

RIDER INSIDER TRANSIT DIARY



**A RIDER'S JOURNEY
TO INDEPENDENCE
BY: DANIELLE
MCGILL**

THE RIDER & ADVOCATE

DANIELLE AS A RIDER WITH A DISABILITY EXPLAINS WHAT IT MEANS TO ADVOCATE FOR TRANSPORTATION

TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

WHAT ITS LIKE TO TRAVEL ON DIFFERENT TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

RIDER TIPS

SAFETY AND SELF-ADVOCACY TIPS ON THE JOURNEY TO INDEPENDENCE

MEETING THE RIDER & ADVOCATE

CREATOR OF A RIDE AWAY PROJECT

My name is Danielle McGill; I consider myself an ordinary person with a disability. Even though I have cerebral palsy, it does not stop me from aspiring, dreaming and achieving my lifelong dream of being an advocate for those who are without a voice.

Independence means a lot to me, so using the local paratransit system, Uber, and community bus for employment, education, medical appointments and social activities are necessary for my journey to independence. To others, I am considered transportation disadvantaged because I depend on others to get around. I see it as a path to independence. Over the years, I've strived to be an advocate for myself, with the help of my parents, and now I want to share my passion for those who desire to be independent but don't know how or haven't had the same support system.



"The journey to independence is only a ride away!"

My story began at the tender age of 7 years old; I began advocating for myself because I was excluded from my brother's Tae Kwon Do class. Since there was no program for individuals with disabilities, the Tae Kwon Do Instructor saw the need for a program that would help special needs children to enjoy physical therapy. Another child with a disability joined the program, and their parents owned a therapy facility. The program grew and was incorporated into the Dan Marino Foundation Center's curriculum for children with autism. This first step of advocacy opened the door for children with special needs, like me, to participate in an extracurricular activity typically attended by able-bodied individuals. In high school, I was nominated and became the Ambassador for the Able Trust Foundation for youth with disabilities while using this platform to help others on becoming self-advocates. Also, I coordinated the Best Buddies Program where the students participated in Special Olympics and to bring disability awareness in Broward County high schools.

During my undergraduate years, I served as the first Disability Representative Coordinator for students with disabilities at Florida International University in student government; this was a first for the nation as well as the State of Florida. After, graduating from FIU with two degrees, I interned for Florida State Senator Rene Garcia, who spearheaded my idea and helped in drafting the Transportation Disadvantaged SB 1086 – to assist individuals, like me, who needed seamless transportation connections across county lines when using the para-transit services to get to my internship. Today, I am working as an Advocate, on an A Ride Away Project with a grant awarded from SAR-TAC at the Ann Storck Center Inc. I am member of the Mobility Management Facilitation - Community Transportation Connections team. This program goal is to assist transportation disadvantaged and individuals with disabilities to gain access to transportation modes in the community. The program focuses on providing better access to employment, medical services, education and other recreational activities through a coordinated system.

As a member of the Community Transportation Connections Team, my role is to advocate for riders' safety and to recommend better access to services in the community for individuals with disabilities. My desire is to reach families, caretakers through my A Ride Away Guide; this will serve as a resource guide that shares peer to peer instructions, tips, and hints. The project will educate on becoming strong self-advocates while learning about different transportation options. This project will allow me to reach others through social media, newsletters, and presentations just to name a few. In this project, I will share many of my travel experiences in my Rider Insider Transit Diary. My hope is to inspire individuals who never thought of traveling alone, how to use all types of transportation services, others are encouraged to share advice to other riders, and learn to be their self-advocate, but you never know....this might start a new journey to your independence. Join me on my journey traveling because our independence is only A Ride Away!



2018 NEW YEAR TRANSPORTATION RESOLUTIONS

BY DANIELLE MCGILL

I hope your New Year is off to a great start! As you start writing your New Year's resolutions for 2018, why not consider adding taking public transportation? I have decided to make a New Year's resolution to further my independence by using different transportation services around Broward and Palm Beach Counties



TRAVELING ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Taking public transportation gives me the mobility and freedom needed to explore opportunities in the community. Should you consider traveling around town or crossing over county lines (like Broward into PalmBeach County), you can use different options like the train or the fixed-route buses. You may ask, "what is a fixed-route bus?" It is a type of bus service that follows a specific path and makes frequent stops along that path. Also, you can try using Tri-Rail. This train travels between counties to get you where you need to go! These are just a few of the options to consider when planning a trip. Trying these options will help you to build personal confidence and awareness.

