



Lawrence Transit Share Your Story Contest



I have been riding the bus system since I was about 5 years old. When I first started riding the bus, I was scared out of my wits because the buses seemed huge to a 5-year-old. But my fear was soon replaced with the acceptance and kindness that each and every one of the many bus drivers have.

For about 6 years, I was riding it every now and then to go to the store, the hospital, or a parent's house, so I wasn't riding the buses as often as I do now. My love for the Lawrence Transit System started to grow in sixth grade when the school bus system wouldn't let me ride because I was supposedly too close to my school to take the school bus. So, my parents gave me the idea of riding the city bus to school, school events, and other things and back to home.

At first, I was a bit worried that I might have to walk a long ways to South Middle School (my middle school) from the bus stops that I usually get off at.



But the 7 driver at the time calmed my nerves and told me that there was a bus stop right across the street. I was automatically relieved at that fact. Time after time, I thought that

riding the city bus was actually quite fun and quite useful for kids whose parents don't have cars like me to use.

I started meeting a bunch of my friends, people that I knew, and really kind people who just wanted to have a conversation on the bus. So, without the Lawrence Transit System, I wouldn't be able to get to the place where I get my education, the place where I get my food, and

Without the Lawrence Transit System, I wouldn't be able to get to the place where I get my education, the place where I get my food, and I wouldn't have met any of the kind, caring, and sweet people that I have met on the bus.

— Jacob Horton

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— Jacob Horton

Iride the Five. It's been for five years now that I ride what I call "The Big Blue Thing." Partly circumstance, more a choice now. I ride five days a week, unless the weather turns foul, out to work in East Hills Park and then back to home.

Riding over these five years, I've seen my share of changes: the routes, the timing, the buses—the Old Clunker, a Newer Clunker, the Old Clunker again because the New Clunker broke down. Then finally the brand new Coach. A thing of beauty.

I've gotten to know and befriend many of the drivers over the years that come from all over the world: Kansas, New Mexico, Iraq, Poland.... a published writer, a local rock and roll icon from the 60s, a photographer, a farmer with milk cows, a restorer of electric guitars—just to mention a few. Ever helpful, courteous and most of all, ever so careful to get us where we need to go.

I've seen an incredible kaleidoscope of faces and people. The workers, who ride almost every



The best of all? It's the young children, who have never been on a bus. They enter wide-eyed and excited at such a marvelous thing.

— Johnny Lyons

day, like myself. Students from South America, Europe, the Middle East, the Orient. Tourists from Australia and Germany. First-time riders whose car broke down and are a bit leery of the experience. The women knitting, the book readers,

the window gazers, the sleepers, the elderly with walkers, newly born babies, the scooter folks, Latter Day Saints in suits, the cell-phone-plugged-ins—who laugh out loud at a funny video, the fellow passengers who help first-time riders figure out how it all works...

Some that have passes, and those who don't have passes, have a hard time counting change or can't seem to get the dollar bill to fit in the box... and some

that don't have either.

The best of all? It's the young children, who have never been on a bus. They enter wide-eyed and excited at such a marvelous thing.

And we tend to forget that—it is a marvelous thing. And a tremendous service to the Lawrence community. I, for one, am grateful.

See you on the Five – Johnny.

— Johnny Lyons

Billy has been disabled his entire life. He will never be able to drive or get anywhere unassisted. He doesn't need a wheelchair but is limited in his capabilities.

Billy's grandparents have been taking care of him since he was a baby. As they have grown older, they have become more and more limited in their transportation options for Billy. While he was in school, it was easy. The school bus would come and take him every day, and drop him off at night.

He was hired on by Cottonwood after he graduated. We had to look for viable transportation options, as his grandparents weren't able to take him on a daily basis, and he needed the benefit that Cottonwood provides.

There wasn't a school bus to take him anymore, and that's when we turned to the Lawrence Transit System. The paratransit is a life saver. They fully understand what we need for Billy, and they are amazing at what they do. They pick him up each morning, coming to the door to help him traverse the sidewalk to the



bus. They take him to Cottonwood, drop him off with the awesome staff there, and then bring him home at the end of the day. They walk him straight up to the front door so that they can be sure he is in the care of his grandmother before departing.

