

ITN GreaterSanDiego™

Dignified transportation for seniors

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6161 El Cajon Boulevard, Suite B451, San Diego, CA 92115
(858) 751-4619 www.ITNGreaterSanDiego.org

It's A Whole New Year!

GROWING ITNGSD

Expanding to South County

It seems like yesterday. In October, 2013, we had our first small community fundraiser, and, with that modest beginning, we launched our first ride. It's been quite a "ride" since!

We haven't been shy. We had to pick up the pieces from a predecessor and did so, with some turmoil, in four months. We became the 24th affiliate of our national senior transportation model, ITN *America*, which now has 27 affiliates throughout the country. Our story is displayed in our previous newsletters - all available on our website.

SANDAG!

Perhaps our most significant achievement to-date was the Senior Mini-Grant Award we received from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) to promote existing operations and to open our service to the South County (Chula Vista, National City and Imperial Beach). We applied for a two-year grant; our award is for one year. But we were glad to be chosen.

The entire project is budgeted at \$133,140. Of that total, we provide income from memberships and rides at \$26,400. SANDAG provides \$85,392 and we are required

to provide a 20% “match” (\$21,348) from private fundraising and volunteer hours. When we submit monthly invoices, we discount our actual costs by the 20% “match,” so our fundraising and volunteer hours are a constant responsibility.

Frugal Budgeting: A Six-Month Extension?

At the outset our Board of Directors made plans for how we could fulfill the two-year promise we envisioned when we applied to SANDAG. They set to work crafting a lean budget so that funds could be carried forward after the year of the grant was up (July 1, 2016). The Board adopted an operating budget that was less than what SANDAG had approved, garnering savings in salaries and office rent.

SANDAG rules allow for a six-month extension (which can be approved at the staff level). We will apply for this in Spring, 2016. In the meantime, at our current rate of grant usage, we will be able to show that we have enough unexpended funds to promise that there will be sufficient dollars to continue for the six-month period at the same level we will have been operating for the first year.

Fundraising

Yet, we are determined to continue through to July 1, 2017, when we hope we might qualify for another SANDAG grant - this time for the full two years. But we will have to raise the funds to cover the first two quarters of the 2016-17 fiscal year. To no one’s surprise, the Board plans for a fundraising event - perhaps in the Spring of 2016. Their target is to raise a net of over \$20,000 - enough to continue ITNGSD services through the six-month extension. Of course, you will hear news about this event when plans are finalized - and your support will be vital!

Rides and Costs-Per-Ride

We have set a target with SANDAG that, by the end of the grant period, we will average 200 rides-per-month. We are closing in right now on an average of 100 rides-per-month. In truth, we would like to be averaging 300 rides-per-month by July 1, 2017. Our expansion into South County might very well mean that a goal of 300 is reachable.

Correspondingly, we must manage our costs-per-ride. If, for example, we take a single passenger on a long 30-mile round trip, it costs more than for two or three passengers together. If the trip is shorter, our cost-per-ride is less. If the trip is short and there are multiple passengers, we become more efficient.

A Grant from Regeneron For the Visually Impaired

Three years ago, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. donated funds to ITN *America* to support memberships and rides for visually impaired adults when they visit eye doctors or eye clinics. Regeneron recently renewed that original grant for another three years. The leaders at Regeneron are concerned that people with visual impairment not continue to drive when there are safety issues. Yet Regeneron knows very well that those with visual impairment want to live their lives as independently and normally as possible. So they support this subsidy which is called “Rides in Sight.”

Regeneron is headquartered in New York but its grant covers the cost of the “Rides in Sight” national office (housed with ITN *America* in Portland, Maine) as well as the program in each of ITN *America*’s affiliates. Regeneron manufactures the drugs that are used to treat macular degeneration, often experienced by seniors.

What Does The Program Provide?

The grant will pay \$40 of the ITNGSD \$50-dollar annual membership fee and it will pay all the costs of rides to eye appointments, even check-ups. The usual cost of a ride (not including the membership) is a pick-up charge of \$4.00 each way and \$1.50 per mile. Ordinarily, if a person is going 5 miles one-way, there would be a \$4.00 pick-up charge and, at \$1.50-per-mile, the ride would be \$7.50. To go round trip the total cost would be \$8.00 in pick-up fees and \$15.00 for the rides. That’s a total of \$23.00 - still about half the cost of a taxi.

But the Regeneron grant covers all those costs when it comes to eye appointments - and it covers \$40 of the membership fee. Except for the \$10.00 to cover the balance of the membership, the kind of trip described above is free. ITNGSD is proud to boast that the average percentage of our riders who use this grant program is greater than the common average of our ITN sister affiliates. How does it work? Prospective riders in this program call an information line at “Rides-in-Sight” at 1-855-60-RIDES (1-855-607-4331). Staff refer the caller to his/her closest affiliate (in our case, ITNGSD). They let us know and we take it from there. We call you when we’re notified.