IS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SCARY?

Many people ask me if it is scary when I try public transportation. My answer is, "not knowing my capabilities makes it scarier!" I believe it is healthy to challenge ourselves and get out of the everyday routine. If you do not try new things, you will never discover the strength in your abilities.

RIDER CHALLENGE

I am challenging fellow riders and future riders to consider taking public transportation as part of your New Year's resolution. Whether you take the public bus or commuter train, share your experiences with me here in the comments or by posting. Remember, the journey to independence is not a straight road, it has wonderful adventures along the way that can lead to great possibilities!



TIP: Remember to share your new resolution with friends or family, so you can have their support. "Don't let fear stop you from trying new transportation services."

CALL, COORDINATE, AND CONNECT TO COMPLETE A TRIP

By: Danielle McGill

PREPARING FOR A COMPLEX TRIP

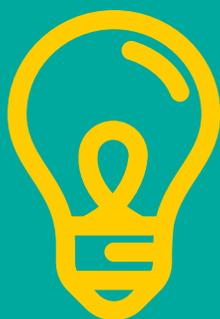
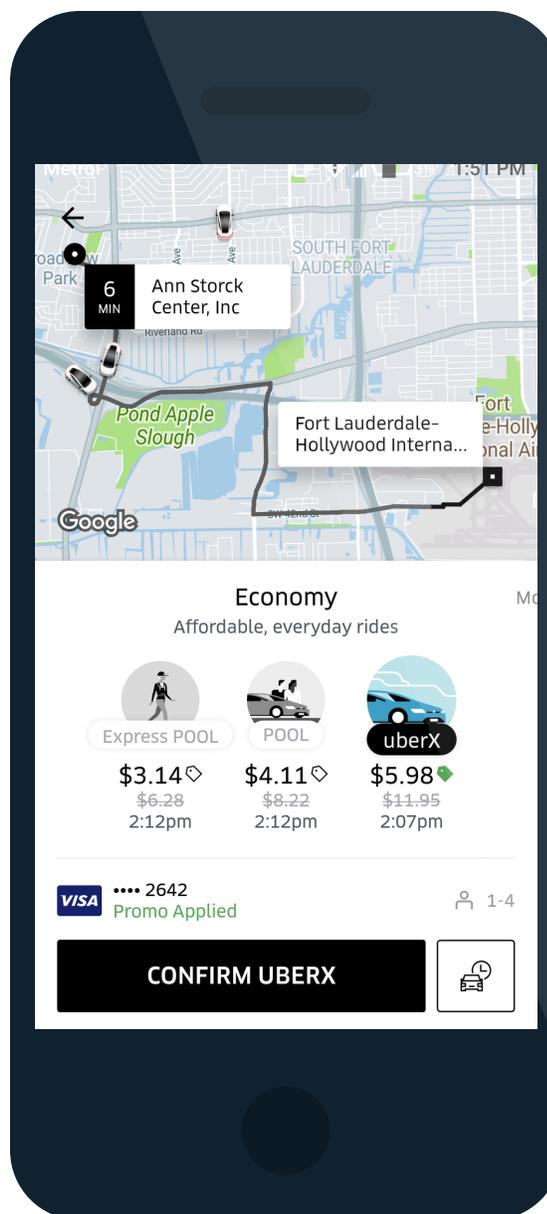
Society still believes the myth that because one has a disability; it is difficult for them to travel. This belief is becoming obsolete the more I travel throughout Florida. Individuals with disabilities however, may feel restricted due to limited access to transportation options. A disabled person has the right to use all modes of transportation, just like their able-bodied peers. I refuse to let my disability affect my mobility when traveling.

Recently, I traveled across the state to Tampa, Florida. To get there, I had to use I used various transportation options, I planned out in advance what I felt most comfortable with for me. Everyone has their comfort zone, but I wanted to try something new. I decided to take an on-demand service called Uber for my ride to the airport. Taking Uber alone was a first for me. When I tried Uber before as you remembered, I took a friend along. When you are trying a new transportation service, it's a good idea to shadow how the service works if possible. The reason for this is so that you are prepared and know what to anticipate.

I scheduled my ride with the Uber app on my smartphone. The Uber app is very easy to use! Upon logging in, it shows your current location, then you enter in your desired destination.

