



## **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Awareness Luncheon – December 5** **We Need Your Support**

ITN SunCoast's 2nd Annual Community Awareness Luncheon will take place on December 5 at The Meadows Country Club. There are two important purposes to the luncheon. Each year we focus attention on an important issue facing people who are 60+, the large majority of the people we serve. In addition, 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.

We need to raise \$75,000 by June 30 to stay afloat and continue to provide the much needed and appreciated rides we will provide. In an effort to make our rides as affordable as possible, we do not charge as much as it costs us to provide rides. As the result, the amount of funds we need to generate through fundraising and grants continues to rise to reflect the difference between the 5,000 rides we provided two years ago and the projected 20,000 ride requests we will receive next year. Since we are mission driven and committed to meeting the need for our services that exists within the communities we serve, we are up to the challenge and need your support to be successful.

Our theme this year is "Ending Social Isolation and Loneliness Among Seniors". The keynote speaker is Dr. Richard Luker, a social psychologist who has been studying American life for more than 25 years, most notably regarding trends in positive aging and vitality. Dr. Luker's research on American community was the basis for his book "Simple Community," which reveals how important community is in keeping older adults engaged and feeling vital.

There are many ways you can help make the luncheon a success. You can make a donation, attend the luncheon, sponsor a table, be a major event sponsor, and share the information about

the luncheon with a friend or colleague. Please help us make the luncheon a success and allow us to continue providing our much needed services. Thank you!

### **Holiday Rides**

Yes, the holiday season is at our doorstep. Can you believe it! Thanksgiving is just a few weeks away and Christmas/Hanukkah closely follow. FYI, rides will be available throughout the holidays. Please let us know with as much advance notice as possible what rides you would like, particularly on the actual days of the holidays. Fortunately we have an incredibly committed group of drivers who want to make sure you fully enjoy the Holiday Season!

### **Holiday Office Hours**

For your information, the ITN SunCoast office will be closed Thanksgiving and the Friday after Thanksgiving (November 24th). So, if you need a ride on Thanksgiving Day, that weekend, or the following Monday, please call us by 1 pm on Wednesday, November 22. Since Christmas and New Year's fall on Sundays, our normal office hours not be affected. Even though the office will be closed at certain times around the holidays, you are welcome to make ride requests for any day over the holiday weekends and we will do our best to fulfill you requests.

### **Meet Megan**

Have you heard the new, friendly voice answering the phone when you call ITN SunCoast? Megan Radish is our new administrative assistant par excellence! Megan has a background in theater as well as customer service. She will help you with ride requests and is managing Let's Go Places! We are very pleased that Megan has joined our small band that is here to serve you.

### **Do You Purchase From Amazon? If So, You Can Contribute to ITNSunCoast At No Cost to You**

When you do your online holiday shopping, please think of ITN! AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support iTNSunCoast every time you shop at Amazon at no cost to you. When you shop at 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 ITNSunCoast. 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 ITNSunCoast as the charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Your selection of ITNSunCoast 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 through AmazonSmile, you will be contributing to us!! This would be a huge holiday gift to us and would be greatly appreciated!!

### **Trips From Venice to Sarasota Theaters**

We recently received a call from one of our Venice members who wants to go to the theater in Sarasota. Since the cost of a ride from Venice to Sarasota can be pricy, she is looking for one or two other people who would like to make the trip and share the cost. Anyone interested? Details about which performance to go to and the date can be worked out later. Give us a call at 941-364-7520 and ask for Megan.

### **Looking for a Lift Van**

We recently received a call from someone looking for a ride and the person uses a motorized wheel chair. Unfortunately, currently we do not have a driver who has a vehicle that can accommodate such a request. At the same time, we want to be able to meet the transportation needs of all people in the area. So, does anyone have or know of a lift van that we could use to give rides to people who have that need? Give us a call!

### **Pick Up Service Available Thru ITN SunCoast**

Just a reminder that we do offer a pick-up service to all of our members. Do you need to pick-up a filled prescription or anything else and don't feel like going out yourself? Give us a call and we will take care of it for you. For this service, we charge the cost of the ride from the pick-up location to your home plus a \$3.00 pick-up charge.

### **We Need More Volunteer Drivers**

The good news is that the number of people to whom we provide rides continues to grow. In October we provided nearly 1400 rides to 200 different individuals. 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 2:00 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](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!!**

**Happy Thanksgiving!!**

Arthur Lerman, Executive Director

Susan Shaw, Executive Assistant

Rich Henderson, Dispatcher

Megan Radish, Administrative Assistant