

GRANT AWARD PRESS RELEASE

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MICHIGAN MASONIC CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

BEST AWARD TO COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

Employee Assistance Plan gets a boost from the Free Masons

Ypsilanti, Michigan December 17, 2019- Community Alliance’s *Direct Care Worker Safe Transport Project* received a boost from a generous award from the Free Masons. “We are always looking for ways to support our amazing Direct Care Workers in ways that are meaningful to them. We have found that at times, especially during severe weather like we experienced last winter, our staff struggle to get into work”, said Kathy Grant, Executive Director for Community Alliance. “Having a budget that allows our Human Resources Department to arrange for a ride to work at no cost to the employee in situations like this is an amazing perk to offer our staff. “

The *Direct Care Worker Safe Transport Project* was piloted in February of 2019 with the threat of severe polar vortex weather conditions. “The services provided by Community Alliance employees are ‘essential’ meaning if they do not show up for work people could die,” said Tanasha Gilchrist, Onboarding Specialist for Community Alliance “We have a very creative Executive Director and supportive Board of Directors so when we talked to Kathy about the challenges we saw coming our way she was very open and acted quickly to allow the funding to pilot this kind of Employee Assistance Program element,” said Naomi Kennedy, Human Resources Team Lead, Community Alliance.

With the *Direct Care Worker Safe Transport Project*, any direct care worker that feels unsafe operating their own vehicles during severe weather, or if the organization determines the weather conditions dangerous to travel, free Lyft or A-Ride transportation is organized on the employee’s behalf on Community Alliance’s dime. “The pilot program last winter was 100% on Community Alliances resources which as a nonprofit organization are limited. Adding the generous grant award from the Michigan Masonic Charitable Foundation opens us up to really serve our employees who go out of their way to serve people with developmental disabilities”, said Kathy Grant.

Connection to the Free Masons was made possible by Christian Usera, CA Board Member and Ann Arbor Lodge Member “I am eternally grateful for the lodge’s assistance with obtaining these funds,” he said. “Honestly the generosity of the Grand Lodge, Ann Arbor Fraternity (No. 262) was very moving to me, the executive director and the policy board, especially for a cause that is so very much worth it. I feel like I am moving just a little toward the man I’d like to become and am grateful that Free Masonry helped me to accomplish that goal”.

The Michigan Masonic Charitable Foundation Masonry’s BEST Grant is a competitive application process
<https://www.michiganmasons.org/foundation>

Community Alliance is the dba for Community Residence Corporation, a nonprofit 501 (3) organization that provides community living support services to adults with developmental disabilities. www.communityalliance-mi.org

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