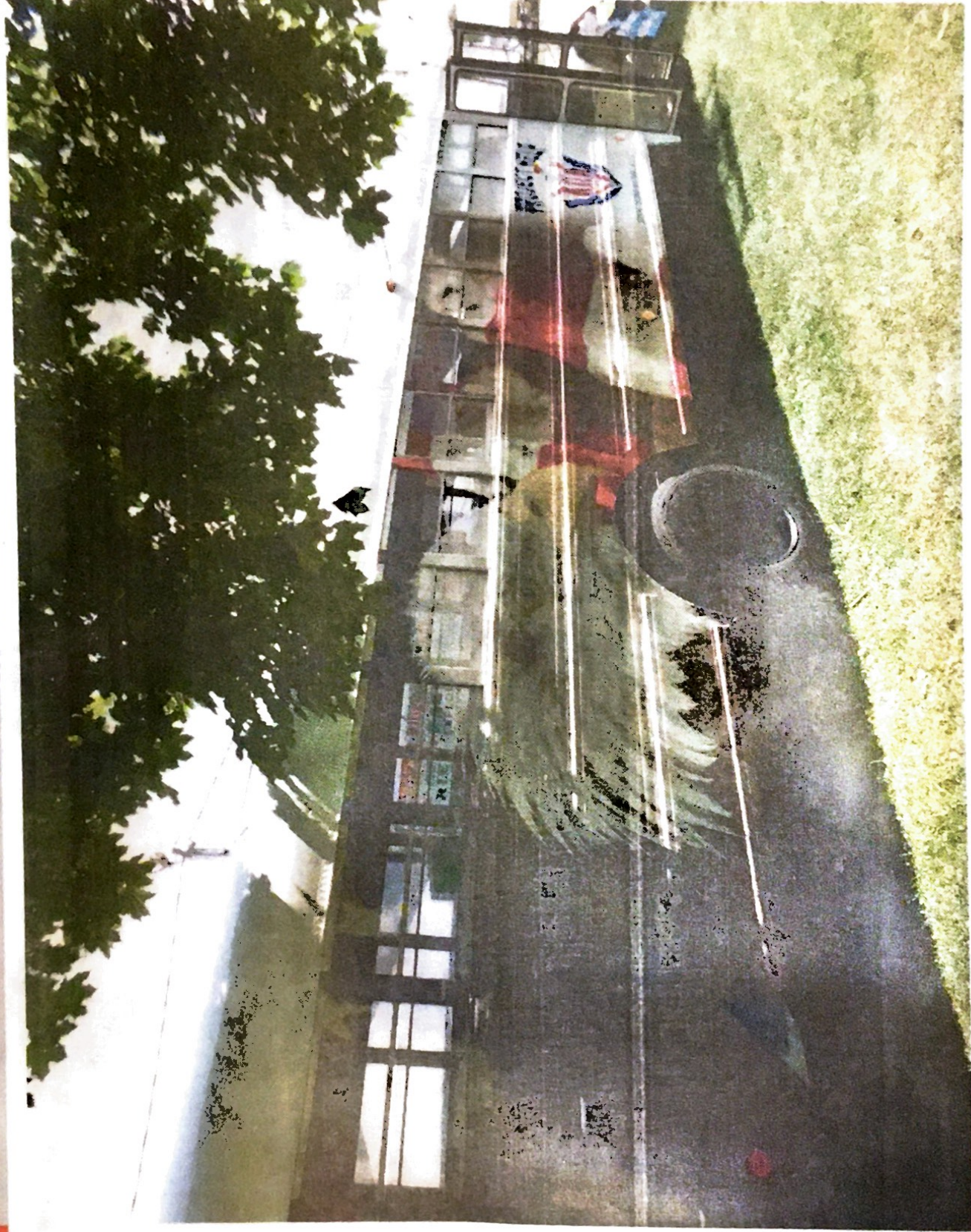


Newton. Veterans bus to be revealed Sept. 10, p. 2



This Saturday volunteers will be thanked and veterans will get a look at Project Help's newly refurbished school bus that will serve as a "mobile closet" to bring services, including resume help, clothing and even barber services, to veterans.