Once complete the price, time, and vehicles options will be shown for you to choose from. As a person with a disability, having these options is great because you can see what best fits your individual needs. Another helpful feature of the app is the ability to view my vehicle in real-time as it's arriving at my pickup location. It allows for an Uber rider to rate the service after you've completed your trip. You can rate the driver and the service. My Uber driver was courteous and careful with my walker. Would I take this transportation option? Yes, due to the limited time frame I had to board the plane. If I were to take I would run the risk of missing my flight.

I enjoy flying; it's easier to travel in my case because sitting in a car for long periods of time stiffens my legs and back. Flying to Tampa is only an hour flight compare to four hours of riding in a vehicle. After arriving in Tampa, I met my local connection which was the local paratransit service bus, Hartline Plus - Hillsborough Area Regional Transit. This was the last leg of transportation service I used to complete my trip. Every county or city when traveling has their system and regulations of how transportation services work. If you are visiting Tampa, it's good to call seven days in advance to schedule a trip. The paratransit service provider has to establish a visitor ID number and verify that you are para-transit rider in your respective county. I called, coordinated the flight then scheduled a para-transit connection to complete my trip. It takes a lot of energy to use different modes of transportation, but if you call, coordinate, and connect, you will be successful. Remember there are services available to us and the journey to independence is only... A Ride Away!



TIPS

1. An individual with a disability has the right to use all modes of transportation, just like their able-bodied peers.
2. If possible, shadow a transportation service with a family member, friend, or caregiver to go on a trial run.
3. When traveling to a new city or county, research their available transportation options.
4. Call, Coordinate, and connect to complete your trip safely.

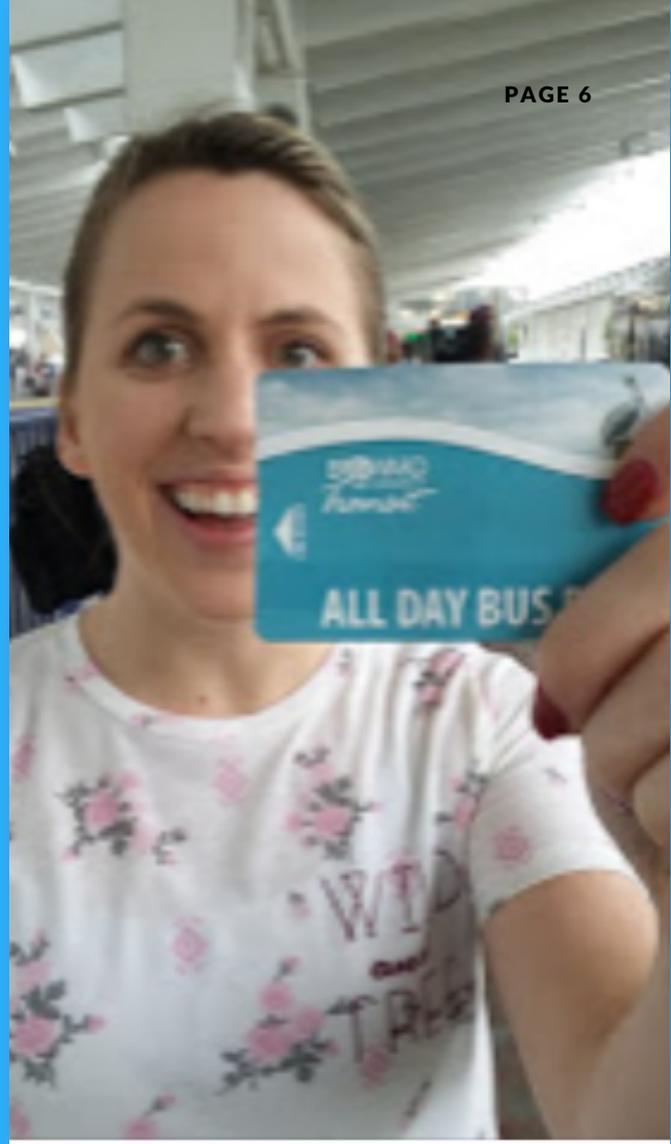
FIX-ROUTE BUS THE INTER-COUNTY EXPERIENCE

BY: DANIELLE MCGILL

Traveling on a Fixed-Route Bus was my way of stepping out of my comfort zone. As a paratransit rider using the fixed-route bus for the first time, it was liberating. It's an experience that everyone should try. Riding on a fixed-route bus is an eye-opening experience.

