

# Sharing the Caring

## Director's Note

Lisa Ciszczon Brennan - Executive Director  
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Greetings to our supporters, clients, and volunteers. As we head into our holy season of Christmas, we're also looking back in gratitude at this past year. What a fantastic year 2023 has been for Collinsville Faith in Action! We celebrated

our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with the return of our July Dinner Auction, we've seen an increase in the number of volunteers signing up with us to be "neighbors helping neighbors," and the Collinsville Area Community Foundation named us as this year's recipient of their Festival of Trees event.

When I joined CFiA in June 2020, volunteerism was at an all-time low due to Covid restrictions. Occasionally, a new volunteer would join us, but in that first year I was here, fewer than four volunteers signed up. That changed this summer though when six new volunteers signed up to work with us, and in November 2023 another six joined us. Thank goodness the tide is turning! This year will also be the first in our history when we are able to bring on a full-time Manager of Volunteers who will dedicate their time and energy to recruiting, training, and overseeing volunteers as well as assist volunteers as they transition from one role to another within our organization.

Even more growth is coming from new clients. Since September 2023, 16 new clients have registered with CFiA, and we know more are coming. Our board and staff have been preparing for over a year in anticipation of the fastest growing demographic in the United States: people aged 65 and over. With a new strategic plan, eight new board members, and two new staff members, we have been preparing for the increase in demand for our services.

As 2023 comes to a close, I'd like to thank all of you who have



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Issue:  
December 2023



supported our work. Outgoing board members Peggy DesPain, Bonnie Farrington, Karen Kneedler, Carol Ricketts, and Gloria Wagener are especially appreciated for their years of work guiding our organization. A special thanks to those area businesses and organizations who joined CFiA as supporters and collaborators in serving older community members. We are proud to continue partnering with community churches and thank their leadership and congregations for keeping us in their prayers and continuing to send us volunteers. And of course, to those supporters who have been with us all these years, we are grateful for your commitment to the mission of Collinsville Faith in Action.

May the Christmas season be a time of peace and love for each of you.



Mike became a client in early 2023 and had a simple request from CFiA: help him get from his apartment in Maryville to the Edwardsville Library once a week. After building friendships with several drivers and staff, it became clear to others that Mike could use help in areas beyond transportation. As the months passed, CFiA helped Mike get connected to Land of Lincoln Legal Aid and get access to healthier foods. When it became evident that Mike's apartment was no longer safe, Mike trusted us enough to at least take a tour of one of our local Supportive

Living communities. On August 28, 2023 Mike moved into a lovely, clean, and safe apartment in the Supportive Living community. He has three healthy meals each day, access to an onsite gym, a weekly cleaning and laundry service, and more. Mike is grateful to CFiA volunteers and staff and says August 28 "was one of the best days of my life." He recently shared that he didn't even realize how lonely he'd become. A reticent man, Mike may be quieter than some of the other residents in his community, but his grin is winning him all sorts of new friends. He continues to go to the Edwardsville Library each Monday.



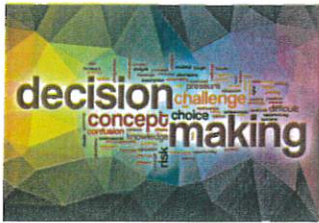


## Answers on Aging -

Patrick Bivens - Answers on Aging  
1-618-344-7788

### Decisions, Decisions: 35,000 per day?!

answers@fiacollinsville.org



Did you know that you are a virtual decision-making machine? Every day, all day, you are making decisions.

Psychology Today cited a statistic that the average adult makes 35,000 remotely conscious decisions each day (1). [This means roughly 2,000 decisions per hour or one decision every two seconds](#). Most decisions are innocuous (what shoes to wear, when to take out the garbage, whether to continue reading this article). Some have lasting implications.

According to the American Medical Association, making decisions day in and day out—whether they are as easy as selecting food from a menu or as difficult as requesting home health assistance—can be exhausting and cause people to feel overwhelmed, anxious or stressed (2). This is known as Decision Fatigue, which is a state of mental overload that can impede a person's ability to continue making decisions.

A person with Decision Fatigue may feel tired, have brain fog, or experience other signs and symptoms of physical or mental fatigue, including procrastination, impulsivity, avoidance and indecision. Decision Fatigue is cumulative; as we make more decisions, our brains are worn down causing us to become more reckless and not think problems through.

