

# Richmond Times-Dispatch

Friday, April 22, 2011 | [Mechanicsville, Virginia](#) 52° Feels Like: 49° Mostly Cloudy



## Business

### Mobility Center of VA helps those in need

[Recommend](#)

30 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.

By JOAN TUPPONCE  
Published: April 11, 2011

The idea for Mobility Center of VA stemmed from Kaye Crenshaw's conversations with a paraplegic friend.

"I started the company because people that have mobility challenges need services," she said. "When we started, the mobility industry was in its infancy. There were mostly mom-and-pop companies. Since then, it has grown into a legitimate industry."

Mobility Center of VA provides equipment such as converted vans and stair lifts as well as a variety of services for people who are mobility challenged.

Crenshaw co-founded the company with her now former husband, Dave Potter, in 1994 after a 15-year stint in sales.

At first, the company provided only van conversions with items such as hand controls and wheelchair lifts. Today, it sells everything from converted vans, high-tech driving systems and turning seats to stair lifts, ceiling lifts and residential elevators.

When customers come to Mobility Center, they are usually going through a sensitive time in their lives, Crenshaw said.

"I am proud that during a moment of crises, we can give them something they need," she said. "What I have learned in this business is that people rise to the occasion."

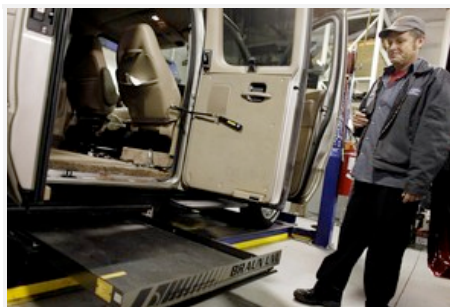
Helene Nichols of Clifton bought a new van from Mobility Center in October to transport her husband, Steve, who is severely disabled with ALS, known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

"We traveled to Richmond because of their reputation," she said.

There were some adjustments that needed to be made to the van during the first few months.

"They were so willing to work with me," Nichols said. "They would come get the van or do whatever was easiest for me. They are very patient and supportive. I'm very thankful they are out there."

The South Richmond-based company started selling wheelchair-accessible vehicles in 1995 at the same



Credit: EVA RUSSO/TIMES-DISPATCH

Patrick Cook and his colleagues at Mobility Center of VA Install lifts and other home and vehicle adaptations for people who have difficulty getting around.

#### Related

**Mobility Center** **What is it?** provides equipment and services for the mobility challenged **Employees:** 20 full time, including the owner **Owner:** Kaye Crenshaw **Location:** 249-255 E. German School Road **Contact:** (804...

[view more](#)

German School Road location it occupies today. The company has the ability to adapt all types of [transportation](#).

"We do whatever it takes for getting people in and out and driving. We have even outfitted a lawn mower with hand controls," Crenshaw said. "All of our adaptations are from a prescription by a [physician](#) or [occupational therapist](#)."

Crenshaw diversified the company's product line by adding [home lifting equipment](#), stair lifts, residential elevators and porch lifts after realizing her customers also had specialized needs at home.

"This type of equipment helps people be more independent," she said. "We've been gradually adding it for the past six years."

[Mobility Center](#) installs, repairs and services all of the products it sells.

"We have our own technical crew," Crenshaw said. "We have a 24-hour emergency service line. We make sure that if there is a need, we can respond in a reasonable time."

Melanie Munster of [Henrico County](#) had to call the company's emergency line when she had trouble with the ramp in her van, making it impossible to transport her daughter to a doctor's appointment.

"They were here in 20 minutes," she said. "They fixed it on the spot. Their service is wonderful."

Since its founding, the company has grown more than 3,000 percent.

"We have had the strongest growth since 2006," Crenshaw said.

The company's six sales associates are certified as aging-in-place specialists, which helps the business tap into the growing senior market.

"We go out and do home evaluations," Crenshaw said. "We partner with a [contractor](#) who does the construction for us, and we do the equipment part of the job."

About 60 percent of its business is vehicle-related, with the remaining 40 percent focused on needs in the home.

"I see a lot of need for what we do in the home-based and aging population," Crenshaw said. "That part of our business grew during the recession because people are having difficulty selling their homes."

[Mobility Center](#) sells its products and services across [Virginia](#) to individuals and organizations such as churches and schools. The company recently opened a company called The Ability Center in Norfolk.

Recommend

30 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.

### Reader Reactions

Voice your opinion by [posting a comment](#).

**Post a Comment** (Please [Sign In](#) | [Register](#))

- Please avoid offensive, vulgar, or hateful language.
- Respect others.
- Use the "Report Inappropriate Content" link when necessary.
- See the [Terms and Conditions](#) for details.

Please sign in to respond | [Sign In](#) | [Register](#)

ADVERTISEMENT



---

the Richmond Times-Dispatch ©2011 Media General Communications Holdings, LLC. A [Media General](#) company. [Terms and Conditions](#) | [Work With Us](#)

---

**Web Links:** [Advertise With Us](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Email Alerts](#) | [Times-Dispatch Shop](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [Mobile Alerts](#) | [Search](#) | [Find Richmond Jobs](#)  
**Newspaper Links:** [Subscribe to the Newspaper](#) | [TD-Digital](#) | [Kindle Edition](#) | [Place a Classified](#) | [Submit News Tips](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Photo Reprints](#)  
**Main Media Partners:** [Richmond.com](#) | [Goochland Gazette](#) | [Mechanicsville Local](#) | [Midlothian Exchange](#) | [Virginia Newspapers](#) | [Powhatan Today](#) | [PolitiFact Virginia](#)

---

 Calais - Powered by Thomson Reuters