

Toyota Presents Community Stars

May 24, 2016

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PORTLAND, ORE. (May 24, 2016) – Through the passenger-side window, 83-year-old Ferne Fabis points with excitement at the new bakery set to open soon near her home in Rockville, Maryland. New people and places have always been Ferne’s passion – even after a leg injury forced her to give up her driver’s license.

Now, at least once a week, Ferne travels with volunteer drivers from the Senior Connection. Sometimes it's to the grocery store, other times the doctor's office, but every time Ferne says it's the wonderful volunteers that make the difference. It's this commitment to keeping seniors like Ferne connected to their community that has earned the Senior Connection national recognition and a new Toyota Prius.

Today, Toyota presented the 2015 STAR Awards for volunteer transportation service at the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) EXPO in Portland, Ore. In addition to the Senior Connection's Grand Star Award 2016 Toyota Prius, \$50,000 in cash awards were presented to 15 award-winning volunteer transportation programs across America (see complete award recipient list below).

"Mobility is about more than getting from A to B," said Latondra Newton, Toyota Motor North America group vice president, social innovation. "Mobility is about connection – to loved ones, the community and needed services. The staff and volunteers of the Senior Connection aren't just drivers, they are conductors of these community connections, as are all the STAR award winning organizations."

This year's Grand STAR Award winner, the Senior Connection, is the largest provider of free, volunteer transportation to seniors in Montgomery County, MD. Since 2004, the Senior Connection has provided more than 280,000 services to over 7,000 seniors, with the help from more than 1,800 community volunteers.

"To know that organizations like Toyota recognize the importance of volunteer transportation and the power of what we are doing, it's just huge," said Tim Shaw, executive director of Senior Connection. "I really believe that this sort of support can drive change in communities across the country to do more to help seniors stay mobile and stay connected."

2016 STAR Award applications are now available online= at <http://nationalvolunteertransportationcenter.org>. The 2016 Grand STAR Award Winner will receive a Toyota Mobility Sienna minivan.

In their 15th year, the annual STAR Awards recognize outstanding volunteer transportation programs and enable winners to continue the involvement of their volunteer drivers in promoting and providing transportation services. The awards are organized by the National Volunteer Transportation Center (NVTC), an initiative of the CTAA. The NVTC provides technical and informational support to volunteer driver programs in the U.S.

2015 STAR AWARD WINNERS

GRAND STAR AWARD WINNER (2016 TOYOTA PRIUS)

- The Senior Connection – Silver Spring, MD

STAR AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE (\$10,000)

- The Senior Care Volunteer Network – Crystal Lake, IL

STAR AWARDS FOR DISTINCTION (\$7,500)

- TASC – Hampton, NH
- Hearts and Hands: Faith in Action – Getzville, NY

STAR AWARDS FOR QUALITY (\$5,000)

- Foothills Caring Corps – Carefree, AZ
- Dial-a-Bus of Benton County – Corvallis, OR
- Reach Out Morongo Basin – Twentynine Palms, CA

STAR AWARDS FOR INNOVATION (\$2,500)

- Elder Buddies – Bangor, ME
- Friendly Visitor Program – Middletown, NY
- Faith in Action Caregivers – Martins Ferry, OH
- Indian River County Ambulance – Vero Beach, FL

STAR AWARDS FOR MERIT (\$1,000)

ECCHO – Port Townsend, WA

- Escorted Transportation Service NW – Arlington Heights, IL
- Interfaith Caregivers of Haddonfield – Haddonfield, NJ
- In Service of Seniors – Pittsburgh, PA
- Interfaith Senior Programs – Waukesha, WI

HONORABLE MENTION AWARDS

- Veteran and Countrywide Volunteer Transportation Program – Sturgeon Bay, WI
- Rural Transit Service, Inc. – Brant, NY
- RSVP of Dane County: Driver Services – Madison, WI
- Patient Navigators – Framingham, MA
- Kibbitz & Ride Volunteer Transportation Program – Delray Beach, FL
- Silver Spring Village, Inc. – Silver Spring, MD
- NORC Volunteer Transportation Services – Atlanta, GA
- Catholic Charities – Honolulu, HI
- Wet Mountain Valley Rotary Community Service – Westcliffe, CO
- Red Cross Transportation Service – Grand Rapids, MI
- Shepherd's Center of Greater Tupelo – Tupelo, MS
- St. Claire's Catholic Social Services – Hyannis, MA