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RYDE Program Expands Senior Transportation Service in Morgan Hill

Low-cost transportation program provides critical lifeline to independent seniors

Morgan Hill, CA, October 20, 2020. Seniors age 65 and older in Morgan Hill will soon have access to safe, affordable ride service through a federal grant aimed at helping seniors living in “transportation deserts” lacking easily accessible public transportation. The grant will enable the “Reach Your Destination Easily,” or RYDE senior transportation program to expand its current area of operations into parts of San Jose and all of Morgan Hill.

The City of Morgan Hill’s Centennial Recreation Senior Center piloted a small volunteer driver program, Get’n Around Town, in 2017. Over the last three years, the Get’n Around Town program has grown to 24 volunteer drivers and has provided over 1,490 rides to more than 30 homebound seniors. With the award of \$30,000 in grant funding, the Get’n Around Town program will be rebranding as RYDE (Reaching Your Destination Easily).

RYDE provides an essential service, helping give seniors the independence they need to age in place and stay connected to their community. “Transportation is the lifeline to the community. Without transportation, older adults can become homebound, isolated, and disconnected, which can cascade into other health issues,” says Debbie Vasquez, Recreation Supervisor for the City of Morgan Hill.

“Merging with RYDE means additional funding to support coordination of the program, marketing, and a supportive network of two caring organizations aligned with our goal of keeping older adults connected to the community,” says Vasquez. The program will continue to be operated locally by the Centennial Recreation Senior Center. Riders can use the program for rides to grocery stores, medical appointments, errands, and local recreation centers within Morgan Hill.

Rides are booked in advance, and fees are charged on a sliding scale, based on ability to pay. Financial assistance is also available. To register, book a ride through Morgan Hill’s RYDE Program, or to obtain additional information, please call 408-310-4250 or email RYDE@mhcr.com. The program will expand to the greater Morgan Hill community as long as there are enough volunteer drivers to meet the demand for rides. “Volunteer drivers are the key to the success of our program and our ability to have a meaningful impact right here in our local community,” says Vasquez. If you are interested in becoming a RYDE Driver or supporting the program, please visit www.morganhill.ca.gov/RYDE for more information.

The RYDE program launched in 2017 in Campbell, Cupertino, Monte Sereno, Saratoga, and the Town of Los Gatos through the Saratoga Area Senior Coordinating Council (SASCC), West Valley Community Services with support from the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisor and the Valley Transportation Authority. The program will launch its new name in Morgan Hill on November 1st. During COVID modifications and extra health and safety protocols will be in place and can be expected.

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The Saratoga Area Senior Coordinating Council and West Valley Community Services will host a joint press conference on Wednesday, October 21st at 10:00 a.m. at the SASCC office (19655 Allendale Ave, Saratoga, 95070) to formally announce RYDE's new service area.

About WVCS

Founded in 1973, West Valley Community Services, Inc. is a non-profit organization that connects low-income and homeless individuals, families, and children with housing, food, and supportive services. Our mission is to unite the community to fight hunger and homelessness. We envision a community where every person has food on the table and a roof over their head.

WVCS is the sole safety net for the 22,000 people living in poverty in the west valley communities in and around Cupertino, West San Jose, Los Gatos, Saratoga, and Monte Sereno. We provide critical safety-net services like food, housing search support, emergency rental and utility assistance, affordable housing, family support, homeless services, financial coaching, case management, and information and referrals – for those with the greatest needs.

About SASCC

SASCC was founded in 1979 on the idea that a community should have an active, dedicated, and capable team assessing and serving the needs of local people as they make their way through adult life. Its mission is to provide access to physical and social activities along with resource services that improve the overall quality of life for aging adults in our community.

About the City of Morgan Hill Centennial Recreation Senior Center

The Centennial Recreation Senior Center operated in partnership with the YMCA opened in 2006 and has been a vibrant and dynamic hub for older adult services in Morgan Hill. The Senior Center provides community enrichment, resources, and social services for older adults through programming and partnerships with respect, inclusion, and diversity. In June 2016, the City of Morgan Hill earned the Age-Friendly City designation from the World Health Organization.

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