The paratransit is a life saver. They fully understand what we need for Billy, and they are amazing at what they do.

— Amanda Burghart

They always make sure he has all of his belongings with him, and take care to recognize that some mornings he's just plain stubborn and might take a little longer getting out of the door. They take all of the worry out of Billy's day, and my grandmother can relax while he's at work, knowing he's in good hands.

— Amanda Burghart
(written by Billy's cousin)

I have no car. Before the T, I had to choose my doctor, dentist, etc. by how close they were to me. Now I can make the decision based on more than proximity. I can also go places without relying on friends.

— Phil Minkin

I ride this bus every day. It's a great and safe way to travel. I ride it to work, to do my grocery shopping, and to simply just get around town. I really appreciate everything that you guys do for us everyday travelers!

— Hannah Herrero

My name is Cassandra Thonus. I am a 2015 Graduate from Free State High School. I depend on the bus a lot because I am part of a program at KU Called Project Search.

— Cassandra Thonus

I enjoy riding the T. When I first started riding the bus about three years ago, I noticed that not too many people rode; several residents thought it was a waste of money for the city to have a bus service that was hardly used. As time passed, at least on my route, it seemed ridership increased; this may have

been because of the hiring spike of GDIT and surrounding businesses. Regular drivers are friendly and knowledgeable, greeting me by my first name.

I was also excited when the city added the Night Line. It has been a lifesaver for me and my

daughter, allowing us to have a safe, secure ride to work and other destinations. I am thankful that the service was included, and each week it gets harder to reserve Friday morning. I'm not upset, just thankful that the service is being utilized. I see nothing but continued growth as the city continues to grow.

— Sharon Roullins

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My name is Hal Schultz. I work for SACK (the Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas). About a year or so ago, I was given a notice that said that I had too many no-shows for the bus and was going to get kicked off. A co-worker of mine got the same letter; both of us have intellectual/developmental disabilities, which can interfere with our ability to always understand information. With the help of a friend of ours, we both wrote letters to Lawrence Transit explaining how important the transportation system is for me to remain independent and keep my job.

Without the transportation system, I could possibly be in a group home living situation (rather than in my own apartment) or I could be without housing as I would not be able to keep my job to pay my rent. The transportation system of Lawrence also helps keep me independent because I am unable to drive, so Lawrence Transit allows me to go to different areas in town and shop by myself or with friends without having to rely on others; my family is not in this area so I have no other people to rely on. I

do have staff that help me, but I am only allowed a small amount of time to work with them, so I cannot always get transportation from them. After writing the letter,

Lawrence Transit did a great job of getting back with me and my friend, and my passes were reinstated so I am able to use this each day to get around.

Because of Lawrence Transit, I am able to be independent

and enjoy a life I would otherwise not be able to live.

— **Hal Schultz**

I have been treated with respect at all times, and I feel that Lawrence Transit is the best transportation company I have ever ridden. I appreciate all you do.

— **Jeffrey Curtis**

The T Lift is great, and they take you anywhere you need. Without it, I would not be able to go to work.

— **Ellen Horn**

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— **Hal Schultz**

Ido not drive. My vision is poor, and my spatial awareness even worse. It is far less dangerous to use Lawrence Transit than for me to risk driving.

When I moved to Lawrence and started working at a warehouse, I had to walk from my friend's apartment next to Iowa Street by the hospital to Delaware Street for five months until I found a place to live. I had to beg rides off of friends or walk to go to the store or anywhere else.

When the bus system started, it allowed me more choices, saved a great deal of time, and gave me some independence.

I was laid off from my warehouse job in 2010. After 17 years of working in two different warehouses, I was put on disability. Knee and back problems limit my ability to walk, so now I use the T Lift. The T Lift has made a vast difference. If I were not able to use this service, I would have to depend on relatives to take care of me, and that would mean leaving Lawrence.

I have lived in Oklahoma, California, Ohio, and Dodge City, Kansas. Lawrence is by far the best living experience, and I would be at a great loss if I ever had to move.

The T Lift drivers get me to a number of appointments at the hospital and the Haskell Health Center. When I am driven to the grocery store, the drivers help carry my bags. These are small things to an able-bodied person, but they mean a great deal to me.

