

CASE STUDY

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Saniflo Pumps Help Nonprofit "Shower Love" on the Homeless

The humanitarian organization, Showering Love, installed grinding pump technology in its flagship bus, which will travel around Florida, providing showers and other services for the homeless.

BY TONY BARA

Many homeless individuals struggle to improve their lives due to limited personal hygiene, which can hamper their confidence and the impressions they make on others, such as potential employers. Showers are taken for granted by those with regular access. For those without, they can be a rare privilege.

To help provide the homeless with access to personal hygiene, Florida resident Jeanne Lewis founded Showering Love, a nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring dignity and hope to those most in need.

"Imagine you've just mowed the lawn in the hot sun, or finished a heavy workout," begins Lewis. "Now imagine that after all that hot, dirty, sweaty work, you're unable to take a shower for weeks or months. That's a reality many homeless people face."

Lewis speaks from personal experience. She spent roughly a decade on the street herself. "One of the worst things about homelessness was that feeling of being dirty all time," she recalls. "It destroys your personal dignity, self-esteem and sometimes even your will to live."

Lewis' vision for restoring hope to the hopeless took physical form when, thanks to general financial donations from like-minded individuals, she was able to purchase a bus to be converted into a mobile shower station. "It was amazing. We raised the money in only three weeks," she says.



Plumbing contractor Rowdy Gifford installs the Sanibest Pro grinding pump from Saniflo inside the Showering Love Bus.

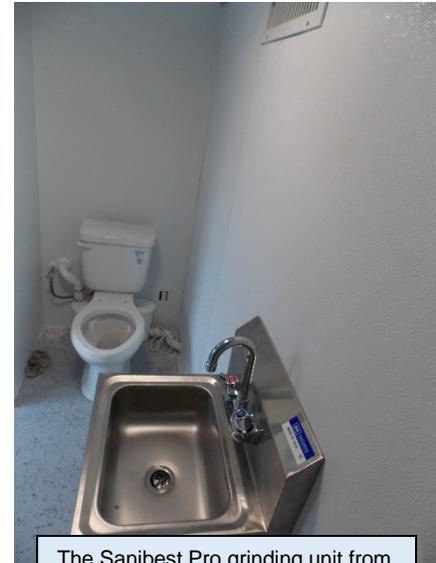
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Afterward, the hard work began of gutting the bus to add showers and toilets, which would become available, free of charge, to those in need. Rowdy Gifford, a master plumber with more than 20 years’ experience and the Licensed Inspector and Plans Examiner for the city of Parkland, Fla., planned and executed the bus’s plumbing.

“We wanted to make the bus totally self-sufficient from a plumbing standpoint,” explains Gifford. To that end, one freshwater tank and one black water tank was installed in the back. Two bathrooms were planned in the 8-foot by 30-foot bus—a handicap facility in the center of the bus and a second space for general use in the front, behind the driver’s seat.

“The challenge lay in moving the water from the bathrooms, across the bus, to the storage tank,” continues Gifford. “Penetrating the bus floor wasn’t practical, due to limited space. We needed a smarter solution.”



The Sanibest Pro grinding unit from Saniflo discharges waste up to 25 vertical feet and/or 150 horizontal feet.

Pumping it out

After conducting some internet research, Gifford discovered Saniflo above-floor plumbing technology. Designed for a host of residential and commercial applications, above-floor plumbing systems macerate (or grind) waste into a slurry before pumping it horizontally and/or vertically through a small-diameter drain line into a septic or sewer system — or, in this case, a storage tank.

“I had never heard of this option before, but it struck me as the perfect solution,” recalls Gifford. “The pump eliminated the need to tear up the floor and allowed the piping to be run along the side wall.”

Saniflo donated two Sanibest Pro units to the humanitarian project, which were distributed by Ferguson. Unlike standard macerators, the Sanibest Pro comes equipped with a heavy-duty grinder that can easily handle the accidental flushing of sanitary articles, such as feminine products, baby wipes, dental floss, condoms, etc. The pump discharges waste up to 25 vertical feet and/or 150 horizontal feet. “We chose the heavy-duty grinders to ensure we could process anything the clientele happens to throw down the drain,” explains Gifford.

He installed the units without any challenges or problems, connecting them along the side wall to the storage tanks in back. “We tested the units out, and they work perfectly,” Gifford says.

“The heavy-duty grinders are perhaps the most crucial, well-performing elements of the entire project. In hindsight, there’s so many applications where I would have used these pumps in the past, had I known about them.”

Moving Forward

With a viable plumbing system installed, the Showering Love bus will be driven to various locations, especially churches, throughout Florida to provide showers and other services to the homeless. With the current setup, the bus can handle up to 40 showers before the tank reaches capacity.

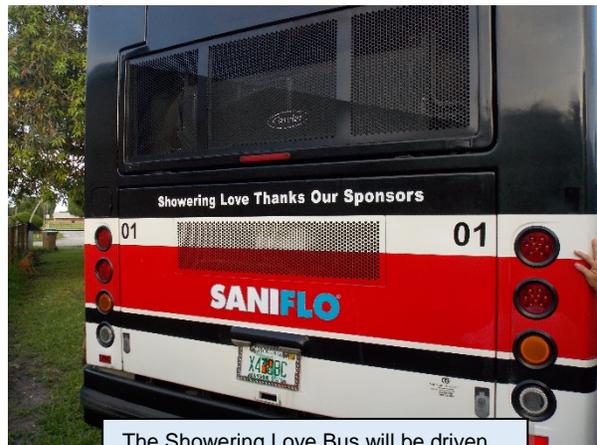
Lewis hopes this prototype becomes a launching pad to create a fleet of buses eventually, meeting not only homeless individual’s showering needs, but also providing them with laundry services, shoe donations and other essentials that will help in the job hunt.

“These showers need to be worldwide. Homelessness is across the board, not just here in Florida,” states Lewis. Gifford echoes the sentiment. “Some people just need a hand up to get back on their feet,” he says. “Thankfully, products like Saniflo pumps are helping them do just that.”

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SFA SANIFLO U.S.A. — whose parent company originated macerating plumbing technology — offers a complete line of up-flush toilets and gray water pumping systems for residential and commercial applications. Saniflo developed its innovative, “above-floor plumbing” technology more than a half-century ago and has led its commercialization worldwide. Today, the company markets macerating technology through 24 subsidiaries in 50 countries and has sold more than seven million units worldwide since 1958. Saniflo markets through independent sales agents throughout North America, and the product line is currently available at distributor and dealer locations throughout the United States and Canada.

- **For more information**, contact Saniflo at 1-800-571-8191. Or visit the Saniflo website at www.saniflo.com.
- **For editorial assistance**, including photography, contact John O’Reilly or Tony Bara c/o O’Reilly DePalma: 815-469-9100 or john.oreilly@oreilly-depalma.com; tony.bara@oreilly-depalma.com.
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