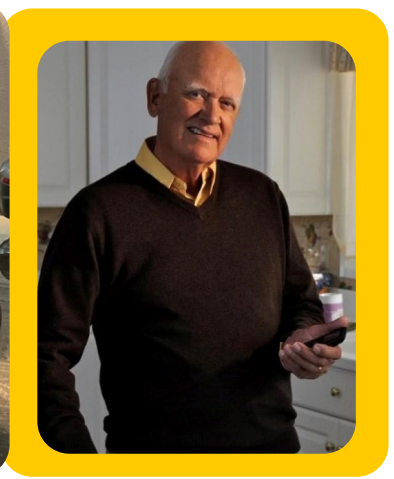


CIVITAN ON A MISSION TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HONOR OF A LOVED ONE



By Brittney Knox-Mensah

For those flying into the most recent Civitan International Convention in Albuquerque, you might recall a friendly face who provided transportation to and from the airport as a fundraiser for the Civitan International Research Center. Matthew Gutierrez, current club president and marketing and communications director for the City of Vision Civitan Club, set out on a mission to provide the best and most welcoming travel experience for all of his passengers. But, after talking to Matthew, this was more than a courtesy he wanted to provide. He was doing this as a fundraiser in honor of his late uncle who recently passed away.



He shared this about his loved one, "My uncle Maurice was a wonderful father, uncle and friend to everyone he knew. Words cannot express what a great man he was. Both him and my grandpa Ray, his brother, are finally reunited together in Heaven and I know even though I never met my grandpa Ray he is hearing all the good I have done and is watching down on me."

Matthew went on to share, "My uncle always taught me how important it is to love your family and to give back to your community no matter how much you can do because one day you might need the help."

And, that's truly what Matthew has done by creatively using this opportunity to fill a need Civitans had to get to and from the airport, but to also raise money to help the CIRC at the same time.

Not only was Matthew focused on the fundraising element of this endeavor, he took great pride in providing a safe, clean and one of a kind travel experience. Whether it was an early flight or late flight, passengers were greeted with a smile, assisted with their luggage and found a complimentary Fiji water in the car. Not only is the car easy to identify with the "We Are Civitan" car magnet, but it received a special wash and detail especially for the Convention experience.

One of Matthew's passengers said the following about his experience, "Great job, Matthew! You provided an important service and made it fun! Thank you!"

Matthew said he wanted to extend a heartfelt thank you to every Civitan who allowed him the privilege to provide them with transportation while visiting Albuquerque, New Mexico for the 104th Civitan International Convention.

"We had a great time at the convention and also in my car singing songs to pass the time and having fellowship as I drove members to their destination. I will forever cherish the memories we made that week," he said.

Matthew is waiting for Giving Tuesday to donate his funds raised to the CIRC as that day comes with helpful matching credits, but it also gives him a little more time to secure any other donations to help him keep towards his goal. He is nearing \$150 for his total, which he made from provide \$5 car rides, per person, per trip during that time.

As he offers his final reflections on providing this service for fellow Civitans, he said, "My uncle instilled in me the importance of doing good for others and I hope through this I have made him proud. It was truly a blessing to me to meet so many Civitans and provide excellent service."