketing director of the Washington Auto Mall. "We work here, we live here, our children go to school here ... it is important to us to be involved and give back as much as we can locally. This local focus ensures that the benefits of the program are felt close to home, fostering a stronger, more connected community."

The Washington Auto Mall has long been known for its charitable efforts, but it wanted to do more — something that involved its employees directly in the process, as well as given the opportunity to partner with local media outlets to promote nonprofits making a difference within the Washington County community.

"We felt like it would be a great addition to our existing philanthropic efforts but also allow our employees a unique opportunity to get involved in the giving process," said Trapuzzano. "By having Washington Auto Mall team members involved, we can ensure that the contributions are not just financial, but also personal, meaningful and, most importantly, local."

Each month, the Driven by Hope committee carefully selects a Washington County-based nonprofit by considering upcoming awareness months, researching local nonprofits and discussing the impact these organizations have on the community. The committee strives for diversity in their giving, ensuring that a wide range of causes receive support.

"The committee is very intentional during the selection process," said Trapuzzano. "We consider a variety of factors when it comes to naming a recipient each month. We want to make sure we are inclusive, intentional and are spreading the love across vast groups that support vast causes."

The program's impact extends beyond the financial support provided to the nonprofits. It aims to inspire other individuals and businesses to recognize the importance of giving back.

"It is our hope that individuals and businesses recognize what Driven by Hope is doing and inspires them to also give back to our community," said Trapuzzano.

Recent beneficiaries

Literacy Council of Southwestern Pennsylvania

The Literacy Council of Southwestern Pennsylvania was the May 2024 Driven by Hope program beneficiary. This organiza-

tion is dedicated to improving literacy rates and providing educational opportunities for adults and children in the region. By supporting the Literacy Council, the Washington Auto Mall has helped empower individuals through education, fostering personal growth and community development.

Memories in the Makin'

Memories in the Makin' was the April 2024 recipient and has greatly benefited from the Driven by Hope initiative. This organization focuses on preserving the memories of individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia through art therapy. The support from Washington Auto Mall has enabled Memories in the Makin' to expand its programs, offering more sessions and resources to participants. This has provided significant emotional and therapeutic benefits to individuals and their families, enhancing their quality of life.

IMPACTED INC.

IMPACTED INC., the March 2024 selectee, is a nonprofit that helps others navigate the difficult and often overwhelming road of diagnosis, treatment and long-term effects of concussions. The support from Washington Auto Mall will allow them to grow their prevention, education, advocacy and support programs.

The Driven by Hope program is not static; it is designed to grow and evolve. The committee has recently been involved in and sponsored other local events to help raise awareness about the program and the nonprofits it supports. Looking ahead, the committee envisions expanding its activities to include volunteering and fundraising efforts.

"Driven by Hope will grow by the number of members, but we also plan to implement additional volunteering and fundraising opportunities for organizations, our teams and the community," said Trapuzzano. "This growth will enable the program to make an even more significant impact in Washington County."

The longer the Driven by Hope program runs, the more organizations are recognized and supported, which in turn spreads awareness about the vital work being done within the community.

"When these organizations personally resonate with someone, it inspires people to get involved or at least pass on the information, thus the more people impacted," said Trapuzzano. "This ripple effect is a testament to the program's potential to inspire broader community involvement and support."

In conclusion, the Washington Auto Mall's Driven by Hope program is a shining example of how businesses can play a pivotal role in supporting their communities. By combining philanthropy with employee engagement and focusing on local impact, the program uplifts the nonprofits it supports and inspires others to give back. As the program grows, its potential to effect positive change in Washington County and beyond is limitless.