The Winter quarter meeting of the Southern California Volunteer Driver Coalition took place on Thursday, December 12th at the California Endowment Center in Downtown Los Angeles. The meeting had one of the most well attended Coalition meetings with representatives from public and private volunteer driver programs in Los Angeles County, social service program representatives from San Bernardino and Orange Counties and community representatives from northern Los Angeles as well. Elaine Porzucki of Jewish Family Charitable Services called the meeting to order and introduced the different agenda topics of the day's meeting. Toni Levysohn of Community Connections based in Claremont gave a presentation on the recent expansion of the Community Connections volunteer driver program. Community Connections recently expanded its program beyond the boundaries of its original four-cities jurisdiction surrounding Claremont and Pomona and now provides volunteer driver services as far west as Covina and also extends east into western San Bernardino County. At this point, Community Connections is the only volunteer driver program that crosses from Los Angeles County into San Bernardino County. For Access customers this can be a great benefit as Access Services does not cross county lines and provide service to destinations in neighboring counties, with few exceptions. The coalition also provided feedback on an informational flyer that coalition members could take with them to conferences and public meetings to further promote and advertise the efforts of the coalition. The Southern California Volunteer Driver Coalition will meet again in Spring of 2014. For questions or comments about the Volunteer Driver Coalition, please feel free to contact me or Matthew Avancena.
Casa de Los Amigos is an Independent Living Community along the coast of scenic Redondo Beach. The residential homes were designed for senior adults who desire living spaces that require minimal upkeep. Seniors that usually live there need little or no aid and wish to enjoy life with other seniors nearby. Redondo Beach is a full-service city with its own police, fire and public works departments, two public libraries, a performing arts center, fifteen recreational and commercial harbor including King Harbor, a 1,500-slip private craft port; the popular Redondo Beach Pier and Seaside Lagoon; and a bathing and surfing beach. This has proven to be an attraction to seniors in a wide age range who are seeking an independent life and yet provide a community feel.

Access Services’ Mobility Management staff; Stephen Wrenn, Mayra Perez-Calderon and Erik Washington along with Dena Antoun, Travel Training Supervisor for Mobility Management Partners, were invited to meet the residents, family and staff of Casa de Los Amigos. This afforded Access the rare opportunity to meet our clients in their own social surroundings. For many residents this was a first time experience in receiving travel options for the Los Angeles regional area along with vital Access rider information. For the residents of Casa de Los Amigos whose daily living and increased activities has been enhanced by Access Services, the Casa de Los Amigos’ Health and Resource Fair was a huge success in providing opportunities and benefits.

Eric Washington  
Mobility Management Counselor

Access Services recently installed two Automated External Defibrillators (AED) and trained its emergency staff on the use of the machine and on the fundamentals of CPR. The trainings were held on December 9, 2013 and January 8, 2014 and provided essential life-saving techniques and hands-on CPR training. One of the many highlights of the training was when participants were able to perform chest compressions and simulate “giving breaths” to rescue dolls.

The instructor, Kevin Corcoran, is a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). He explained that Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) occurs more than 350,000 times each year in America. Without immediate CPR and early defibrillation (within 3-4 minutes), survival is less than 5%. Immediate bystander CPR and early defibrillation can improve a victim’s odds of survival by 50-75%.

Upon completion, emergency staff received certifications from the American Heart Association in CPR and AED use that is valid for 2 years.

Charace Thompson  
CTSA Analyst, Operations
This holiday season Access Services adopted two families who work within the community of El Monte. Each family is a single parent household with the parent working less than 30 hours a week for the San Gabriel Conservation Corp. SGCC is a work program that hires at risk or hard to employ young adults. SGCC provides these young adults with tools to grow as individuals and prepares them to enter the work force.

Anthony and Roxanna had no idea that Santa was coming to town via Access Services. They were overwhelmed with joy when they realized that all the gifts in the room, which included a really awesome Power Ranger bike, were for each of their children. It was an awesome experience to see the impact Access made in the lives of these two single parents.

Thank you Anthony and Roxanna for your contributions in the community of El Monte. Access wishes you the best in 2014!

I would like to give a special thanks to the Access Family for their generous giving, and CEO Shelly Verrider for her support and heart of gold!

Charlene Motta
Administrative Assistant
Join us in congratulating Mr. Larry Hart of Sherman Oaks, CA our Helping Hand winner for the month of November 2013.

Mr. Hart has been a member of Access Services since 1995 and frequently uses the service to travel to work. He is originally from Chicago and then moved to New Jersey before making California his home in 1978. Mr. Hart states he is a news junkie, records current events and enjoys reading on international events.

When asked, “What is your favorite thing about the service” his response, “being able to travel long distances and get to the places I need to go.” He also stated that he is grateful for the service and expressed his appreciation for all the Access drivers and the Customer Service Dept.

Since June, Mr. Hart has traveled 430 times with no late cancellations or no-shows. He enjoys using the service and commending drivers on their good works. His hobbies are listening to Rockabilly music.

Mr. Hart expressed that he missed the days when Access Services provided same day service, but understands it is no longer available.

Hamilton Franco
Operations Supervisor