

How do we get where we need to go?

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Oriskany resident Ann Tabrizi, 76, has a personal reason for wanting to help seniors drive safely and to help them get around after they decide they need to stop.

Her ex-husband died last year, two weeks after being struck by an older driver in a New Hartford parking lot, Tabrizi said. The woman was cutting through parking spaces, saw Tabrizi's ex-husband walking and tried to slam on the brakes. But she hit the accelerator instead, Tabrizi said.

The woman walked with a cane and seemed to have significant mobility issues, she said.

"I thought, 'Oh, for crying out loud, maybe this woman shouldn't have been driving in the first place,'" she recalled.

But Tabrizi understands that giving up the car keys isn't easy. There are ride services for medical appointments, but there's more to life than going to the doctor.

"What if you want to go to the theater, what if you want to go someplace for fun? And this is happening all the time. A friend I just talked to has stopped driving. How do we get where we need to go?" she asked.

That's why Tabrizi has signed up to train to be an instructor in the Parkway Senior Center's Retiring From Driving program, a program that helps seniors drive longer and teaches them about alternative transportation for after they give up their cars.

It includes a car check to see if adjustments, such as angling the mirrors or adjusting a head rest, can help.

In Oneida County, key-free options include Centro and Birnie bus services, Centro's paratransit services for the disabled, walking, biking, Amtrak trains, taxis, driver services, ride sharing websites and lifts from family and friends.

For information on local transportation resources, go to www.psc-utica.com and click on "Retiring From Driving" on the left. To find out about upcoming classes, call 223-3973.

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