WHAT IS A FIXED-ROUTE BUS?

A fixed-route bus is a larger sized bus that follows a selected travel route on the road; along the roads are bus stops. These are seen along the route to help you get on or off as you travel to your destination. When I started this journey I was excited yet nervous. Once, I was actually getting on the bus I felt like I could do anything! Trip Planning is important in the success of traveling from Broward to Palm Beach. My destination was Florida Atlantic University. I had to look up a transit systems map to see what route I needed to travel into Palm Beach County. To help me transfer to other buses I used the Broward MyRide App to check on the times of bus arrivals. I also had a copy of the bus schedule with me to make sure the information is accurate.



BOARDING FIXED-ROUTE BUS

What is cool is that the bus operator can lower and bring the accessible ramp out. The bus operators were attentive when I was boarding on the bus with my mobility device. I learned that it's okay to speak up, which is part of self-advocacy. When boarding on the fixed-route bus it is good to carry the exact bus fare amount because the bus operator does not give change. I bought an All Day Bus Pass at a reduced rate, which is great to save money. It was nice to have a bus pass instead of carrying the \$3.50 fare for the paratransit bus each way. Other riders on the bus were nice, but there were some that the bus operator kept his eye on along the way. Since, I have a disability; I was allowed to sit in front of the bus, which gave me easy access to exit the bus.





PEOPLE ON THE BUS

Along the journey, I met some other riders, but I was cautious. On the bus you will meet people from all walks of life. I followed the bus scheduled and watch how we stopped at other bus stops. What I liked about the fixed-route bus is that the bus operator announces the stops, and you can request a stop by pulling down a handle. When I pulled down the handle it signaled the bus operator to stop. I was able to get off and travel on the visiting county's fixed-route bus. When I transferred on to the other bus, I paid a reduced bus fare again because of my All Day Bus pass.

TIPS:

1. Trip Plan: Know your route and carry a bus schedule
2. Carry exact money or change for bus fare
3. Self-Advocacy is speaking up to communicate your needs
4. Be cautious when meeting other riders



ARRIVE AT F.A.U

The bus operator drove me to Florida Atlantic University; I was happy and could not believe that I took a fixed-route bus. If you like routine and schedule times, this transportation option maybe for you. The Journey to Independence is only... A Ride Away!

TRAVELING ON TRI-RAIL

BY: DANIELLE MCGILL

During April's transportation challenge, I traveled on two different train lines – Brightline and Tri-Rail. They were great experiences! I hope my stories inspire you to try other ways of getting around. With each new travel experience, I feel a greater sense of independence and empowerment. You can do it, too!

TRI-RAIL MEANS...



Tri-Rail was my first complex trip. I traveled from Fort Lauderdale to West Palm Beach and made multiple transfers from fixed-route buses to the Tri-Rail station. Tri-Rail is a commuter rail similar to Brightline, but there is a difference. Tri-Rail stops at stations that connect to Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties. The name “Tri-Rail” refers to the three counties served by the train line.

PURCHASING TICKETS AND MAKING TRANSFERS

Before leaving the Tri-Rail station, it is important to have a ticket because the conductor goes around to check if passengers have purchased a ticket to their destination. On the way back to Ft. Lauderdale, I witnessed the conductor giving a person a written warning ticket. If you're making a transfer from the Broward County Transit or Palm Tran fixed-route bus systems to the Tri-Rail, you can purchase your train ticket from the kiosk at a discounted rate.

Overall, traveling on Tri-Rail for the first time was great! During my travels I met James, a Tri-Rail employee. He did an excellent job explaining the traveling process and shared information about the ticket prices. I think Tri-Rail is another wonderful option for our transportation challenge. If you didn't get a chance to try a new mode of transportation in April, we encourage you to try again in May. Join me on the journey to independence, it's only a ride away!

ACCESSIBILITY ON TRI-RAIL

My journey traveling on Tri-Rail allowed me to learn how simple it is to ride and visit neighboring counties. For instance, I use a mobility device (a walker) to travel. At the station, there is an accessible ramp that is leveled with the train track. When the train comes to a complete stop, a Tri-Rail operator will provide an extended ramp that connects to the accessible ramp, allowing me to board safely with my mobility device. While aboard the train in Fort Lauderdale, I noticed there are signs directing me to accessible seats. During my travel, I kept my mobility device with me. The Tri-Rail trains have ADA-accessible restrooms for its passengers. At times traveling on this transportation option can be for an extended period of time. It all depends on your trip. Along the way a Tri-Rail operator will announce each destination, so passengers know the location.

