

# Connections

NEWSLETTER—Year End 2018



Matching riders with providers

## MOBILITY MATTERS CONTINUES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

One of my favorite sayings is: “When in doubt about where you are meant to be, look down at your feet.” We all are where we are for a variety of reasons and events that have happened in each of our lives. The legacy we will one day leave behind is hopefully one we are proud of and have earned. Mobility Matters continues to thrive because our staff, volunteers, donors, and clients are where they are meant to be!

Recipients of this Newsletter are mostly donors and volunteers of Mobility Matters programs and services. Each of you, in your own way, contributes to our success. Volunteer drivers contribute by selflessly giving their time, compassion, and resources to help vulnerable seniors and veterans in need of assisted transportation. Our donors recognize that free programs are not free to run and contribute financially in order to help us carry out our mission, in which they, too, believe. We are so blessed at Mobility Matters, because many of you serve as both volunteers and donors! Several of our clients donate as well! THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH!

### MOBILITY MATTERS - RIDES PROGRAMS

#### Qualifications for Clients

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

##### RIDES FOR SENIORS

- Live in our service area, which is anywhere in Contra Costa 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 or dental care and basic necessities, like grocery shopping.
- Trained, certified service animals welcome

##### RIDES 4 VETERANS

- Live in our service area, which is anywhere in Contra Costa County.
- Must be an honorably discharged veteran of any age.
- 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 or dental care and basic necessities, like grocery shopping.
- Trained, certified service animals welcome

#### 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 or disabled veteran 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!



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#### BOARD OFFICERS

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#### Our Mission

Mobility Matters provides mobility management services throughout Contra Costa County by matching riders to transportation providers that meet their individual needs. Mobility Matters operates volunteer driver programs that provide free, one-on-one, door-through-door rides for seniors and disabled veterans who cannot access other forms of transportation.

## A Message from Francesca Vogel, Board President

The Mobility Matters Board of Directors would like to thank you for your support of our mission to help us provide accessible transportation options for the population we serve. Without our wonderful volunteers, our generous donors, and dedicated hardworking staff we couldn't fulfill our mission. As we enter the new year we are thankful and know we can count on you for your continued support.

Happy Holidays!

Warmly,  
Francesca, President of the Board

## Aging in Place



*Elaine's license plate!*

I have yet to meet anyone who has written, "I hope to be put away in a long term care institution." on his/her bucket list! That's not to say any of us would resist nursing home placement if it was because we were not able to take care of ourselves at home and were no longer safe, but most of us, as we age, would prefer to live at home.

The U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines **aging in place** as "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level."

In surveys, most adults....in fact 90 percent of adults over the age of 65 report that they would prefer to stay in their own residence as they age.

Aging in place challenges include changing health, social, and emotional needs that must be addressed to help us maintain a well rounded life in the residence of our choice. To live out our later years as comfortably and safely as possible, we need a well thought out plan, that includes finances, ideally put into place in our earliest working years. I don't know about

the rest of you, but planning for my needs during my retirement years was not even on my radar when I was young! Fortunately, I am still working and loving what I do, at 72, and have had a chance to put a plan in place.

As you plan for your later years, remember your plan may need to be changed, revised, adjusted according to the changes you will experience with age. Aging is not an illness, but realistically, we are looking at a variety of personal and environmental changes that can alter the best laid plans, not the least of which are your transportation needs. At Mobility Matters we have seen again and again the profound effect that the loss of one's mobility outside the home has done to people's lives!

In 2019, we plan to work with other senior service agencies to put together a workshop on the subject of aging in place for those of you who are younger, so you can make plans for yourself and assist your older relatives with theirs. Also, those of you who have already retired will be given information and "tools" to help you adjust your plan to improve your safety and quality of life as you age in place! Hope to see many of you at this workshop! We will send out an invitation to all of you.

## An Important Addition to Services Provided by Mobility Matters

As I'm sure everyone is aware, in 2017 and 2018 California was hit with devastating fires, in both the northern and southern regions of the state. Resources were pushed to the max, homes and property were lost, whole communities were destroyed and a number of residents lost their lives, the majority of which were seniors. This was a wakeup call for many of us to better prepare our businesses, homes and family, animals, and belongings for these type of crisis in the future.

Realizing that most of the clients served by Mobility Matters all over Contra Costa County live alone and are unable to leave their home unassisted, we decided to proactively address the inevitability of these types of untoward events and put plans in place to help secure our client's safety.

We have changed our intake form to now include an emergency plan for each of our clients, which we help them prepare. This individualized plan is left with the client after their initial in home assessment and a copy is kept in their file at the office and updated periodically, as changes occur. We are doing this with all new clients and will go back and do these with each client already enrolled in one of our programs.

Elaine Welch, our CEO, is now serving as the co-Chair of VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters). VOAD associations improve outcomes for people affected by disasters by facilitating cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration among nonprofit community based groups, government agencies, and other organizations. Roque Torres, our Director of Transportation, has begun working with local authorities, emergency response agencies, and members of our staff to develop a comprehensive emergency plan for Mobility Matters. In the event of an emergency, such as a wild fire, major earthquake, flood, landslide, chemical leaks, etc. we will attempt to contact all of our clients in the affected area, and if they are in a mandated evacuation area determine if they have a way out. If they do not have any way to leave, we will notify officials of their location and special needs. This will include our working with our specially trained volunteers who may be able pick up our clients and get them to a designated temporary shelter under our direction.

Volunteer drivers who want to participate in helping our clients to get to safety will receive special training after the first of the year and be deputized to participate. If you are one of our drivers and want to learn more about this, please contact Roque, and he will respond to any questions or concerns you may have. Participation in this program extension is entirely voluntary, and we will never put our volunteers or staff in a dangerous situation.



## Welcome Roque!

As most of you are aware, our beloved Dale Welch, who helped start the Rides for Seniors program over 13 years ago and then matched client mobility needs with volunteer drivers who were willing and able to meet those needs, retired last December at 79! He just turned 80 on November 5, 2018 and is enjoying his well earned retirement.

His successor, who started at the first of this year, is Roque (Rocky) Torres. Roque knew he had big shoes to fill and has filled them from heel to toe! In addition to serving in the U.S. Army, Roque came to us with extensive experience as Logistics Manager for a trucking company, a Retail and Delivery Supervisor for the US Postal Service, a motor cycle safety instructor, emergency dispatcher, and State Traffic Officer and EMT for the California Highway Patrol. Transportation, security, and emergency management are his specialties.

In his role as the Director of Transportation at Mobility Matters, Roque is primarily responsible for ensuring that clients of the Rides for Seniors and Rides 4 Veterans programs, who request rides for medically necessary and basic necessity rides, are matched with one of our screened, trained volunteer drivers. He is a man with a mission and typically books 100-120 trips per week! Juggling volunteer schedules and varying availability with set times and location of specific ride requests is no simple task, but Roque manages to get the job done in a timely and efficient manner week after week and has earned the respect and admiration of all he comes in contact with including volunteers, clients, and our staff!

Utilizing his skills and experience in safety and crisis management, Roque is in the process of developing an emergency plan for our agency that focus on the safety of our clients when evacuation orders are issued during an environs crisis. He has established contacts and working relationships with emergency agencies and responders at several levels in the County and State.

Early next year, we plan to share our emergency plan with other agencies in Contra Costa County that provide senior services in the hope that partnerships will develop which will increase our ability to see that essentially homebound seniors will have the same opportunities as their neighbors to survive a disaster.

Also a military history buff, Roque dons a genuine WW1 army uniform for our Veteran events!

