

For Bob Bergman, independence means the ability to get to work on time. Bob works at Oregon Research Institute. It's a job he loves, and a job that benefits the community. Bob likes to have fun, and he likes to do a lot of things. Bob graduated from the travel training program in 1998. He travels independently, with transfer assistance provided by the Transit Hosts.



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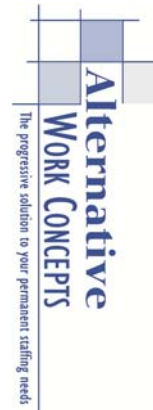
Bob's mother Betty says, "Bob is a pretty miraculous young man for the difficulties he has. He is now 55 years old, so we have gone through 55 years of dealing with differences. Bob was born with Cerebral Palsy, and the day I was told he was blind was the hardest day. "Life is like a big pie, where you cut it into pieces – like living, working, and social – and it takes transportation to do every single one of them."



"If I didn't have the city bus, I'd be stuck at home. It's good stuff."

- Bob Bergman

P.O. Box 11452
Eugene, Oregon 97440



Travel Training And Transit Host Program



*A Service of Lane Transit District
Eugene, Oregon*

Alternative Work Concepts
P.O. Box 11452
Eugene, Oregon 97440
(541) 345-3043
E-mail: awc@efn.org

Alternative Work Concepts (AWC) is a nationally recognized organization whose mission is to assist people who have multiple physical and cognitive disabilities in finding employment in our community.

In addition, AWC contracts with the local mass transit agency, Lane Transit District (LTD), to provide travel training to people with disabilities on the fixed-route bus system. A unique feature of the travel training program is the *Transit Host* Program, which allows people who otherwise would use paratransit services the additional support needed to use the fixed-route system for their routine trips. Transit Hosts are located at the main downtown transfer station to assist with scheduled transfers from one bus to another, which enables people to reach their final destination. This added support mechanism results in a great cost savings to LTD, and, more importantly, means greater independence, self worth, and empowerment to people with significant disabilities.

Other advantages of the Transit Hosts within the transit system include support for all seniors and people with disabilities who travel through the transfer station; acting as an extension of the customer service function; another set of eyes and ears for security; and, on-platform assistance to the general public.



Referrals to the Travel Training and Host program come from a variety of people, including the local paratransit service, RideSource, Senior and Disabled Services, and from family members, case workers, vocational councilors, and school professionals

AWC conducts an extensive screening process that includes meetings with the trainee and the trainee's support network of family, caregivers, and/or case workers. Throughout the training process, if it is determined that the trainee could use the additional support at the downtown transfer station, he or she is placed into the transit host schedule.



In Fiscal Year 2007, the Transit hosts performed nearly 60 assisted transfers each weekday – an annual total of 11,695 assisted rides. The training program to date has graduated more than 600 trainees, most of whom, without training, would be using the paratransit service for their repetitive rides.

Working with Alternative Work Concepts extends LTD's ability to serve people with disabilities tenfold. There are so many benefits to engaging people in this way and to finding transportation solutions that are respectful, flexible and empowering.

Terry Parker, LTD Accessible Services



With assistance from Alternative Work Concepts, Ben started his own business delivering mail in the downtown Eugene area. Ben rides the bus downtown each weekday morning and begins his day at the AWC office, where his wheelchair is outfitted with a plastic box and lid for carrying mail. While Ben remains on the Transit Host roster, he travels mostly independently, and uses the host support when needed if there are any route changes due to unexpected circumstances such as construction.



Henry works at Pearl Buck Production Services. Previously, Henry rode paratransit every day to get to and from work, but always had the desire to ride the bus. With travel training and on-going transit host support, Henry now rides the bus every day and is much happier to be feeling more independent and having the opportunity to visit with people. He really likes the bus operators.