



Behind the Wheel

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Medical Transport Service Inspires Generous Gift

Legally blind, Susan* doesn't drive. She lives alone and doesn't have family nearby. So Susan relies on AgeWell Services' Senior Transportation Program to get her to doctor appointments and home again.

When her federal stimulus payment arrived in January, she knew immediately how to spend it. She made a generous gift to the Senior Medical Transportation Program which has helped her live independently despite her limited vision.

"I live on my Social Security and a small monthly pension," Susan explained. "I don't have a lot of needs so I put this toward the wonderful service I've received through the years. It's time to give others a little helping hand."



"Together, we can be a mighty force."

• Mark Evans, AgeWell Services Senior Transportation Program Senior Manager

The Senior Medical Transportation Program offers low-income seniors in Muskegon County door-to-door non-emergency medical transportation at no cost. Volunteers who meet strict screening criteria serve as drivers.

"Your volunteers are tremendous," Susan explained. "We are so lucky to have this service."

Since taking on the program in July 2019, AgeWell Services has earned a 100% satisfaction rating among users, all of whom indicated they would recommend the service. For the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, 2020 - during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic - drivers provided 11,503 rides, 11,653 volunteer hours, and logged 126,500 miles.

One survey respondent was quite descriptive in his comments on the survey: "Not enough paper in existence for me to give you all your well-deserved praise."

For Mark Evans, who manages the program, the community support reflects a commitment to teamwork: "Together, we can be a mighty force."

In addition to extensive background and driving record screenings, volunteers complete a minimum of eight hours of training with an experienced driver. Evans explained that many volunteers form lifelong commitments to their passengers.

"Most of them are retired seniors themselves," Evans explained. "Our drivers are such kind people and truly care about our clients. We are honored to work with them."

Many volunteers had to stop driving during the pandemic to protect their own health, forcing AgeWell Services to scale back service to critical medical appointments and rely on paid staff members who shifted duties while Tanglewood Park was closed. The shift, along with fewer rides, increased the cost of a one-way trip by 92%, from \$13 to \$25.

Generous donors, including Susan, have contributed \$6,484 to the program since October 1, 2020, which has helped keep the wheels turning. To support the Senior Medical Transportation Program, make your gift online at: <https://agewellservices.org/support-agewell-services/>.

*Susan has asked to remain anonymous so we're using a pseudonym.

Volunteers Needed: Senior Transportation Program Drivers

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, 11,503 rides were given to 361 seniors to non-emergency medical appointments. Many volunteers had to stop driving during the pandemic for their own health. Now the demand is growing, so more drivers are needed.

If you enjoy driving and would like to bring a smile to someone's face, consider becoming a volunteer driver for the Senior Transportation Program.

Interested? Please contact Jessica Shagonaby, Wellness Receptionist and Volunteer Coordinator, Phone: 231-733-4788 or email jessica@agewellservices.org.





Delivering Hope: Support New Meals on Wheels Vans

Three counties. Five vans. Thirty-six routes.

It takes a fleet of vans to deliver Meals on Wheels to seniors five days a week. More than just a meal, these daily visits provide the comfort of a daily, socially-distant check-in so important to homebound seniors.

In Muskegon County, Meals on Wheels vans travel 18 routes; Ottawa County has 12 routes; and Oceana County has six.

The five vans, ranging in age from 3 to 15 years old, wrack up a lot of miles and need maintenance, repairs, and eventual replacement.

AgeWell Services recently purchased two used 2018 Express Cargo vans fitted with shelves to keep meals secure and safety cages to protect drivers. The vans cost \$18,652 each and are financed for five years.

Several partners stepped up to help add to our fleet:

- **Preferred Chevrolet Buick GMC** in Grand Haven found the vans for us and installed new tires before discounting the purchase price.
- The **JSJ Foundation Fund** provided \$4,200 for the down payment on the new-to-us vans, adding to our \$2,000 in trade-in value.
- **Shelby State Bank** waived all loan fees to finance the vans.

Here is your chance to join this community effort! Will you please help pay off our two van loans?

Every \$340 donated covers one monthly loan payment. A donation of \$680 will make payments for both vans. See our **Wish List** for other options to help pay off the vans.

Together we can help seniors by delivering nutritious meals and the social connection they need to live happy healthy lives.

Double Your Impact!

Many generous employers will match the charitable gifts their employees, their employees’ partners, or their retirees make to nonprofit organizations. It’s a great way to double - or even triple - the impact of your philanthropic giving.

Most employers have specific guidelines or areas of focus they are willing to match. The first step is to ask your human resources representative if there’s a matching gift program offered by your employer and request any required forms. AgeWell Services is happy to confirm donations, provide information about our nonprofit status or simply answer questions about how charitable donations are used.

