



From all of us at ITN SunCoast

We wish you and your family very Happy Holidays!!

Holiday Rides

Thanks to the generosity of our volunteer and paid drivers, we will be providing rides on and over the upcoming holidays. In the spirit of meeting your transportation needs during this joyous time of year, please let us know as early as possible if you will need rides around Chanukah, Christmas, and New Year's. Give us a call (941-364-7530) and put in early ride requests.

Holiday Office Hours

The ITN SunCoast office will be closed all day on Monday, December 24, Tuesday, December 25 and Tuesday, January 1 and will close at 2 pm on Monday, December 31 to celebrate Christmas and New Year's. We will be open normal office hours on Friday, December 21st to take your ride requests for the following Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Thank you for being sensitive to the desire by our incredible staff to enjoy the holidays themselves.

Year End Appeal!!

As you know, ITN SunCoast is a non-profit organization that relies on fundraising and grants to cover 35% of our annual budget. This year that means we need to raise \$150,000 in order to continue to provide rides. Unfortunately, providing transportation services is not inexpensive. We purposely keep our rates low in order to be affordable by as many people in our community as possible. Please help us continue to help you and remember us during this holiday season by making a contribution to ITN SunCoast. Contributions to ITN SunCoast are tax deductible and can be made online at www.itnsuncoast.org, by calling our office, or through the mail. Thank you!!

Let's Go Places Update

Last year we launched Let's Go Places! in an effort to address the issue of social isolation and loneliness among older people. Many of our riders are individuals who live in their own homes by themselves. Unlike those who live in retirement or independent living communities, many of our riders are very isolated. For \$15 round trip, we take people to activities and events in their area as shown on a monthly calendar that we prepare. It is an opportunity to do something with a few friends or meet a few new people and have fun out in the community. The most popular destinations so far are the University Town Center (UTC) mall and the Ringling Museum.

While many people think that Let's Go Places is a great idea, few have taken advantage of the service. We do not understand the limited response and, as the result, we are going to take a few months off to reevaluate the program. In the meantime, if you want to go to UTC, Ringling Museum, or other area destinations, or if you want to experience a "Joy Ride", please give us a call and we'll set a date. If you live in Venice, Englewood or Northport and would like to go to Sarasota for the theater or some other destination, let us know. Or, if you have any ideas on how we might make changes to our approach that would increase its appeal, please share those thoughts with us. We are very interested in your suggestions!

Convert Your Car to Cash!

Do you have a car in the driveway that is costing you money to register, insure and maintain and that you almost never use? ITN SunCoast makes selling your car quick and easy and we get great prices for you! We will pick up your car and make all the arrangements for its sale. With the proceeds, you can put some of it in your personal transportation account with us to cover the cost of future rides and use the balance as a tax deductible donation to ITN SunCoast. For more information, call us at 941-364-7530.

Reminder: Jane Brody is coming to Sarasota! **Get Your Tickets While They Last!**

Tickets are now available for "Jane Brody: Living Well to 100," a luncheon and fundraiser for ITN SunCoast on January 17, 11:30 am to 1:30 pm at the Carlisle Inn & Conference Center in Sarasota. If you are a Jane Brody fan, known as the "High Priestess of Health", or simply want to learn new things about aging successfully, visit www.itnsuncoast.org or call 941-364-7530 to purchase a ticket. For \$50 per ticket you get to hear Jane Brody, visit healthy living exhibits, get a swag bag, and have a sit down lunch. Seating is limited! Event sponsorships are available.

ITN SunCoast's December Business Champion



As ITN Suncoast's Business Champion for the Month of December, Canada Med Services is ready to help you save up to 80% on your prescription medication. For 15 years Canada Med Services has helped local residents afford their medication via a mail order pharmacy program. Located on Bee Ridge Road in Sarasota, their friendly team will help you in person or by phone. As Winners of the 2018 "Best in Service" Sarasota Small Business of the Year Award, Canada Med Services is proud of this honor and is committed to providing you with their best service and best prices.

ITN Suncoast is proud to announce partnership with the Canada Med Services Charity of Choice Program. When you use Canada Med Services and mention ITN SunCoast as your Charity of Choice, a % of your order will be donated back to ITN SunCoast. For more detail on Charity of Choice and services provided by Canada Med Services, please read material enclosed in this mailing. Information on how this free service works, how you can save on medication and a free prescription card has been included.

