

# Dayle McIntosh Center's Mobility Management Program Grows Independence Mobility for Orange County's Disabled and Older Adult Population

By Stacey Kumagai

Mobility matters. For the over 500,000 people in Orange County who are people with disabilities and/or are part of the 60+ older adults / aging community population of 770,000 (2025 statistics for the State of California Department on Aging) – Mobility issues can be challenging in car-dependent Orange County. Enter a real-time solution with the Dayle McIntosh Center's MMPP program.

**Dayle McIntosh Center for the Disabled** (DMC) is celebrating 49 years as Orange County's only Independent Living Center for people with disabilities, older adults and Veterans and is also celebrating the one-year anniversary of the **Mobility Management Professionals Program** (MMPP) relaunch in partnership with OCTA after the program was paused due to COVID-19 at the start of the pandemic and funding ended in 2022

The DMC MMPP program is designed to inform, educate and train the community on how to have equity accessing the transportation system for a better quality of life. In addition to access, additional benefits in training include customized goal-setting, planning and additional support for travel safety. The OCTA Measure M2 (M2) Senior Mobility Program



*DMC's MMPP Team: Ivan Cortez, Lead Home and Community Access Coordinator and Travel Trainers Marisol Zamora and Babar Masood.*

is designed to fill the gap between local fixed-route buses and ADA paratransit, or OC ACCESS service, by providing local transportation services to seniors in participating cities in Orange County.

Thanks to the partnership's funding DMC moves people with disabilities and older adults forward as more change is created in creating solutions to what currently 25% of Orange County's population according to the OC Aging Services Collaborative.

DMC's MMPP so far has created access and impact for forty-four OC residents whose individual lives which have changed since the relaunch one year ago in which 16% of this

group are older adults with and without disabilities.

The oldest MMPP participant's age is 96 years old - proving no one is ever too old to learn new things desired to have bus training to succeed in living the life one chooses.

"The biggest demand in the 55+ market has been requesting assistance in applying to and navigating the OC ACCESS Paratransit Services. Travel Trainers offer one-time training with OC ACCESS given it is a direct ride to their destination. Most 55+ consumers prefer to save time by using OC ACCESS over the fixed route system due to their door-to-door service and less walking distance. However, after completing such training several 55+ consumers have shown interest in learning to ride the fixed route system as a fare saving option," states Ivan Cortez, DMC's Lead Home and Community Access Coordinator.

"The most notable change in consumer growth is going into the program with doubt and ending with confidence and to get out of their comfort zone and become knowledgeable about the fixed route system. (Overcoming fear) -It strengthens their confidence in riding independently and without needing to rely on others. It

motivates them to be proactive in the community and explore new areas for themselves. It is a great alternative to use for those who do not drive anymore as well. Consumers feel intimidated with the fixed route system at the start of the program because of its multiple bus changes. Here, Travel Trainers offer encouragement and adjusted training/routes to ease the process and ensure the consumer's comfort. Upon exiting the program, consumers have been seen in the community navigating the bus system independently following the Travel Trainers' teachings and guidance," Cortez explains.



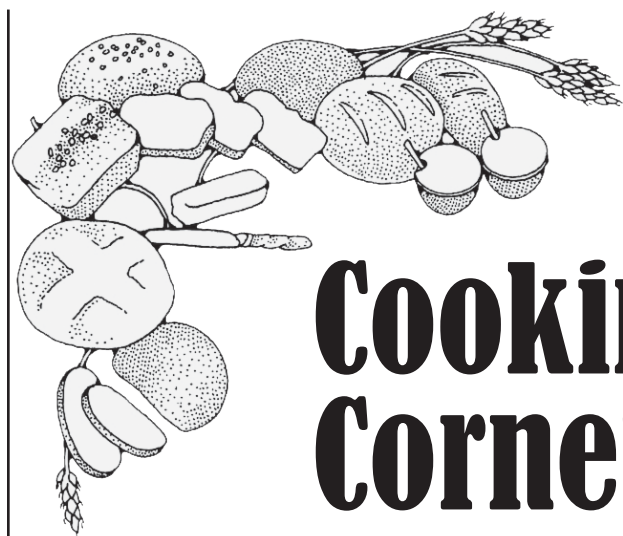
*DMC MMPP consumer J. Thomas successfully navigated a trip from Santa Ana to a day in Newport Beach.*

In the last year since the program's revival, DMC has also had to pivot recognizing the market has a growth surge in additional needs. While the current program still features much of what the original program offered for the DMC

MMPP team to assist the older adult community to learn how to learning how to safely and confidently navigate public transportation through OCTA with trip planning and travel training to doctor's offices, libraries, churches, friend or family member's homes, and other locations of the consumer's choice, there are new gains with the current program's pivot to add value to the program.

