

# ThisWeek COMMUNITY NEWS

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## Community Resources Center Agency's auto generates grins

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**THISWEEKNEWS.COM**

Posted Oct 2, 2017 at 6:05 PM

Updated Oct 2, 2017 at 8:19 PM

### Gail King calls it the “smile car.”

Gail King calls it the “smile car.”

The employee of the Clintonville-Beechwold Community Resources Center said that's because when she pulls up in the gaudily painted car to provide a ride for a client, they invariably smile.

An unlikely confluence of events resulted in members of the center's Village in the Ville program being ferried to appointments in eye-catching style, in a vehicle customized by a truck artist from Pakistan.

It began when Carl Bogenschutz's wife, Margaret, got a new car. Carl inherited her old car and decided to get rid of his 7-year-old Honda Accord. The Worthington couple has known Bill Owens, CRC executive director, since the mid-1980s, so Carl offered to donate his old car to the settlement house.

“He wouldn't have been able to get a lot for it on the open market,” Owens said. “It's crucial that we have that kind of support.”

Meanwhile, Clintonville resident and longtime car-art enthusiast Greg Phelps learned that Haider Ali, famed for his painting of commercial trucks in Pakistan, had plans to visit the United States. Phelps has long admired Ali's work and invited him to Columbus.

“He travels around the world ... going to London and doing a bus, going to India and doing a project, just spreading the news of creating bonds and peace through this art form,” Phelps said.

“He wanted a car to paint. I wanted it to be something significant.”

Phelps was aware the CRC had received a vehicle for taking senior citizens to medical appointments and on other trips.

Things came together over Labor Day weekend at the Hot Times Community Music and Arts Festival in Columbus' Old Towne East neighborhood, when Ali was turned loose on the CRC car.

"It was really amazing to watch him create this from 5 o'clock on Friday to 5 o'clock on Sunday," Phelps said. "Every step along the process it got more detailed. He does it so effortlessly. The symbolism, I think, was wonderful."

"This car (is) my gift for Columbus people and message of peace and friendship for Pakistani and American people with my art and colors," Ali said last week via Facebook. "Art is the only source for which peace in the world can be established.

"My goal is also that I use social media to decorate the world with my colors and talk peacefully."

Although the artist speaks little English, Owens said he was able to communicate to him that the design on the vehicle should incorporate some symbols from the resources center's logo. Ali also researched on his own and found that the cardinal is Ohio's state bird. He added one to the car.

Owens said the finished product "makes it super-easy for people to recognize their ride is there."

"So far, it's been so much fun," said Christine Happel, director of Village in the Ville. "It's always really nice to drive our older residents in general. You can just tell it's something new in everyone's day."

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