TIPS

1. Riders must have a ticket when traveling on Tri-rail.
2. Wait for the Tri-Rail to make a complete stop, your safety is important.
3. The Tri-Rail operator will announce destinations as you travel.



AN INSIDE LOOK AT BRIGHTLINE'S NEW SOUTH FLORIDA STATIONS

BY: DANIELLE MCGILL

For Clean Air Month I chose to travel on Brightline, the newest South Florida transportation option available to everyone. This train system travels across West Palm Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, and next month to Miami. This transportation option is an express train that allows people from Palm Beach and Broward to ride across counties with ease. What is special about the service is the focus on the travelers' experience.

Trip planning is the first step before traveling. It gives riders an opportunity to ask questions when learning the process of a transportation service before traveling.

When I arrived at the facility, right away I could see that Brightline cares for the environment. The station has solar panels and the trains use biodiesel, a cleaner-burning fuel made from renewable sources. Brightline is a great mode to try for the transportation challenge promoting Clean Air Month!

All Brightline staff were welcoming and personable. It was easy to ask questions about accommodations, which gives comfort to individuals who are traveling for the first time. I was impressed by the modern and high-tech interiors of the train. The seats were comfortable and offered USB ports, reading lights, and some rows had tables to work or eat a meal along the way. During the ride to West Palm Beach station there was a group of seniors traveling on Brightline for the first time, just like me!

The staff secured and folded my walker, and they were mindful about asking me for assistance before assuming. In my opinion that is a big plus when helping someone with a disability. When boarding, there was a gap between the train and track where my wheel would get stuck. That was my only concern. The staff nearby kindly assisted me on the train, and the manager took my suggestion to look into getting a ramp. Making reasonable suggestions is part of self-advocating for yourself and others.



The goal of Brightline is to provide passengers including seniors, families with small children, choice riders, and individuals with disabilities a wonderful experience when traveling on the train from purchasing your ticket to reaching your destination safely. If you are an individual with transportation challenges who visits other counties, for work, or recreational activities with family. Brightline makes connecting easy when traveling across county lines, so this transportation option is a great choice!

A Ride Away Project focuses on learning and using different transportation options. When there are choices life's opportunities are achievable!



TIPS:

- 1. It's ok to make suggestions to the appropriate staff to improve the service, if reasonable.**
- 2. Trip plan and walk through the steps before traveling on a new transportation option.**



