

# The Emergence of ILF Transportation: Inspiring and Serving - The Collinwood Observer

*by De Andra Smith*

5-6 minutes



ILF Transportation specializes in transporting disabled and disadvantaged people, veterans, and those who require transportation on professional excursions.

**(Cleveland, Ohio)** ----- NaJeebah Shareef’s world changed, for the better, through a chance encounter with a homeless veteran in the mid-winter of 2012. Ms. Shareef came to Cleveland while pursuing her Master’s degree in 2010 searching of opportunities, in a city that was already showing signs of being revitalized in several industries. On her way to a job interview a homeless veteran approached her and asked for spare change. Shareef was glad to help, and she did; however helping to her meant gaining insight into how he ended up on the streets? She asked the man, "Sir, I will give you some spare change if you tell me how you ended up in this situation?" He responded, “Lady you really don’t have the time or patience to hear my story.” Ms. Shareef replied, “Sir, I will make the time to hear your story”; this especially after he shared with her he was a veteran having completed four tours in the Middle East.

The Veteran sat down with Shareef to a meal sharing his situation, his story... his hell; and she listened in utter disbelief. He shared with her that after his fourth and final tour he suffered mentally and

emotionally, which caused chaos at home; causing his wife to take the children and leave him. So he ended up without his family, and that spiraled him into losing his home; and what was even worse was this War Veteran was unable to get the proper assistance through other organizations he went to for his necessities such as monetary benefits, medical and mental healthcare. In his words “All they did was push the numbers”. Push the numbers? Ms. Shareef had no idea what that meant. “Pushing numbers” means the organizations assigned and/or designated to actually provide care kept the bodies coming in without actually helping them. Why? Bodies in meant the organizations could continue to collect funds from local, state and federal entities; in short there was no accountability for whether or not the services the vets needed were actually being provided.

Shareef could hardly believe that after serving by putting his life on the line for his country, the most simplest of needs were not being met by those whom he had given his life to serve. Ms. Shareef says “this Veteran's tragic heartbreaking story changed the purpose and direction of my life”, and she catapulted into action. In 2013 the vision and mission of Inspiring Lives Forever (ILF) Transportation Service was birthed.

Ms. Shareef states that within 6 months of starting the transportation business she landed her first contract. NaJeebah shares that she lives by the principle that “my first encounter is NOT to judge, but to get to know who you are.” The very foundation of ILF Transportation is built on servitude. Serving others is loving ourselves, and this seems to be something that mankind has managed to forget about, especially when it comes to those who give or have given so much of their lives to make sure that our freedom and liberties remain intact and uncompromised.”

Since 2013, Shareef has grown ILF Transportation into a full service transportation company. ILF being owned by this African-American Woman provides first and foremost reliable transportation for our veterans to their medical and mental health appointments, and to the VA to get their benefits. ILF Transportation, with full accreditations and certifications, offers non-emergency

transportation to disabled and disadvantaged individuals –especially those on Medicaid/Medicare; as well as personal transit needs, and logistics management in all 50 states here in the U.S. ILF also operates courier and delivery services; and since obtaining HAZMAT certification is now stepping out into the freight carriers specializing in HAZMAT transport. The ILF fleet includes four-door sedan cars, wheelchair vans, courier/delivery vans, and freight and dump trucks. ILF under Shareef’s guidance is now operating contracts with corporations, local- federal- and state government, and government agencies. In short, ILF IS the future of transportation here in NIE Ohio. And it feels good knowing that ILF is headquartered right here in South Collinwood. 16113 St. Clair Ave is home-base for a business once run out of a basement. The new facility, which is located in a HUB Zone, has been fully renovated to house the executive offices with a garage for the fleet of ILF vehicles.

An amazing accomplishment for this new Clevelander NaJeebah Shareef, she says she loves NE Ohio and its people and said ‘God couldn’t have chosen a better place to change my life and use me to help people. I am SO grateful”.

Local, national and international....ILF Transportation is leading the way in transportation right here out of the South Collinwood community.