While most decisions do not have long-lasting impacts on our lives, some decisions can impact our health, safety, happiness, and even longevity. With all the decisions that we make in a day, how can we avoid Decision Fatigue so that we may focus on the more impactful decisions, such as:

- Do I need help in my day-to-day life? Can I prepare food for myself, or should I look for programs that ensure I have healthy meals? Is my home clean and safe, or do I need assistance? Am I able to get around without assistance, or do I need to find in-home help?
- Does my current housing situation meet my needs for safety, security, and general well-being? When, if ever, should I look for alternative housing?
- How will I respond should I face a life-threatening illness or injury? Have I made my wishes known to my loved ones? Do I have a health-care proxy in effect?

So how can we make these major decisions when we have 35,000 other decisions to make each day? According to the AMA, there are six techniques we can use to avoid Decision Fatigue so you can make the best possible choices:

Streamline choices. Make lists before you go shopping so that you have fewer decisions to make when you are in the store. Lay out your clothes the night



before so you won't have to scramble in the morning. Use GPS so you don't have to decide on the best route.

Delegate some decisions. Let your friends pick the restaurant and your children decide on the Christmas dinner menu. Recognize that we don't have to be in control all the time.

Make big decisions in the morning. Research shows that the best time to make decisions is in the morning, when we make the most accurate and thoughtful decisions, and we tend to be more cautious and meticulous. By evening our decisions may be more impulsive.

Stop second-guessing yourself. Once you make the decision, don't waste additional energy worrying about whether it was the right one. Remember, you made the best decision in that moment with what you knew. Rehashing your choices only adds to the fatigue.

Develop daily routines. Look at all the big

and little decisions you make every day and think about how you can simplify your life. Plan to exercise at the same time every day. Clean out your refrigerator every week on the same day. Volunteer your time to the same organization on the same schedule. Routines help you decrease anxiety and conserve your energy for the decisions that really matter.

Seek help if symptoms worsen. While decision fatigue alone doesn't warrant a trip to the doctor, if you notice burnout symptoms like exhaustion, not caring for yourself properly, or if you are struggling with depression and anxiety, think about seeking professional help. Decision fatigue "is a phenomenon that with other issues could make it worse."

You can't avoid making decisions. Making good decisions requires clear-headed thinking. Recognize the symptoms of Decision Fatigue and use the strategies above to make the best possible decisions for you.



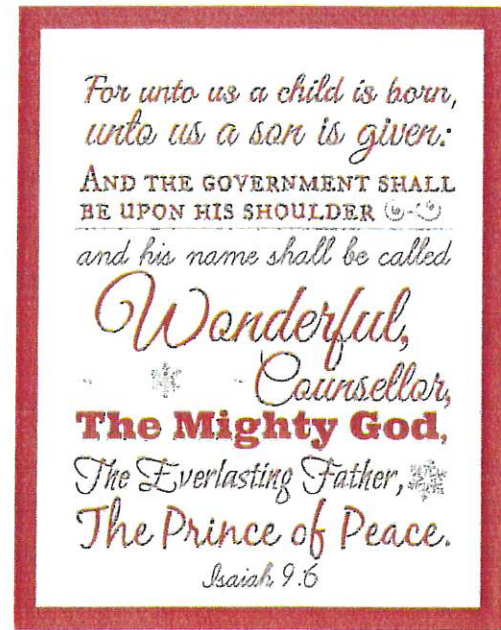
A chilly morning for the 2023 Veterans Day Parade in downtown Collinsville.







Volunteers from Collinsville High School pitched in to rake leaves of Collinsville Faith in Action clients and enjoyed a friendly meal with other volunteers in November.



## Ways to Give

**Click** to Donate: Click the DONATE button on our webpage to make a one-time or recurring monthly donation. Regularly scheduled monthly or quarterly donations help us plan our budget more accurately.

**Text** to Donate: Text the word PLEDGE to 618-249-3227 on your smart phone to quickly and easily set up a one-time or regularly scheduled donation. This is an easy way to donate, and you can share the text-to-donate information easily with friends and family.

**Plan** to Donate:

1. Check with your employer to see if they offer a Matching Donor benefit. If so, for every dollar you donate, your employer will match that amount thereby doubling your donor power.
2. Bequests are a beautiful way to build your Faith in Action legacy. Working with Land of Lincoln Legal Aid at no charge or your own lawyer, you can name CFIA in your will or as an organization that is named by you as a recipient receiving donations in your memory.
3. Talk to your financial advisor to have funds that may increase your taxes to be directly donated to CFIA. You help your community, and you don't have to pay income tax on the earnings.

