

Newsletter

Fall 2020

MISSION STATEMENT

Senior Rides and More is a faith-based nonprofit whose mission is to promote senior independent living, health and safety by providing free transportation and other services.



**Senior Rides
and More**

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Senior Rides and More is a Winner of the Houston Metropolitan BBB Award of Excellence 2020!



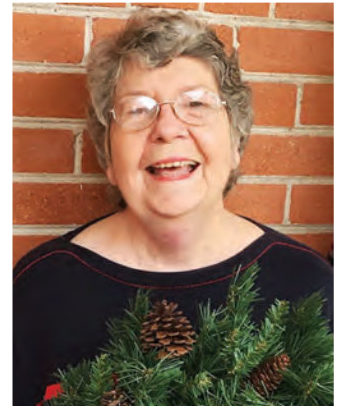
This coveted award spotlights a commitment to excellence in the marketplace and is an honor not given to everyone. The BBB recognizes the winners as role models for their character, expertise, and commitment to quality and trust.

The Awards for Excellence is open to all accredited businesses and nonprofit organizations with the BBB of Metropolitan Houston. Applicants have to provide written responses to ten to twelve questions on an entry form questionnaire. All applications are reviewed and receive a score from the Silver Fox Advisors judges, and not all applicants win an award.

Senior Rides and More is proud to be an organization that is recognized for making a difference in the lives of Houston's senior community.

Carleen Retires

"Where is Carleen?" This is the question that has been asked by our care receivers at least one hundred times in the past few months. After more than a decade as a Senior Rides and More office scheduler, Carleen McQueen decided it was time to hang up the phone and pick up her gardening tools. Yes, she decided to retire. Carleen began her career at Senior Rides in 2008, sharing the office scheduler's chair with Debby Posso (now the Director). Anna Pieniazek, our former Executive Director, is the smart woman who knew that Carleen was going to be the superhero of SRAM. Carleen soon established



herself as a beloved friend to our care receivers, and a sympathetic ear to those who needed someone to talk to. Her laughter is genuine, her voice is as sweet as a southern belle, and her opinions are sassy and sharp.

She is already missed by her friends who call to make their appointments, and by her friends in the office. Senior Rides volunteer Lloyd Parks asked Carleen, "Who is going to laugh at my jokes now that you're gone?" and volunteer John Marshall tells her, "I always know that when I hear your friendly voice on the other end of the line, there will certainly be some laughs involved." Senior Rides and More founder and board member, Annette Bisanz, tells Carleen "You are sweet, understanding, and compassionate. I will miss your voice but will always remember what you gave to the people we serve."

All we can say right now is that we love Carleen and wish her many happy years of having fun with the grand-kids, cleaning out closets, and pulling weeds

Volunteer Spotlight: Carl Sandlin

If you are a Senior Rides and More volunteer, you will recognize the name Carl Sandlin. Some have even called me to ask, "Who is this Saint? He helps so many people on the schedule!" Carl is a volunteer who has befriended many of our seniors and has dedicated himself to helping those same care receivers every week of the month. Please allow me to introduce you to this amazing person.

Born into a farming family in Union City, Tennessee, Carl has fond memories about his childhood on a farm. "Seeing the hogs all snuggled together asleep in the sun on a cold winter day – a beautiful sight to a farm boy!" During the summers he loved seeing the corn tassels at exactly the same height across the corn field.

While in high school, Carl dreamed of a career in agriculture. One day his asked him, "Carl, what are you going to study when you get to college?" Carl replied, "Oh, I don't know dad. Agriculture, I guess." Dad stopped Carl's intended career path when dad stated, "You can't make a living farming." Instead, Carl pursued a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering and graduated with honors from Tennessee Technological University. He was offered a Fellowship to pursue his Master of Science in Chemical Engineering at Georgia Institute of Technology. While at TTU, Carl went through advanced ROTC training and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant upon graduation.

CAREER:

Carl enjoyed a nearly 40-year career as an engineer with Humble Oil and Refining Company, now known as ExxonMobil. His world travels with ExxonMobil began with his first assignment in New Orleans, then to Ahwaz, Iran and Manama, Bahrain; back to New Orleans and Lafayette, LA, a stop in Houston, before moving to Madison, NJ and then finally a four year assignment in Malaysia as the Drilling Manager for Esso Production Malaysia Inc. Carl finally returned to the USA in July 1994 as Drilling Operations Manager in Houston. In 2001, he was given a new assignment and was responsible for exploration activity all around the world (Australia, Far East, West Africa, Mediterranean Sea, Brazil, US Gulf of Mexico, and Russia), and for production and drilling and completions activity in Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, and Sakhalin Island (Russia). On

May 6, 2010, Carl retired from ExxonMobil. In late 2011, he was asked by the CEO of British Petroleum to assist BP in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon incident. His job was to assure the Safety, Ethics, and Environmental Assurance Committee of the Board of Directors that all 26 recommendations from the Bly Report had been implemented across the whole of the Global Wells Organization. He completed the assignment in February 2016 and is now finally and officially retired from corporate life. Carl stated that his career was "Very challenging but very rewarding. I'd still be working but being retired is more fun!!"

FAMILY LIFE:

In case you were wondering if Carl found time for a personal life, he did. He met his wife Judy while singing in the church choir and they married in 1975. Ten years later, their daughter Rachel came

into their lives by way of adoption. Rachel is now a mom herself, making Judy and Carl doting grandparents to their granddaughter Lillian. Carl says, "We are lucky, for they live just 1.5 miles from us!"