The drivers make the T Lift what it is, and I would like to thank them. I'm embarrassed sometimes to ask for help, and that pride can limit me. The T Lift drivers un-

derstand that I walk slowly, cannot carry too many bags and am sometimes in a lot of pain. This takes away most of the difficulty in negotiating everyday tasks. Drivers like Jim and Jimmy work hard to make sure the disabled are not further

diminished by acting impatient or laughing. They treat us like normal human beings and respect our differences.

Over the past fifteen years, I have gone from occasionally using the regular routes to depending on the T Lift. If it were not for Lawrence Transit, I would not be living in Lawrence, Kansas, and for that I am eternally grateful.

— Juanita Marshall

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Lawrence Transit has been our saving grace for sure! My 12-year-old daughter and I recently moved here in January 2015. Unfortunately, my truck had broken down, and I was stressing on how we would get to work and school. We weren't too familiar with the bus system, but after a little research and much assistance from the drivers, we made it work.

I feel safe with my daughter taking the bus, and she always gets to where she needs to be. Not to mention the time she forgot her bus fare and the driver allowed her to ride after I assured I would be waiting at her bus stop with money in hand.

I appreciate Lawrence Transit so much because if it wasn't for them I wouldn't have a job and I would have to walk 45 minutes twice daily to get my child to school. What a blessing! Oh and the Night Line is an AMAZING service as well!! Thank you, Lawrence Transit!!

— **Johnnelle Hymon**

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— **Johnnelle Hymon**

My name is Lisa. I use the T Lift on a regular basis. I ride the bus to Dillons on Massachusetts for work. Without the bus system, it would be hard for me to get to work. I enjoy talking with the bus drivers.

I know a lot of the drivers by name. They are very nice and they get me to work on time. They do a great job.

Sometimes I ride the bus to Cottonwood. Sometimes I ride to the bowling alley to meet up with my friends. I have a lot of friends that ride the buses just like me.

We need the bus system for work and to go to activities because we don't drive. I am glad to have the T Lift to ride. It is important to be able to ride the T Lift.

— **Lisa McCleary**

They are always on time, which I like. And always very friendly. I talk to the drivers once in a while. And if I have a question, they are always courteous and full of insight. Makes my ride much easier.

— **Fioanna Sharp**

I grew up in Lawrence and own a car. But having traveled to other cities where I always use public transportation, I was very happy to see Lawrence develop its own transit service 15 years ago. It came in handy when my son became a skateboarder during his teenage years and could ride the bus to Centennial Park, but I always figured the bus was something I'd use in the future, perhaps when I got older and no longer wished to drive.

But then, the unexpected happened. In early October, I broke my left arm and fingers on my right hand, rendering me incapable of driving, let alone taking care of myself, and making me dependent on family and friends. To make matters worse, I don't have health insurance because my income is too low to qualify for subsidized insurance, and I earn too much for Medicaid.

Luckily, I've found the T to be convenient and affordable. Not wanting to be a burden any more than I had to be, I began taking the bus to my numerous doctor

appointments and rehab therapy sessions; it has given me a sense of independence and freedom. Sometimes it even seems like an adventure, as I figure out stops, routes and how well the system works.

I'm sure I speak for many people when I say that Lawrence Transit definitely adds to the quality of life in Lawrence. Now it's hard to imagine our town without it.

— **Beth Reiber**

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— **Beth Reiber**

I have been using the transit system to get to and from work and my kids to daycare. And sometimes to just go downtown to shop. The bus drivers are always super friendly, especially to my 3-year-old, who loves riding the bus. She enjoys talking to the drivers and being able to sit and talk to everyone else on the bus. It's truly the highlight of her day when she gets to ride on the bus.

— **Kristina Meuffel**

I'm not a good story teller, and I even not a good writer. Furthermore, I've just use bus in Lawrence for 2 months since I came here this August. So if you expect a well-organized story, you would be disappointed. But if you want to hear my story, a true story that how buses change my life, I could provide a true story of mine, no gain, no less, just a very simple story in a few words.