Wende Chan Steps Aside As ITNGSD Exec. Director Elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Board

Wende Dawson Chan, who has served as pro-bono Executive Director of ITN *Greater San Diego* since its inception in the summer of 2013, is stepping down from that post, effective this month (December, 2015). The Board has elected Wende to be Secretary-Treasurer of the Board, making her a full voting member and officer. In this fashion her counsel and oversight will provide continuity throughout the SANDAG grant. The duties of the ED will continue to be filled by Wende until a new ED is appointed.

Rebecca Taylor Takes New Position

At the same time, Rebecca Taylor, for the past year ITNGSD's operations officer, has decided to move on with her career in San Diego in a full-time position. (With ITNGSD, her post was part-time.) Rebecca has previously served on the Board and was Chair of the Board for a year. As our Operating Officer for the past year, she has become accomplished as ITNGSD's public persona, establishing a major reputation in community outreach. The Board has elected Rebecca to be a member of the ITNGSD Council of Advisers.

Daniel San Nicolas Gets New Title: "Rides Coordinator"

Daniel San Nicolas continues as our "Dispatcher" and adds "Rides Coordinator" to his title in keeping with ITN America's nomenclature. Daniel's commitment and diligence have been hallmarks in ITNGSD's rider services. His commitment to our mission has been consistent for the two years he has coordinated our rides.

Daniel's responsibilities will expand to include much of the outreach that Rebecca has been doing, including maintaining relationships with our "sister" transportation organizations and making presentations about the ITN "door-through-door, arm-through-arm" model of serving seniors and the visually impaired. To reach Daniel and our dispatch services, call 619-990-2226.

Chair Kathy Randall, Vice Chair Joaquin Anguera Complete Their Service on the Board

Kathy Randall and Joaquin Anguera have completed their terms on the ITNGSD Board - Kathy as Board Chair for six months, providing important planning and marketing leadership and Joaquin as Vice Chair, having served on the ITNGSD Council of Advisers and the Board since ITNGSD started in 2013.

Kathy, former Chair of the Advisory Board of San Diego County's Aging and Independence Services, was recently appointed to the California Commission on Aging by Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins.

Joaquin, retired Deputy Director of AIS, has been a volunteer driver for ITNGSD as well as a leader on the Board. Both Kathy and Joaquin had previously served on the ITNGSD Council of Advisers and will return to membership on the Council.

Dixon Arnett Returns as Chair; Marylou Brentano Steps In as Vice Chair

Dixon Arnett returns as Chairman of the Board (having served in that role in 2013-14). Dixon is the former Director of the California Department of Aging, was Deputy Under Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services and was an elected member of the California Assembly, serving four terms in the 70s.

Marylou Brentano is the founder and president of TQM Associates, Inc., a firm that specializes in finding and placing engineers and high tech candidates sought by such firms as Boeing, Northrup-Grumman and other major clients. She founded TQM over 20 years ago. Her offices are in Old Town.

Importantly to ITNGSD she is a regular rider and is known by all our volunteer drivers. Over the past year she has developed her keen interest in ITNGSD and has been an informal counselor to our staff.

It's All About Our Volunteer Drivers...

Loretta Spano: A true champion who has been driving for ITNGSD for the whole time, since 2013, and who drove for our predecessor in 2011-12.

David Kochman: Our newest volunteer driver, a resident of Hillcrest

Judy Stern: Founder of Rides4Neighbors in La Mesa and a long-time member of the SANDAG Transportation Advisory Council (Chair) .

Joaquin Anguera: Former Vice-Chair of our Board, former Deputy Director of Aging & Independence Services and Professor of Gerontology, SDSU.

Wende Chan and Dixon Arnett: Our husband/wife team! Wende has been pro-bono ED of ITNGSD for 2 1/2 years; Dixon serves as Board Chair

Our newest drivers are currently undergoing routine background checks and training. All drivers receive criminal and DMV background reviews, their cars are safety checked and they are required to take a short course in our model of service.



Joaquin, Wende, and Dixon relax with fellow volunteers from ElderHelp and Rides4Neighbors at the annual Volunteer Driver Coalition luncheon.

We Need Volunteer Drivers in the South Bay!

... and Our ITNGSD Sponsors!



Regeneron Pharmaceuticals'



**The Doole Family
Charitable Foundation**



The San Diego County Council on Aging



The Chan/De La Meilleure Trust

Vehicle Donations

According to a recent Met-Life study, transportation is the second-highest expense in American households. It is more than the cost of health care and food, combined. The only higher cost is housing. When, as the study points out, the costs of gas and oil, wear and tear, repair and insurance are included, owning a vehicle is expensive! Thus, donating a vehicle to support ITNGSD makes sense. ITNGSD car donors get rides at about half the cost of a taxi, maintain their independence in their homes and get a tax deduction. Those who donate can also use the donated value to pay for their rides with ITNGSD. Or they can make a tax-deductible contribution of those rides to our “Roads Scholarship” program which supports rides for those with low income. It’s a win-win for everybody!

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