



Shriners Hospitals
for Children™

Southwest Airlines Helping Patients Reach Their Destinations



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Southwest Airlines' Medical Transportation Grant Program is a tremendous aid to Shriners Hospitals for Children's patients and families. Through this program, the airline annually donates green passes, which are essentially free round-trip airline tickets, to patients with financial or medical needs.

"The Shriners organization and Southwest Airlines have shared a wonderful relationship throughout the years," said Michele Kyle, a specialist in the charitable giving department at Southwest Airlines. "We've been able to assist numerous Shriners facilities in the past with anything from changing executives' and patients' travel itineraries at the last minute to providing free medical transportation for patients."

With Shriners Hospitals for Children located in the U.S., Mexico and Canada, patients sometimes travel hundreds or thousands of miles to receive the specialty care they need. Many Shriners temples have transportation coordinators who set up these long-distance appointments and make transportation and housing arrangements. When possible, the temple pays for the expenses, such as plane tickets, through a hospital transportation program. Since an average domestic round-trip ticket costs nearly \$400, the green passes could potentially save an individual temple thousands of dollars a year.

"We are grateful to Southwest Airlines for their incredible generosity," said Ralph Semb, president

and chief executive officer of Shriners Hospitals for Children. "By saving our temples money, they allow us to help transport more children to their appointments."

With a green pass, the transportation coordinator can book any available flight for the patient and one parent or guardian, and no blackout dates apply. Green passes are good for use in any city Southwest Airlines serves, and they are only good for Southwest-operated flights.

Southwest Airlines recently donated 300 green passes to Shriners Hospitals for Children, which are now available. Temple transportation coordinators can contact Ruby Valdes, manager of the executive vice president's office at Shriners International Headquarters, at (813) 281-8110, to learn if their temple is eligible to receive passes.

Southwest Airlines has steadily increased its donations throughout the past few years. From 2003-2005, the company gave Shriners Hospitals for Children 20 green passes. In 2006, the number increased to 25 tickets, and in 2007, an additional \$5,000 was donated. In November 2007, the airline donated an additional 100 green passes. The value of 200 tickets donated in 2008 was \$80,000.

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www.shrinershospitals.org