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY:

Carl is devoted to volunteering, to his church, and to an active lifestyle. "I am convinced you need a reason to get up and out of bed in the morning. And golf six days a week isn't it!" exclaims Carl. (He does love golfing!) He is involved in several organizations:

- The Global Missions Committee at Chapelwood United Methodist Church
- The Board of Directors for Caring Adoptions since 1996
- The Board of Directors of Noah's House, a group home for intellectually disabled adults in Harris County
- The Board of Directors of The Restoration Team, a nonprofit that helps folks rebuild their homes after Hurricane Harvey
- The Board of Directors of Fairhaven Food Pantry, an outgrowth of Chapelwood UMC that is working with the Houston Food Bank to help feed people during this pandemic
- He is a dedicated volunteer with Senior Rides and More and usually drives 3-4 days a week depending on the need.
- In 2011 he was asked to join the Friends of Music at Tennessee Tech.



Welcome Jim Odasz to Senior Rides and More!

Senior Rides and More has a new part-time Scheduler and his name is Jim Odasz.

Jim has lived and worked in the Houston area for the past 24 years and recently retired from Hewlett-Packard. He has been married to his wife Kate for 24 years and will be celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary in February 2021. Prior to living in Houston, Jim and his wife lived in the greater Orlando, Florida area. With Jim's experience in the high-tech industry he brings a wealth of knowledge to the scheduler position that will allow him to seamlessly handle the operational requirements for Senior Rides and More.



Jim and his wife keep busy with many hiking trips out to the Hill Country as well as travel to see family across the country. An avid hiker and off-road adventure seeker, Jim recently spent a month with his wife during the Covid-19 shut down on an extended road trip to visit the western Rocky Mountain states with stops in Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Utah to enjoy the mountain hikes and fishing in remote areas as part of their adventure.

Jim's other main recreational hobby for the past ten years has been playing baseball in the Houston Hardball League with the Houston Skeeters. And for the past seven years, Jim has been the Assistant Coach for the St. John's School Mavericks baseball program and Head Coach for the Junior Varsity team. Janie and Debby are happy to have Jim as part of the Senior Rides and More family.

PASSION FOR LIFE:

Carl stays active when he is not volunteering. In 2010, he began his quest to hike the Appalachian Trail. After a couple of starts and stops, he has hiked about 836 miles on the Trail, most recently he added 466 miles in the fall of 2019. He had hoped to be hiking again this year ... but along came Covid19. Carl has also hiked about 148 miles on the Pacific Crest Trail in Washington State. He is truly an inspiration!

FUN FACT:

Carl plays the Tuba and was named an "All-State Musician" his senior year of high school. While at Tennessee Tech, he landed a job with the Tuba teacher at the University who enlisted him to start a Tuba Ensemble at the school. Not only is Carl a Founding Member of the Tennessee Tech Tuba Ensemble, but the only engineering major in that group - everyone else was a music major! That group has now performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City 8 times. As Carl says, "Not too bad for a farm boy from west Tennessee!"

SENIOR RIDES AND MORE:

I asked Carl, "What is it about volunteering for Senior Rides that inspires you?"

He answers, "When you call the care receiver the day before the appointment to arrange the details of the trip, and his/her voice brightens when they know it is their volunteer calling on behalf of Senior Rides ... well, that just makes my day!"

Several care receivers call Carl their best friend. He believes it is because they can tell that he truly enjoys being helpful to them, he is there to listen to them, to assist where he can, and just generally be supportive.

Carl Sandlin is indeed an inspiration to all of us at Senior Rides and More. We are grateful that his path in life has brought him to our door. Thank you, Carl, for your amazing service to Senior Rides. We wish we could clone you.

Supporter Spotlight



Senior Rides and More received a generous donation over the summer from Mr. Patrick O'Connor of O'Connor Tax Reduction Experts. Thanks to his commitment to helping seniors, we were able to purchase more than 160 lighted foldable magnifying glasses to give to our care receivers. This item is valuable to those with aging eyesight. The magnifying glass folds into a pocket protector and shines a light when it is opened.

This light illuminates the page underneath the magnifying glass allowing those with poor vision to read print in a dimly lit area. Remember the times you may have struggled to read your menu in a darkened restaurant, and you know how frustrating it can be for seniors whose vision is declining due to advancing age.

Senior Rides and More is grateful to Mr. O'Connor for thinking of our seniors with vision impairment, and for his generosity to all our care receivers. They truly appreciated a nice gift during this year when many of our folks are staying home and staying safe. It is the support of our incredible donors that allows organizations like ours to thrive during challenging times.

Senior Rides And More Advisory Board

Cindy Siegel, Metropolitan Transit Authority Board
Mr. Orlando Sanchez, Harris County Treasurer
Ms. Virginia Lootens, Attorney at Law
Dr. Bill Franklin, M.D., Physician, retired
Inge-Lotte Liesner, Community Supporter
Deanna Parmenter, CFO, Cougar Sales
Vince Ryan, Harris County Attorney



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Facebook.com/VICSW.org



Caregiver Statistics Jan 2020 – October 2020

Total Reported Volunteer Mileage – 20,835
Total Reported Volunteer Hours – 2,889
Total Reported Visits/Events – 2,787

Our Corporate Angels

Bethany Christian Church	Jean Griswold Foundation	St. Martin's Episcopal Church
The Brown Foundation, Inc.	Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation	St. Philip's United Methodist Church
Harry S. and Isabel C. Cameron Foundation	The Hildebrand Fund at Greater Houston Community Foundation	St. Philip Presbyterian Central Mission Endowment Fund
Chapelwood United Methodist Church	The Robert H. and Anita Q. Lawe Foundation	Shell Oil Foundation
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ExxonMobil Foundation	St. Albert of Trapani	Tomball Regional Health Foundation
Aubry and Sylvia Farb Community Service Fund	St. Anne's Catholic Church	Isla Carroll Turner Friendship Trust
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