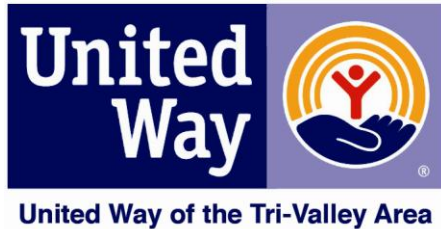


Partner Profiles



Lisa Park Laflin, Executive Director

Editor's Note: This is the nineteenth in a series of articles that demonstrates the community impact of the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area.

This column spotlights community initiatives that are supported by the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area. This week we take a closer look at the Elder Rides program coordinated by Community Concepts. This program provides transportation services which are crucial to older adults. Not only is transportation a necessary link to critical medical and preventative care, but it is a key factor for maintaining the independence and well being of our rural neighbors. There is no state or federal funding available to seniors on Medicare to travel to their critical and pre-emptive appointments. (MaineCare provides transportation services for their recipients, but Medicare does not.) Medicare will only pay for emergency transportation services. Expensive ambulance rides can be greatly reduced if the elderly have access to vital and preventative medical transportation. That is why the Elder Rides program is so important. The Elder Rides program is the only such program in the Franklin County area.

The Elder Rides Program ensures that seniors feel a sense of well being and independence, but it also helps family members stabilize their employment because they will not have to take large amounts of time from work to transport loved ones to dialysis or other doctors' appointments. Community Concepts has been recognized both nationally and state-wide as a leader in volunteer recruitment, management, and training. Volunteers donate their time to provide transportation, which is a great savings to the community. The impact of using volunteers is tremendous: individuals in need of vital transportation are efficiently served, and volunteers and those being transported are connected, often establishing lasting relationships. This opportunity to connect with others in a meaningful way cannot be underestimated.

Recent reports indicate that Community Concepts Elder Rides program provided a total of 470 clients with 22,104 trips covering a distance of over one million miles. It takes a tremendous amount of diverse support to offer such a valuable service. This includes funds generated from grant writing, individual support and United Way funding across the counties Community Concepts serves. United Way of the Tri-Valley Area funding directly supported nine of those clients to take 126 trips which covered 50,000 miles.

For more information on obtaining a ride through the Elder Rides Program, contact 779-0594.

The mission of the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area is to improve people's lives by focusing the caring capacity of our communities. For more information or to give, advocate, or volunteer in your community, visit www.uwtva.org, call 778-5048 or e-mail info@uwtva.org.