

Transportation Services Aim to Keep Seniors Independent

By Heather Dale

Shortly after John Harnish retired, the lease on his car expired and he found himself carless. To run errands and get around he would rely on family, when they were available, or call cabs, but on a fixed income, they were pricey.

Luckily for Harnish and other seniors living within the area, Aging at Home – A Community Network offers affordable and reliable transportation and helps to fill the transportation gap for seniors who require occasional trips to the hair salon, market or to medical appointments within their community.

“I’m 71. I have chronic fatigue. I appreciate the fact that I can sit back and let someone else do the driving,” Harnish said.

Aging at Home assists older adults living within Aldan, Colwyn, Darby, East Lansdowne, Lansdowne and Yeadon boroughs and helps provide support for seniors who need just a little assistance to maintain their independence in the community.

“Our goal is to work with seniors living in the Greater Lansdowne area who need access to reliable transportation, and who are not connected to Community Transit,” said Trindy Grundy, associate director of long term care at Senior Community Services. “Our plan is to work hand-in-hand with the available transportation services provided in the county, while addressing the needs for those specifically in our catchment area.”

Aging at Home members, ages 60 and over can access transportation each weekday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Those in need of a ride within the service area for medical appointments and errands are asked to contact the program at least 48 hours prior to their need for transportation. A donation of \$5 is requested for each ride and must be within a 7 mile radius from the member’s home.

Since launching the service earlier in the fall, the program averages about 50 rides per month. Rides are provided by trained Senior Community Services staff members in a new Ford C-MAX Hybrid vehicle.

Harnish has nothing but praise for the driver who takes him to Rite Aid and the grocery store on Wednesdays. They are both Air Force Veterans and always have great conversations.

“It gives me something to look forward to on Wednesdays,” he said. “[The driver] is one of the most cautious and responsible drivers.”

In addition to providing transportation services, Aging at Home, which is funded by a grant from the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, also provides key services that seniors need to remain independent in the community: with house/yard work and minor home repairs; home delivered meals; guidance with health insurance and prescription coverage options; help reducing the financial and emotional stress of caring for an aging loved one; and healthy living and lifelong learning classes.

If you need assistance and live in one of the communities served by Aging at Home or have any questions, please contact the program at 484-534-2201.