I left my country, Vietnam, to come to US just 3 months ago, since by husband follow his dream to be a professor in US. Many people in my country think that is a perfect way for me to have a chance to visit and stay in US for several years. At that time I was so proud that I do, too. I even imagined about having a job, having a new life, then I could do a great thing when get in America - the land of opportunities.

Unfortunately, sometimes life is not as a dream. I became stressful after I came here. I realize that I never can have a job here, with a little knowledge of speaking and listening. I didn't even know where to go, what to do, whom to talk with. My life seemed to be ruined in a small apartment. That time was the hardest time in my life. I missed my parents, I missed my country, and I just wanted to

come back home. Because of my boredom, I argued with my husband all the time. I wanted him to know what he did to destroy my life. I lost my job, I lost my friends, I lost all of the communication in my daily life, and I had to live far from home. For such those things, I didn't know how worst it could be.

Then things change when one day I follow my husband to campus and take the first bus. Although I had been familiar with catching bus to school 10 years ago, but

I really hesitate because the bus drivers in my hometown are not nice, they even never smile with customers. Then I realized that people here in Lawrence, specially bus drivers are very kind and nice. So I felt free to take bus to go anywhere with the bus schedule in my hand. The more distance I go, the more information I get. The more information I get, the more events and groups I join in. Now, it has been more than two months since I had take the first bus, I'm so confident that I could communicate with people very well. I don't know whatever my life change in the future, but I know it will be better and better.

Above is the main story that buses help me to get on with the new life. And here is the small story

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— Mai Bui

that makes me feel warm as I'm at home. One day, I had to take the bus to my conversation partner's house in the cold weather. In addition, because I came from a tropical country, so I have always have the temperature over 90 degree. When I was walking on the way to bus stop, the bus pass over me. I was very disappointed at that time, I knew I have to stand in the cold weather for at least an hour without any seat. Nevertheless, when I walked to the bus stop, I realized that someone has put two chairs for the passenger to sit. I don't know how to show my feeling in the most real way. I just know that I felt very warm in my heart as I see that kind. I felt like I was going home, I felt like this place is not simply the unstable living, it's like home. And now whoever ask me where I am staying, I would reply not staying, I'm living in Lawrence.

That's how buses change my life.

— **Mai Bui**

When Jimmy picks me up on Wednesday to go to Weaver's, we like to sing and dance together.

— **Hilary Metzger**

Hi, my name is Hilary Metzger and I have ridden the T Lift for ten years to Weaver's and to the Hospital. The bus drivers are friendly and nice to me.

When Jimmy picks me up on Wednesday to go to Weaver's, we like to sing and dance together. When Jim picks me up to go to Weaver's on Friday, he always has his country music on to sing along to.

I met a new friend named Mildred. She rides the bus with me on Friday. We drop her off at the hair salon right across from where my sister used to work. Me and my new friend talk a lot together.

Before my grandpa died, I would tell him that I have two jobs and he would not have any and he would tease me about my paychecks. Some of my bus drivers would pray a lot for him.

I like riding the T Lift. I have made some good friends.

— **Hilary Metzger**

I have been riding the T Lift for a few months now to LMH for therapy services and to doctors' appointments, and you could not find a better transportation service with the great drivers and how they treat the riders including myself. They help you to and from the bus as well as helping you on and off the bus keeping your safety and well being 100% the number one priority. They do a great job with communicating with the T dispatcher of all instances during transporting all riders.

The drivers also make sure that all riders once they get to their destination get into the locations inside the building as safe as possible and they always greet you with great pride and joy to show they love what they do by transporting the most precious cargo on this earth. The drivers always have your safety in mind such as making sure all safety belts are properly in place and that includes all points for wheelchair safety for no erupt movement in case of an accident or radical drivers around the buses along the transportation routes.

I strongly recommend the T for your safe and dependable transportation wherever you go in Lawrence.

— Robert Anderson

I strongly recommend the T for your safe and dependable transportation wherever you go in Lawrence. Keep up the great work you are doing! Congratulations on 15 years!

— Robert Anderson

I would like to submit my story of how the T has greatly affected my life, not to win, but because I have heard rumors that the T might be in danger of no longer existing.

