

## May 17, 2017 — VVCC named Best Volunteer Transportation Program in U.S.

Verde Valley Caregivers Coalition was selected as the winner of the National Volunteer Transportation Center's 2016 Grand Star Award. The award, sponsored by Toyota, includes the grand prize of a Toyota Sienna Mobility Vehicle.

The NVTC STAR Awards recognize outstanding volunteer transportation programs and the involvement of their volunteer drivers in promoting and providing transportation services to passengers, especially older adult passengers. VVCC competed with 147 other volunteer driver programs around the nation.

"This award demonstrates how vital and outstanding our team of volunteers are to the community—people who have come forward to help all those in need," VVCC Executive Director Kent Ellsworth said.

Each applicant for the 2016 STAR Award was asked to submit a story written by a passenger/client who received transportation from its service. Client (neighbor) Sonny Roa told how VVCC volunteers take him from Camp Verde to Cottonwood for dialysis three times a week. "Many times I was confined to a wheel chair or could hardly walk ten steps without help and you made sure that I had proper transportation to my doctors' appointments and to the dialysis center," Roa said.

The NVTC is an initiative of the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA). Its purpose is to provide assistance and support to volunteer transportation programs across America. In 2014, VVCC received a STAR Merit Award from NVTC, placing in the Top 10.

"This award comes at a special time for us," said Ellsworth. "Twenty-five years ago the organization decided to serve older adults throughout the Verde Valley. The first year of operations we served 80 seniors with 50 volunteers. Today, we serve over 2,000 older adults with about 370 volunteers—who make all of this possible."

VVCC volunteers provide transportation to medical, physical therapy, grocery shopping and other appointments, as well as home visits, handy person help, business and pet assistance. These assistive services improve the quality of life for older adults who wish to live in their homes for as long as possible.



Sonny Roa and Volunteer Torrey Barcanic