



INSIDE METRO: THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE TRANSIT

Meet Steven: A ParaCruz Driver Bringing Compassion, Dedication, and a Smile. Steven brings compassion and dedication to his role as a ParaCruz driver at Santa Cruz METRO. A Navy veteran and proud father of four, he combines his love of the outdoors with his passion for helping people—whether he's driving riders safely to their destinations or fishing off the Santa Cruz Wharf with his kids. For Steven, ParaCruz is more than transportation; it's about connection, service, and community.

Tell us a little about yourself, Steven

Hi, my name is Steven. I've been a ParaCruz driver at METRO for about a year and a half now. I live in Aptos now, but I grew up in Santa Cruz. I went to Santa Cruz High School and graduated with the class of '95. I've got a couple nicknames. Back in the Navy, they called me Marty—short for my last name. Later, when I worked construction, folks called me Stevo.

Can you describe ParaCruz for people who might not know?

ParaCruz is a door-to-door service. We pick people up right from their homes and take them where they need to go. It's wonderful because many folks have a hard time getting to a bus stop, and this service makes sure they can still get around safely and comfortably.

What inspired you to become a ParaCruz driver?

I've worked hard my whole life—building houses, pouring concrete—and that's tough work. I wanted something I could do for the rest of my life, something meaningful. ParaCruz gave me that. I get to be outdoors, I get to help people, and I get to be part of something bigger than me. I plan to be here until I'm a passenger myself.

What do you enjoy most about driving for ParaCruz?

Helping people. That's the best part. And I love being outdoors, so between the riders and the scenery, it's all good. I work in a beautiful town, and everywhere I go, I feel lucky.

ParaCruz provides such an important service. What does that responsibility mean to you?

It's a big responsibility. People rely on us to get them where they need to be safely. I take pride in that, and I always try to put a smile on their face.

Can you share a memorable rider experience?

There's one rider who always makes me smile. He's got the biggest grin and is always laughing—truly the happiest rider ever. Seeing him on my schedule makes my day.

What's one thing people might not realize about ParaCruz drivers?

Most people don't realize how much we help families. Not everyone has a vehicle that can support a wheelchair. We take that burden off families so they don't have to miss work or rearrange their lives to get loved ones to appointments.

How do you make sure every rider feels comfortable and cared for?

I start with a smile. Once they're on board, I check in—ask if they're comfortable, if they'd like the heater or air conditioner on. I want every ride to feel easy and safe.

What do you enjoy most about being part of the METRO team?

I love being part of the bigger picture. We all need help at some point in life, and I like being the one to provide it. Every day when I go home, I feel good about what I did.

Do you have any advice for new ParaCruz drivers?

Have compassion. You don't know what someone might be going through that day. A smile can make all the difference.

What keeps you motivated or makes you proud of your work?

Getting someone where they need to be safely and on time. That's a good feeling.

If you could describe ParaCruz in three words, what would they be?

Reliable. Compassionate. Transportation.

Is there anything else you'd like your METRO colleagues to know?

I love coming to work. I'm happy to be here, and I've got a smile on my face every time I show up. I plan to be here a long time.

What do you enjoy doing in your personal time?

I've got four kids, so I love going to their dance recitals and sports games—soccer, basketball, baseball. But honestly, some of our best times are just curling up on the couch together with a bowl of popcorn and watching a movie.

Do you have any hobbies?

I collect sports cards and coins with my kids, watch sports, and fish.

What's your favorite sport to watch?

Baseball. Hands down. It's the greatest sport invented. Doesn't matter who's playing—if there's a game on, I'm happy.

What's your favorite local fishing spot?

The Santa Cruz Wharf. I take my kids there, and we usually face the boardwalk. Even if we don't catch anything, it's still a good day. The view is beautiful.

Who's your personal hero and why?

A concrete contractor here in Santa Cruz named Mike Burns. He brought out the best in me and made me believe I could do anything I set my mind to.

Do you have any final thoughts?

ParaCruz is great. Between management, dispatch, and drivers, we're all working together toward a common goal: getting people where they need to be safely. And I love being part of that.

"Steven's dedication to ParaCruz and our riders shines through every day. He is the definition of a team player—always ready to step in, lend a hand, and even stay late if that's what it takes to support his colleagues and ensure our clients are cared for. His reliability and compassion make a real difference, and he brings a smile to everyone he meets, whether it's a passenger, a coworker, or a member of the community. Steven embodies the spirit of METRO: service, teamwork, and heart."

- Daniel Zaragoza, Operations Deputy Director