We are a one car family with both adult parties working and two children. I bet you can guess how difficult transportation can be sometimes. Not with

the T. The routes and schedule can work for just about anything and the fares are more than fair (see what I did there?). I can get to work, take my daughter to gymnastics, or we can go to the library! No matter what it is or where I need to go, I know that with the T, we aren't stranded! So thank you!

— Sarah Galyon

Hello, my name is Carmen Lopez. I have been living here in Lawrence, Kansas, for a year and a half. I moved here from California because I was laid off my job as a housing counselor and couldn't afford to live in California because I became disabled.

It was very difficult for me leaving my loved ones behind, so it has not been easy. I was very blessed to have found a part-time job right away at Dillons on 6th and Wakarusa. I didn't have transportation, because I had to sell my car to move here.

One of my coworkers told me about the T Lift bus service, so I applied and qualified right away.

I tell my drivers every day how much I appreciate this service, because if it wasn't for all of you and this service, I would not have gotten my life back!!!

So thank you all, for all you do! Thank you Jacob, Louise, and Samatha, for booking my rides and being so courteous and professional every day. And of course my drivers, can't mention them all but, Byran, Hugh, James, all of you, you know who you are! Thank you so much! Happy Holidays to all of you and your loved ones.

— **Carmen Lopez**

It doesn't seem like fifteen years since the Lawrence Transit got started. It has helped me be more independent in going to work each week. I truly appreciate all the T Lift drivers, and your friendships. You all do a fantastic job balancing all your passengers' schedules and dealing with traffic every day.

— **Dina Haverly**

I'm still new to Lawrence, but I have come to love the transit system here! I'm a biker, but I have to accept the fact that I live in the Midwest. Weather happens. It's nice to know that public transit is an option! The drivers are always friendly, and there are stops where I need them. I'm honestly surprised to see such a great system in

place here in Lawrence!

I appreciate everyone that keeps the buses going, and the community I'm happy to live in!

— **Donald Green**

The drivers are always friendly, and there are stops where I need them.

— **Donald Green**

When I gave up my car five years ago, I planned on biking everywhere. I quickly realized arriving at your destination on time meant you arrived sweaty. I began forcing myself to arrive 15 minutes earlier than my scheduled time to cool off.

After about half of a year of being early for EVERYTHING, a friend mentioned that the buses have bike racks on the front. I was blown away! My journey with Lawrence Transit had begun, and I have been using it ever since.

I have lived at two different locations since I started taking the bus, and the nearest bus stops were only a few blocks away in both parts of the city. They have also dropped me off a few short blocks from each of my destinations!

I would have to say my favorite part of taking public transportation is I get to catch up on my social media, do a crossword puzzle, chat with other passengers, or read a book I've gotten from the library. While the majority of people are driving and have to pay attention to the traffic, I get to kick back and enjoy the ride! Thank you Lawrence Transit!

— **Anthony Gradert**

First off, Lawrence, Kansas is BLESSED to have a bus system. The bus system has improved a lot since I've been here. I'm from Kansas City, and I'm used to catching the bus everywhere. I park and ride, since they have those. They travel to different counties through the greater KC area.

While the majority of people are driving and have to pay attention to the traffic, I get to kick back and enjoy the ride!

— **Anthony Gradert**

As I said, the service is improving, and I look forward to seeing better service come about—including extended hours, until at least 11:30 p.m., and for a few hours on Sunday for people to go to church.

If there was service on Sunday, it would greatly benefit the company and people in the community. It would be nice if they could run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. That would make a world of differences in the people of Lawrence's lives. Thank you so much for letting me tell my story, and much blessings to you all.

— **La Tonya Johnson**

I am writing this story on behalf of my son, Brady Tanner, who is mentally handicapped. Brady cannot read or write and does not talk well enough for many people to understand him. He would not be able to call and make transportation requests on his own so it has been very helpful to have a set route for him.

We have become very dependent on the T Lift to get him to and from work four days a week. It is good for a special needs person to work and have a sense of responsibility, and without the T Lift, it would be very difficult to get him to work. We are also very thankful for the kind bus drivers who have taken time to know Brady and to understand him.

A year or two ago, we had a bad snow storm and the bus couldn't get up the hill. The bus driver walked Brady home that day, and I thought he went above and beyond the call of duty. He could have just as easily called me to walk to the end of the street to meet them or he could have had Brady walk up the hill by himself. I thank you for this service from the bottom of my heart.

