



NEWS

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LOST AND FOUND IN CRENSHAW; MTA BUS OPERATOR HELPS OUT DAZED WHITTIER MAN

"Tired but calm," is the way Jack Fenelon described his 85-year-old dad, John Fenelon, after MTA bus operator Cora Lewis came to his rescue after a six-hour odyssey.

The Whittier resident, for years the stabilizing force in the family, simply took the wrong bus home from a mall and wound up in Crenshaw - nearly 25 miles off-course (or 2-1/2 hours by bus).

The alarms went off when the elder Fenelon, who needs a walker to get around, didn't return to Springhouse, a retirement home, on time for lunch with another son.

Jack, a former gas company employee, like his dad, and wife Holly, will never forget the frantic search for Dad that cool Sunday afternoon. They were beginning to fear the worst.

However, much to their relief came word that MTA Bus Operator Cora Lewis, 28, had found the exhausted John, sitting on the ground, alone, near an MTA bus layover zone. She then invited the weary-looking man onto the bus and asked him for identification.

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"From just looking at him I could tell that he was in trouble," said Lewis, who has driven buses for the MTA for six years. "I said, 'do you need something?' and asked him to come on the bus, and then we just went from there."

Lewis, recently recognized by the MTA Board of Directors for the actions she took, also received a \$100 check and letter from the Fenelon family as an expression of their gratitude.

"It's always nice when bus operators are acknowledged for helping other people," said Lewis, a past recipient of numerous certificates of appreciation and commendations for passenger assistance, safe operation and schedule performance.

Lewis and similar acts of kindness are no strangers. Sometimes her bus might flash "out of service," but actually she's helping a sight-impaired person cross the street to a transfer bus.

"Cora Lewis took the initiative," said Jack Fenelon. "We were very grateful he had fallen under her care. She was terrific."

Holly Fenelon believes Lewis' intervention quite possibly prevented a far greater tragedy from occurring.

"We believe that Cora's concern and involvement spared John from great potential harm as night was falling and an elderly person could become very ill from chilly nighttime temperatures or even become a victim of crime. Cora is truly a treasure in our opinion."

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"We're all very proud of Cora," said Ellen Levine, Executive Officer for Transit Operations. "She is one of our very best. Every day, somewhere, some place, MTA bus operators are performing many acts of kindness, but Cora's action really stands out."

Cora Lewis lives in Los Angeles and has a 6-year-old son, Demetrius Martin, an honor student at St. Eugene's Catholic School.

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