COMMUNITY CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF

Greater Bridgeton Area Transit
Connecting Our Community

Who knew riding a bus could be so much fun?

The first anniversary of the Greater Bridgeton Area Transit (GBAT) program was an overwhelming success. More than 500 people attended the event held in Bridgeton’s Culinary Park from 4 to 7 p.m. on Halloween.

The free event commemorated one year of Pascale Sykes Foundation funding for the expanded hours of the existing bus line operated by the Cumberland County Department of Employment and Training.

During that past year, ridership increased 33% and 3,800 additional passenger trips were documented. That was reason to celebrate in and of itself, and the event provided the community the opportunity to get together and have fun as a result of that good news.

Family fun at its finest was the result of months of planning by the GBAT’s advisory committee. There were smiles all around as the anniversary event featured food, music, information tables, give away items and of course Halloween candy for the throngs of trick-or-treaters.

Those involved in making the event a well-attended success are as follows:
Pascale Sykes Foundation: President Frances Sykes, her husband Skip and Executive Director Colleen Maguire; Gateway Community Action Partnership: President and CEO Albert B. Kelly, Perry Valentine, Andre Jones, Natasha Harden, Vice President/Planning Mike Cudemo; Cumberland County Department of Employment and Training: Executive Director Dante Rieti, Transportation Coordinator Ryan Feaster, Customer Service Representative Gloria Cortez, Omnibus Operator George Johnson, Omnibus Operator April Reaves; City of Bridgeton: Mayor Kelly and Public Works Director Dean Dellaquilla; Carmelo’s Ristorante & Pizza: Chris Lairson; Glen Park Townhomes: Pat Thomas, Jane Pelletier; Cumberland County Guidance Center: Gary Moellers
Kyesha Scott was sitting in class at Shore Beauty School in Egg Harbor Township when she received a text from her step dad telling her to call him right away. She had no idea what he wanted, but it had to be important since he wouldn’t normally text her while in class.

Scott left the classroom and called her step dad. It was good news. No, make that great news. Scott had the winning ticket for a new flat-screen, high-definition television through the Greater Bridgeton Area Transit anniversary event raffle.

“I went back into the class and told everyone I won a television,” Scott said while picking up her television in December. “Santa came early. It was very exciting. I never won anything as big as this before. I’m going to put it in my bedroom. I have the wall mount and I am ready to go.”

Scott obtained her raffle ticket on the GBAT bus while going to work. The GBAT bus has been a blessing. Before the grant-funded extension of GBAT routes, through a transportation initiative funded by the Pascale Sykes Foundation, Scott often had to walk to her job at McDonald’s, and it could take her up to 25 minutes.

“The bus has been really helpful, especially when it is cold,” said Scott, who is scheduled to graduate from the Shore Beauty School in nine months and is hopeful of starting a career as a cosmetologist and barber.

The Pascale Sykes Foundation has granted $242,000 since October 2012 for an expansion of the Greater Bridgeton Area Transit public bus service. Expanded hours have helped passengers reach places of employment, job interviews, doctor appointments and shopping centers, while learning about various resources in their communities that advance Gateway’s mission “to provide services that improve the quality of life and promote self-sufficiency.”

Gateway is the lead agency in this program in a collaboration that includes the Cumberland County Department of Employment and Training.

The Greater Bridgeton Area Transit program celebrated its first anniversary on October 31 with a free event in Bridgeton’s Culinary Park that included food, music, information tables, giveaway items and Halloween candy for trick-or-treaters. More than 500 attended.

“We are pleased with the success of the Greater Bridgeton Area Transit program,” said Albert B. Kelly, Gateway’s President and CEO. “I like hearing stories like the one of Kyesha Scott and how the bus has helped her. It’s great to know that we are making a difference in someone’s life. We thank the Pascale Sykes Foundation for recognizing the need for transportation in Bridgeton and making this happen. We also thank our partners for their hard work in making this a success.”

For more information on the GBAT program, call (856) 451-8920 x108 during normal business hours.