

# Wheaton Leader

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Business provides rides for those with disabilities

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# Special needs business pairs service with kindness

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**WHEATON** – When Linda and Kristen Mobley were preparing to go to a special needs summer camp in Michigan earlier this summer, they were torn.

Kristen is in a wheelchair and her mother, Linda, wasn't comfortable driving there.

Instead, they contacted Special Needs Chicago, a transportation service based in Wheaton that provides travel assistance to suburban Chicago residents facing physical or cognitive challenges.

"It means a lot just to have the option to work with someone who caters to and cares about those with special needs," Linda said.

Special Needs Chicago owner and founder Michelle Dacy decided to start her business last fall after her 7-year-old daughter, Natalie, developed neurological problems that led to mobility issues. Dacy said her experience with her daughter and the time she spent caring for her elderly grandmother made her appreciate the significance of the service that her business offers.

"A family has so many things on their plate if their loved one has physical or developmental challenge. Just one little thing – transportation – if I can make that littler corner of their life easier, I'm happy," she said.

Special Needs Chicago provides transportation in the Chicago suburbs, not only to individuals such as the Mobleys, but also to other organizations, including Bridgeway Christian Village and the ALS Village. Karen Lukaszewski, the coordinator of the Adult Day Rehabilitation Program at Rush University Medical Center, said the care Dacy and her staff take is what sets them apart.

"I've worked with her since I started in 2008, and when she started her own business, we wanted to stay with her," she said. "Michelle has been so consistent and clearly takes it seriously. It's more than plugging names into slots. She sees the people's side of it."

Dacy said she and her drivers try to cater to the needs of about 100 riders a month they service, helping as much as they can, whether it be for long-distance wheelchair travelers such as the Mobleys or an elderly relative who needs transportation to a doctor's appointment. Linda said that Special Needs Chicago called two days in advance to go over the travel schedule, asked about stops for food because of her diabetes, then came 30 minutes early the day of the trip to help load the van.

Dacy said that she obtains most of her new clients through word of mouth, which is part of why works to make each transportation experience a good one.



Photo provided

**Michelle Dacy demonstrates one of her company's vans. Special Needs Chicago provides transportation for those with developmental or physical disabilities around Chicago and its suburbs.**