

# Southington United Way gets \$40K grant for senior transportation

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STAFF WRITER

**SOUTHINGTON** - The Main Street Community Foundation has provided the United Way of Southington with a \$40,000 grant to help them continue to support Senior Transportation Services.

The grant, which comes from the Bradley Henry Barnes & Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust, is known as the “Southington-Community Well Being Grant.” This was set up “to support the health and wellbeing of Southington residents,” according to Kate Kerchaert, program officer for the Main Street Community Foundation.

“Last year, we set aside \$100,000 to attract new organizations to apply. We are awarding that money to the United Way; LISA, Inc.; Neighbor Brigade, which helps neighbors dealing with short term crisis; and the Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington,” added Kerchaert.

United Way of Southington plans on using the grant to market and promote its Senior Transportation Services.

“They are one of the agencies we fund on a yearly basis,” said Jack Eisenman, executive director. “Senior Transportation Services provides rides for people ages 55 or above from a couple of different towns but the money we give will all go to benefit Southington residents. In North America, we don’t always treat our elderly as well as in other parts of the world. This service allows our older residents to be able to shop, make medical appointments and visit loved ones.”

Kerchaert pointed out that the local Calendar House does a good job in providing rides for local seniors, but that the demand for this service exceeds what they alone can provide.

Marc Pelletier, president of United Way of Southington, said this is something special that the community has been enjoying very much.

“We have had a long relationship with this program; we have been funding it for 20 years. We’ll be reaching out to the senior center, which has a good handle on who needs rides. From what I’ve heard there are probably 100 rides each month that they are unable to provide. This is a wonderful town, but its needs are growing. This will go a long way to put a dent in that number,” said Pelletier.

Nancy Morrissey of Senior Transportation Services added that their program used to receive federal funding; however, they lost that grant in June of 2015. The Main Street Community Foundation grant will



Brian Johnson | Staff From left, Kate Kerchaert of the Main Street Community Foundation, Nancy Morrissey with Senior Transportation Services, Jerre Betts with the Main Street Community Foundation, Jack Eisenman of United Way of Southington, Nicky Roy of United Way of Southington and Marc Pelletier, president and director of United Way of Southington.

help them to recoup that loss, at least locally.

“We provide one on one, door to door service,” she said. “Seniors will be picked up in the driver’s personal car and they will wait for people while they are having their appointments.”

Eisenman noted that United Way of Southington plans to reach out to local veterans in an effort to find new volunteer drivers.

For more information on United Way of Southington, call 860-628-4565 or visit [unitedwayofsouthington.org](http://unitedwayofsouthington.org).

For more information on the Main Street Community Foundation, call 860-583-6363 or visit [mainstreetfoundation.org](http://mainstreetfoundation.org).

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