

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Richard Smith 951-653-0740 rsmith@ILPconnect.org

TRIP Mileage Reimbursement Service Was the Right Choice

TRIP Metro North in Middlesex County, Massachusetts has provided needed rides for area elders and individuals with disabilities since 2011

Riverside, CA – April 2, 2019 – The *TRIP Metro North* volunteer driver service at Mystic Valley Elder Services (MVES) in Malden Massachusetts was a good idea, according to former Director of Community Programs, Vida Poole. The TRIP model of transportation, created by Independent Living Partnership (ILP), was adopted and implemented by Mystic Valley Elder Services nine years ago to supplement existing transportation offerings for elders and adults living with disabilities who had difficulties getting to needed health and other services.



In 2007 Mystic Valley decided to take a serious look at the problem of transportation for elders and individuals living with disabilities. Poole says that in 2008 she participated in one of the Community Transportation Association of America's (CTAA) Institutes for Transportation Coordination and from there began to research transportation models from across the country.

Poole continues, "We conducted an inventory of senior center vehicles and trips and confirmed that, while there was a good deal of transportation, it was fragmented and disconnected." She says, "What we learned from the literature was that a volunteer transportation program was often part of the mix of transportation services offered and we then worked with a consultant who found the TRIP program and recommended it as a possible addition to our current services."

Since TRIP Metro North began in 2011 about 200 people have received over 39,000 one-way trips and traveled close to 300,000 miles to access services they needed. Clients of the service are elders and individuals living with disabilities who do not have other means

of transportation. Limited eligibility to use the service is granted to people who use paratransit but need to travel outside the paratransit service area. Financial support for TRIP Metro North has been provided through competitive federal New Freedom and 5310 grant awards.

According to MVES TRIP Representative Annie Kirsch, “TRIP Metro North is available to older adults and adults living with disabilities in our communities of Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Revere, Stoneham, Wakefield, and Winthrop.” She says, “With TRIP, you choose a driver with whom you’re comfortable – a friend or a neighbor (and in some cases, certain relatives may qualify, too) – and the two of you work together to travel, track mileage, and at the end of each month we will send you a mileage reimbursement check for you to give to your driver.”

Kirsch says, “Consumers can use the TRIP to bring them to any destination at all whether medical, social, work, or day trips and they can make as many stops as needed.” Other important benefits of the program include clients being able to pick their own volunteer driver who they already know and having the ability to control their own schedule for getting out and about. Another benefit is that the service crosses “transportation boundaries” to travel to various communities that other services may not be able to reach.

More information about the TRIP Metro North program is available at <http://www.mves.org/trip>.

The nonprofit Independent Living Partnership (ILP) in Riverside California is the creator of the rider focused TRIP volunteer driver model which has been successful in Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Richard Smith, ILP CEO, says, “The TRIP model can also be operated anywhere in the United States to provide transportation for elderly, disabled, sick and alone individuals.” Information about the Independent Living Partnership and TRIP is available at ILPconnect.org.

###