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Miami-Dade County Bus Operator's Quick Actions Save a Passenger's Life

There are superheroes who don't wear capes and masks, but their heroic actions help to save the lives of strangers. On the morning of September 19, Miami-Dade Metrobus Operator Laronda Marshall was driving her usual bus route 77 unaware what was in store for her that day.

When she reached a bus stop around 10:25 a.m., a passenger who was getting off the bus told her that a man in the back was slumped over and seemed ill. Marshall quickly parked the bus and walked back to check on the passenger.

The man was unconscious and non-responsive. Marshall, a former nurse's aide, couldn't find a pulse so she asked someone near her to dial 911. With the help of other passengers, she was able to move the man from his seat and lay him down on the floor of the bus. By then, her nursing instincts had taken over and she started steady chest compressions on the ill rider.

Marshall continued to apply chest compressions and by the time emergency workers arrived 10 minutes later, the man was breathing again. According to paramedics at the scene, her quick actions helped save a life that day.

This incident wouldn't be the first time operator Marshall helped to save a passenger's life. In fact, September's event was her third life-saving act since becoming a Metrobus operator in 2011.



Laronda Marshall on her bus route. (Brigitte Stambury/Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works)

In November 2017, Marshall saw a pedestrian, who had been struck by a car, laying motionless on the road. She secured the scene by parking the bus to protect the person from being further injured. Marshall stayed and comforted the injured man until help arrived.

A month later, Marshall jumped into action again when she saw a little girl alone in the middle of a major intersection in Miami Gardens. Marshall guided the child to safety inside her bus and called for assistance.

"Operator Marshall is an exemplary employee who goes above and beyond her duties. She places the wellbeing and safety of those she serves as top priority. We are extremely proud of Operator Marshall and are grateful for her professionalism, heroism, and her willingness to serve others – even in challenging situations," said Alice N. Bravo, P.E., Director of



Miami-Dade County Bus Operator—cont'd from cover

Miami-Dade County's Department of Transportation and Public Works.

Marshall's Division Superintendent, Mary Peoples, said, "Marshall is a model employee. We are so proud of her. She's an inspiration for all of our bus operators," Peoples said.

Marshall herself said she is grateful she was given an opportunity to use her past skills as a certified nursing assistant to save someone's life. She encourages others to learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation – it might just come in handy.

"I have a love for people, and my instinct is to jump in and help," Marshall said. "I really feel everybody should learn CPR because it could save a life, especially in transit."

Bus drivers are not often recognized for their service to the community. But on October 29, operator Marshall received a special commendation from Miami-Dade County in the Board of County Commissioner's chamber.

After sharing Marshall's story via the Department's social media channels and with local news outlets, it went viral. Operator Marshall is a true hero and Miami-Dade Transit is beyond proud to have her on the team.

Senior Resource Association and Bike Walk Indian River County celebrated World Car-Free Day

On September 20th, the Senior Resource Association and Bike Walk Indian River County hosted a celebration and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new public bike repair station located at the GoLine Hub on 16th street in Vero Beach. In recognition of World Car-Free Day, participants arrived at the Hub via bicycle just as the buses rolled into the Hub at 9:20am.

The new bike repair station was provided by Bike Walk Indian River County with the support of Dyer Subaru of Vero, Orchid Island Bikes & Kayaks, People for Bikes, and Sunrise Rotary of Vero Beach. The station contains multiple tools for onsite repairs of multiple bike mechanical problems and includes an air pump with pressure gauge for inflation.

"GoLine strives to improve the quality of life for residents in our community by providing convenient and fare-free transportation for all. More than 300 bicycles are loaded on and off the bike racks of our county buses every day. The new bicycle repair station will make the commute for multi-modal riders safer and much easier," Karen Deigl, President and CEO of Senior Resource Association and GoLine Indian River Transit said.

Laura Aaron, a founder of Bike Walk IRC, arrived at the event on her bicycle followed by other members of the coalition. More than a dozen local bikers soon followed including Phil Manson and Brian Freeman from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).



"Not only is this a much-needed utility for individuals whose primary transportation is their bicycle, we hope to help educate our community about the importance of bicycle safety and the proper maintenance of their bikes," Aaron said.

The new bike repair station is open and free to all riders, Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 6:30pm and Saturday 8:30 to 4:30. All GoLine bus commuters, including visitors and residents, can ride the bus at no charge on 15 fixed routes throughout Indian River County. Convenient bike racks are available on all GoLine buses.

For more information about Senior Resource Association and GoLine Indian River Transit, visit SeniorResourceAssociation.org or GoLineIRT.com.

Palm Tran Prioritized Most Vulnerable Populations throughout Hurricane Dorian

When a catastrophic category five hurricane threatened landfall in Palm Beach County, Palm Tran took all steps necessary to prepare for the worst possible outcome. While residents scurried to fill gas tanks and gather supplies, Palm Tran transported the homeless to nearby shelters free of cost. Furthermore, Palm Tran announced a “Free Transit Day” on August 31, 2019, which assisted riders with reaching family members, evacuating to shelters and running last-minute errands. As the hurricane neared the Florida coast, the exact path of the storm remained unclear. Nevertheless, Palm Tran staff worked around-the-clock to keep residents informed and prepared.