**Call** to Donate: Call us at 618-344-8080 to set up a one-time or recurring donation with your credit or debit card. In just a few minutes, we'll have you set up!

**Mail** to Donate: It's always a pleasure to receive notes from our supporters, so if you prefer to mail in a check, we appreciate it! CFIA, 233 N. Seminary St., Collinsville, IL 62234.

## Overcoming Stereotypes about Aging

For the last several issues, Sharing the Caring has shared information about the issue of ageism and how negative stereotyping about aging is problematic for all people in our society.

First, a refresher on what ageism is and examples of varying levels of ageism. Ageism includes overt examples such as denying housing or employment to someone based on that person's age; these discriminatory practices are prohibited by laws.

However, more nuanced examples of ageism are also damaging because they can shape one's thoughts with misinformation. For instance, many people often joke about being forgetful due to age, but the reality is that many of us will age with little to no cognitive impairments.

Perpetuating negativity about the aging process is another example of a subtle but damaging form of ageism. Skin care products marketed as "anti-aging" suggest that beauty is limited to only the young. This mindset is often adopted by both older people AND youth who learn to think that aging should be avoided or at least masked.

While it's clear that aging is a natural part of life, aging can bring challenges, but it's important to remember that many stages of life bring challenges and even discomforts. Remember puberty? That was an awkward

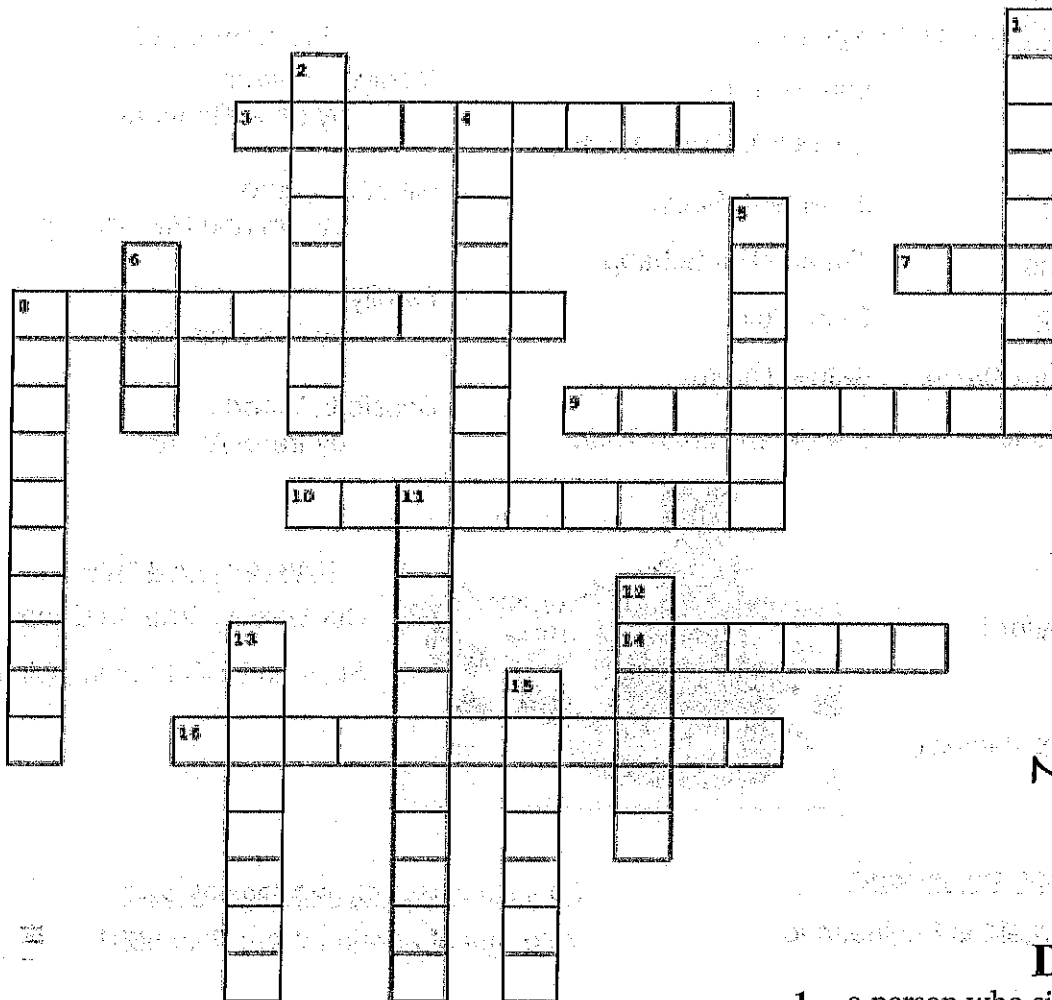
time for many of us, and our bodies morphed quickly, often to our embarrassment. Certainly, when I was in my 40s, my metabolism changed and did so without my consent! I have dear friends in their 80s who continue to walk and exercise daily and absolutely bristle when others refer to them as "spry." Aging varies immensely from one person to the next, but ageism supposes that all people age in the same way.

