Toyota awards grant to Jewish Family Service of Greater Dallas to boost Elderly and Disability Transportation Services

In the Covid era, staying home has become a feature of life for many people. But there are still journeys of necessity, and even desire, to be taken, and for many older or disabled adults, getting out poses tough obstacles.

To help with this mobility, Toyota Motor North America awarded a grant to Jewish Family Service of Greater Dallas (JFS) to transport seniors and people with disabilities to medical appointments and provide access to social services.

“The freedom to move is critical to health and wellbeing, and we are proud to partner with the Jewish Federations of Greater Dallas and America to create one more pathway to connect riders with vital services,” said Mike Goss, general manager, Toyota Social Innovation.

Toyota’s grant, overseen by the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas (JFGD) and the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), provides a 2021 Toyota Sienna accessible minivan, as well as gas, maintenance and a salary for a driver for one year. The transportation service will aid elderly and disabled individuals living in Plano traveling to medical appointments and to the Aaron Family Jewish Community Center of Dallas (JCC) for meals and social programs.

“To provide care to those who once cared for us is one of the highest mitzvahs and honors we can offer,” says Rabbi Mordechai Harris, Interim Chief Operating Officer, JFGD.  “The Federation is honored to collaborate and partner with JFS to support this initiative, to support our community’s most vulnerable.”

Limited finances, location, and disabilities make it difficult for the elderly to access transportation services, contributing to poor health and a decline in quality of life.

“The generous grant from Toyota enables us to bring back our transportation program, thus eliminating a barrier to independent living for many of the older adults in our community,” says Debi Weiner, JFS Senior Director of Older Adult Services. “We are so grateful for this partnership.”

With COVID-19 variants still a concern, it is especially important to provide an alternative to public transportation for more vulnerable populations.

“For older adults, keeping safe from COVID-19 and high-risk situations has been a huge priority,” says Cathy Barker, JFS Chief Executive Officer.

The fundamental need for programs such as Toyota’s van grant is echoed by Dr. Matthew Keller, co-chair of the JFNA's Disability Committee: “Challenges accessing transportation can lead to social isolation, depression, and difficulty obtaining medical care,” Toyota’s grant also allows us to reduce those barriers for the people of Plano and enables the Federation and partner agencies to do what they have always done: provide older adults and those with disabilities the support they need to thrive.”

By the end of December, clients and JCC members will be able to book appointments online with our new Van Driver, Shelita Warner. All inquires may be sent to driver@jfsdallas.org.

To request Older Adult services at JFS please call the intake line at (972) 437-9950 x340.

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