Canada Med Services recognizes the importance of ITN SunCoast & ITN SunCoast thanks Canada Med Services for being December's ITN SunCoast's Business Champion.

Get \$10 off your order in December by mentioning ITN SunCoast!

Canada Med Services, 4113 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, FL 34233
941-927-3600
M-F 9:00-5:00 Sat 9:00-2:00

Member Spotlight: Melissa Weiss

By Linsea Mohr

Remember the book, “The Little Train that Could” from childhood? Meet the ITN rider who *knows she can* accomplish anything with just a little effort.

Through her senses, keen sensibility and resolve, ITN rider Melissa Weiss, 62, helps the visually impaired find their way through services offered by her non-profit employer, Lighthouse of Manasota. Only a brief six years ago, she became legally blind due to glaucoma but has learned to adapt to a life of independence via the Lighthouse services along with her “can-do” attitude and daily triumphs with emphasis on the “umph.”

Melissa’s story exemplifies the power of positive intention. “If you decide to do the best you can, you will,” she said. “This applies to anything in life no matter how big or small the obstacle.” Lighthouse has adeptly taught her how to maximize her talents and abilities to the fullest extent possible.

Her story began in Columbus, Ohio. She attended Miami University of Ohio and moved to Sarasota four years ago after losing some of her vision. She has three children and an adorable grandchild named Mark who is 3 ½ years old. Since living in Sarasota, she works for Lighthouse of Manasota as an administrative assistant. Her job is fulfilling in that she is able to give back and improve the quality of life of sight-challenged people. Lighthouse has many workshops that help the visually challenged perform daily living tasks including Reading, Writing and Lighting, Mobility and Cooking without Looking.

Undaunted by her visual impediment, Melissa has continued to pursue all of her interests such as cooking with groups, two book clubs, swimming, local attractions including Mote Marine and Ringling’s Touch and Feel Program along with trying new restaurants. ITN is her transport concierge that also allots her independence. “ITN’s door-to-door service is invaluable for the visually impaired in terms of finding reliable, courteous and trustworthy service,” she said.

She credits her self-confidence to always having been a “glass half-full” type of person. “Everyone has hurdles in life to overcome,” she said. “You just have to choose to push through the hard parts and try to have fun while being kind to people along the way.” Her next new adventure awaits and like the little train that ultimately could climb the hill successfully, Melissa’s outlook is that she knows she can overcome any obstacle.

Meet John Craumer, Member of the Board of Directors

By Linsea Mohr

True grit. Determination. The Golden Rule. Acute listening. Make an effort to get along with others. Stay healthy. Enjoy life. These are the principles that guide ITN board member John Craumer.

Today, as every day, he says he “got up on the green side of the grass.” It’s his way of beginning each day with a positive outlook and his infectious sunny disposition.

Craumer, 79, isn’t one to let the grass grow under his feet for long in his action-packed life that centers on his affinity for sports ranging from football, tennis, track, basketball and golf. Sports propelled him with the tenacity skills to fulfill his career goals in retailing. He started at McCrory’s 5 & 10 and then he became the VP and Regional Manager of Lane Bryant for 17 years where he managed 63 stores from Baltimore to Miami. He moved to Sarasota to be the general manager of Kane’s Furniture. His avid participation in local affairs landed him the position as Chairman of the Resident Committee for the Pines of Sarasota for the past four years. Also, he has been an ITN board member since early 2016.

He likes the vantage point of being on the ITN board. “It’s a different perspective and it’s satisfying to be a part of ITN success in this market,” he said. He highlighted that the ITN drivers are the key to making the business go and they are the backbone of making it work.

John emanated from Emmaus, PA near Allentown and has been in Sarasota since 1988. He met his match in 1984 when his future wife, P.J. was late for work (John was her manager) due to a golf lesson. John found the perfect partner for him. They both had three children from prior marriages. Together, they had 12 grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Unfortunately, P.J. passed away in 2011.

These days, John likes to say he’s on “the back 9,” a golf term designating his endurance of years. He spends his free time watching sports and trying new restaurants around town. His favorite eating spot thus far is Captain Brian’s Seafood. He loves to bask in the idyllic climate of Sarasota and has no regrets. He’s done it all and wouldn’t change a bit of it.

In sports and in life, John has always played to win yet he continuously plays like a gentleman and is a valuable asset to the ITN team.

More Volunteer Drivers Needed!

The good news is that the number of people to whom we provide rides continues to grow. As mentioned earlier, in October we provided over 2,300 rides. 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. 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