

Toyota and VMI Deliver Wheelchair Accessible Van to Disabled Local U.S. Air Force Veteran

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PHOENIX, Ariz. (Jan. 26, 2015) – [Toyota](#) and [Vantage Mobility International](#) (VMI) delivered a 2015 Toyota Sienna with the Northstar Access 360 in-floor side entry ramp conversion to disabled U.S. Air Force veteran and Star Spangled Salute contest winner, Susan Kirsch. The delivery ceremony was held this morning at the American Legion in Pasco, Wash., with executives from Toyota and VMI, as well as Ms. Kirsch's friends and family and local mobility dealer, Specialty Mobility.

“We’re thrilled to be a part of a program that can change the lives of deserving veterans such as Ms. Kirsch,” said Doug Eaton, president of VMI. “The Star Spangled Salute contest is our way of saying thank you and giving back to those veterans who have given so much. VMI is proud to provide mobility options that help disabled veterans regain their independence. We’re excited to see how Ms. Kirsch’s wheelchair accessible van transforms her family’s life.”

The Star Spangled Salute is part of VMI’s Operation Independence, a national program to educate U.S. veterans about federal grants available to them, and to assist first-time buyers. More than 1,800 veterans from across the U.S. and Puerto Rico entered the contest for the chance to win the Toyota Sienna with a VMI Northstar Access360 conversion. The online contest began in March 2014 and Kirsch’s name was drawn on Veteran’s Day, November 11, 2014.

“Toyota is honored to, once again, donate a Sienna as a way of showing our appreciation to the men and women who bravely served our country,” said Mark Oldenburg, Toyota’s National Fleet Marketing, Mobility and Strategic Planning Manager. “Susan Kirsch is an inspiration to millions of Americans. She bravely served our nation and perseveres today by refusing to let her disability prevent her from raising a family. Delivering the Sienna conversion van to Ms. Kirsch is Toyota’s small way of saying, thank you.”

Kirsch is a 49-year-old veteran who joined the U.S. Air Force at the age of 17. She suffered a spinal injury during a war game training maneuver, leaving her disabled. Susan has a 14-year-old son who is also disabled, so the family will truly benefit from this mobility van. Her personalized gray Toyota Sienna was delivered by VMI dealer John Culver of Specialty Mobility in Kennewick, Wash.

The Kirsch family’s new Sienna was donated by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., and features the Northstar Access360 conversion donated by VMI. VMI’s wheelchair conversion for the Toyota features full-cut floor and removable driver and passenger seats, offering greater access with more space, flexibility and ease of use.