



**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**2024**



# Letter from the CEO

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, we're filled with immense gratitude for your continued support of Ride Connection. Your generosity has empowered us to expand our services and positively impact the lives of countless individuals in our community. This year marks a significant moment for me, as I prepare to transition from my role as CEO. It's a bittersweet feeling, as this organization and its mission have been a central part of my life for many years.

Looking back at the past year, I'm incredibly proud of how our team, our volunteers, and our community partners have continued to adapt and innovate, ensuring that Ride Connection remains a vital lifeline for so many individuals in need of transportation options. We've navigated challenges with resilience, always prioritizing the

needs of those who rely on us for safe, accessible, and reliable transportation. The stories of impact—the medical services accessed, the groceries purchased, the social connections fostered—are a testament to the dedication of every individual who contributes to Ride Connection's success.

As I prepare to pass the baton, I do so with full confidence in the future of Ride Connection. We have a strong strategic foundation, a passionate and dedicated team, and an unwavering commitment to our mission. I am excited about the fresh perspectives and leadership that will guide Ride Connection into its next chapter.

I want to express my deepest thanks to our incredible staff, our tireless volunteers, our generous donors, and our invaluable community partners. Your unwavering support has made everything we do possible. It has been an honor and a privilege to lead this organization, and I am excited to watch Ride Connection continue to thrive and make an even greater impact in the years to come.

Thank you for being a part of this journey.

Sincerely,



Julie Wilcke Pilmer  
Chief Executive Officer



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ride Connection acknowledges that our facilities are situated on the traditional village sites of the Multnomah Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Molalla, Clackamas, and many other Indigenous nations of the Columbia River, who have called this place home long before the arrival of white colonizers (Portland Indian Leaders Roundtable, 2018). We honor and recognize the enduring relationship between Indigenous peoples and their territories.

# The Rosewood Initiative

## Ride Connection and The Rosewood Initiative Partner to Enhance Community Mobility with Accessible Electric Bus

Ride Connection is thrilled to announce a partnership with The Rosewood Initiative, a vital community organization dedicated to empowering residents in East Multnomah County. This collaboration marks a significant step forward in enhancing accessible transportation options for the Rosewood community, made possible through generous funding from Pacific Power. The funding enabled Ride Connection to acquire one of the region's first fully accessible electric buses, a game-changer for local mobility.

This state-of-the-art electric vehicle will serve as a cornerstone for improved access to essential services and community engagement within the Rosewood community. It will provide vital transportation for older adults and individuals with disabilities, ensuring they can easily reach crucial appointments, community events, and support services. Beyond individual transport, the bus will also play a critical role in delivering essential resources, including diapers and food boxes, directly to those in need, addressing immediate community well-being.

The partnership kicked off with a successful site visit where The Rosewood Initiative team visited Ride Connection's headquarters. This visit facilitated strong connections between the two organizations, providing an opportunity to showcase the bus's innovative features, including



its advanced accessibility ramp and comfortable interior. A test ride around the neighborhood offered a firsthand experience of the bus's smooth operation and ease of use.

The Rosewood Initiative is committed to creating a thriving, equitable community. Reliable and accessible transportation is a key component of that vision. Partnering with Ride Connection, and having access to this incredible electric bus, will significantly enhance our ability to serve our community, connecting residents to vital resources and opportunities they might otherwise miss.

As the partnership deepens, Ride Connection looks forward to collaborating closely with The Rosewood Initiative to fully understand the evolving transportation challenges faced by the community. This ongoing dialogue will ensure tailored solutions are developed, empowering Rosewood residents to thrive and access all that their community has to offer.

## Meet Pat

**“I consider going the extra mile as part of the job.”**

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With a background in journalism, community-based adult education, and community organizing, Pat spent 16 years in Australia and New Zealand working across various forms of communications before returning to the U.S. After moving back, she began noticing something that deeply resonated with her— older people waiting for hours at the community pool for their transportation. Disappointed by the long waits and eager to help, Pat started driving people in her own car for free. It was through this that she learned about Project Linkage, and, after talking with the team, she knew she wanted to join the volunteer team. Now, Pat has been volunteering with Ride Connection since 2017, and even after taking a break due to knee surgeries, she returned to continue helping as soon as she was able.

For her, the heart of volunteering is offering not only transportation, but also emotional support too. “You meet people where they are,” she says. “Some people are shy and reserved, others are exhausted from doctor’s appointments, and some people are feeling sad.”

**“These are very human situations, and I want to be present for that and validate their personhood.”**

Beyond driving, she listens to her passengers’ concerns, often going the extra mile by recommending helpful resources to solve problems in their lives.