YOUR EVENTS

Project Help bus unveiled in special ceremony

By Kyle Morel
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NEWTON – Everyone gathered on the Connor Green at Sussex County Community College could hear the distant roar of engines, growing louder as they made their way through the campus from the upper parking lot.

Eventually, 15 motorcycles driven by members of the American Legion Riders of New Jersey came into view, traveling along College Hill Road before making a right turn into the large parking lot. The American Legion flag and the head of a bald eagle, followed behind, and was escorted by the escorting motorcycles as it entered the pavilion to loud whistles and applause from the crowd.

It was quite the entrance for the “mobile closet,” a converted Project Help bus now used by Project Help to assist local low-income veterans with transferring back into civilian life. The vehicle’s renovation was no small feat, and the ceremony at the end of the Tuesday night was Project Help’s way of showing gratitude for everyone who participated in the project and helped make it a reality.

“Our charity is a real, true charity. None of us get paid,” said Sandy Mitchell, founder and executive director of Project Help. “We work hard and do this because it’s more than a full-time job, so when we have the opportunity to put our people out in front of other people to recognize our effort, we like to do that.”

The project originated about two years ago when Mitchell contacted longtime family friend Mike Miller of George’s Salvage, who donated a school bus that would be driven around the county to aid veterans without access to a vehicle. From there, several other local professionals worked on renovating the bus, and all were honored with Project Help’s ceremony.

Project Help’s executive director, Sandy Mitchell, said the bus interior, renovated the bus contracting, renovated the bus interior in two days, installing custom cabinets, wood floors and hanging rods for clothing. All-County Transmissions owner, Mike Merle provided new brakes at no cost to Project Help, while Bernie Cooke, of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, had the bus wrapped in vinyl for free – normally a \$12,000 cost, according to Mitchell.

The last remodeling project for the bus will be completed by the local chapter of the Sheet Metal Workers Association, which will install a platform and stairs with a railing near the rear of the vehicle to make two entrances and exits.

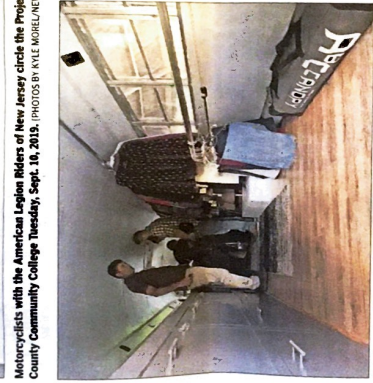
Mitchell explained that the bus will be used primarily in advance of college career fairs and similar events, where free clothing is available for veterans to take as they prepare for job interviews. Any other services, it will also include computers and printers at select times so beneficiaries can type up and print out resumes.

“We really want this to be a valuable service to the veteran community,” Mitchell said.

Approximately 100 members of the public attended Tuesday’s unveiling of the bus, among them SCCC administrators; Sen. Steve Oroho and Assemblymen Parker Space and Hal Wirhills, all R-24th Dist.; and Freshholders Herb Vardley and Sylvia Petello.

In brief remarks toward the end of the ceremony, Oroho credited the persistent attitude of Mitchell as well as the generous spirit of the community in seeing the bus project come to fruition. As he looked around at the many veterans and first responders in attendance, he made it his duty to announce that the bus is the public’s choice to repay their debt to society.

“That’s why this kind of bus is so important because some



Guests get a chance to tour the inside of the Project Help “mobile closet” bus during an unveiling ceremony for the bus at Sussex County Community College, Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019.



The Project Help “mobile closet” bus is seen parked during an unveiling ceremony for the bus at Sussex County Community College, Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019.



Mike Miller of George’s Salvage, left, listens as Project Help founder and executive director Sandy Mitchell addresses the crowd during the Project Help mobile closet reveal under the pavilion at Sussex County Community College, Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019.

of them really need our help,” Oroho said. “That’s what we’ve got to always remember, that they need us.”

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