

NONPROFIT TIDINGS

Beaches seniors can dial new ride courtesy of Baptist Health

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Baptist Health donated funds for Dial-A-Ride, the Beaches Council on Aging's free transportation program for seniors and adults with disabilities, to purchase a new vehicle for a double-digit increase in demand.

The donation totaled \$115,000, including insurance and additional amenities, according to the council.

The wheelchair-accessible van, which holds eight passengers and two wheelchairs, is the fifth vehicle of its

kind in the fleet.

The council connects senior Beaches residents "to people, services and places with care," Executive Director Lori Delgado Anderson said.

"This generous gift allows us to expand our reach."

A Community Health Needs Assessment conducted by Baptist Health and other health systems showed "lack of transportation as a barrier to accessing health and well-being," according to the council.

Dial-A-Ride is an "essential service," Baptist Health's Katie Ensign said. "We're working to remove obstacles."

The average number of one-way trips provided by Dial-A-Ride increased from 535 in 2022 to 770 in 2023, an increase of 31%, and to 937 in 2024, an increase of 22%, the council said

In 2022, the program served 203 people; in 2023 the number rose 21% to 246 and 14% to 280 in 2024.

The council is at 3410 Third St. S. in Jacksonville Beach.

For more information call (904) 246-1477, email info@beachescoa.org or go to beachescoa.org.

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A HISTORY OF HELPING

Dial-A-Ride, free transportation program for seniors and adults with disabilities, has seen a rise in demand over the past three years.

2022

535 one-way trips
203 people served

2023

770 one-way trips
246 people served

2024

937 one-way trips
280 people served