

Senior Transportation Program Stands Out

By Lee Borrowman

The successful Lamorinda Senior Transportation Program has been described as community based, innovative and resourceful. It has become a role model in the senior transportation industry. This program, which serves the close to 10,000 Lamorindans who are 65 or older, is shaped by three interdependent components: a 20% discount taxi service offered by Contra Costa Yellow Cab & DeSoto company for Lamorinda seniors, a volunteer driver program provided both through Senior Helpline Services "Rides for Seniors" program and Seniors Around Town targeting Orindans, and a ten passenger van service (dubbed Lamorinda Spirit) with wheel chair lift managed by Lafayette Senior Services. The van serves not only older adults but any persons with disabilities.

Lafayette Senior Services coordinator Mei Sun Li says, "The support of the City of Lafayette, including the City Council, Mayor Federighi, former Mayor Carl Andruri and Jay Lifson of the Chamber of Commerce, as well as from the East Bay Community Foundation and Supervisor Gayle Uilkema has been vital to the success of the program." The Moraga and Orinda city councils have also officially endorsed the project, and it is hoped that the tri-city relationship will continue to grow.

As of year-end 2006, with seven months of expenses under the belt, the Lamorinda Spirit van had logged close to 800 rides with the focus on taking ADA/LINK eligible passengers to a lunch program in Walnut Creek.

The launch of Errand Day last November, which provides door-to-door transportation to grocery stores, drug stores and medical appointments, has garnered praise from local seniors: "I really depend on the van and enjoy riding it. I don't know what we would do without it," said one 90-year-old resident of Lafayette. A rider from Moraga said, "I think Errand Day is a wonderful service. It's a godsend to me as I'm housebound without it." And everyone loves driver Eddie Carvalho, who assists his passengers to and from the van, carries groceries, and treats each rider with courtesy and kindness.

There will be a Sock-Hop fundraiser for the Lamorinda Senior Transportation program on May 6, from 2:00-6:00pm, at the Lafayette Community Center. Tickets are \$10, and live music will be provided by the Tice Valley Swing Band.



Lamorinda Spirit Van.

From left to right: Susan Hahn, Lafayette Senior Services Commission Chair; (on lift) - Muriel Manus Lamorinda Spirit Van Rider and Volunteer; Malcolm Hendry Lamorinda Spirit Van Volunteer Driver; Gayle Uilkema District Supervisor

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