

Meal Mobile Rolls Services Directly to Those Living on the Streets

The Lord's Place and GL Homes partner on delivering hot meals and engagement services to help end homelessness.

The Lord's Place started the engine to the Meal Mobile, a comprehensive service delivery bus for those experiencing homelessness, on Monday, September 18, 2023. Thanks to the long-standing partnership and financial support of GL Homes, the local social impact agency is now able to drive its wrap-around services directly to the most vulnerable individuals living on the streets.

This transformative vehicle will change lives with a full-service kitchen for serving wholesome, freshly cooked meals and an office for [engaging clients](#) to expedite their journey out of homelessness. The bus also serves as an extension of The Lord's Place's [culinary training program](#) which gives clients the necessary foundational skills to acquire an entry-level position in most commercial kitchens.

More than 90 attendees were present to officially start the bus engine, including: The Lord's Place executive leadership team, board members, staff members, friends of the agency; the GL Homes executive leadership team and company employees who had a direct hand in the design and creation of the bus; and local dignitaries.

Director of Culinary Operations Jim Collins and some of the [Joshua Catering](#) staff, volunteers, and culinary apprentices prepared and cooked breakfast wraps, muffins, and frittatas to demonstrate the delicious and nutritious meals that will be served.

"The Meal Mobile embraces our philosophy of using food as an engagement tool. Whether we engage with our clients at our physical engagement center at 2808 N. Australian Avenue or directly where they are living on the streets, we know the first necessity is curbing their hunger. Once we address the essential need for food, we can begin the conversation of how to meet their other needs to ultimately end their homelessness," stated Diana Stanley, CEO of The Lord's Place.

The mobile engagement office will allow the outreach team to pass out clothes and hygiene products and connect homeless individuals to healthcare, mental health services, shelter/housing, and more.

During a formal presentation, Stanley introduced GL Homes Executive Vice President Alan Fant, Palm Beach County Mayor Gregg Weiss, Palm Beach County Commissioner Mack Bernard, and Palm Beach County Commissioner Marci Woodward who addressed the attendees about this "labor of love" which took seven years from initial concept to starting the engine.

"We are most grateful to our partners at GL Homes and to our county officials for recognizing the need in our community to bring our services directly to where our homeless neighbors are. This bus is the first of its kind in Palm Beach County, and we are thrilled to be able to expand the way we are delivering services to our clients," said Stanley.

In addition to donating more than \$100,000, the GL Homes team also contributed more than 500 volunteer hours to purchase and convert the 41-foot-long bus from a mobile command unit into a food truck and engagement office. GL Homes employees assisted with concept development, equipment selection, kitchen design, interior architectural design, exterior graphic design, and obtaining city permits.

Mayor Weiss also emphasized the importance of community partnerships: “It’s our responsibility to make sure that everybody has an opportunity to have a safe, clean place to live so that they can live a respected life as they choose here in our community...We have a responsibility for others and taking care of others in our community. You all live it. You live it each and every day. And to our partners at GL Homes, your commitment, your support, we couldn’t do this without people that are willing to step forward and help provide the resources.”

Following the presentation, The Lord’s Place founding board member Jack Scarola said a blessing for the Meal Mobile and then Stanley handed the keys to Fant who officially started the engine.

According to GL Homes Vice President of Community Relations Sarah Alsofrom, “The Meal Mobile will deliver high-impact, life-changing services to those experiencing homelessness. There is nothing else like this social service delivery system on wheels in our community. Together, The Lord’s Place and GL Homes will help break the cycle of homelessness.”

“This is a change-agent vehicle. There is no question about it. And we are using food as a way to engage because we believe that every single person living on the street does not deserve to be there,” added Stanley.

The bus will travel to various locations throughout Palm Beach County, beginning with Victory City Church in Riviera Beach, Journey Church in Boynton Beach, and The Ramp in Belle Glade.

About the Meal Mobile:

The 41-foot-long bus is a converted mobile command unit, formerly owned by the City of Coral Springs. The inside consists of three main areas. The front is the driver’s cabin, including a small couch and the restroom. The middle is the kitchen equipped with a full-size combination oven (steam and dry heat), a 30-inch griddle, a 24-inch grill, a full-size warming cabinet, a 27-inch sandwich making unit, a small reach-in fridge, a two-drawer freezer, a 30-gallon potable water tank, and a 3-bay sink. The rear section is a full-service office for four people—capable of internet access, printing, and other administrative work. Mounted to the rear of the bus are two 100-pound propane tanks. As a food-service provider, the Meal Mobile is fully licensed and undergoes regular and unannounced inspections.

The bus can cook for and serve food for up to 100+ people per trip. Typical menu items include: salads, hot and cold sandwiches, burgers, dogs, steak sandwiches, grilled cheese, pancakes, eggs, breads, and a derivative menu of what is being offered in Café Joshua on any given day. The menus can be customized to include special meals like vegan/vegetarian, keto, etc.