Her commitment to the people she serves reflects her passion for community organizing and advocacy, and it has been a deeply fulfilling part of her life. We are so lucky to have Pat in our corner, and we can’t wait to see all the joy she spreads in the coming years!



# Red Hat Society Rolls with Ride Connection

Introducing the vibrant King City Red Hat Ladies! For several years, Ride Connection's Tualatin/King City program has been organizing monthly lunch outings for this stylish and close-knit group, and both the members and their dedicated driver, Bert, greatly benefit from the experience. Alice, the group's "Queen Bee," shared that they currently have 11 members. "We used to have twice as many, but it became challenging to secure lunch reservations for such a large group!" The Red Hat Society, a nationwide social club, aims to empower women to fully embrace life, and it's clear this group is doing just that.

The ladies gather each month at the King City Civic Association where Bert takes them to the selected restaurant chosen by a rotating "hostess" in the group. This month, Kathy picked Benihana in Beaverton. "Having a reliable way to get to and from the restaurant means we can truly enjoy our time together," she said. "And Bert is the best driver! He's always so upbeat and careful on the road."

The Operations Team is eager to reinstate more group outings like these, which were more common before the start of COVID, to better serve the community. Bert, a 13-year veteran of the Ride Connection driver team, enjoys the change of pace that group trips provide. "This is such a cheerful group," he



**"Having a reliable way to get to and from the restaurant means we can truly enjoy our time together"**

remarked. "They always radiate positivity. It's a joy to drive them!" As Bert prepares for his retirement in October, Ride Connection is filled with gratitude for his time and endless compassion. "Ride Connection has given me more than I've given it," he humbly replied.

Before lowering the lift for his last rider, Bert shares a warm smile and reminds her to "watch the curb" as she departs. He will be greatly missed by the Red Hat Ladies!

NEW EVENT

# An Evening in Support of Ride Connection



Ride Connection's 2024 annual fundraising event, An Evening in Support of Ride Connection, brought together community members, partners, and supporters for a memorable night of celebration, generosity, and gratitude.

The evening raised vital funds to support our mission of providing accessible, responsive transportation to older adults and people with disabilities across the region.

This year's event was especially meaningful as we also paid tribute to our long-time CEO, Julie Wilcke Pilmer. Julie's visionary leadership and unwavering dedication have shaped Ride Connection into the trusted and impactful organization it is today. While we are sad to see her go, we celebrate her remarkable legacy with deep appreciation and look forward to continuing the work she so passionately championed. Julie is moving on to pursue other interests and to dedicate more time to her family, and we wish her all the best in this exciting new chapter.

# Ride Connection by the Numbers

Total Revenue

**\$80,929,866**

Total Assets

**\$39,795,208**



**1,671,951**

Total miles  
driven



**324,813**

Total trips  
provided by Ride Connection  
employees, partners  
and volunteers



**12,946**

Total volunteer  
hours



**4,214**

Unduplicated  
Riders

## RideWise Travel Training Outreach:

Total presentations and  
group trips: **882**

Total participants: **679**

## Trip Type

Medical **49%**

Shopping, Grocery **26%**

Support Services **13%**

Recreation **9%**

School, Work, Volunteering **3%**



# Thank You to Our Donors

## **\$75,000+**

The Estate of Dorothy Raeburn

## **\$50,000**

Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund

## **\$30,000 - \$49,999**

OCF Joseph E. Weston Public  
Foundation

## **\$5,000**

CareOregon  
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Oregon  
Travis Phillips and JC Vannatta  
Jean Vitali  
Lisa Wilcke  
Anita and Daniel Yox

**Thank you for helping us link accessible, responsive  
transportation alternatives with individual and community needs!**



## **\$100 - \$249**

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## **IN-KIND DONORS**

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Forest Grove Senior and Community  
Center  
Hugh and Bonnie Gilmartin

# Volunteer with



Ride Connection is looking for volunteer drivers! We need caring and compassionate people to provide rides to places like medical appointments, the grocery store, and community centers.

We will match you with older adults, Veterans, or people with disabilities in need of transportation right in your neighborhood, when it is convenient for you (Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm). Volunteers may choose to drive their own cars, or one of ours.

To volunteer, you must have at least 5 years of licensed driving experience, be able to pass a criminal background check and demonstrate safe driving habits on the road. You'll be equipped with excellent training on safety, defensive driving techniques, and other helpful tools to ensure a great experience for you and everyone you drive.



To learn more, contact our Volunteer Outreach Manager:

**[volunteer@rideconnection.org](mailto:volunteer@rideconnection.org)**

or call **503-528-1724** | TTY: 711

**Volunteering with Ride Connection is more than providing a ride – it's providing human connection, and access to the community.**