

Lincoln County Joint Transportation Committee: Connections to care

By Diane Rodriguez

It all started with \$2,000 – money to help seniors and people with disabilities find transportation to medical appointments and health services in Lincoln County.

Kitty Bushman, chairman of the Lincoln County Joint Transportation Committee (LCJTC) and a director of the North Lincoln Health District, and Cynda Bruce, transit program director of the Lincoln County Transportation Service District, shared the details of how this combination of agencies helps people get where they need to go.

“Pat Constance, a parish nurse, came to my office. She was concerned about barriers to medical access in this area,” said Bruce. “Seniors and disabled individuals were having trouble getting around.”

Constance also was on the health district board – and an initial connection between transit and health was born. In 2018, LCJTC received a \$5,000 grant for transportation via bus tickets from the Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund. It received the same in 2016. These grants run through the North Lincoln Health District.

Overall, LCJTC has received \$16,000 from the charitable fund since 2013.

The tickets are given to health care providers to distribute as needed for people to use Lincoln County transit system buses to get to appointments and other health services, which can include completing tests, picking up prescriptions and obtaining mental health services.

“We try to be flexible. Someone may need to get medical supplies or a flu shot,” said Bruce. “They may need food for nour-

ishment, which can be a medical need. We don’t want to limit it so much that people can’t get their health care needs met.”

Bushman explained that LCJTC also uses \$5,000 annually from each of the two hospitals (Samaritan North Lincoln and Pacific Communities) to provide for other transportation.

“The joint committee gives money to people who need taxi rides or gas cards (\$25 vouchers or cards); this goes through the foundation at both hospitals,” said Bushman. “This also includes discharge planners at the hospitals and also the finance person at the hospitals can ask for assistance.”

Bruce cited the example of a man who contacted her office because he needed to go to Corvallis for appointments. She suggested this program could get him there and maybe he could stay at the Pastega House. He didn’t think that would work, she said, because he had a little dog and couldn’t leave it alone at home.

He eventually stayed a couple of times while someone cared for the dog. He went back and forth, eventually completing his treatment.

“I didn’t recognize him when he called. I got the tickets together, delivered the tickets to him because there wasn’t enough time to mail them. Turned out he was someone who had previously worked with my daughter at a Lincoln County business,” said Bruce. “It was awesome to give him services, give transportation to someone who had worked hard all his life and needed some help now.”

When asked for final comments about this program, both women chimed in, almost completing each other’s sentences.



Photo by Diane Rodriguez

Cynda Bruce (left) and Kitty Bushman

Bushman: “The program is something that people need to be more aware of, that there is help out there for them.”

Bruce: “Without this program, medical costs would increase because people wouldn’t take care of themselves as well.”

Bushman: “Being able to go to the doctor’s office instead of letting something go and ending up in the emergency room. Talk to providers if you need help getting places. Contact the foundations for specific rides.”



The foundations can be reached at the following:

North Lincoln Hospital Foundation
541-996-7102

Pacific Communities Health District
Foundation
541-574-4745



Courtesy photo

Aurora Carmona (left) and Sharon Edenfield attend Sen. Ron Wyden’s Town Hall meeting at the Lincoln City Cultural Center on Jan. 5.



Courtesy photo

Allison Cook and her daughters, Eden and Eva

Cook graduates from Tribal Home Visiting Program

Congratulations to Allison Cook, recent graduate of the Siletz Home Visiting Program. Cook entered the program in January 2016 just weeks before the birth of her daughter, Eden, and graduated January 2019 when Eden turned 3.

During the course of those three years, Cook and her partner experienced many life events, including moving, surgeries, a job change and the birth of another child. Yet through it all Allison remained calm, supportive and engaged as a mother.

When asked what she valued most from participating in the Siletz Home Visiting program, Cook said “It reinforced my parenting skills. Helped to know I am doing it right.”

Election Deadlines

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Feb. 2, 2019	In-person voting – Tribal election, Tribal Community Center, Siletz
4 p.m.	Feb. 2, 2019	Deadline for returning absentee ballots