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More Proof that TRIP Volunteer Driver Program is a Superior Transportation Service Option

**1,475 people with disabilities received 152,000 free trips
during the July to June 2018 program year**

Riverside, CA – August 14, 2018 – The TRIP volunteer driver mileage reimbursement program of the Independent Living Partnership has set a new performance record again this year, providing needed transportation for elderly, disabled and seriously ill people, according to Chief Operating Officer Ivet Woolridge. Woolridge says, “The nearly fifteen hundred clients we served probably could not have received the rides they needed in any other way.” She continued that eligible clients are unable to drive themselves, do not have family to assist them, and are unable to use public transportation alternatives for various physical, mental health, or financial reasons.

This year’s program performance beats last year’s totals. Total volunteer assisted miles of transportation this year of 2.3 million tops last year’s total miles provided. According to Woolridge, “The cost to ILP of providing this transportation was \$6.30 per one way trip, about one-fourth the cost or less of providing the same trip using a van service like Dial-A-Ride.” Since beginning the service for the elderly, disabled and sick residents in Riverside County California in 1993 the stable and successful service has made more than 2 million trips possible.

Woolridge says, “Imagine you cannot drive, have no family to help, cannot walk to the bus stop and do not have the money to pay for an Uber or Lyft ride or pay for a transit van service and you need to get to your doctor, the grocery store or some other important place, what are you going to do?” Maybe you can beg a neighbor to provide the ride, which according to Woolridge, can be embarrassing and maybe not successful. She continues the TRIP model has been the answer for people in Riverside County for twenty-five years and should be a transportation option everywhere. The Independent Living Partnership’s grant to also provide a volunteer driver mileage reimbursement service for Los Angeles County residents was recently extended for a second year.

The design of the volunteer service includes the payment of mileage reimbursement for people who volunteer to drive for neighbors and friends. According to Woolridge, “The payment of mileage reimbursement makes it much easier for our riders to request transportation assistance because asking for help is more like a business transaction than asking for charity.” A typical conversation between a rider asking for a ride and a potential volunteer often is something like “When you go to the store next week, can I come with you? I can help pay for the gas.” According to Woolridge, “The payment of a

mileage reimbursement for volunteer drivers also helps cement the assistance relationship of drivers with their rider.”

The Independent Living Partnership is offering to assist agencies and organizations across the country to start and operate similar services based on TRIP’s experience. Like all beginning services, TRIP started small twenty-five years ago and then grew continuously as a result of the enthusiastic satisfaction for the program by riders, volunteer drivers, funders, the health community, and government agencies.

Woolridge says, “Any community wanting to improve transportation service for the elderly and disabled should consider implementing a TRIP model service.” Information about how to start a volunteer driver mileage reimbursement is available at ILPconnect.org.

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