Collinsville Faith in Action provides services to people over the age of 60, some of whom have disabilities due to aging, and some who have few if any physical or cognitive disabilities. Our mission is to provide services to clients so that we can "support their independence," and independence means different services for different individual needs. Ageism tries to say all aging experiences are the same for everyone and that all older people are all the same.

What can we do to end or at least limit ageism? First, remember to be aware of your own thinking and own language regarding age. Are your jokes about aging perpetuating a false idea about aging in general? For more information about ageism and ending ageism, visit Reframing Aging at <https://www.reframingaging.org/>







### Across

3. receiver
7. acronym for local funder of accessible transportation that funded Folks Wagon
8. movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another
9. this king brought the gift of myrrh
10. a small round candy made of sugar with various flavoring and coloring ingredients
14. the act or process of expansion
16. one of the things, propositions, or courses of action that can be chosen

CFIA  
Newsletter  
Fun

### Down

1. a person who signs up to do work at no charge usually to be helpful
2. the act or process of making a determination so as to avoid this kind of fatigue
4. singular form of a fact, occurrence, or circumstance observed
5. a sign or indication of something
6. first name of a new CFIA employee
8. German word for Christmas tree
11. a spicy dough often used for holiday cookies
12. tendency to regard older persons as debilitated, unworthy of attention, or unsuitable for employment
13. to send or appoint (a person) as deputy or representative so that they can complete a job innocuously
15. last name of a new CFIA employee

Individual Donations

Irene Alford	Louise Hicks
Harry Bacca	David & Valarie Mueth
Ellen Bednara	Josephine Sapia
Jeanine Bivens	Jim and Pat Schapp
Ramona Clark	Glen Stoltz
Cody and Laura Cruse	Kathie Throm
Donna Grotefendt	Gerald and Joan Todd

In Memory of

Marilyn Crowder  
by Ellen Bednara

Ginette Crump  
by Jim and Pat Schapp

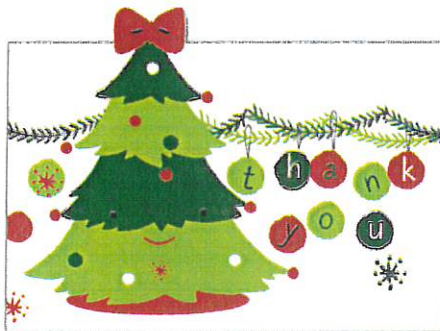
Family  
by Ramona Clark

Bessie L. Woods  
by Irene Alford

In Honor of

Jesus Christ  
by Irene Alford

Carol Ricketts  
by David & Valarie  
Mueth

Church Donations

Our Lord's Lutheran Church  
St. John UCC Evening Circle

Business Donations

Ameren Illinois/Leidos Engineering

Community Group Donations

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5691

Donations received are updated monthly and acknowledged with a receipt sent by mail to the donor. Online donations are acknowledged with a receipt sent automatically and immediately by email. Donations are then recognized quarterly in this newsletter. Gifts received after our newsletter has been sent to the printer will be recognized in the next newsletter.



Participants in Elder Connection and new volunteer Pat prepare to board the Folks Wagon after a luncheon at Collinsville Faith in Action.

## CFiA Newsletter Fun Answers

Across

3. recipient  
7. act  
8. transition  
9. balthazar  
10. sugarplum  
14. growth  
16. alternative

Down

1. volunteer  
2. decision  
4. phenomena  
5. symptom  
6. matt  
8. tannenbaum  
11. gingerbread  
12. ageism  
13. delegate



## Welcome Karen and Matt!

Karen Saravia joined the CFiA team this fall and has proven herself a natural fit with our clients who call requesting services and information. Karen lives in Glen Carbon and was interested in a career change that allowed her to do the kind of work that more closely aligned with her personal philosophy of helping others and living her faith.



