

# Commuter Spotlight: Kerri Stratton

## The wonder mom

Kerri Stratton had been interested in vanpooling for awhile. She knew it would help her save money on gas and vehicle maintenance. She also knew her company might subsidize the van.

In April of 2007, the time was right. She worked with her employer, Southern Company, and the CommuteSmart team to start a vanpool from Calera to Inverness.

With all the plans in place, it was time to board the van. Kerri had some trepidation at first, but once she made the jump, she found that her vanpooling commute made her life much easier. Her initial concern was how she would pick up her son if he needed her, but thanks to CommuteSmart's Emergency Ride Home program (ERH), Kerri found that she didn't have to worry about being stranded at work in the event of an emergency.

CommuteSmart will reimburse any registered commuter up to five times per year for the cost of a taxi or rental car. Now Kerri has the peace of mind that if she or her son becomes ill or she has to work overtime, she'll be able to get home.

For Kerri, vanpooling has become a worry-reducer all around. She loves that she saves on vehicle wear and tear now that she's avoiding the heavy traffic conditions that take a toll on her brakes.

Kerri also loves saving money on fuel and doing her part for the environment. Before riding in the van, she spent nearly \$250 each month on gas just driving to and from work, in addition to weekend and evening activities for her and her son. Now, with company-subsidized vanpooling, she's saving more than \$125 every month. The green benefits don't stop there: Collectively, Kerri's vanpool reduces approximately 1,000 vehicle miles every week, eliminating the associated pollution-causing emissions.

Her vanpooling experience had another unexpected benefit: she discovered she loved the social aspect of sharing the ride with her co-workers. She's enjoyed getting to know them better and knows she can depend on them in a pinch.

Kerri's former, solo commute was "hectic and stressful" due to traffic and her frequent and expensive trips to the gas pump. Now, she just shows up for the vanpool and can relax. Since her van has a schedule that alternates drivers, Kerri uses the time when she's not behind the wheel to read and talk with her new friends.

While Kerri's fortunate to have her van fully subsidized by Southern Company, she says, "I'd still vanpool even if I had to pay for it."

If vanpooling sounds like the commute option you've been looking for, you can register for CommuteSmart's free [ridematch database](#) or talk to a member of the CommuteSmart team about starting a vanpool at your worksite.



Save money, start vanpooling today!

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