



Transit Means Access for All

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As a person having lived and experienced disability throughout life, I can speak to the issues of mobility from the various phases of the aging process and the ongoing barriers an individual faces. Prior to moving to Northwest Indiana (NWI), I lived in Chicago where I worked, had a business, and volunteered with numerous organizations; transportation could be had in all its forms: from taking the subway, getting on a public bus at various times of the day or evening, calling or hailing a taxi, or getting into my car with ease.



Through the creation of the Miller Neighborhood Infrastructure & Transportation Committee we developed partnerships with over seventy organizations. Through the partnership with the Indiana National Park, we arranged to provide accessible transportation to and from the South Shore Miller Station to Marquette Park and the Beach during the weekends of the summer months. By attending and participating in Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission meetings, we now have voice on policy. One major success is that plans have been written and developed from the Universal Design lens, meaning that we must go beyond the ADA. People with disabilities need to be seen and heard as equal partners.

These past seven years have been about raising awareness of the needs of transportation for all, particularly those of the disability community. Society has been so focused on seeing disability from the medical model and fails to see us from a social, business model: persons with disabilities work, enjoy socializing, participate in sports and attend to civic responsibilities. It's understandable that basic transit services need to revolve around visiting the doctor and getting to the grocery store, but now we must move beyond and provide more services and resources.



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