



Connections

NEWSLETTER—Year End 2015

Matching riders with providers

GOOD NEWS!

I am very happy to announce that the new name of our organization (formerly Senior Helpline Services) is now MOBILITY MATTERS.

We will continue to offer the transportation programs and services we previously provided, specifically Rides for Seniors, our free, one-one-one, door-through-door, escorted volunteer driver program for qualified senior residents in all of Contra Costa County and 7 cities in Alameda County, and our Transportation Information & Referrals (I&R) Helpline at (925) 284-6109 or toll free at 1(855) 234-RIDE (7433).

The only difference in our I&R Helpline is that we are now prepared to respond to requests for transportation information and referrals from anyone in Contra Costa County, whereas before, this service was focused only on seniors and those trying to help seniors with their mobility needs.

In January 2015, our organization began implementing the Contra Costa Mobility Management Plan by providing mobility management services throughout Contra Costa County to facilitate collaboration and coordination between public and private transportation providers in order to create a network of integrated options that primarily address the mobility needs of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low income individuals.

We have updated our brochures and will begin updating our website soon. If you have questions about these changes, what kind of mobility management projects we are working on, our plans for the future, or how you can help, please call me at (925) 284-6699 or email me @ elaine@mobilitymatterscc.com. Our team is looking forward to working with other transportation providers, multiple and varied organizations, as well as individuals on the various aspects of mobility management. Together, we can truly make a difference with lasting effects! (Please see page 2 regarding our plans for the Reassurance Phone Friends Program.)

If you are in receipt of this newsletter, you are a donor, volunteer, client, staff member, board member, or a new friend of Mobility Matters. Each of you is precious to us, and without you, we could not carry out our mission. Thank you for your continued support and may you all be blessed with good health and happiness this holiday season and all year long!



Have a wonderful, prosperous 2016!

Elaine Welch RN, MBA
Executive Director

ALERT!

Better transportation for seniors and people with disabilities

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority wants to know what is important to you about transportation in the future. They have a survey both online and in print. It is important that you weigh in on issues that are important to you. The survey covers issues about; buses, BART, walking, biking, highways, local streets and Programs for seniors and people with disabilities. If you want more programs for seniors and people with disabilities this is your opportunity to be heard. Answer online at www.ccta.net or call us and we'll be sure to get you a printed survey. (925) 284-2207.

DEADLINE 12/11/15!



Matching riders with providers

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Our Mission

Mobility Matters provides mobility management services in Contra Costa County facilitating collaboration and coordination between public and private transportation providers creating a network of integrated options that primarily address the mobility needs of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low income individuals.

A Message from Jennifer Williams, Board President

As this year comes to an end, I am reflecting on how fast time moves. For the past 6 years, I have had the honor and joy to work with this amazing organization. My term as Board President is up in February and it feels like I just started with the Board a short time ago. I will be filling my time now chasing after my little darling Maya, who turns one in December, and I will be venturing into a new consultant career in 2016. I will never actually leave Mobility Matters, because I will continue to keep up with its progress and continue to support its efforts in every way I can.

I am so thankful for my experiences at this wonderful organization and so grateful for all that all of you do for it.....for the brave **clients** who trust us to help you age in place.....for the many selfless **volunteers** who give their time and compassion to those in need of their services.....to our loyal **donors** who realize free programs are not free to run and continue to support us so generously.....to our extraordinary **staff** who never waiver in their commitment to our mission....and lastly to my fellow **Board members** who provide the oversight and guidance that all nonprofit organizations need to thrive.

Best wishes to all of you for a holiday season filled with gratitude and love.

CHANGES TO THE REASSURANCE PHONE FRIENDS PROGRAM

The Reassurance Phone Friends Program started at our agency in 1998 when we were known as Contact Care. At that time, Ann Watkins, one of our longtime volunteers noted that seniors rarely called the helpline and wondered if there might be a better way to offer active listening and assistance with their life challenges. Her research resulted in the launch of the Reassurance Phone Friends Program that offered senior residents of Contra Costa County the opportunity to have a phone friend volunteer call daily or less frequently, if requested. These are one-on-one phone relationships that let the client know someone cares, offers a few minutes of friendly conversation and compassionate listening, and gives us the opportunity to identify the need for services, information, referrals, and advocacy. With this program, staff provides a "safety net" by following up on unanswered calls to see if the client needs immediate help due to a fall, sudden illness, or other reason.

As our Rides for Seniors Program has grown over the past 10 years, several of those receiving calls in the Reassurance Phone Friends Program opted out, as they were now able to spend time with volunteer drivers and enjoyed talking with them on trips to the doctor, grocery shopping, etc.

As a result of low enrollment in this program, and our new focus on mobility management, we have decided to refer all seniors who want to receive calls on a regular basis, and volunteers who want to make calls, to the Assistance League of Diablo Valley 925-934-0901, which has a similar program, called Telecare, and the capacity to enroll more clients and volunteer callers. We will continue to provide the same services to those clients and volunteer callers who are currently on our Reassurance Phone Friends Program as long as they wish. The transition should be seamless. Nothing will change for them.

