

Happy Holidays

**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 Years. Give us a call (941-364-7530) and put in early ride requests.

## **Holiday Office Hours**

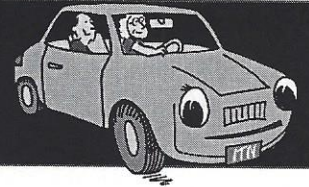
The ITN SunCoast office will be closed on Monday, December 25 and Monday, January 1 to celebrate Christmas and New Year's. We will be open normal office hours on Friday, December 22nd and 29th to take your ride requests for the following Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Please remember that since we will be closed those two Mondays, ride requests for the two Tuesdays, December 26 and January 2, need to be made by 1 pm on the previous Fridays. Thank you for being sensitive to the desire by our incredible staff to enjoy the holidays themselves.

## **Year End Appeal!!**

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 \$90,000 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. Thank you!!

ITN SunCoast | 941.364.7530 | [www.itnsuncoast.org](http://www.itnsuncoast.org) | [info@itnsuncoast.org](mailto:info@itnsuncoast.org)





## **2017 Luncheon – A Great Success!**

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual “Come Ride With Us!” Luncheon took place on Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at the Meadows Country Club and was a great success! Our theme this year was “Ending Social Isolation and Loneliness Among Seniors” and highlighted our new service, **Let’s Go Places!** Over 125 people in attendance were moved and motivated by the comments of our keynote speaker, Dr. Rich Luker, a social psychologist and researcher, who has been studying American life for more than 25 years, most notably regarding trends in positive aging and vitality. Based on his research, Rich noted that the keys to living a fulfilling life are: have love, have purpose, and keep moving.

Our Annual “Come Ride With Us!” Luncheons serve two important purposes.

- Each year we focus attention on an important issue facing our riders, people who are 60+ and adults of any age with vision impairments.
- The luncheon is our major fundraising event of the year, the results of which are critical in allowing us to continue to provide our ride services.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the luncheon a great success! A special thanks to our luncheon sponsors (see attached list), Rich Luker, and Heidi Godman who was the emcee for the luncheon.

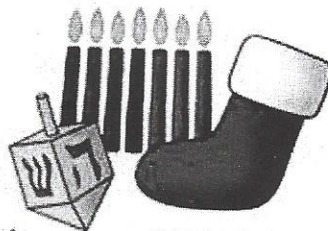
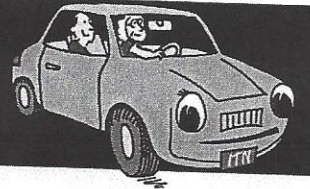
## **Volunteers of the Year – Joanna Stevens & Peg Mercner**

The ITN SunCoast Board of Directors selected Joanna Stevens of Sarasota and Peg Mercner of Venice as our 2017 Volunteers of the Year. Between these two remarkable individuals, Joanna and Peg have provided over 975 rides logging more than 10,000 miles.

Joanna Stevens has been providing rides for ITN SunCoast since 2010. Joanna is always there in a pinch when rides are needed and on numerous occasions has hopped into her car with little notice to make sure people get to where they need to go. Over that period of time, Joanna has provided nearly 700 rides and just keeps on going.

Since 2012, Peg Mercner has been providing rides in the Venice area along the southern border of the region we serve. Despite sometimes feeling like she was out there all by herself, Peg has been true to ITN SunCoast and has provided almost 300 rides. She has been the foundation of the presence and support ITN SunCoast has garnered in the Venice area over the years.





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## **Free Rides to Eye Appointments Continues**

As you may know, for the past few years Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. has provided a generous grant to cover the cost of ITN members' rides to eye appointments. The grant is for a specific amount of money on an annual basis. Since the number of eye appointment rides we provide varies from month to month, we periodically need to adjust what rides are covered to stay within the limits of the grant. The good news is that there are enough funds available so we can provide free rides both to and from eye appointments during the months of December and January. We will provide you with advance notice if grant funds start running low and we can only provide free rides one way.