Here are some of the organizations who have recently matched gifts to AgeWell Services:

- The Gerber Foundation
- The Pfizer Foundation
- ITW (Illinois Tools Works)
- Consumers Energy Foundation
- State Farm Companies Foundation
- Reckitt Benckiser Group



Do You Match?

If you have any questions about making a matching gift, please contact Advancement Director Diane Smith at 231-683-2651 or via email at diane@agewellservices.org.

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Mission Statement

AgeWell Services invites you to redefine age! We provide vital connections to keep you nourished, active, learning and living independently.

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From the Director...



Dear Friends,

We have experienced a lot of “ups” and “downs” over our organization’s history. The last year provided a lot of challenges and opportunities we never saw coming. Creativity, dedication, and hard work pulled this team of volunteers, community partners, and paid team members together, keeping our essential operations running on adrenaline. Your generous financial gifts, homemade masks, and volunteer engagement were the fuel that kept this team serving 23, 097 seniors this year.

Our story about Susan’s gift highlights a program that never stopped - despite the challenges they faced. While our volunteers went from 90 active to only 24 engaged, those 24 individuals worked tirelessly to ensure we continued to provide lifesaving rides. Susan’s praise of the program is only one story of how the Senior Transportation Program makes a difference for low-income seniors. We are SO proud of this amazing team’s dedication and determination to continue through this pandemic. Vaccinations offered to our core team of volunteer drivers is helping re-engage current volunteers as well as recruit new. Please consider giving your time and talents to help these Muskegon County senior residents.

Enclosed is AgeWell Services’ Annual Report to accompany this edition of *Behind the Wheel*. We are thrilled that despite the challenges of meal sites closing, contracts on hold and some programs operating at a bare minimum, we were able to keep the pace of service in most programs. AgeWell Services was a grant recipient of the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA). And, thanks to our friends at Shelby State Bank, we secured a Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) loan. These two items saved our year financially by ensuring we did not lay off even one employee during the pandemic. It also allowed us to build our cash reserves, knowing that the upcoming fiscal year would not be as favorable. These acts of Congress, along with your generous donations, allowed us to continue serving seniors, saved our organization’s assets, and kept us out of debt.

Last year gave us the opportunity to think creatively and quickly. AgeWell Service’s culture is continuous quality improvement which helped our team move fast to meet the changing external environment. We continue to adapt the best we can as the environment changes. Our services and work flow are dictated by vaccination rates, community positivity rates, hospitalizations, and government guidelines. We continue to Plan, Do, Check, and Act as things change.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and every AgeWell Services team member, thank you for providing the fuel that inspires us every day!

Warm Regards,

Kris Collee
Executive Director



Wish List

Every gift to AgeWell Services makes a difference in a senior’s life. If you want to see more tangible results of your gift, please consider funding something on our Wish List.

- Provide a single round-trip to transport a senior to a critical medical appointment from door to door: **\$25 per trip.**
- Feed a homebound senior for a week. More than 80% of our seniors who receive meals, receive meals five days per week. **\$35.**
- Two portable indoor/outdoor projector screens to use during senior activities at Lunch & Activity Centers in Muskegon County: **\$80 each or \$160 for both.**
- Feed a homebound senior for a month. **\$140.**
- Three wireless headsets for the Mission Services department. Assessors contact seniors who receive home delivered meals every six months to evaluate their priority. These headsets keep assessors’ hands free to write notes and type in data while maintaining confidentiality: **\$160 each or \$480 total.**
- Make a monthly payment on one or both of our Meals on Wheels transport vans. Every **\$340 makes one monthly payment**, or **\$18,652** will completely pay off one van loan and **\$37,304** pays off both vans.
- A water pump for a 2015 Ford Taurus that makes 50 Senior Medical Transportation trips a week: **\$1,400 for parts and labor.**
- Feed a homebound senior for a year. **\$1,680.**
- One full year of software licensing to aid in the investigations of financial exploitation by our SafeSeniors Muskegon County Task Force: **\$2,000.**

To make a wish come true, contact Diane Smith, Advancement Director 231-683-2651.



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PLEASE HELP KEEP YOUR RECORD UP TO DATE!

Is your name and mailing address correct?

Please contact Colleen G. Steinman with any changes:

Email: Colleen@agewellservices.org

Phone: (231) 421-7966



Help Us Step Into New Territory

As The Community Recovers From COVID-19.

While we've stepped back to keep everyone safe, you can **STEP UP** in spirit to provide nutritious meals for our aging neighbors.



Heels
for
Meals

Brought to you by
AgeWell Services.



Scan to donate now.
<https://bit.ly/31sCSjN>

Support Heels for Meals Now!