

From all of us at ITN SunCoast!



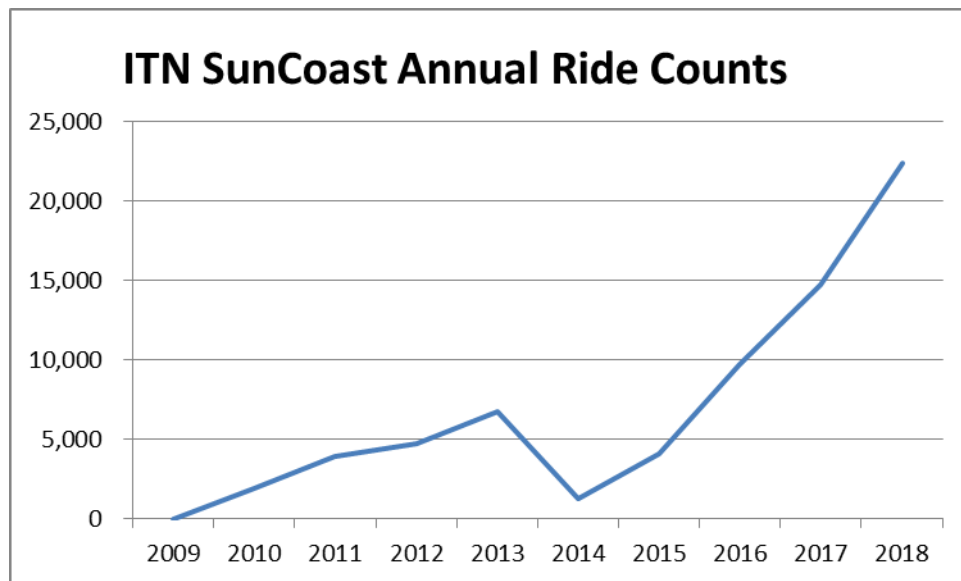
Jane Brody – Live Well to 100!

On Thursday, January 17, Jane Brody, the New York Times “High Priestess of Health”, will tell us how to live healthy and happy to 100. She is the keynote speaker at our 3rd Annual Come Ride with Us! Luncheon at The Carlisle in Sarasota. This is our major fundraising event of the year! Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased by calling our office (941-364-7530) or online at www.itnsuncoast.org. We are providing free rides to the luncheon!

Thanks to the generosity of some of our sponsors, complementary tickets are available for ITN SunCoast members if you would like to attend and the ticket price is more than you can afford. Call our office to make your reservation.

Our 2019 Commitment to You

We know that you value the ride services we provide based on the ever increasing numbers of ride requests we receive and the moving comments you share with us about how much our services mean to you. The number of rides we gave increased by 50% from 2017 to 2018 with over 22,000 rides provided in 2018. At the current pace of giving over 100 rides a day on 2 to 3 days a week, we expect to give over 30,000 rides in 2019. We are gratified and challenged by this.



We strongly value your trust and appreciation for what we do in serving you and the community. We are committed to continuing to providing outstanding services in 2019 that allow you to stay connected to the community and allow you to do the things you need and want to do. Based on feedback we have received from our riders and family members, our goals for the New Year include offering on-demand rides and providing rides to people who use wheelchairs and motorized personal transport vehicles. We want to expand our financial ability to give rides to people who are blind or have vision impairments as well as rides to individuals who live on limited incomes. In addition, we are committed to addressing the issue of social isolation and loneliness by providing low or no cost rides to events held by our community partners like the Friendship Center, Lighthouse of Manasota, JFCS, the Neuro Challenge Foundation, Goodwill Manasota, and the outstanding local performing arts venues like Florida Studio Theater.

Why All the Fundraising?

We are sorry to be constantly asking for your financial support and for more volunteer drivers. It seems to us (and probably to you) that our requests for donations are never ending. As you probably know, we do not cover our costs by what we charge for rides. This is done purposely since we want to make sure that our rides are affordable by as many people in the area as possible. At the same time, as the result of the huge increase in ride requests that we are receiving, there is increased pressure to raise the funds through donations, grants and sponsorships needed to sustain our services. We do not want to be victims of our own success. We also do not want to repeat what happened in 2014 when the then Board of Directors decided to suspend rides because of financial concerns. We are committed to the long-term sustainability of ITN SunCoast and will do everything we can toward that end. We do need your support financially and as volunteer drivers and your ideas to accomplish this.

ITN SunCoast's January Business Champion



Welcome to A Better Solution Home Care

A Better Solution Home Care has been providing home care with heart to Suncoast seniors for over 20 years. It is our mission to exceed the expectations of our clients, by delivering the highest standards of care with passionate and trained caregivers.

You or a loved one may need care at some point to cope with the demands of daily living. This is especially the case when there is an injury, surgery or a disability involved. A Better Solution is a home care agency you can trust. They provide caregivers who provide care and support when it is needed.

A Better Solution's services are available 24/7/365 for temporary and/or long-term care when assistance with tasks of daily activities is needed. Their services can be provided in an individual's own residence or in a facility. They deliver individualized, sensitive care designed to meet the individual needs of a diverse range of clients. Their services are flexible so that any special circumstances or needs can be met.

ITN SunCoast is very appreciative of the strong and consistent support we have received from ABS – A Better Solution Home Care. In addition, Barbara Cogswell, the owner at ABS, serves as the Chair of our Board and brings the same compassion, thoughtfulness and commitment to ITN as she does to her clients.

For more information, see the enclosed brochure or visit www.abs.care . You can also contact them at (941) 906-1881 or email bcogswell@abs.care.

