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# YORK TOWN CRIER

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## Marcotte takes 'American pride' in giving back to the community

By **Beth Meisner**  
Staff writer

Charlie Marcotte puts his money - and his expertise -- where his mouth is.

The owner of American Pride Automotive won't hesitate to tell you "it isn't the government's job to take care of people."

He also won't hesitate to share his philosophy that it's "us" - local businesses, local civic organizations, neighborhoods and churches - who should be lending a hand and supporting projects and programs which help those who need it.

And Marcotte is right in the middle of "us."

Marcotte operates an American Pride in the Tabb area of Yorktown and another in Williamsburg. Every six weeks, one or the other of the businesses holds Family Service Day.

"We service cars for single parent families for free," Marcotte said. That includes an oil change, tire rotation, new wiper blades if needed and a good going over to make sure there is nothing serious going on that could make the car dangerous to the driver and its passengers.

A regularly serviced car is a safer car - and it lasts much longer, too, which is often a very important bonus for a single parent. Over the years, American Pride has given away thousands of dollars of free automotive care, Marcotte says.

"We'll probably never know how much we affected people" with this maintenance service work, he says. It's not a stretch to imagine lives - as well as engines -- have been saved by what he and his crew do.

"We all want to reach out and do something positive for the community," Marcotte says. His people volunteer their Saturdays when Family Service Day rolls around.

"The guys that work here are the best," he adds. "We hire nice people."

Marcotte hopes American Pride will be a "good witness" to other businesses who will also put their "boots on the ground" and get involved with the community.

Churches and other organizations know who needs help and businesses can tap into that information to offer their own brand of assistance - or join forces with other businesses in a group effort. He welcomes co-sponsors for Family Service Days



A youngster colors a picture to go with the plant she potted for her mother at the last Family Service Day, which was held right before Mother's Day. Photo courtesy of American Pride

and has an arrangement with Chick-fil-A, which operates a coloring table for children who don't want to sit around doing nothing while Mom or Dad gets the car worked on.

Family Service Day is open to all single parents and no referral is needed - just show up! The offer includes military families who have one parent deployed because the one left at home has all the hassles of a single parent even though it's a temporary condition.

In addition to Family Service Day, Marcotte offers a series of car care clinics and sponsors a booster club card which enables qualifying organizations to "help themselves" with fund raising efforts.

Marcotte, a New Hampshire native, moved to Williamsburg in 1988 when he got out of the Army. He opened his first American Pride in that city in 1995 and the York

County location in 2005. He now employs 15 people.

American Pride won the first Business of the Year Award given by the York County Chamber of Commerce and has been AAA Shop of the Year two years in a row. It is a full-service automotive shop, offers inspections and has a wide variety of domestic and foreign cars for sale.

"We live up to our American Pride name," Marcotte says. "We fly the flag with respect," taking it up and bringing it down every day. "We take pride in the tradition of excellence."

American Pride is located at 1939 George Washington Memorial Highway in Yorktown (595-4100) and at 5406 Airport Road, Williamsburg (903-2473.)

It is a member of the York County Chamber of Commerce.



*Family Service Day will held on Saturday, June 12, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at American Pride's Yorktown shop located at 1939 Route 17, Yorktown*