"Now, we are able to provide those same services and supports through OCTA's Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Disabled (EMSD) funds, however after experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeing not only an increase in need from the 55+ population but also a need to adapt our training methods due to the combined impacts of Long COVID, vaccine-related complications, and the natural process of aging. Additionally, there is a growing need to incorporate personal safety as older adults continue to be targets of theft and scams. As a result, the program and DMC as a whole is evolving to include more individualized pacing, increased coordination with healthcare and support systems, and expanded education strategies to ensure older adults can remain mobile, connected,

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# Cooking Corner

## Irish Cheddar & Guinness Shepherd's Pie



A cozy, flavorful dish perfect for a St. Patrick's Day lunch or dinner.

### Ingredients

#### For the filling

1 lb ground beef or lamb  
1 medium onion, diced  
2 carrots, diced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 cup frozen peas  
2 tbsp tomato paste  
1 cup beef broth  
½ cup Guinness (optional but delicious)  
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce  
1 tsp dried thyme  
Salt & pepper to taste

#### For the topping

2 lbs potatoes, peeled and cubed  
4 tbsp butter  
½ cup milk or cream  
1 cup shredded Irish cheddar (like Kerrygold)  
Salt & pepper

### Instructions

#### 1. Make the potato topping

-Boil potatoes until tender.  
-Drain and mash with butter, milk, salt, and pepper.  
-Stir in the shredded Irish cheddar. Set aside.

#### 2. Make the filling

-Sauté onion and carrots in a skillet until softened.  
-Add garlic and cook briefly.

-Add ground beef/lamb and brown it.  
-Stir in tomato paste, thyme, salt, and pepper.  
-Pour in broth and Guinness; simmer 10 minutes until slightly thickened.  
-Add peas and stir.

### 3. Assemble

Spread the meat mixture in a baking dish.  
-Spoon the cheesy mashed potatoes on top and smooth.  
-Use a fork to create ridges (they brown beautifully).

### 4. Bake

Bake at 400°F for 20–25 minutes until golden and bubbling.

### Optional festive touches

-Sprinkle chopped parsley on top  
-Add a little extra cheddar for a browned crust  
-Serve with Irish soda bread or a simple green salad

## Dale McIntosh Center

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and independent in their changing bodies and environment," explains Brittany Zazueta, Executive Director for the Dayle McIntosh Center.

Impact and change is the main objective in the program service provided by DMC's MMPP Team. In addition to helping individuals gain access allowing them the freedom to travel independently and avoid social isolation, comes success stories like the time when DMC's Travel Trainer assisted a low vision, 74-year-old consumer with applying for OC ACCESS and obtaining a power electric wheelchair with double control switches through DMC's Reuse Recycling Program. This allowed the consumer's husband to effectively assist the consumer in using the power electric wheelchair for future OC ACCESS training with the Travel Trainer toward their goal of navigating independently to the Braille Institute.

Another time a 61-year old with spine/back injury who had limited mobility skills was provided support from DMC's Travel Trainer who coordinated with DMC's Reuse Recycle program to acquire a power electric wheelchair. After the Travel Trainer provided training on the fixed route system to DMC for the consumer to be able to take the power electric wheelchair home. This motivated the consumer to be active in the community and be able

to visit friends and family while also running errands using the fixed route system.

Many of these program success stories provide the best satisfaction and fulfillment to improve quality of life, independence and access for Orange County residents with disabilities and older adults needing additional support, which is part of the goal of DMC a peer-led organization.

This past year has been rewarding in that most consumers are very grateful for the travel trainers and the patience they have while working with them. They have stated how beneficial the program is for reaching both leisure and important destinations. The travel trainers enjoy doing trainings as each consumer is full of energy and eager to learn different routes. This has also opened doors for consumers to participate in different programs within DMC. The MMPP program has partnered numerous times with DMC's Reuse Recycle program to provide Durable Medical Equipment so consumers can safely navigate the fixed route system.

"Listening to consumers express their gratitude brings me joy because it shows that our trainings are meaningful in achieving their personal goals," states Cortez.

For more information on DMC's MMPP Program call 714-621-3300 or explore their MMPP webpage or share their flyers in English and Spanish with a friend for family member to get started on training today.

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