Karen has quickly learned the software system we use for organizing service requests and matching requests with volunteers. She demonstrates her professionalism daily and takes initiative when she sees a need to be met. Most importantly, Karen demonstrates a true desire to serve our clients and demonstrated this by playing an integral part in the November Elder Connection. If you haven't met Karen yet, make sure to stop by or give her a call. She will be the first Manager of Volunteers our agency has employed in its 25-year history, and we are so pleased to have her join us.



Matt Swinford is our Accounting and Grant Reporting Specialist. After more than three decades of teaching accounting at a local community college, Matt was ready for retirement and part time employment at an agency that served others. He joined CFiA in November.

Matt is a member of St. John United Church of Christ, and he runs the audio-visual booth during their church services and special events such as weddings. We are very fortunate to have a skilled accounting educator who also brings strong computer skills to the agency. Matt is able to help the non-accounting staff and board members better understand our non-profit's financial well-being and within the first days of employment, Matt helped us iron out some office computer glitches. Matt eagerly stepped into his new role at CFiA and even used some muscle as we rearranged furniture in our office building to accommodate our growing numbers.

We are so happy to welcome both Karen and Matt to the CFiA team. Their presence will ensure CFiA can continue to meet our mission during this time of increased requests for services.



The Collinsville Community Foundation has chosen Collinsville Faith in Action to be the recipients of this year's Festival of Trees!

Festival of Trees is an annual event and will be held on Wednesday, December 6; tickets will be available soon through the city's website. The event features Christmas trees and wreaths that have been fully decorated by area businesses, churches, and organizations. The trees and wreaths are available to attendees

through an auction. The night will also include raffles, drinks, and food. The Foundation supports community nonprofit organizations throughout the year and raises funds at the Festival of Trees. We hope our supporters will join us on December 6 at the Gateway Convention Center for this holiday tradition that benefits the entire community and Collinsville Faith in Action. For additional information, please go to [www.FestivalofTrees.info](http://www.FestivalofTrees.info).

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### Correction:

In our last (Fall 2023) newsletter, we mistakenly wrote that the Collinsville Township had purchased a vehicle that was being used to transport participants of the Collinsville Senior Center and occasionally groups of Collinsville Faith in Action participants. The vehicle was not purchased by the township, but rather, Agency for Community Transit (ACT). ACT funds a variety of projects related to transportation, and they have provided funding to Collinsville Faith in Action. We apologize for the error.

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### Make Your Voice Heard

Reader, are you age 60 or older? If so, please participate in a survey regarding needs of people in your age range. Our Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is AgeSmart, and they are collecting data so that state, county, and local governments can better identify and meet the needs of residents. Please complete the 2-sided survey in this issue of Sharing the Caring and return it by mail or email to AgeSmart. Please complete and send no later than December 29, 2023.

AgeSmart Community Resources  
801 West State Street  
O'Fallon, IL 62269  
[kyoch@AgeSmart.org](mailto:kyoch@AgeSmart.org)





## Older Adults Needs Survey

As your Area Agency on Aging, AgeSmart helps older adults maintain their health and independence and to live well. We want to do our best to meet the needs of older adults in our community. If you could take a few minutes to complete the survey, we would greatly appreciate your input.

1. As an older adult, **how important** are the following issues to you?

	Highly Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Slightly Important	Not at all Important
Information about services available for older adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food/Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elder Abuse/Fraud	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to In-Home Assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loneliness & Isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial Planning/Will	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**What other issues are important to you?**

2. Do you need assistance in any of the following? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Cooking/meal preparation      ☐ Routine housework (cleaning, laundry, etc.)  
☐ Balancing a checkbook/paying bills on time      ☐ Minor home repairs (handyman service)  
☐ Managing multiple medications      ☐ Transportation      ☐ Legal matters (Wills, POA, etc.)  
☐ Understanding Medicare/Medicaid      ☐ Isolation & Loneliness  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\* Please continue on the back side \*\*\*\*\*

1. Are you interested in any of the following programs? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Social Opportunities    ☐ Wellness/Exercise    ☐ Lifelong Learning    ☐ Volunteering  
☐ Computer/Technology Classes    ☐ Community Dining  
☐ Concierge Service Designed for Seniors to Offer Personalized Assistance  
☐ Family Caregiver Support Programs  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Where do you get information about services for older adults? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Community/Senior Center    ☐ Newspaper    ☐ TV/Radio    ☐ Internet  
☐ Word of Mouth    ☐ Doctor's Office    ☐ Don't know/Not sure  
☐ Social Media    ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please tell us about yourself.