MIAMI - FORT LAUDERDALE - WEST PALM BEACH

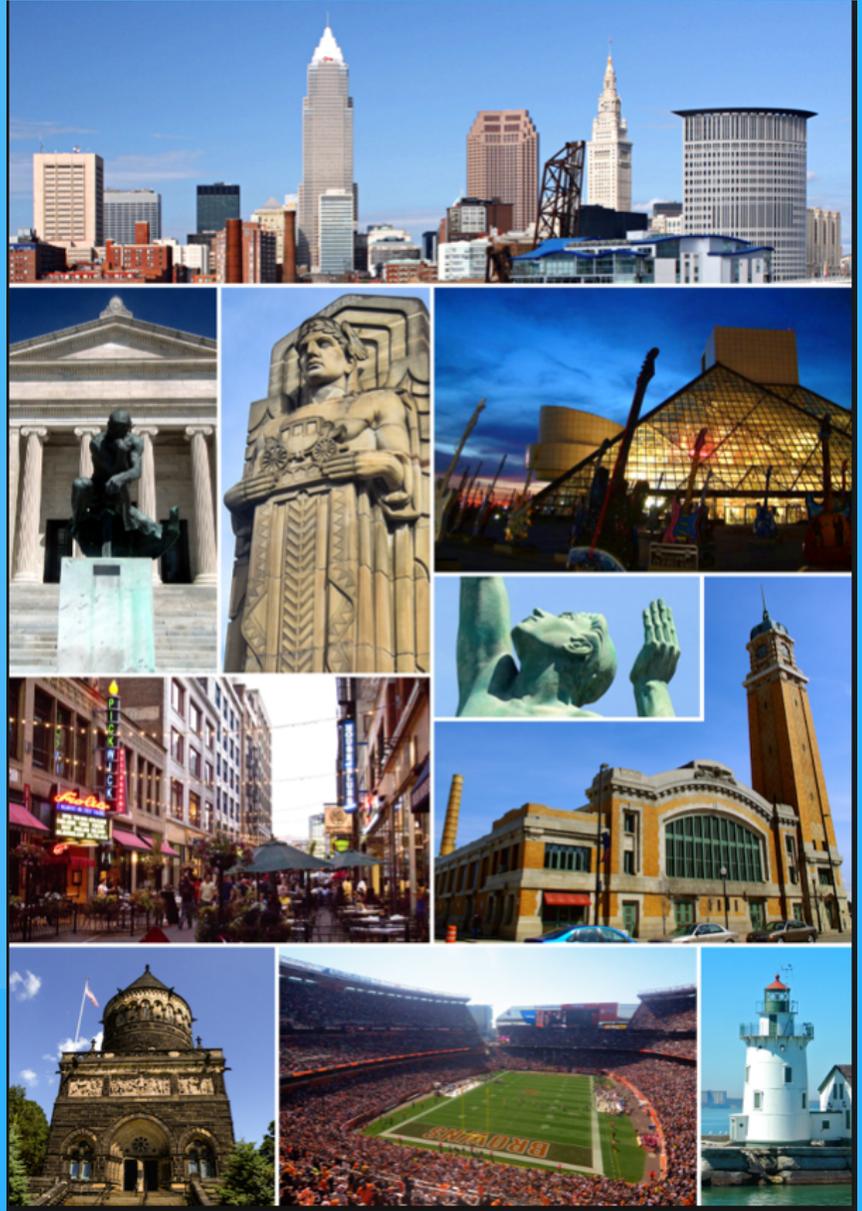
A woman with long blonde hair is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is seated in a car, with the leather headrest of the seat visible behind her. The entire image has a warm, orange-toned overlay. A white rectangular box is positioned in the lower half of the image, containing a quote in bold, orange, uppercase letters.

**”TRAVELING ON
DIFFERENT
TRANSPORTATION
OPTIONS HELPS ME TO
DISCOVER THE STRENGTH
IN MY ABILITIES!”**

FLYING TO BIRMINGHAM , ALABAMA

By: Danielle McGill

The 2018 Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) Conference was AMAZING! Thanks to Ann Storck Center's Community Transportation Connections program for hosting A Ride Away Project and staying true to its mission and vision. In addition, I want to say thanks to Self-Advocates Resource Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) for sponsoring this project and the opportunity to attend this year's conference. Traveling to Alabama was an accomplishment for me on the journey to independence. Flying out of Florida was an experience that I would like to share with all of you riders.



TRAVELING TO AIRPORT

My trip to Alabama started at 2:00 a.m. I got ready and reviewed my Travel Checklist. I made sure I had my state photo ID, boarding pass, and papers with information about the hotel I am staying at for the conference.

An airport shuttle named Super Shuttle gave me a pickup window of 3:05 to 3:30 a.m. because my flight left at 5:55 a.m. I used the Super Shuttle App to locate the shuttle. The Super Shuttle arrived at my house at 3:10 a.m. and it was a shared ride similar to the paratransit transportation option. On the app, it showed me the driver's name and profile picture. When the driver came he introduced himself and folded my walker and helped me with my carry-on bag. The shuttle inside was like a larger version of a paratransit bus. We had one stop before heading to Ft. Lauderdale Airport. I told the driver the airline I was going to fly on, and then he dropped me off at the Southwest terminal around 3:50 a.m.



AT THE AIRPORT

Inside the airport, I went to the Southwest counter and asked to have a staff member call a skycap help me through Transportation Administration Security (TSA) checkpoint line and walk with me to my gate. Skycaps are staff that help passengers with their bags or passengers who need help getting to a gate. Airlines offer this when buying an airline ticket. Since it was early in the morning, I requested this service.

Skycap staff and I went through TSA, I showed my Florida photo ID and my boarding pass and TSA Security staff scanned them. The Skycap helped me put my carry-on bag in a bin with a separate bin for my cellphone and mini purse. Once my carry-on bags were screened through the x-ray machine, I was asked to be pat down by TSA staff. This is not scary. I was asked to be pat down because I can't go through the body scan machine that spins. These security guidelines are to keep us safe when flying to our destination. The pat down took about five minutes because they had to scan my walker too.

