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**Mentor Public Schools and Laketran pilot “Cardinal Go” to improve access for high school students**

Lake County, OH – Mentor Public Schools was recently awarded a grant that will fully fund a two-year pilot of a new student transit benefit program with Laketran. Cardinal Go is an innovative partnership that will allow Mentor High School students, grades 9-12, to ride Laketran’s Local Route 1-9 free of charge wherever they are traveling – be it to campus, internships, activities, local resources, or after school jobs.

“There is a transportation paradox for many individuals in northeast Ohio. Individuals are unable to secure a job because they do not have a car and they are unable to secure a car because they do not have a job,” shared Dr. Joe Glavan, CTE Coordinator, Mentor High School. “Students are not immune to this same paradox and can often face similar situations with access to employment and community resources.”

In order to address this, Mentor Schools partnered with Laketran to provide an additional transportation opportunity for high school students to increase access to real world learning opportunities and community resources in northeast Ohio.

The program will be available to students starting this fall.

“We are very excited to be launching Cardinal Go with Mentor Public Schools,” shared Laketran
CEO Ben Capelle. “This program will provide a reliable and affordable way for students to access educational and economic opportunities, as well as bring awareness to public transportation.”

“We have many parents contact us about transportation options so students can take advantage of programs off campus including internships, College Plus, and career development programs,” continued Capelle. “Neither Mentor Schools nor Laketran want transportation to be a barrier for students to participate in these programs. Cardinal Go guarantees students can access these programs and get jobs that will help them now and into the future.”

Students have many route options when choosing public transportation as a way to go. Laketran launched Route 8, its first new bus route in 20 years, which connects Mentor High School directly to Tyler Boulevard, Lakeland Community College, Mentor-on-the-Lake and Mentor Headlands. Laketran’s Route 1 serves Mentor Avenue and Route 3 travels Reynolds Road and Lakeshore Boulevard. They also have a local commuter route, Route 9 that serves Heisley Road and Diamond Centre during peak hours. All routes transfer at Great Lakes Mall and Lakeland Community College.

Laketran plans to extend the program to other interested Lake County high schools.