



Colombian city gets ambulance, fire equipment from local departments

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LAWRENCE — For the past 25 years, sick and injured people living in Jardin, Columbia, got a ride to the hospital in the back of a pickup truck.

Patriot Ambulance in Lawrence and members of the Lawrence, Andover and Dracut fire departments have come to the rescue, donating a 2000 ambulance, which will be shipped to the Central American town. It will arrive packed with firefighting gear, jackets, pants, boots, stretchers, neck collars, backboards and bandages.

"This is a perfect gift," said Wilson Jaramillo, 41, a native of Jardin now living in Hingham. "Wow. I'm so emotional. I can't wait to get it there because they're waiting for it with open arms."

Jaramillo told friend Doris Anziani about the need in his hometown. Anziani, who is a Lawrence firefighter, got the ball rolling by talking to fellow firefighters and staff members at Patriot. Anziani also spoke with Patriot's District Manager Cindy Marcotte.

"As soon as I asked Cindy, she said yes," Anziani said. "I feel awesome because the ambulance will bring hope to the people of this town."

Marcotte also is glad it will help the injured.

"It's going to be faster for them to get to the hospital and transport people in bad weather," she said.

After getting the keys to the ambulance, Jaramillo took it for a test drive down Blanchard Street.

"Wow, it's fantastic," he said when he returned a few minutes later. "Now I want to be an EMT."

This is the fifth ambulance Patriot donated to a Latin American country. It had previously donated three to the Dominican Republic and one to Puerto Rico, said David Walton, the company's co-owner.

"This is an incredible piece of equipment and it's like you're giving them gold. It's great to see they're putting it to good use," Walton said.

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