— **Janie Tanner**

I have been riding T Lift ever since they started in our community. If it wasn't for T Lift, I would not be able to continue working in the community due to lack of transportation.

Before T Lift started, I had to pay the high price of a cab if I wanted a job, and it did not do any good having a job when everything I made went to pay for transportation.

The drivers always get me to work on time. They are always friendly and willing to talk sports with me as we drive across town. Thank you T Lift for helping me to have a better life.

— **Julie Rector**

I love the T Lift as it gets me to where I need to go. I recently moved to Lawrence. I can't drive. The T Lift gets me to work! Having the T Lift has helped me to become independent. I think the drivers are really nice and kind to me!

— **Jennifer Goff**

I thank you for this service from the bottom of my heart.

— **Janie Tanner**

Since I have been without transportation, I have been riding the bus more and more. It wasn't until today that I realized how important the bus service in Lawrence is to me.

Yesterday, my boyfriend was listening to music with his headphones in but when he removed them, the rubber tip did not come out of his ear. I thought, "No big deal, I'll get it out with tweezers." Wrong!!! It was so deep in his ear that I was afraid I would rupture his eardrum!

We called a friend for a ride to the ER but because there were so many people, she didn't want to wait as she had to work in the morning and it was 9 p.m. This morning we took bus #1 to downtown and bus #6 to the hospital. It took around 30 minutes total to get there. The doctor got the earpiece out in a matter of seconds and we were back out to catch the bus home in less than an hour.

The drivers were funny and friendly and very calming at a time that was in no way was pleasant for Todd. They made us feel comfortable and showed true concern for his well-being. My hat is off to these wonderful men

and to Lawrence Transit for hiring them and having the best bus service I have ever experienced in my life, (that's a lot of years)!!!

— **Cynthia Hein**

I moved to Lawrence from Northwest Kansas 9 years ago. Lawrence is the biggest town I have ever lived in, so it was overwhelming. A few months after I lived here, I figured it out for the most part. I found out I really like this town. The people are kind and friendly, which I did not expect from a town this size. I also like the diversity of the people.

I was a little intimidated by the bus system at first. After I started riding the bus and asked the drivers a million questions, I figured that out, too. The drivers have always been patient and nice.

Thank you for reading my story.

— **Erica Geist**

I love T Lift. The drivers are fun, and they joke around. When it's cold, they put the heater on, and when it's hot, they put the air conditioning on.

— **Robyn Herzog**

The drivers have always been patient and nice.

— **Erica Geist**

Sept 1, 2015. This started at Walgreens. At 9:45 p.m., I had a low blood sugar attack. I have had only one other in my life. I knew what it was when I became sick. Those who were working with me could see how sick I was; they said my face was

very pale and sweaty. When the bus came, the driver helped me on the bus due to my weakness. He could tell I was very sick and asked me if I wanted to go to the hospital instead of home. I replied “no.”

I then told him I hadn't had a good meal before I had gone to work which brought on this attack. I could barely speak at this time. I was so weak. I didn't have any money to get anything at work to eat. Without hesitation, he gave me his container full of green grapes. Grapes have natural sugars in them, and that's what I needed badly. I was and still am very grateful for his sacrifice to me. He told me to eat all of them, and the more I ate, the better I felt. I might have gone into a coma. I didn't realize how bad it could have been.

I wish to thank all of the bus drivers for their compassion towards other people. I will never

forget what this driver did for me that night, and what all of the drivers that know me have done for me. I wish to make known the driver's name, hoping he will be appreciated for the service he has done. Brian on Night Line. “Thank You, Brian!”

I wish to thank all of the bus drivers for their compassion towards other people.

— Pamela O'Shea

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I am about to be having a kid and I really don't have a car to get around anymore. When I need to get around, I take the bus. I really like the bus. It helps out so much when you don't have a car.

— Monica Edwards

I am disabled, and I have two kids and can't afford a car. By the time I pay bills and get the kids what they need, I have nothing left. Not sure if this will help, but gotta try. Thank you for all the service you give.