To transport the homeless, Palm Tran’s fixed-route buses traveled to John Prince Park, Phil Foster Park, Jim Berry Park, and Curry Park the Sunday before the storm. Many of those picked up did not have plans of evacuating before Palm Tran’s arrival. In the event of a category five hurricane, this transportation could have been the difference between life and death.

“Amid an oncoming natural disaster, it is critical the most vulnerable citizens are not overlooked,” Palm Beach County Administrator Verdenia C. Baker said. “We transported hundreds of people to safety and made sure no one was left out in the storm – and Palm Tran played a critical role in getting everyone out of harm’s way.”

Palm Tran’s paratransit service, Palm Tran Connection, transported disabled and special needs residents to shelters that met their specific needs. In total, Palm Tran Connection made more than 318 evacuation trips leading up to Hurricane Dorian.

Palm Tran’s administrative staff worked tirelessly to keep customers up-to-date. More than a thousand calls poured into Palm Tran’s call center. In addition, all social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) were updated

every few hours with information such as listing bus routes near shelters, providing scheduling updates and answering common questions and concerns. Palm Tran’s Facebook posts reached more than 56,000 people and received more than 450 shares in the days before, during and after Hurricane Dorian.

“In a natural disaster, keeping all lines of communication open is crucial. When we looked at how many people we were reaching just on social media, it was astounding,” said Palm Tran Senior Manager of Public Relations Joe Harrington. “It exemplified the importance of reaching our customers in every way possible.”

Throughout the storm, Palm Tran staff was hard at work at Palm Beach County’s Emergency Operations Center and Emergency Information Center. The teams in these locations received first-hand communication and updates on evacuation needs and information to be disseminated to the public related to the storm.

In the end, Palm Beach County was spared the brunt of the storm, however, the Bahamas was not as fortunate. Hurricane Dorian made landfall in Great Abaco and the Grand Bahamas as a category five storm, which moved at a glacial pace. The storm resulted in devastating destruction and fatalities. When Bahamas evacuees arrived to Palm Beach County via the Port of Palm Beach, Palm Tran buses helped provide transportation to Tri-Rail, Palm Beach International Airport, local rental car agencies and shelters.

“I am proud of everyone at Palm Tran who went above and beyond to keep safety at the forefront. The efforts Palm Tran took to ensure no one was left behind truly exemplify our mission to provide access to opportunity to everyone; safely, efficiently and courteously,” Palm Tran Executive Director Clinton B. Forbes said.

For more information, visit: www.palmtran.org.

PCPT launches Veterans Program Offering Free Rides

Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT) is proud to launch complimentary bus rides for those who’ve served our country as well as our community. The Pasco Board of County Commissioners voted September 18, 2019 to approve the Veterans Program offering free rides for veterans and active-duty military on all PCPT

fixed-route transit beginning October 1, 2019. The offer can be accessed on all fixed-service transit routes by presenting one of the following forms of identification to a PCPT bus driver: military ID card, DD Form 2; valid VA card, or “V” on driver’s license.



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Collier Area Transit's Mobility Week 2019

This year, Monday, October 25th through Friday, November 1st, 2019 is known as Mobility Week in Florida. Mobility Week was launched in Central Florida in 2016 by the Florida Department of Transportation and is now a statewide annual assortment of outreach events which are geared towards bringing attention to various safe, multimodal transportation choices. Mobility Week in Florida is based on a very successful European model, European Mobility Week, which was started in 2002 and now has over 2700 cities in 54 countries that participate in this initiative.



Mobility week seeks to improve public health and quality of life through promoting various aspects of mobility such as biking, walking and riding transit. Mobility Week provides choices and options for safe, secure, healthy, affordable, and convenient travel choices between the places where people live, work, and play. Last year, Mobility Week 2018 was the third year of celebrating this effort in Florida, in which the Florida Department of Transportation had over 141 partners host 93 events to raise awareness.

For Mobility Week 2019, CAT has partnered with Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida, to promote joint key priorities of improving the mobility and well-being of the community of Collier County. The Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida is an organization that helps transform communities across the United States that encourages healthy-choice practices so that people live longer with a higher quality of life. The Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida is encouraging the public to mix up the way that people travel by biking, walking, or taking transit to any destination, take a picture and share their story on social media to be entered into a raffle to win a dinner for two at a local Blue Zones Project-approved restaurant of choice.

CAT celebrated Mobility Week in conjunction with "Passenger Appreciation Day" on Friday, November 1st, by offering free rides all day on all 19 fixed-routes throughout the county. CAT encouraged non-transit riders to try public transportation as a choice of mobility for the week. Transit contributes to a reduction in pollution emissions and congestion on the roads for which just one bus can eliminate 40 cars off the road. November marked the beginning of the busy winter "season" with tourists and seasonal residents heading south. Refreshments were served at CAT's two bus terminals in Naples and at the site of a future terminal in Immokalee and passengers received fun promotional items as a thank you for using CAT's public transportation service.