



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 20, 2017

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Goodness of America

Uber Driver an Über Hero

Uber driver Keith Avila of Sacramento, California, saved a teenage girl from sex trafficking by being observant and acting quickly.

When Avila picked up two women with a teenage girl and drove them to a Holiday Inn, he overheard the women openly talking about delivering the 16-year-old to a “john” for money.

“The woman in the back started coaching the girl,” recalled Avila. “She said, ‘before you go in, check for weapons. When you hug them and touch them, pat them down.’”

Avila adds, “The woman told the girl to get the donation first. She said, ‘Ask if they have your donation before you go into the room.’”

Avila told *People* that the teenage girl looked as young as 12 years old, but was wearing a very short skirt.

Avila could not believe what he had heard and was astounded by the blatant conversation. It was a scenario he never imagined witnessing at his job.

“The worst thing I thought would happen when driving Uber is that I would be getting drunk passengers and I would have to handle them,” Avila told NBC Latino. “All my life, I thought about people throwing up in the car as the worst scenario.”

After Avila dropped the women off at the hotel, he immediately called the police.

“I was 100 percent sure I knew what was happening,” Avila told *People*. “It wasn’t 99.999 percent. It was 100 percent. And I knew I had to do something, but I didn’t know exactly how I was going to do it. I wondered if I should take pictures with my phone.”

Once convinced that something illegal was transpiring, Avila listened closely to the conversation and was even able to learn which hotel room the young girl was to go to meet her “john.” He provided all of the pertinent information to the police, and they arrested Disney Vang, who was caught in the hotel room with the teen, along with the two women who were delivering the teenage girl to Vang.

According to NBC Latino, the teenage girl turned out to be a runaway. Police placed the girl in an “alternative housing situation” until she could be reunited with her parents.

Officer Chris Trim from Elk Grove police credited Avila with saving the girl from a life of trafficking: “He could’ve said nothing. Went on his way, collected his fare. And then that 16-year-old victim could’ve been victimized again.”

Won’t You Let Me Take You on a Sea Cruise?

A worldwide *Harvard Business Review* study found that more than half of employees do not believe they are respected or appreciated by their employers. But employees at Bertch Cabinets in Waterloo, Iowa, are not likely among that group.

From January 8 through January 13, Bertch Cabinets was closed for business. Why? Because the boss, President Gary Bertch, treated all 800-plus employees to a cruise.



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"It's terrific.... Everyone works hard for a common effort and reaps the rewards," Bertch told Today.com.

According to *The Courier*, the company has been offering trip incentives to its employees since 1989, but could not continue to provide this benefit to the staff after 2005, when the company struggled through the economic downturn. "It was a long and challenging recovery.... Things were tighter than normal financially," Bertch said.

Now that the economy has improved, Bertch Cabinets has been able to bring back the very generous incentive program.

Bertch challenged employees a year ago to meet certain goals, and offered the cruise as an incentive.

"We were anticipating we'd have better sales again this year," he said. "We just tried to get all of our people pumped up a little more to achieve the various goals, both customer-oriented goals and financial goals."

Employees were also provided the option to opt out of the trip and take the cash instead.

Today.com reported that since the news of the cruise has gone viral, other companies have reached out to Bertch for advice on how to implement a similar program. Some of the advice Bertch has offered includes using chartered planes to eliminate the difficulties of booking flights and reducing stress for first-time travelers.

"Sure, there are some big bad guys in business ... but most are good people and care for their employees," Bertch said.

Teenagers Honor Veteran

Six teenaged boys took time out of their Christmas holiday to serve as pallbearers at the funeral of a Navy veteran who died without a family.

The *Sun Herald* reported that the Vietnam War veteran, 70-year-old Jerry Wayne Pino, died on December 12. His funeral arrangements had reportedly been pre-arranged, but he had no pallbearers to carry his casket. "He was an unclaimed veteran," said Cathy Warden, who works at the funeral home that handled Pino's services, Riemann Family Funeral Homes.

Warden asked her son, Bryce, if he would mind serving as a pallbearer. Bryce already had plans to be out of town on the day of the funeral, but his friends were more than happy to step in. Within minutes of texting his friends, he had enough volunteers.

In total, six students from Long Beach High School — JT Tripp, Bailey Griffin, Joseph Ebberman, Jake Strong, Kenny McNutt, and James Kneiss — volunteered to serve as pallbearers. All of them play for the Long Beach football team.

"Bryce sent the text and asked them to wear khaki pants, shirts and ties. 'Let's do this!' he told his classmates. Almost immediately, they said yes," Warden said.

Tripp's mother took to Facebook to praise the boys for their good deed. "This morning, JT and fellow Bearcats will be pallbearers at a veteran's funeral service," said Stacie Tripp in the post. "Proud mom when he told me that no one should be buried without people who care present, especially a veteran."

"Exposure to patriotism and respect comes from the home, schools, and community. Proud of all these



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boys!" The boys were presented with the U.S. flag by the honor guards at Pino's service. They intend to hang the flag in the football team's locker room, along with a plaque honoring Pino's service.

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