

“Reliable Rides” Moves Our Neighbors Forward

“I want to express my deep gratitude to Britepaths. You recently helped me with a car repair. I needed a new transmission, which I could not afford. Britepaths was able to help with this and I was able to repair the car. Now I’m able to get to work and help my family. Thank you so much!”

– Britepaths Financial Assistance Client

Many of the Fairfax County area residents who seek assistance from Britepaths are working hard at one or more jobs, but they struggle to pay for housing, food and other necessities because of the high cost of living in our area. For most of us, when our car breaks down, it’s an annoyance. But for Britepaths’ clients, it’s a situation that can threaten their ability to keep their jobs and stay in their homes.

For many years, Britepaths has provided financial assistance to local families who are referred to us because they are in crisis. Our traditional Financial Assistance Program most often provides rent or utility assistance to help families catch up on their bills and avoid

eviction. In 2012, we launched our “Reliable Rides” car repair program with the assistance of the Transurban Express Lanes Community Grant Program, because we saw more of our clients in danger of losing their jobs when their cars broke down. The program is one of the few options dedicated to car repair assistance in Fairfax County.

Through Reliable Rides, Britepaths offers financial assistance of up to \$400 per client to pay for car repairs. The client must seek a referral from Fairfax County’s Coordinated Services Planning (CSP) division of the Department of Health and Human Services, and submit a written car repair estimate. The client must also use the car as transportation to work and must have resources to pay the remaining balance of the repair bill.

When a client is referred for assistance, Britepaths’ Financial Programs Manager contacts local auto repair companies with which we have a relationship, or the shop where the car has been taken, and tries to arrange for a discount. She then works with the client and CSP to determine what funds we have available and what the client can pay.

Britepaths pays the service provider directly for the work, and the client pays the balance of the bill. We ask all of our Financial Assistance recipients, including our Reliable Rides clients, to attend a Basic Budgeting Class or Financial Counseling Clinic offered regularly by Britepaths’ Financial Literacy Program as an additional resource to help

clients work through the crisis they are experiencing. Clients may also be eligible for one-on-one Financial Mentoring if they are interested in working more intensively on their finances.

Britepaths’ Reliable Rides program currently has approximately \$900 per month available for clients. With the assistance of the Transurban Express Lanes Community Grant Program, we were able to assist 28 clients with car repairs in 2016.

The program is also made possible by generous local businesses that partner with us to provide discounts or in-kind services to our clients. Our Reliable Rides partners are: The Brake Squad of Fairfax, CRV Auto Repair, AAA of Fairfax, Julius Auto Shop LLC, MPR Auto Services, AAMCO, Skyline Automotive, Genesis Auto Repair Corporation, 7 Corners Liberty Auto Service, and Champion Auto Repair.



Can You Help?

Britepaths always receives far more requests for Reliable Rides assistance than we are able to fulfill. You can donate to Reliable Rides via our secure Donate page at www.britepaths.org. Type “Reliable Rides” in the Comments on the donation form. Companies and organizations wishing to sponsor the program or provide car repair discounts or services may contact Diana De La Rosa at **703.273.8829** or ddelarosa@britepaths.org.



Need Help?

Fairfax County residents who are working and have demonstrated need of assistance may contact Fairfax County’s Coordinated Services Planning at **703.222.0880**. Assistance is provided on a case-by-case basis as funds are available, and cannot be guaranteed.



PHOTO BY EDMOND JOE

Britepaths’ Maria Jose Cantoni (left) with Lisa and Joe Gregory of The Brake Squad. Since 2014, The Brake Squad has partnered with Britepaths to provide a discount for our Reliable Rides clients who utilize their mobile brake repair service, helping make Britepaths’ and the client’s funds go much further.