

Van donated to serve another veteran in need

By ARLA SHEPHARD
MASON COUNTY LIFE

For the past five years, Army veteran Ron Andersen has had to rely on a wheelchair to get around, with his wife, Cheryl Andersen, working hard to transport him to and from doctor's appointments.

The Belfair couple have an uncovered Jeep, which made Ron Andersen's trips especially unbearable whenever it rained.

"I have MS (multiple sclerosis), along with about every other thing you can think of," he said. "This chair is not weather compatible in the rain, but you've got to get to your doctor's appointments rain or shine."

At the start of February, the Andersens received a welcome surprise — North Mason Resources and the local Chapter 22 of the Disabled American Veterans had arranged for Andersen to receive a donated Dodge Ram van outfitted with a wheelchair lift.

Shelton resident Sherry Hartley had owned the van and used it for her brother, a disabled Army veteran, until he recently died.

Hartley wanted the van to go to another veteran in need, and her neighbor, Army veteran Fred Foreman, contacted Harry Tachell, service officer for Belfair's Chapter 22 DAV, located at North Mason Resources.

"Cat (Ross, North Mason Resources director) and I looked at each other and said we knew exactly who needed the van," recalled Tachell, who is also an Army veteran. "This is just an example of the small miracles we do here at North Mason Resources."

Since receiving the van, the Andersens have been able to go with ease to doctor's appointments and run errands in Tacoma, Silverdale and Port Orchard.

"It is a miracle," Cheryl Andersen said. "Before, if we went to the hospital in Silverdale, we'd have to call an ambulance to get there and to take us home."

The van has opened up Ron Andersen's world.

"I get to go to the store, I get to go shopping, where before it was a pain, all around, spending 20 minutes or so just getting in-

ON THE COVER

From left, Belfair resident Cheryl Andersen, her husband Ron Andersen, North Mason Resources director Cat Ross and DAV service officer Harry Tachell stand with the Dodge Ram van that North Mason Resources and the DAV arranged to be donated to the Andersens. Army veteran Ron Andersen has multiple sclerosis.

Photo by Arla Shephard

to the Jeep," he said. "Now, if we want, we can go out and have dinner somewhere."

He never thought something like this could happen to him.

"Nothing like this ever happens for me," he said. "It is about as good as winning the lottery."

For more information on services the Disabled American Veterans offers, or to make a donation to a veteran, email Harry Tachell at dav22vso@outlook.com, call 552-2303 or visit North Mason Resources at 140 NE State Route 300 in Belfair.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HARRY TACHELL



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Top: From left, North Mason Resources director Cat Ross watches as Shelton resident Sherry Hartley hands over the keys to the Dodge Ram van she donated to Army veteran Ron Andersen and his wife, Cheryl Andersen. Hartley had been using the van for her Army veteran brother, who recently died.

Bottom: Shelton resident Sherry Hartley wanted to donate her Dodge Ram van to a veteran in need. The van is outfitted with a wheelchair lift.

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