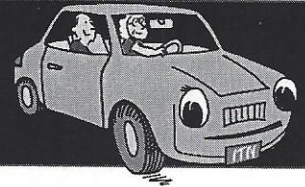
## **Credit Card Convenience Fee**

The number of ITN SunCoast members who pay their monthly statements by credit card has increased quite a lot. While we recognize the convenience of paying this way, the credit card processing fees we have to pay has become a significant expense. As the result, beginning January 1, 2018 we will be charging a \$3.00 per transaction credit card convenience fee.

## **Longboat Key – Siesta Key Surcharge**

If you live on Longboat Key or Siesta Key, you know that traffic during season can be a real challenge. Depending upon the time of day, it can take double or triple the normal amount of time to reach a destination, particularly on the mainland. This situation has made it difficult to find drivers willing to provide rides to and from the Keys during the season. In response to the legitimate concerns of our drivers, beginning January 1 through April 30, in the event of heavy traffic, we will be charging riders for additional time needed to get to and from the Keys at a rate of \$15 per hour calculated in 15 minute increments. We will use the travel time calculated in our ITN Rides software as the baseline. Please call us if you have any questions about this. We want to be fair to both our riders and drivers.





## **Car Donations**

Do you have a car in the garage that is costing you money to register, insure and maintain and that you almost never use? ITN SunCoast accepts car donations and takes care of all the details. We will pick up your car and make arrangements for its sale. You can use the value of your vehicle as a tax deduction and/or put part of the proceeds in your ITN SunCoast account to cover the cost of future rides. You can also give credits to a family member or friend or donate to our Road Scholar Program. For more information, call the ITN SunCoast office.

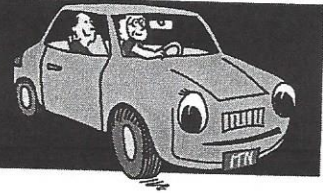
## **Amazon Donates to ITN SunCoast at No Cost To You!**

We know that more and more people are making their purchases on line and this includes gift purchases over the holiday season. Amazon Smile is a simple way for you to support ITN SunCoast every time you shop at Amazon at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same prices, selection and convenience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to ITN SunCoast. You log into Amazon Smile at <https://smile.amazon.com> using the same email address and password as your regular Amazon account. Your shopping cart, wish list, and other account settings are all the same. On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you need to select ITN SunCoast as the charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Your selection of ITN SunCoast will be remembered and then every eligible purchase you make on AmazonSmile will result in a donation. This is an on-going program, not limited to the holiday season. So, every time you make a purchase through Amazon, as long as you log into your account thru AmazonSmile, you will be contributing to us!! If you have any questions about this, call Arthur in the ITN SunCoast office.

## **We Need More Volunteer Drivers**

The good news is that the number of people to whom we provide rides continues to grow. We expect to provide nearly 20,000 in 2018! 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!! Thanks!!





## Friendly Reminders

- ITN SunCoast office hours are 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, Monday thru Friday and 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.** We cannot guarantee rides called in after 1 pm.
- For rides you need on Saturdays, 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](mailto: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.

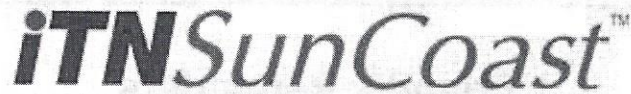
**Thank you for being a member/supporter of ITN SunCoast!!**

Arthur Lerman, Executive Director

Susan Shaw, Executive Assistant

Rich Henderson, Dispatcher

Megan Radish, Administrative Assistant



Dignified transportation for seniors

# **Thank You to the Sponsors of our 2nd Annual Come Ride With Us Luncheon !!**

**Held December 5, 2017 at the Meadows Country Club**

## Mile Sponsor

Elite Health – Humana

## Half Mile Sponsors

A Better Solution: Home Care

Herald Tribune Media Group

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## Table Sponsors

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