



At Community Life Bridge our mission is to Bridge the Gap of unmet needs for mature adults, enhancing their quality of life and our community. The Community Life Ride (CLR) program bridges many gaps in our community, primarily a lack of affordable and accessible transportation. Launched in 2019, CLR is a volunteer-driven transportation program for adults who no longer drive. Currently, a team of 84 vetted and trained volunteers provide rides to our 96 program members to support their independence and quality of life. The program is open to anyone over the age of 60 who can get in and out of a vehicle with relatively little assistance, and no longer drives or seldom drives themselves. CLR serves Sumner County with convenient, trustworthy transportation that older adults can rely on and have confidence in.

In the Spring of 2022, once COVID had started to slow down, Community Life Ride set out to connect our riders to each other. In August of that year, we had our first rider social, creating the opportunity to have brunch at a local restaurant and meet others within the program. There were six riders who decided to participate. These riders laughed, shared stories, dreamed about places to visit with each other and exchanged phone numbers. It was a successful event! For Joy Barbarine, it was a pivotal moment within her time with Community Life Ride.

A few weeks after the rider social, Joy's husband Gus, passed away. Gus was also at the social so the other ladies had met him and had been dreaming alongside Joy about the activities this group would do together. The women who had sat around the table were quick to call and send messages to Joy to encourage and support her during this season when just weeks before they didn't even know each other. But now, Joy had a local support system of friends who understood feeling isolated and not able to drive, coming alongside her during this season of grief and loss. These ladies were true friends, and Joy was so thankful that our program had brought them together.

Two years later in August of 2024, the Sassy Sisters were created. Joy, along with Mamie and Betty, who were also at that original rider social in 2022, and two other ladies they have gained as friends through Community Life Ride, rider socials began to gather monthly to eat out and shop. These friends understand the unique challenges of isolation due to a lack of transportation. They all utilize the CLR program to get around and are overjoyed to be able to use it together to combat loneliness and improve their quality of life. We have a total of 36 individual riders who have attended rider socials this year and several of them have enjoyed multiple opportunities to gather with other riders.

Community Life Ride is proud to provide rides not only to medical destinations, but to just about any destination a rider might want to go. Between January and November of 2024, we have provided over 54% of our rides to non-medical destinations such as shopping, hair salons, visiting friends or eating out like the Sassy Sisters do monthly. These rides improve our riders quality of life and allow them to live independently. In our program, where 64% of our riders live in individual residences instead of a senior living environment, this aspect of our program is important for basic needs as well as social and emotional needs.

Having West End Home Foundation as a partner has allowed us to expand our program to provide various types of rides and staffing funds to support additional services like our rider socials. Their vision of enriching the lives of older adults in a way where they are engaged in their communities is aligned with our vision to bridge the gap of unmet needs for mature adults, enhancing their quality of life and our community. Together, our staff has been able to fulfill our mission for the Sassy Sisters as well as 121 other riders throughout this year. We are thankful for the funds we receive which enable us to remain focused on the services we provide and improving the quality of life for all in our community.