

5/14/82 Seutmel

# Lift Line Helps The Housebound

By RUSSELL EVANS

A young woman in a wheelchair has recently moved to Santa Cruz. She studies the schedule of classes offered by Cabrillo College and tries to picture herself as a student. But, she wonders, how could she attend college in a wheelchair?

Across town an older man has found himself abruptly disabled, the victim of a stroke. He is confounded by the paralysis of his legs and the frustrating impairment of his speech. He's heard of the Stroke Center in DeLaveaga Park, where stroke victims meet regularly for therapy and exercise. He'd like to go, too. But, he wonders, where can he turn for transportation? He can't afford to pay for a taxi out of his small income. And, even if he could, how could they handle him in his wheelchair?

There's a transportation answer available locally for both. It's called Lift Line.

In 1973, the Volunteer Bureau of Santa Cruz County saw the need for a specialized transport service for the handicapped. After three years of planning and organizing, and with the aid of funding through the county, the Bureau started Lift Line.

Beginning with four station wagons, Lift Line has now grown into a paratransit agency with five lift-equipped vans, four full time drivers, and an office and administrative staff of three. The vans are equipped with two-way radios and are dispatched to provide door to door service to medical appointments, social services, therapy sessions and even grocery shopping. Also included in the program is a subsidized taxi service for ambulatory passengers.

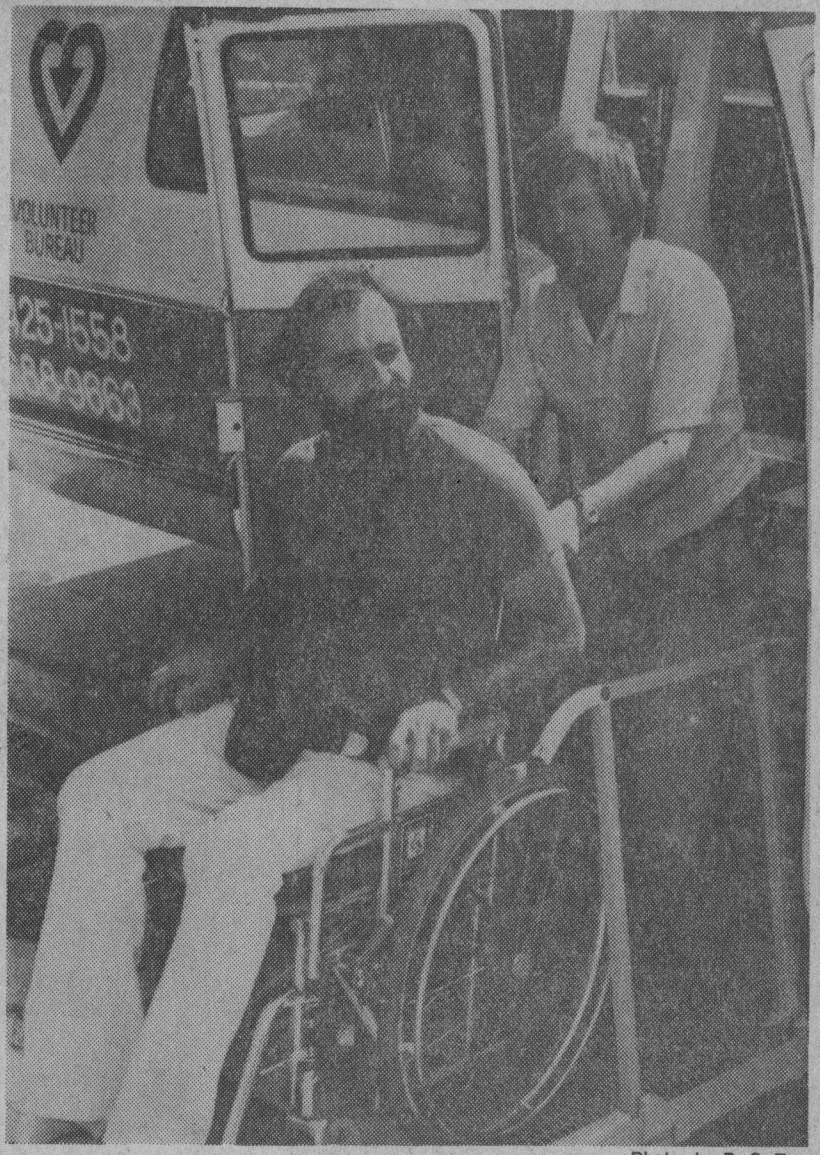
Lift Line enables handicapped students, like Edward Hughes, to get to and from classes at Cabrillo College. Hughes, 36, is a victim of Muscular Dystrophy and bound to a wheelchair. "Without Lift Line," he says, "it would be impossible for me to pursue an education."

Says long time Santa Cruz resident Grace Palmer, 81, "Why, I think it's the best organization in Santa Cruz."

Drivers get high marks for helpfulness. Says Teresa Nosek, a student at Cabrillo, "I feel safe because I know the drivers are trained to handle emergencies."

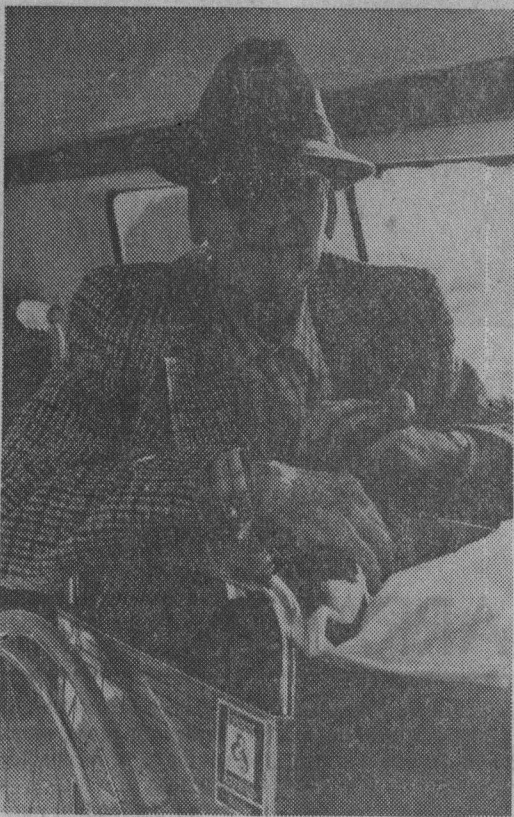
The transit service provides transportation free of charge.

To get a ride, call 425-1558 or 688-9663. The office is located at 1509 Seabright Ave. and advises calling at least 48 hours in advance to



Photos by R. C. Evans

Driver Ron Maysenhalder aids Joe Pileggi in boarding one of the five lift-equipped vans.



Jimmy Groves is a grateful Lift Line passenger. The service takes folks to their medical care, grocery shopping, therapy care and to nutrition sites such as daily lunch at the Loudon Nelson Center. Of the people served, 70 percent are over 75.

## Reaching Out To Landlocked

Stephanie Smith, Lift Line coordinator, says, "we would like to reach out to more people who are not aware of our services. Many are landlocked in their homes, mobile homes or apartments. A lot of our

to meet these people's essential needs."

Lyle Abraham, one of the van drivers, adds, "Our service helps make them as independent as possible — helps them stay in their own environment."