ITN Special Discount - \$40 for your first 3 hours of service with A Better Solution.

Member Spotlight: Addie Garcia

By Linsea Mohr

ITN rider Addie Garcia, 95, often has a “senior moment.” Except to her, she defines those moments to mean joyful moments with her close family and friends. Her fitness addiction enhances her active lifestyle along to keep up with her grandson, Cayman.

From the beginning, Addie has always had an optimistic outlook on life. Her parents emigrated from Lisbon, Portugal to Wilbraham, MA where she was born and raised. Her first job was in accounting at Friendly’s Ice Cream headquarters and she continued in accounting after marrying her husband, Jose Garcia, a molder whom she met at a local dance. A son and a daughter completed their family. Her son is a veterinarian in Odessa and her daughter works for a criminal attorney locally.

Widowed for 26 years, she has reinvented the idea of “retirement” by filling her life full of hobbies and activities such as working in her private oasis backyard garden and attending fitness classes for the past 17 years. “My seven fitness friends hold me accountable to attending class and we go to lunch once a month,” she said. She also tries to eat healthy with no fried foods, gets seven hours of sleep, tries to be a good person and doesn’t lie. Additionally, she cleans her own house and cooks to stay active. Occasionally, she steps out for dinner at her favorite dining spots in town which is Italian food or The Fish House on Casey Key.

ITN enables her to maintain her active social calendar within the Venice area where she lives. “ITN has been fantastic,” she said. “The workers are polite and so great. It’s reassuring that they are always on time.”

Addie has always maintained a youthful vantage point of seeing the sunny side of life and making lasting connections. Her sense of humor grants her a unique perspective of finding the funny aspects of everyday life and she relishes in savoring the sweet flavor of every precious moment with family and friends.

Volunteer Driver Michael Levitan

By Linsea Mohr

Meet the ITN volunteer driver who gets a real lift from giving a lift. Michael Levitan, 70, says it’s the best job he ever had. “I’m doing something for people hands on and they can’t thank me enough for it,” he said.

It's a rewarding feeling for Michael, whose earlier life road took a different path down business and financial stratospheres where he managed Fleet Bank branches and launched Pitney Bowes franchises in New York upon graduating in Finance from Long Island University (BS) and attaining a graduate degree in Accounting. He grew up in Forrest Hills, NY and lived in East Hampton, Long Island in the 80s. He met his wife Sandy on the beach in Long Island and had three children, two boys and a girl and is looking forward to his daughter's upcoming wedding.

Michael retired seven years ago to Sarasota and has embraced his retirement lifestyle by pursuing his favorite sport of golf with his longtime comrades, frequenting Marcello's Restaurant and attending Monday Nights on the Bay concerts as a Ringling Museum member. Even with a calendar packed full of fun, something was missing. Michael wanted to volunteer in a way that directly helped and touched people. He found that with ITN.

"It's important to stay active, engaged and meet interesting people," Michael said. Being of service and volunteering at ITN is a win-win for both the volunteer and the rider. "I have ongoing friends as riders. Some have a similar background as mine and it's fun to catch up with them by taking them around town," he said.

A little time, driving talent and good conversation is the winning formula for a great ITN trip. Michael will enhance your local journey from start to finish.

More Volunteer Drivers Needed!

As mentioned earlier, the good news is that the number of people to whom we provide rides continues to grow. We feel terrific about this since this is our mission. At the same time, in order to meet this increase in ride requests, we need your help in finding more volunteer drivers. If someone you know has as little as an hour a month and is looking for a way to make a difference in a person's life, please have them call us at 941-364-7530. In addition to meeting very interesting and appreciative people, there are a number of additional benefits we give our volunteer drivers. These include mileage reimbursement and credits for miles driven that you can use in the future yourself, give to a family member or friend, or donate to our Road Scholar program. If someone you refer to us becomes a volunteer driver and provides rides over a 3 month period, we will give you a \$50 referral credit in your account. Help us help you!!

Friendly Reminders

- Our office hours are 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday thru Friday and we may be reached by calling 941-364-7530. If you call us after 2 pm, we will get back to you the following day. **In case of an emergency after hours or on the weekend, call 941-928-6506.**
- You may request a ride for any reason, on any day of the week including weekends, at any time of the day or night to anywhere within Sarasota and Manatee Counties. **Please make your ride request by 1 pm the day before you want a ride.**
- **For rides you need on Sundays and Mondays, please call in your ride requests by 1 pm the previous Friday.** On Friday afternoons, we set the schedules for Saturday, Sunday and Monday rides.
- If the details of a particular ride change after you have called us and made the ride request, please let us know asap and do not wait until you receive the confirmation call. Our ride schedules are pretty set by the time of the confirmation calls so making changes at that time can cause problems for us.
- When you call to make a ride request, please be prepared to give us your pickup and destination addresses and the times when you want to get picked up for both portions of your travels.
- You now have the option of submitting ride requests through email. Requests should be sent to info@itnsuncoast.org.
- You are welcome to have friends join you for rides to wherever you want to go. Your friends do not have to be ITN SunCoast members and there will be an additional charge of \$2.50 per person per ride.

You may request rides for friends to visit you at your home. In this case, we will charge you, our member, the regular fare for the ride requested and it will be up to you to collect the charge or not from your friend.

Thank you for being a member/supporter of ITN SunCoast!!

Arthur Lerman, Executive Director

Cheryl Grasso, Executive Assistant

Rich Henderson, Dispatcher

Megan Radish, Administrative Assistant