I passed through security and viewed the screen displays looking for the time of arrival, flight number, and gate number that is on my boarding pass.

-Flight number 2358 Ft. Lauderdale to Tampa

-Time of Arrival: 5:55am

-Gate number: A2

I followed the skycap staff to my gate location and I gave Skycap a tip for helping me through TSA. When at the gate I asked the Southwest staff member for a gate claim tag for my mobility device. If you travel with a mobility device like a walker, scooter, or wheelchair, I highly recommend doing this, especially if you need your device to get to another plane, for example a connecting flight. Your device will be on the walkway when exiting the plane. Make sure to always have a claim number from the Southwest staff just in case your mobility device is not at the gate.

The Southwest staff scanned my boarding pass again and helps me to the plane. I get on the plane and passengers have open seating on Southwest. The air crew on the plane were very nice and helped me put my carry-on in the compartment over head above the seat. I sat at the window sit so I could look out as the plane travels to Tampa.

On the plane all passengers are given information from the air crew about air safety before takeoff. This is so you know what to do in an emergency during flight. After the information was given, the captain flying the plane gave a weather report of the destination to Tampa then the air crew made sure our phones were on airplane mode and passenger seat belts were fasten. The plane was cleared for take-off!!!! Here I go on the first part of the journey to the SABE Conference!

Traveling independently to a place you've never been can be scary, but part of the journey to independence is experiencing new things and places as you travel. The journey to independence is only a ride away!

Sometimes airline staff will change your boarding pass to "pre-board" if you're using the device to board the plane. After receiving my new boarding pass with pre-board, I was getting excited because I was going to be flying out of state by myself! Due to the amount of time before boarding the plane, I decided to use the restroom and get some coffee. Shortly after, I heard announcements for pre-boarding passengers for flight number 2358 from Ft. Lauderdale to Tampa; of course I hurried on back to gate A2.



TIPS:

1. Have Photo ID and Boarding Pass accessible
2. Ask for a gate claim tag for mobility device if you are traveling with one.
3. Request for Skycap if you need assistance going through (TSA) or gate.

TRAVELING WITH SERVICE ANIMAL AT THE AIRPORT

Recently, I was reading an article online about traveling with service animals. I have a dog name Rico. My dog Rico brings joy and comfort to me, just like people with service animals. Some of my friends have service animals that help them with their daily activities. For individuals who own a service animal view them as a helpful companion. These service animals form a bond with their owner, because of the nature of work they provide daily.

What tasks does your animal perform to help you with your disability?

What makes a Service Animal different from a pet are the tasks or work the animal can do to help an individual manage their disability when being independent. While it is wrong for a person to ask you about your disability, they may ask what tasks your Service Animal is trained to help you. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) allows Service Animals owners to be taken by their word. Some people with disabilities choose to keep their disability private. According to Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) airlines may need documentation that is not older than one year from the date of your trip. Emotional Support Animals are recognized as a service animal. Remember, misrepresenting an animal as a Service Animal is wrong to do, it's against the law.

There has been debates on whether emotional service dogs are consider to be a service animal. In my opinion, they are, for this reason. If your service animal helps you fulfill tasks independently while making life's challenges easier to overcome then the service animal has done their job as a companion. For many people being able to travel with their service animal gives them comfort when traveling. This creates freedom and encouragement, especially if you're going somewhere new. Like the saying goes dogs are man's best friend!

Summer is here and many people are traveling. While traveling you may want to bring your Service Animal. This is your right by law; here are some steps to make your experience at the airport pleasant before flying.

Know what to expect

The Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration has common rules when traveling with a service dog or assistance animal. However each airline understands them slightly differently. Always call first a week before your trip.

Traveling Internationally

You may be flying out of the country. Service Animals may need to be up to date with their shots or vaccines depending on your destination. You want your service animal safe for the journey. It's best to call the airline ahead of time to find out the current rules for which country you are flying to. Ask the airline if there are any new vaccines that you need to know. Each airline understands TSA guidelines slightly differently. Always call ahead of time before your trip.

Some people are uncomfortable flying,

Contact your airline before you travel

The crew may need to make plans before your boarding, so call to make them aware of what kind of service animal you are traveling with. The air crew may also be able to help you choose the most comfortable seat for you and your animal companion. Find a direct flight if possible because it will make for an easier experience for you and your animal.

