



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Two HCDE Head Start moms to receive rehabbed cars, Responsible Parenting Award from Bates Collision Centers

WHAT:

Just in time for the holidays, two Harris County Department of Education Head Start moms will each receive a rehabbed mystery vehicle full of gifts from Bates Collision Centers as part of their annual Responsible Parenting Award.

In its 23-year tradition, Bates Collision Centers will be giving cars No. 41 and 42 to **Destini Rhodes**, a teaching assistant at Sheffield Head Start, and **Alionuska Montalvo Perez**, a Pugh Head Start mom. Both were nominated by Head Start staff.

Each year, Bates Collision Centers gives two refurbished cars to HCDE Head Start parents who are actively involved and demonstrate responsible parenting. Shop owners Lee and Leila Bates have made this annual giveaway a priority because they recognize the sacrifices parents often make to provide for their children.

“Transportation is life-changing, whether you have it or you don’t, and people want to help people that are helping themselves,” said Leila Bates. “This program doesn’t just focus on their needs; it focuses on their desire to go beyond.”

Bates employees donate their time and skills to work on the cars and help fill them with gifts. Other community members and businesses donate gas, insurance, and materials needed to rehab the vehicles.

About Destini Rhodes

Twenty-eight-year-old Rhodes, a single mom of three, is a full-time employee and student at San Jacinto College pursuing an associate’s degree in early childhood education. She hopes to enroll at a university and major in special education. Her son’s autism diagnosis inspired her journey into the education field. Rhodes currently relies on a borrowed vehicle to shuttle her kids and herself to and from school and work.

About Alionuska Montalvo Perez

Montalvo Perez is a Cuban immigrant who arrived in Texas five years ago in search of a better life for her family. Her son, Jencarlos, 3, is enrolled at Pugh Head Start. Though she works as a custodian at the City of Houston’s Bob Lanier Public Works Building downtown, she is a certified phlebotomist, but her inability to speak English is a barrier to higher employment. Montalvo Perez relies on public transportation but hopes that a car would allow her to be more actively involved in her son’s school activities.

WHO: HCDE Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support Services **Jonathan Parker** and Head Start Senior Director **Venetia Peacock**; Bates Collision Center co-owners **Lee** and **Leila Bates** and staff; HCDE Head Start teaching assistant and mom **Destini Rhodes**, and HCDE Head Start mom **Alionuska Montalvo Perez**, and their families

WHEN & WHERE: **Thursday, December 16—Destini Rhodes**
10 a.m.
Bates Collision Center—Channelview
15532 East Freeway (I-10) Service Road, Channelview, TX 77530

Friday, December 17—Alionuska Montalvo Perez **Speaks limited English, fluent Spanish*
10 a.m.
Bates Collision Center—Baytown
3219 N. Main St., Baytown, TX 77521

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