

NEWS RELEASE



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Racine County and Johnson Foundation Host Senior Transportation Forum

Racine – Most drivers outlive their ability to drive by seven to ten years, a statistic that highlights why the transition away from driving is a serious—and growing—social and safety issue in this country. In Wisconsin, and across the nation, communities are recognizing that existing transportation systems are not meeting the mobility needs of normally aging people.

Katherine Freund, founder and President of ITNAmerica[®], the nation's first sustainable transportation option for seniors, is the featured guest at a Wingspread community forum on senior mobility on March 12th, co-hosted by Racine County and The Johnson Foundation in conjunction with ITNRacineCounty[™]. In 2008, *The Wall Street Journal* named her "One of 12 People who are Changing Your Retirement."

"We've added years to the American life span but our transportation systems--from mass transit to our reliance on the private automobile--were never really built for people who reach such extended ages," says Freund. "Independent Transportation Network[®] is a new member of the transit family specifically designed to meet the needs of older people."

The ITN affiliate model is based on community engagement and collaboration to solve the real and growing problem of dignified transportation options for seniors and the visually impaired. In the weeks and months ahead, ITNRacineCounty will be launching volunteer recruitment and training efforts while also developing community awareness of ITN's unique program features that benefit volunteers as well as member riders. Seniors have the option of trading their own cars to pay for rides while volunteer drivers may store transportation credits for their own future transportation needs or use their credits to help family members at any ITN anywhere in the country.

"The vast majority of Americans do not plan beyond their driving years," adds Freund. "I am grateful to The Johnson Foundation for their willingness to facilitate dialogue and examine creative solutions to this important social and public health issue. We are also indebted to Racine County for convening local community partners and providing the start-up funds for this new ITN affiliate. Your leadership and support empowers the people of Racine County to build a sustainable solution for their grandparents and parents now and for themselves in the future."

ITNRacineCounty needs the support of the whole community. For information about rider memberships, volunteering to drive, or car donations, go to www.itnracinecounty.org.

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