



The Transporter

Volunteer
Transportation Center

June 2009
Volume 9 - Issue 2

United Way Partner Agency Success Story

United Way Office - My Dad died this year. He had a good life. Even so our family misses him terribly. The last few years of his life he was on dialysis. Every other day he drove to the hospital, was hooked up to the life-saving machines, and drove home again. Not only did the treatment extend his life, but the quality of life was good.

At the hospital over the years, my Dad met many people from all walks of life. What impressed him the most, aside from the medical care, was the service provided by the Volunteer Transportation Center that brought fellow patients in from all over the county three days a week, week in, week out, morning,

afternoon and evening. These drivers would go to a home, help the person into the car, drive them to the facility, bring them to the dialysis floor and then wait for them all the needed hours to bring them home again.

What would people in our rural communities do when they needed medical procedures - chemotherapy, radiation, physical therapy or dialysis - without this service? Even if one could afford it, would public transportation tell you a joke when you were down, or that your hair looked nice when it didn't?

Lives have been extended, costs kept under control and personal dignity kept intact because of this Volunteer Transpor-

tation Center's dedication. My Dad was very impressed. If my Dad was impressed than I knew it was something worth while. I think Dad was grateful that he could drive himself to his appointments and I know he was grateful that someone out there could drive his fellow patients to the same appointment.



United Way is funding the Volunteer Transportation Association at \$19,000 for 2009.

They could use \$31,000. Right now, we need United Way more than ever.

We Couldn't Do It Without You!

Linda Welsh - This article is dedicated to our outstanding volunteers. I often think, where we would be without you? You are here to assure that transportation is available to our clients for their critical medical appointments and monthly grocery shopping. It is your dedication and commitment that make the Volunteer Transportation Center a valuable service to the community. It's a privilege for us to be able to work with you and learn from you each day.

Success in the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest critics and to endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of one's self; to leave the world a little better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm

and sung with exultation; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived - this is to have succeeded." How do we really place a value on the work of volunteers? If you were to gauge their worth merely for the day-to-day service they give our organization in hours of service, that might be a start. However, the number of hours alone doesn't even begin to define the impact these special individuals bring. The commitment they make, the experience they possess and the compassion they show to each and every client is only exceeded by the passion they unselfishly demonstrate when they freely give their time each week. For this they ask nothing in return.

"What It Means To Be A Volunteer." I want to make sure I performed due diligence, so I looked up the definition of the word volunteer. The first line read, "A person who performs or offers to perform a service voluntarily." I hear the drivers

come in and out of the office daily and how they let you know that they are looking forward to their next run and letting you know that because they volunteer it has made them a better person. The reason it has made them a better person is not because they have to do the task, they do it because they want to. "Giving feels like you're living."

Our volunteer drivers come from all walks of life from retired people to younger moms looking for something to do while their children are in school. Some drive only occasionally, while others drive full time. Since our drivers use their own vehicles for the transport of others, the VTC reimburses for their mileage and expenses.

We are always in need of volunteer drivers. You can apply at anytime, just call 788-0422 or visit us on the web at www.VolunteerTransportationCenter.org.

Thank You Drivers!

Inside this issue:

<i>Volunteer Driver Of the Quarter</i>	2
<i>Client Quotes</i>	2
<i>Live with Web Site at Volunteer Transportation Center</i>	2
<i>Your Hand May Be on the Wheel But Where is Your Mind</i>	3
<i>A bit of History of the Volunteer Transportation Center</i>	3
<i>Message from Don Drew, Executive Director</i>	4

Rides Youth Baseball Tournament Was A Big "Hit"

Raised over \$850

10 Teams of 12 players

10-12 year olds

Winner Watertown Ice (12) over Knappspation Potsdam (6)

8-10 year old

Harrisville (8) over Knappspation Potsdam (6)

Special Thank You

Gary Rosintoski, Dick's, Victory Promotions, JJ Stocker, Mo's Dinner, Watertown Wizards, AJ Dinner, The Dinner and Unicorn.

Welcome New Drivers To VTC



- Gary Baxter, Brownville
- Casey Denicola, Lafargeville
- Lori Mehaffy, Watertown
- Tony Wilson, Gouverneur

Why not join them? Apply Today



United Way



United Way
Of Northern New York, Inc.

Quote

"I am always very happy to write out a check to the Volunteer Transportation Center for a donation as this is a service I can not imagine what it would be like to be with out. You always make sure I get to my appointments with one of your drivers. The drivers are always very pleasant and understanding of my needs. Thank you so much for your service in our community."

