

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Richard Smith 951-653-0740 rsmith@ILP-TRIP.org
Ivet Woolridge 951-653-0740, x11 IWoolridge@ILP-TRIP.org

1,722,015.7 miles of free rides provided last year Elderly, sick and disabled riders count on free TRIP service

Riverside CA – August 6, 2021 – For the program year of the non-profit Independent Living Partnership (ILP), that ended June 30th, ILP’s celebrated TRIP service for Riverside County California provided more than 300 volunteer driver assisted one-way trips each day for riders who had no other means of accessing needed services and resources. According to Ivet Woolridge, Chief Operating Officer, “the one hundred and eleven thousand trips, and more and 1.8 million miles of transportation for otherwise unserved elderly and disabled riders, was a respectable accomplishment for a volunteer driver program in these COVID times.”

ILP’s CEO, Richard Smith, says “that the twenty-eight consecutive years of high-level service and effective and cost-efficient program performance is testimony to the gold-standard, rider centered, self-directed volunteer driver, mileage reimbursement TRIP program.” Smith continues that the impressive ratio of at least one volunteer driver per rider, more than a thousand per year, would most certainly be a volunteerism record.

According to Smith, “Consistent annual, high-dollar grant funding of the TRIP volunteer driver service for Riverside County cannot be considered to be other than a very strong endorsement for TRIP and the job we do for County residents who would otherwise be unserved by alternative transportation options.” Every year since the service began 1993, TRIP has been awarded grant funding from the Riverside County Transportation Commission and the Riverside County Office on Aging and has now received 5310 funding through the California Department of Transportation for over six years. 2.5 million dollars of grant funding for the program has already been awarded for the next 3 years.

Eula Robertson-Ray, President of the ILP Board of Directors, points to the satisfaction of TRIP riders over the years as having also been a factor in the long-time stability of support for the critical volunteer driver service. She says, “5 Star satisfaction ratings by TRIP riders in annual surveys, with survey returns always in excess of 50%, are the norm.” She continues “Thousands of riders and thousands of volunteers getting isolated people out of their homes, to doctors, grocery stores, and other places every day has a huge impact on lives of our clients, on the volunteers who receive mileage reimbursements for the rides they provide, and also on community well-being.” Robertson-Ray is proud of her work with ILP, saying “this is the type of rewarding work that I hoped for in my retirement.”

Recently, the wife of a TRIP rider sent in an unsolicited thank you. Patricia P. wrote “I was going through all my husband's paperwork and found the ‘TRIP’ file. As he passed away this past December 2020, I wanted to let you know how much it meant to me to know my husband was being transported to his dialysis. He felt comfortable knowing it was my neighbor and it blessed my neighbor as well with cash for doing it, as he was out of work. You'll never know how grateful I was to have you back me up...”.

Smith says, “By every measure, this volunteer driver, mileage reimbursement service is a success.” He asserts that the design of the nonprofit program is the reason because riders pick their own drivers from among friends and neighbors, mileage reimbursement is paid to volunteers to make recruitment easier and keep volunteers engaged with their drivers, the; purposes for rides permitted are expansive and inclusive so that riders get out more often and get their needs met, and riders and volunteers arranging for needed travel on their own requires little administrative involvement. ILP assists organization start similar services.

For more information about TRIP, visit ILPconnect.org. Smith began directing the TRIP Program shortly after it began. Woolridge, ILP’s Chief Operating Officer, joined the organization in 2012. Eula Robertson-Ray was elected to board service in 2016 and became the board president in 2019.

###