



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer
Trina Wright and Rick Young present Christina Smith and her two daughters, Bella Allen, 3, and Gracee Allen, 10, the keys to a 2000 Isuzu Trooper.

Christmas comes early

Car Doctor's Young donates car to family in need

By Jolene Guzman
 The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — When Christina Smith found out she would be the owner of a new-to-her car, she was in disbelief.

"I won't say the words I said, but I was really excited," Smith said Monday.

The car, a 2000 Isuzu Trooper, is an early Christmas present for Smith and her two daughters, Gracee Allen, 10, and Bella Allen, 3.

Rick Young, the owner of The Car Doctor, donated the car to them after asking around to find a family in need of reliable transportation. She picked up the car Monday after Young made sure it was ready for the road and detailed.

PJ. Johnson with Titus III House in Dallas knew right away that Smith and her family were the perfect recipients. Johnson said Smith began a long journey of recovery at Titus House, which provides a place for women to live while in recovery.

Now Smith is sober, has reunited with her children, has her own apartment and recently landed a job in Albany, Johnson said.

"I went through Titus House, too, and was just telling PJ. the other day that it's amazing because she gave me the opportunity to be there," Smith said. "I didn't have the greatest reputation for behavior, so she trusted in me and allowed me to be there. It helped me a lot. I got a lot done there. Titus is amazing."

Smith said shortly after arriving at Titus III, she entered treatment, but Johnson held a room for her at the house.



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Bella Allen, Christina Smith and Gracee Allen celebrate receiving an Isuzu Trooper on Monday.

"I came back right afterwards," Smith said. "I was there for about five months doing all the programs I needed to do."

The donation is a wish fulfillment for Young, too.

"I've wanted to do this for about five years. It seems like the holidays come and go so fast that by the time I thought about it, I didn't have enough time to do it," Young said.

This year, the stars aligned, and Young received the car from a long-time customer.

"The car itself was donated to me by a customer who was moving out of state and didn't have a need for the car. We fixed everything that was wrong with it," Young explained. "He asked if I knew of a place to donate a car. I told him I've been wanting to do this forever."

A grateful Smith thanked Young Monday when he handed the keys over to her.

"He made a very happy family," she said. "We're going to get a lot of use out of it."

Young said he's glad to see the car go to a family that really needs it.

"That's a perfect example of someone who had gone through hard times and worked to get themselves back on the right track," he said. "I'm happy to see a family like that get what they deserve."

He plans to make a similar donation every year around the holidays or find a family that already has a car that needs repairs and do that work for them.

"We could bring it into the shop and do an overhaul on it, make sure it's all safe for them," he said.

Smith hugged and thanked Young before loading her daughter's car seat in the Trooper.

"Merry Christmas," he said, "and we will see you at your next oil change."

Solution on Page 12A

				2	1	5	
		1	9	7	4		3
	6						2
7			3	4	9		8
	1	9	2		8	6	3
6		3	9	1			4
9					2		
8		7	4	2	6		
	4	1	7				

Sudoku

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆

4	3	2	8	1	6	7	5	9
5	6	9	3	7	4	8	1	2
1	7	8	9	5	2	4	6	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
2	1	6	7	4	9	3	8	5
9	8	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
8	5	3	6	2	1	9	4	7
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	3	8

How to do Sudoku

Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row, and three-by-three square. See example above.

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