Thank you,
Lafayetteville

Quote

"The Volunteer Transportation Center has the most companionate drivers. They are always cheerful and very helpful. I am so thankful for the rides they give to me to the doctors. I just do not know what I would do with out them."

Thank you,
Alexandria Bay

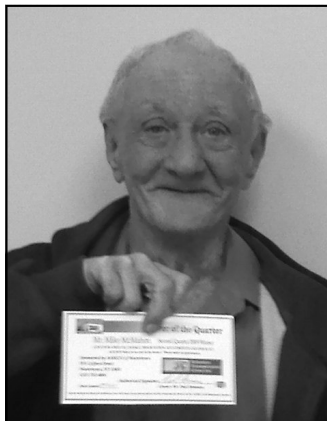
Quote

"Your service is much appreciated. I would be not be able to get to my appointments with out it. Thank you so much."

Thank you,
Adams Center

Volunteer Driver Of The Quarter Mike McMahon

Mike McMahon has been a driver of the Volunteer Transportation Center for nine years. Mike retired from Commodore Computers at the age of 40. He and his wife, who was born in Watertown, traveled around the country and shared a passion for music. At one time they had a music contract for a show in Atlantic City. Eventually they settled in Royersfort, PA, a place they both called home. Living there for some time Mike and his wife of 23 years were foster parents to 270 children of all ages. Even now a majority of them still



stay in contact with him. After his mother-in-law became ill, they moved to Watertown to care for her. Shortly after that move Mike's wife took ill and passed away in 2002. Mike's

mother-in-law lived with him until her death in December of 2007. A nephew worked in the security department at the Department of Social Services and told Mike there was a need for drivers. He then applied and started driving nine years ago. Mike's specialty at VTC is driving children. Driving 6-7 days a week is very enjoyable Mike says. "No two days are the same, love every minute of it". His strong commitment is "Giving back to the community."

SPONSORED BY 
AAMCO of Watertown

Web Site Goes Live at Volunteer Transportation Center



Volunteer Transportation Center, a local non-profit organization founded in 1991, officially launched its web site (www.volunteertransportationcenter.org) this month.

Prior to the launch, the site was home to a single page site that provided limited information about the organization. The new Deputy Executive Director, Linda Welsh has a web design and large computer background and took on the task of revamping the web site when she came on board in September 2008.

On our site you will find what programs and services we provide, how to volunteer, ways to give, events and happenings, newsletters, how to contact us and other information about our organization. A web site is a very strong tool to use with today's technology. We can get information out quickly for many viewers and it is inexpensive as well. Our site is a never ending project and will be continually updated. The site is most definitely not set in stone; we are continuously editing and constantly adding new

information to the site as things develop. Our goal with the site is to increase our visibility within the community in which we provide services, and to get out what we are about as well as the need of support and funding so that our organization may continue to provide critical transportation to those rural residents that have no other means available. Please take the time to check out our web site frequently and see the changes as the site grows.



2009 Board of Directors

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Michael Benson | Ben Coe | Bill Plemons - Secretary |
| Dick Brooks - V. President | Howie Ganter - President | Nancy Spicer |
| Brenda Company - Treasurer | Dr. Henry George | Don Terpstra |
| Krystal Catapano | Jean Heady | John Waterhouse |
| Martin Clement | Clayton Jank | Cathleen Whitcomb |



Your Hands May Be on the Wheel But Where is Your Mind?

We've all seen them. The drivers who are chatting away on a cell phone and clearly not focused on their driving. Perhaps some of us have even been that driver a time or two.

But even if you can say that you never use a cell phone while driving, what about other distractions? While driving, do you find yourself ...



- Reaching for something in the back seat?
- Having an absorbing conversation with a passenger?
- Attending to a child or pet?
- Letting your eyes settle on a clever billboard or beautiful scenery?
- Allowing your mind to wander?

Experts are finding that the real problem with cell phone use is not whether both hands are on the wheel, but the fact that our brains actually have a limited ability to focus on two or more tasks at once.

In fact, distractions and inattention are the underlying causes of most crashes and near crashes. Research indicates that types of distractions vary

by age, with drivers between the ages of 30-49 most often distracted by cell phone use, those ages 50-64 by eating and drinking, and those ages 65 and older by outside objects and events.

