

# **ITN** Greater San Diego <sup>TM</sup>

## Dignified transportation for seniors

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## A Difficult Decision

# ITNGSD Board Decides To Close Our Services

With deep regret and after months of soul-searching and counseling with former Board members and members of our Council of Advisers, the ITNGSD Board has voted unanimously to dissolve our non-profit entity, effective June 30, 2016. Discussions about the long-range financial sustainability of our three-year-old service to seniors and the visually impaired started at the Board level last December.

Central to the analysis and evaluation was the fact that our grant from SANDAG to open services to the South County was for one year (not the requested two years). Our application for a major grant, through The San Diego Foundation, from a generous contributor supporting the Initiative for Age Friendly Communities, was declined even though the application was invited.

## Whither Volunteer Drivers?

In addition, we have had difficulty recruiting additional volunteer drivers to our stalwart crew. We can't prove that competition from UBER and LYFT have been challenging, but there is anecdotal evidence. And, due to lack of funding for marketing, outreach and recruitment, we have not yet had the impact that we had hoped to have in the South

County - an impact that we had hoped to demonstrate. While we have opened the doors in the South County substantially, we have not yet been able to provide the rides we had projected in our original application to SANDAG. SANDAG was willing to give ITNGSD a six-month extension on our one-year grant, but when the Age Friendly Communities Initiative grant didn't materialize, we reasoned that we would be more pressed financially than we could expect to bring in.

### **Prospects for the Long Range?**

More important, there was enough money left in the one-year SANDAG grant to fund the extension period because of frugal budgeting. Thus, ITNGSD might be able to survive that half-year, but there would be the obvious need to raise, from private sources, the equivalent through the following six months during which it would have been possible for ITNGSD to apply for a succeeding SANDAG grant. But a succeeding grant wouldn't begin until July 1, 2018, necessitating the further fundraising. Make no mistake, the staff of ITNGSD has applied for numerous grants from family foundations, but received only one in the past two years.

As you all know, the Board of Directors of any organization, profit or non-profit, is charged not only with budgeting, accounting, transparency, fiscal responsibility and long-range planning as well as day-to-day oversight. Now, for over five months, the ITNGSD Board has wrestled with these questions.

### **The Final Decision**

The final decision was made at the Board meeting on May 17, allowing enough time to notify all concerned and direct members and riders to alternative services. The motion to dissolve ITNGSD had been pre-approved at the April meeting of the Board, but was confirmed in May, after further review. For three years we have provided increasing rides for seniors and the visually impaired. Many riders have become friends of our volunteer drivers and our Roads Scholarship program has made sure that we have been able to include those with low income.

For three years all of you who read this newsletter will know that, for us and for you, the mission to use the ITNGSD door-through-door, arm-through-arm dignified transportation model has helped people continue to live independently. We hope that goal will continue and thrive!