— Marcella Blevins

I was the type of person whose parents chose for whatever reason that it wasn't necessary to learn how to drive, and although it was a tiny obstacle in my hometown, I learned once I was living in the country that it was more of a hassle than anything else. Walking will get you to where you need to be, but it takes rather long, and in a city that isn't made with walkers in mind, it can be a straight hassle.

And then I ended up losing my job while in that country-bound city. There were no job opportunities within walking distance, so I started to look back in my birth state where the jobs seemed to be more plentiful but the next question was "What about transportation?"

Unlike previous cities where the public transportation wasn't really geared towards the public, I knew that Lawrence had an easy-to-use public system, which would be a blessing for the new life I would start to embark on. For me, I had gotten to know the buses in the previous April when I had come to visit family, and now it would be a full time dedication.

Since I have moved here, the

buses have greatly enriched my life and added a new depth so that I don't feel like I am doing nothing. First of all, they help me to be able to get to my job and normally right on time so I don't have to worry unless I have made a wrong decision on my part or if I got a late start.

The second thing is the bus helps me to get to where I need to go and usually without much of a

walk once I learn the right stops. They are helping me to get to know my surroundings, which would be a frightening job in a city this size to a walker and to get to

see more than just the few surrounding roads.

But my most favorite thing about the buses is the freedom. Back in Virginia, I would be off for two days and basically grounded to the house unless I could convince someone who was off of work if we could go out. I was wasting my time and not actually doing anything that was of importance, which irritated me since I knew there were places that I could spend my time, to explore and get to know.

In Lawrence, there are more opportunities to explore and find something to do. Now when I am off, all I need to do is either jump

My most favorite thing about the buses is the freedom.

— Julia Brumfield

on the bus and pick a destination or head downtown to see what may be offered by the Watkins Museum. Where the bus doesn't run, though, it runs close enough that the destination is usually just a small walk away.

And so the bus system has been a wonderful piece of my life since moving. Due to the buses, I have met interesting people on the bus, conversed with warm bus drivers who are quite knowledgeable of the routes and where to go to get somewhere while getting to know them as people and to be able to explore the city. With each bus route I learn, there is more of the city to be unlocked to my adventurous soul, although my skills of learning the right places to stop and timing does need to improve a bit. And I truly want to thank the City of Lawrence and the Lawrence Transit System for giving me so much with just a simple thing as a ride.

— **Julia Brumfield**

The low prices of the bus enabled me to look for work and get around to doctors' appointments, as well as go shopping.

— **Kristle Opal**

I've lived in Lawrence since 2012, and the transit system has always been there for me. I was homeless when I moved here, living at the Drop-In Center. The low prices of the bus enabled me to look for work and get

around to doctors' appointments, as well as go shopping when I had the extra money. It was confusing at first, but the longer I lived here, the more I came to understand the hows and whys of the route system. I am now homeless

again, but the bus is always a helpful and friendly service to get me to more and more important appointments. Bus fare is always reasonable. I tend to buy the monthly pass so I will always have access to transportation. I'm happy with the new night bus as well, as it gets my boyfriend to work on schedule. Thanks for having a working system.

— **Kristle Opal**

It is a great way to get me from home to work and Rock Chalk Park on Monday and Thursday.

— **Drew White**

Greetings. My name is Deb Boyle, and My Story is actually an Our Story.

In November 2013, my guy, Mike Bottom, suffered cardiac arrest. We began a slow healing process that included cardiac rehab. He got to know Cardel as he travelled to and from the hospital, and as his health improved, he began volunteering at LMH to give back. Cardel and Mike bonded and became friends on these journeys to and from, and little did we know that this would set into motion a series of events that would touch our lives every day since.

Moving forward one year later, November 2014, I was diagnosed with Stage 2B breast cancer. Mike was continuing to heal, and my journey on the buses began as I was facing 6 months of chemotherapy and 30 radiation treatments. Going to and from the hospital, we got to know Carl, the two Aarons, and Scott. They were amazing to get to know as people and not just our bus drivers.

All this said, all of the above drivers showed us an exceptional level of customer service in the beginning, and this gradually

changed into genuine caring about our health and well-being. We came to look forward to their smiles and inquiries about our day. Going through so many issues and the stress they caused, our burdens would become a bit lighter with their concern.