I can't begin to thank all the hundreds of Reassurance Volunteers who kept (and still keep!) the promise to call senior residents of Contra Costa County on a regular basis. Feedback from Reassurance clients since the inception of this program, over 17 years ago, has been overwhelmingly positive. If any of our present Reassurance clients or volunteers or anyone else has questions or concerns about the changes to this program, please call Laurie Beck at 925-284-6161.



Volunteer Spotlight

Mobility Matters is grateful to each and every volunteer serving seniors in Contra Costa and/or Alameda County. Thanks to all who generously contribute time, energy, kindness, and even personal resources, like gasoline, to help local seniors age in place.

One of the most unique features of the Rides for Seniors Program is that there is no minimum time commitment required. Some volunteers drive once or twice a month and some provide several rides a week. Any time contributed helps!

While every volunteer driver is vital to the Rides for Seniors Program, we'd like to highlight one especially committed volunteer who was also honored by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors earlier this year as a Volunteer of the Year. Her name is **Sue Oszewski**.

Sue is a nurse who did not stop taking care of others just because she retired. She not only takes at least a ride a week, but often offers to take one or two additional rides in any service area, which includes all communities of Contra Costa County as well as northern and central Alameda County. In fact, since Sue joined our team in late October 2007, she has taken over 600 rides! She is willing to take long rides with long wait times for difficult-to-transport clients.

Sue, third from right in the front, receiving her award from the C.C. Board of Supervisors



Her gentleness, patience and compassion with clients, and selfless dedication to this program has not only helped SHS carry out its mission year after year, but has made her a favorite volunteer often requested by clients she previously drove. Because Sue was trained as a nurse, she is an excellent listener and skilled observer. She sees each client as more than just someone who needs a ride, bringing observations she makes about her clients' needs that affect their safety or well-being, back to staff, so that we can follow up and help the vulnerable population we serve to obtain the other services, support, and resources they need to age in place safely and comfortably with a high quality of life. Sue selflessly, always thinks about the needs of others. She is an exemplary volunteer and a valuable member of our Mobility Matters family. Thank you, Sue!

★ About Victoria ★



Victoria Williams, Program Manager, Rides for Seniors, Alameda County, joined our staff in January 2015. This position was vacated when her predecessor, Tighe Boyle, was selected to fill the new role of Mobility Manager.

Our clients and drivers for Alameda County have had the pleasure of working with Victoria this year and some of you may have had the opportunity to work with her in the past, as she is a long time resident of Alameda County and has held a number of positions that involved serving seniors and individuals with disabilities in both Alameda and Contra Costa County. Just prior to joining our team, Victoria served as a Placement Specialist with Senior Visionary Services to help families and clients find appropriate placement when living at home was no longer safe.

Prior to her work with Visionary Services, she served for over 10 years as the Paratransit Coordinator for the city of Hayward, not only managing day-to-day paratransit operations, but designed, implemented, marketed, and evaluated door-to-door, shuttle, and group trip services. During this time, she also served on the Board of Directors for Senior Services Foundation in San Leandro.

Prior positions all involved direct and indirect services for seniors both paid and as a volunteer.

Victoria not only has over 30 years of experience working in the field of services for aging and individuals with disabilities, she brings strong communication and teaching skills, experience of both recruiting volunteers as well as being one, and expertise in client outreach. She is known for her compassion and listening skills and is respected and admired by all who work with her.

Victoria works out of the Mobility Matters central office in Lafayette as well as our satellite office at the Emeryville Senior Center. She spends a lot of her time at Alameda County recreation and senior centers and other places where seniors and potential volunteers gather. Regardless of her location, she is available by cell phone and email during regular work hours Monday through Friday.

Victoria can be reached at (510) 928-RIDE (7433) or Victoria@mobilitymatterscc.com.

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MOBILITY MATTERS RIDES FOR SENIORS PROGRAM

Qualifications for Clients

In order to apply as a regular client for our Rides for Seniors program, the individual must meet **ALL** the following criteria:

- Live in our service area, which is anywhere in Contra Costa County or the cities of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Piedmont & San Leandro in Alameda County.
- Age 60 or older.
- Able to walk with the aid of a cane, walker, knee scooter, crutches, or elbow assistance.
- Require escorted, door-through-door assistance.
- Able to call in to request rides.
- Unable to use other forms of transportation for medical care and basic necessities, like grocery shopping.

Temporary Clients: If an individual, age 60 or older, resides in our service area, and is usually able to use other forms of transportation, including driving self, does not have someone to drive him/her home after an outpatient surgery or procedure requiring general anesthesia, we can provide transportation to and from the outpatient facility that day.

Qualifications for Volunteer Drivers

In order to apply to become a volunteer driver, the individual must meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

- Be a caring, mature individual who is willing and able (usually one trip per week) to provide transportation to a senior who can no longer drive or take other forms of transportation.
- Age 25 -75 with a current driver's license.
- Excellent driving record and crime free background.
- Own or have access to a reliable, safe vehicle that is registered and insured.
- Participate in a three hour training class before giving first ride.

When a volunteer driver joins our team, we can usually enroll at least two more clients. Come join us and find out what a difference you can make in other people's lives. It will change their lives for the better, and it will most certainly change yours as well!