

## **Hanover Senior Rides Celebrates 1,500 Rides for Hanover Seniors**

The Hanover Senior Rides program just celebrated the completion of 1,500 rides for seniors in Mechanicsville and Ashland areas. This program provides transportation for seniors aged 60 or older who can no longer drive but need rides to medical appointments, the grocery store, the bank and other personal business.

Since there is no public transportation, and very limited taxi service in Hanover, many seniors who cannot drive depend on families or friends for rides. But there are times when families and friends can't take time from work to provide the rides when seniors need them. This program allows seniors to have more independence and live in their homes longer. "Hanover County is a great place to live but if you're a senior and can't drive, you may need to move from your home to an assisted living facility."

The Hanover Senior Rides program is a ministry sponsored by (MCEF) Mechanicsville Churches Emergency Functions and (ACES) Ashland Christian Emergency Services. It began in 2013 and has grown as more seniors have become aware of the service. The program design is simple: Volunteer coordinators receive the ride requests, confirm the appointment and then email the ride request to our volunteer drivers. "Our drivers volunteer their time and use their own vehicles to handle the transport requests." While the rides are free, the riders are given an envelope and asked to consider a donation for the service.

Hanover Senior Rides averages 50 to 70 rides per month. Thirty volunteers operate the program which is currently serving 105 seniors. Riders must be ambulatory and able to walk with use of a cane or folding walker.

The volunteer drivers must first have a good DMV driving record, a background check, and take an 8 hour driver safety class before they begin driving. Drivers must also have the desire to help others in Hanover and be willing to volunteer their time to drive for seniors. Drivers are reimbursed 25 cents per mile to pay for the cost of gas. Other costs to the program include liability insurance, scheduling software and driver training. These costs are paid for through individual donations and grants. Anyone who may want to support this program can make a donation to Hanover Senior Rides, PO Box 604, Mechanicsville, VA 23111.

In late March the volunteers from Ashland and Mechanicsville came together for lunch to celebrate the completion of 1500 senior rides and for the leaders of ACES and MCEF to say, "Thank You" to all the Hanover Senior Rides volunteers. It was a good time for all of the volunteers to meet each other and share the benefits of this program through their experiences.

Pat Hubert, President of MCEF, shared a letter from one of our senior riders which include these comments: *"Following a cerebral hemorrhage... Senior Rides assisted me. The positive impact of this transportation service has been dramatic and crucial for me and my family as well. Doctor and therapy appointments were met. My and my family's stress level reduced... self-*

*sufficiency and “normalcy” returned. Now, I am being sustained at age 83 by rides to maintain independent living alone in my dwelling. Without exception, each of the eight different drivers I enjoyed in all of the 2016 trips, were considerate, cheerful, and of course, on time. They have been delightful and feel like friends.”*

If you are a senior who is in need of rides or if you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver for Hanover Senior Rides please call us at ACES in Ashland (804)798-2784 or MCEF in Mechanicsville at (804)357-9063.

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The above press release was published in the Mechanicsville Local, May 17, 2017 edition, page 20 and continued on page 21 with the photograph of the volunteers who really make it all happen.