



STEPHANIE

As a freshman Accounting major coming to Penn State Altoona, everything was a new puzzle for Stephanie to put together including two classes Tuesdays and Thursdays that were

at the Downtown Campus right after classes at the Ivyside Campus!

“As an out-of-state student without a car, that was a new and nerve-wracking thing to figure out! I found out about Amtran and called their office (the Help-Line). They were really helpful and friendly in figuring out exact buses and times that I’d need to get between those classes.”

“Using my student ID, I can ride to downtown classes and events as well as to Walmart or the mall. It saves me money which is really important as a college student.” Stephanie never had to drive where she lived in Maryland, and now she doesn’t have to worry about driving or the expenses of a car as a student here in Altoona either.



SHERRI

“I build my life around transportation. It gives me safety and independence in the city. So, I find my housing on a bus route.” Sherri rides the bus to work daily and says it’s really

great to get to work so quickly and conveniently. She says often the bus driver is the first person she talks to in her day and there’s always a friendly greeting.

“I love being able to track the bus on the MyStop smart phone app so I don’t have to be standing outside in the dark or freezing cold or alone feeling unsafe. I can check and know when the bus is arriving and just step out to the stop to meet it. After living in D.C., Chicago, and State College where I was so used to that technology, I was surprised to find Altoona had it!”

“People here tend to think you have to have a car to be independent – but having lived in cities and relying on buses, I got used to not driving and being independent. And that is priceless when you are young and busy and living paycheck to paycheck.”

Altoona, PA

Amtran helps individuals and strengthens our community. Our bus service helps people get where they need to go. We help working people get to their jobs. We help older people age in place instead of having to move out of their home. We help college students get to class so that they can avoid the added expense of owning a car. We help people with disabilities maintain their independence.



MARTY

As the Assistant Director for the Center for Independent Living, Marty knows “The #1 concern for people with disabilities in PA is transportation. We are lucky to be in Altoona where there is public transportation.”

“For many of our clients, Amtran is a lifeline. It enables them to get out of the house, get to food, get to what they need, and it also helps them reach social and recreational goals” which are all such important components to physical and mental health. And because it is “dependable and predictable,” it is especially compatible with her clients.

“Our new location for the Center for Independent Living was chosen because it’s accessible—not just the flat, one-story building but also for the large parking lot that buses can come into easily. Amtran designated us a ‘Call Stop’ so that customers can get dropped off or picked up right at our door if they ask.”

Amtran discovered from Marty that many of the clients were anxious or unable to ask a driver for a Call Stop, so Amtran printed cards with the Center for Independent Living logo inside a vinyl ‘wallet’ that the client can simply show the driver.

Marty’s reaction to the cards: “This is a game changer! This gives our people ‘permission to ask’ and it’s very official looking so they will use it. Thank you!”



DEBBIE

“I love the bus—don’t ever get rid of the buses!” says Debbie who moved here to Altoona from her native Hawaii in 1985. “I don’t drive, so the buses get me everywhere.”

Debbie rode Amtran buses to work for years. Now that she is retired from her full-time job, the bus gets her to freelance jobs that help to pay for doctor’s bills and extras. She uses the buses to go grocery shopping, run errands, and meet friends to go out to eat.

“One time I called a cab and I couldn’t believe how expensive it was! And now that I have a senior bus pass, Amtran saves me even more money.”

Debbie remembers many drivers she knew and liked over the years who have retired. She misses them but says there are nice new regular drivers she sees now.

“I love that there’s no loud noise, everyone behaves, and that they keep the buses clean and comfortable.”

She really depends on their service. “Call me anytime to say good things about Amtran—I’m your ‘go-to’ girl!”

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LYNN

Lynn relies on Amtran buses to get to her job every day. “I used to live a block away and walked to work every day, but when my mother needed more and more care I moved in with her.”

This put Lynn all the way across town from work, and she hadn’t needed to own a car in years. A divorced mother of nine children, Lynn liked not worrying about the maintenance and cost of a car and the hassle of finding parking spaces. She didn’t want to buy a car now, but she didn’t want to change jobs. She had worked in the cafeteria at McAuliffe Heights Elementary School for years.

“I loved my job – the kids there, my co-workers, and I didn’t want to transfer jobs.” So now she transfers buses, taking a bus a block away from home and transferring to a second bus at the Transit Center to get to work.

“I’ve never had a bad experience. The drivers are all nice and I don’t have to worry about the driving, parking, or weather.”

As an added bonus, Lynn met her boyfriend on the bus. He’d gone back to school taking classes at Penn State Altoona’s downtown campus and is a regular rider. They met riding the same bus route and have been together for a year.



ANN

Ann is an Independent Living Specialist who works with people who have mental and/or physical disabilities to gain independence. A large part of her job is helping her clients figure out how to successfully integrate riding the bus into their daily lives.

She empowers people by assisting them with the basics on how to ride the bus so that they can get where you need to go. She encourages them to call Amtran’s HelpLine to get information when they need it.

“For a lot of my people it’s very stressful to learn something new, but once they practice the routes that fill their needs, it becomes comfortable and really necessary to them.”

Here are some comments from Ann’s clients:

“I don’t have a vehicle, and it’s hard for me to walk any far distance. People like me who are elderly or handicapped really depend on buses.”

“I like using the bus. Most places I need to go are too far to walk, and cabs are too much money!”

“We can call their office (Amtran’s HelpLine) to get information on buses and routes and times, and they’ll help.”



TOM AND MARLENE

Tom and Marlene are two retired professionals from Penn State Altoona and are very active volunteers in the Altoona community. They have one car between two of them with busy schedules, so Amtran buses really help them when they have volunteer work at different places.

Marlene said “It’s very handy to go to the Transit Center and see the different routes and schedules. You can get a bus going in any direction. You have to plan it, but Amtran’s able to get you just about anywhere you need to go. And no matter what bus you take, you can get to a grocery store without transferring. That’s fantastic!”

She also really appreciates being able to take the late bus home from the campus if she is working on a theatre event at night. The bus stop is very close to their house, so the driver sees her safely home in the dark.

Tom noted, “The bus drivers are all really helpful and friendly - which is really different than what I was used to when we lived in Chicago.” They said some of the drivers that know them wave as they’re driving by when Tom or Marlene are walking their dog!

Marlene appreciated that she could take the bus to help at the Senior Center while Tom had the car to work at one of the theatres. She drives the car to State College to babysit her grandkids, and Tom has the Amtran buses to get all around Altoona.

“And when the grandkids visit us, they love riding the bus while we point out the Altoona landmarks!”



MICHELLE

“I have been riding the buses since I moved to Altoona almost 40 years ago! At first it was about saving money and having no car, but then it became so convenient and easy that I always looked for my place to live on a bus route.” Now, she has a “Seniors Ride Free” pass which she says is really important for people who are on Social Security.

Michelle uses the bus to get to doctor appointments, shopping, her job, and volunteer work. When she recently had to move outside the city of Altoona to Hollidaysburg, she once again wanted to make sure she could use bus transportation.

“I can get the bus right at the end of my street and it stops everywhere important in the area - the courthouse, the little boutiques and shops and restaurants in downtown Hollidaysburg, the doctors, the Dollar Tree, the Martin’s grocery store.”

“The drivers are great. They’re polite and helpful. They get to know their customers and watch for them. The regular riders become a little community, and that’s really nice.”