Keeping focused on the road is a challenge because today's cars encourage multitasking, especially when you have accessories like beverage holders, electric tilt seats, outlets for electronics, a GPS device, a CD player and more.

Distractions while on the road are hard to avoid, but responsible drivers will limit unnecessary activities that divert their attention. A wandering mental moment could find you jolted to attention by a blaring horn or screeching tires. So keep your eyes on the road and your mind on your driving.



A bit of history of the Volunteer Transportation Center



In 1991, the United Way first introduced the Volunteer Center of Jefferson County as an agency to recruit and place volunteers in the area. In that same year, the United Way conducted an exercise to identify the unmet needs of Jefferson County residents. Transportation of rural Jefferson County residents with limited resources was recognized as one of the unmet needs in the community. In 1993, the Jefferson County Office for the Aging contracted the Volunteer Center to assign volunteer drivers using their own vehicles to transport senior citizens to medical appoint-

ments and other critical destinations. Thus the Senior Transportation Program was born and the Volunteer Center established its new mission: to provide transportation to citizens in need, enabling them to maintain higher levels of independence.

The Enhanced Transportation Program, now called the Other Transportation Program, was established by the Volunteer Center in 1994. This program exists to ensure that those people with absolutely no other transportation available to them can keep crucial appointments, including doctors' visits, dialysis treatments and therapy sessions.

In 1998, the Project Wings transportation program began as a project of the Lions Clubs of Jefferson County, funded by a grant through the New York State and Bermuda Lions Foundation with matching funds from the Lions Clubs of Jefferson County. This program continues to provide much needed transportation to the blind and visually impaired in the community.

The year 2002 brought another new program when the Rural Capacity Task Force applied to the Developmentally

Disabled Planning Council to study the need for transportation for the disabled. The resulting TRAIN program was funded for three years and deemed a success, but funding was not renewed by the DDPC. The Volunteer Center then created the Persons with Disabilities program and continued to transport these clients with other funding.

In January 2005, the Volunteer Center began to transport residents of Lewis County to dialysis treatments through our own fundraising efforts. Later that year, the Board of Directors voted to adopt a mission statement reflecting this expansion, as well as a name change for the organization. Effective January 1, 2006 the Volunteer Center of Jefferson County became the Volunteer Transportation Center to emphasize our focus on transportation.

This brings us to June 2009, we have six staff members, 15 board of directors members and 85 active drivers. The need for our services is growing every day. Thank you for your support so we can help others in need of transportation.

Volunteer Transportation Center, Inc

203 North Hamilton Street
Watertown, New York 13601

Phone: 315-788-0422
Fax: 315-788-8021

E-mail: volctr@westelcom.com

www.VolunteerTransportationCenter.org



A Friendly Reminder

**Transportation programs would be
Non-existent without donations.**



Please donate if you are able.

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Watertown, NY
13601
Permit #63

Don Drew Executive Director's Message

In the spirit of "neighbors helping neighbors"



A few months ago Jane Schmidt, Volunteer Coordinator, at Samaritan Medical Center (SMC) came to me with an idea. The idea is simple and pain free. People would collect can tabs (pull off tabs) from soda cans and other types of aluminum cans. Folks could drop them off at either the information desk at SMC or at the Volunteer Transportation Center located at 203 North Hamilton Street, in Watertown. The can tabs would be processed and the proceeds given to the VTC for its critical dialysis transportation program.

The VTC was charged to get the word out about this unique way of donating. People have donated from all over; a local American Legion Post, a person reading our web page sent in a manila envelope full from Ohio, and I am told some soldiers sent a considerable number from Iraq. This form of giving can be done by anyone, it doesn't cost anything but a little time, and it could be fun if groups started a competition.

I hope by now everyone knows that our critical transportation programs are not fully funded by any governmental agency. We rely on quite a mixture of funding including; county government, local towns, other agencies needing transportation, and the generosity of the residents of the community to help. The clients themselves help to fund the transportation programs. In 2008 the clients donated \$16,582.00. This amounts to \$0.045 cents per mile. I would like to challenge clients who are able to do so donate \$0.10 cents per mile. Last year, 2008, we traveled 369,408 miles in service; if clients could have donated \$0.10

cents per mile, this would have amounted to another \$20,000 plus in resources to continue our critically needed transportation programs. Of course no one is turned away if they are unable to afford to donate.



"America has had a long and rich tradition of generosity that began with simple acts of neighbor helping neighbor."

Helen Boosalis