Your **Gender:** ☐ Male    ☐ Female    ☐ Other

Your **Age:**    ☐ Under 60    ☐ 60-69    ☐ 70-79    ☐ 80+

Your **Race:** ☐ White/Caucasian    ☐ Black/African American    ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native  
☐ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander    ☐ Asian

**County** you live in:

☐ Bond    ☐ Clinton    ☐ Madison    ☐ Monroe    ☐ St. Clair    ☐ Randolph    ☐ Washington

**Thank you for completing our survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!**



Please complete and  
send no later than  
December 29, 2023.

AgeSmart Community Resources  
801 West State Street  
O'Fallon, IL 62269

[kyoch@AgeSmart.org](mailto:kyoch@AgeSmart.org)



## Transportation Services

For 25 years, CFiA volunteers have been providing clients transportation to their medical appointments as well as their personal appointments, but have you noticed the number of new companies also offering transportation? There are more businesses offering transportation services, especially to people over the age of 60, because there is a very high need for this service and for-profit organizations can often bill Medicare.

While CFiA continues to offer transportation at no charge to our clients, we do want everyone to be aware that there are alternatives to our transportation services that can provide clients with a backup plan. Our clients prefer CFiA volunteers because they know they are trusted individuals who are extremely reliable, but there are times when we simply do not have enough volunteers to meet all the requests.

The following is a list of different agencies and for-profit companies that offer transportation services in and around the Collinsville Faith in Action service area. Many will simply bill Medicare and/or Medicaid, some require a small payment, and many have restrictions on where they will travel, but all are worth contacting as an alternative to CFiA. We love all our clients, and we want them to have other choices for transportation when we cannot fill their ride request.

ACT 618-931-7433

A1 Med 618-293-0066

American Cancer Society 800-227-2345

Best Medical Trip Inc. 618-451-4856

Collinsville Senior Shuttle 618-346-5200 x 2

Express Medical Transporters (EMT)  
618-345-4000

First Transit 877-725-0569

JewelRide 618-250-4771

MCT 618-931-7433

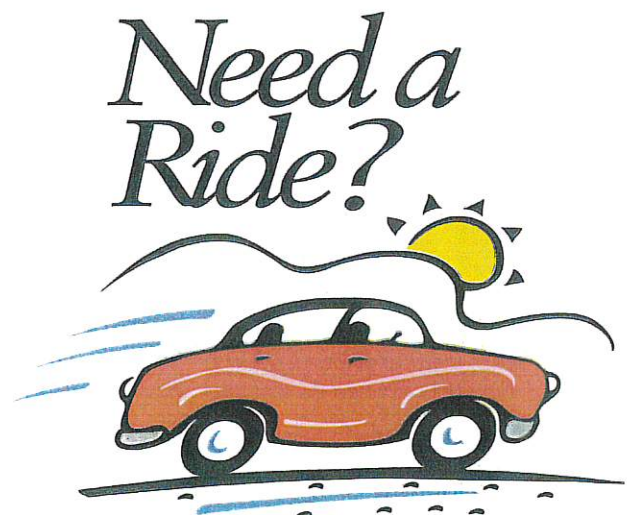
Metro-East Transport 877-725-0569

SSP Transportation 618-465-3298

Checker Taxi 618-877-4444

Rainbow Taxi Service 618-344-1865

Riverbend Taxi 618-346-1568



Collinsville Faith in Action  
233 North Seminary  
Collinsville, IL 62234



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A Neighbor's Independence Depends on You!

# Faith in Action

## Partner Congregations

### Caseyville

Caseyville United Methodist Church  
St. Stephen Catholic Church

### Maryville

Copper Creek Christian Church  
Our Mother of Perpetual Help  
Catholic Church  
Our Lord's Lutheran Church

### Collinsville

Collinsville First United Methodist Church  
First Baptist Church  
First United Presbyterian Church  
Holy Cross Lutheran Church  
Meadow Heights Baptist Church  
Navigation Church  
Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church  
Revive  
St. John United Church of Christ  
S.S. Peter & Paul Catholic Church