Before you arrive, limit water and exercise for your service animal

Most likely, it will be a long time before you'll find a good place for your Service Animal to relieve themselves again. Accidents do happen however, I have seen travelers bring poop-poop bags and wipes to clean the mess if they need to go. Don't be surprised if your companion animal decides to go to the restroom when approaching the plane. I have heard from people and friends that it's because their nervous. Note: If you need to leave the secure boarding area to relieve your animal, you must undergo the full screening process again. Inform the TSA Security Officer upon your return to the security checkpoint and she/him will move you to the front of the screening line to go through the screening process quickly.

Find airport dog relief areas: Do you have a smartphone? Well if you do there is a free Working Like Dogs "Where to Go" app for Apple or Android can help you find airport dog relief areas

You and your Service Animal must remain well-mannered at all times

The experience others may have with you and your Service Animal may be the first and only they will ever have. It is up to you to leave them with an excellent impression. While it is your rights under the law to go together with your Service Animal, you still need to be respectful of others who may be uncomfortable around animals. While traveling with a Service Animal, keep them under control at all times, so you don't become the center of attention. Do not play with or show off your Service Animal at the airport or during your flight. Remember, how you and your Service Animal act affect other Service Animals in the future to fly.

Arrive at the airport early and let security know that your Service Animal is not a pet
Tell the TSA Security that the animal traveling with you is a Service Animal and not a pet. This will give you an opportunity to move to the front of the TSA Security checkpoint line since the TSA Security may need to spend more time with you. During the security checkpoint you should not be separated from your Service Animal.

Identification of Service Animals at (Airport)
Airlines do need some form of Identification to show that your service animal is not a pet. TSA has made identification cards for travelers who have service animals. Some other forms of identification are the harness, a doctor's letter or other paperwork of the traveler using the animal for their disability is necessary. You can call the airline for their service animal policy..

Be polite and helpful to TSA Security

Always be polite to TSA Security, and respect will make things easier for you and them. TSA Security is trained on how to treat Service Animals and their owners. They know not to talk, distract, touch, play, feed, or pet Service Animals.

You can help with the TSA Security Checkpoint process by guiding the Service Animal while the TSA Security does their check. You must keep control of your service animal in a way that makes sure your service animal will not harm TSA Security.

Going through TSA Security

There have been changes now when going through security, after you pass the metal detector, you cannot touch with your service animal except for holding the leash until you both have been cleared by the (TSA) Security. Even if you walk through the metal detector and do not set off the alarm, you may have to be screened, again if you touch your service animal before you have been cleared.

Secondly, you may be asked to have your service animal on leash at all times. If this procedure creates a problem for you let TSA Security know. You are responsible for keeping control of your Service Animal at all times.

Finally, travelers with any kind of animal may now have to go through explosives trace testing. This is quick and easy and happens after you have cleared with TSA Security Checkpoint. You may be asked to hold your hands out, palm side up. The security officer will then wipe a pad across each of your hands and then ask you to wait while a machine scans the pad for traces of explosives. This leaves nothing on your hands.

Remember, TSA Security cannot separate you from your service animal or tell you to remove your service animal's harness, leash, or collar. If you experience this at TSA Security Checkpoint, you should ask for a supervisor to assist. If you need to file a complaint against the TSA Security, you may send a message to: TSA.ODPO@dhs.gov with the following information:

- o Your name
- o Address
- o Phone number and email address
- o Date/time you went (through the security checkpoint)
- o Name of the airport
- o Name of the airline
- o Flight number & departure gate information.
- o Explain what happened and give as much information you can remember about your experience with TSA Security person involved.

Check in at the gate

When going through TSA security, and being cleared owners let the airline staff know that you have a Service Animal. If this is your first time, flying with your Service Animal on this airline, ask them what you need to do. Most likely you will be allowed to pre-board first.

Boarding the Plane

When you've passed through the gate to the plane the aircrew on board will help you to your seat. Airlines may have your Service Animal use the space between your feet. It's best to bring with you small treats for your animal because it will help them feel more relaxed. Avoid bringing water onto the plane for your service animal.

If you feel discriminated

If you believe you are experiencing discriminatory behavior by an airline like pilots, or aircrew you may ask for help from a Complaint Resolution Official, known as a CRO or ADA Coordinator. You may also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Transportation. Visit this link for more information

<https://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/service-animal-guidance>.

To see more of travel experiences with Danielle McGill and learn more
about *A Ride Away*

Project visit <http://selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/page/2/>