On Oct. 6, 2015, I was declared cancer free and shortly thereafter returned to work at GDIT. Without fail, Susan, Carl, Aaron, and Scott inquire about my day as I ride to and from work.

They celebrated my good news with and for me when I told them I beat cancer.

You are to be commended for hiring such wonderful people. They are a positive impact in our lives every day. We genuinely bonded with these fine human beings, and though we faced some dark and scary times, they always lifted our spirits and even now continue to do so.

My job is very stressful. At the end of every day, there is Aaron, smile in place, a “Hi Deb, how was your day!” waiting to make me smile.

So, our heartfelt thanks to Lawrence Transit, to Cardel, the two

You are to be commended for hiring such wonderful people. They are a positive impact in our lives every day.

— Deb Boyle

Aarons, Carl, Scott, Susan and the others we don't know as well: Thank you for your friendship and caring these past two years. We are grateful and look forward to riding on...

Blessings upon you all at Lawrence Transit!

— **Deb Boyle**

My oldest daughter started her freshman year at Free State High School in August 2015.

We would not be able to transport her by car every day, and it would be too far to walk. So, I suggested that she take the city bus rather than the school bus. At first, she did not like this idea, but I kept mentioning it as a convenient option and an opportunity for more personal freedom.

A couple weeks before school started, my wife and I convinced her to take the bus trip to and from her new school with me. We caught the number 6 bus less than a block from our house and were dropped off at the main entrance to Free State High School.

She was still not sure about riding the bus by herself every day, but then we took a short walk. We got a frozen yogurt, and caught the bus at a different stop nearby to go downtown. That is when I saw the wheels inside her head start to spin. She took my schedule and started studying it. She figured out when she would have to catch the bus, how she could go visit a friend, and of course go downtown to hang out. "The keys to the kingdom," I said. "Once you learn how to use our

transit system, you have the ability to get around town on your own, no license required."

Now, on school days, she is usually the first person up and getting ready. Using the Lawrence Transit system to get to and from school has

helped her gain confidence, independence, and a wider variety of social interactions. The first year of high school can be a very frustrating and difficult transition. I know that, for my daughter, using the Lawrence Transit System played an important role in making that transition a little easier.

— **Lance Fahy**

Using the Lawrence Transit system to get to and from school has helped her gain confidence, independence, and a wider variety of social interactions.

— **Lance Fahy**

As a foreigner, it might be hard to adapt sometimes, especially in a new country. I was born in Nairobi, Kenya, where I also grew up. It has not been an easy journey moving to another country. Leaving family is one of the hardest tasks one can do. I have two sisters who are both currently in college.

My eldest [sister] goes to Kansas University, while my sister who is older than me, goes to Vassar College, NY. When we first came to the United States, one of the hardest things to do was making new friends. Sacramento, California being my first state to live in, offered a wide variety of people from all over the world. It laid a foundation for me and my family on how life in America is lived, because we just had a general idea.

People are curious, and curiosity contains questions. The most common questions that I have been asked are, “Do you have cars in Africa? Do you guys live with animals, like lions? Have you fought a lion?” I have been asked these same questions many times; it seems like a routine to me.

Fortunately, I met wonderful

friends who guided me through the American traditions, how things work here. We started on food stamps. We had a budget that we had to meet. My mom worked two jobs, even though we were living with my aunt, who has been here for about 12 years now. We had easy access to the stores and schools. My parents had to relearn

some driving aspects, in order to legally drive here. Due to hard work, we move up the ladder.

My father traveled back to Kenya to receive his doctorate. He later applied for job openings at universities. He received a reply from Kansas University, where he

currently works. On July 13, 2013, we arrived here in Kansas. We looked around to see where everything was.

For the first few weeks, we used the bus to get around while waiting for our vehicles to be shipped here. The bus system helped us quite a lot. The bus is my means of transportation, which has been helpful. It enables me to get around town without bothering my parents. They are well maintained and have wonderful drivers. We all start somewhere small, but end up big.

The bus is my means of transportation, which has been helpful. It enables me to get around town without bothering my parents.

— Mburu Nganga

— Mburu Nganga