THREE AGE-FRIENDLY HOUSING MODELS SHARE TOP PRIZE IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEST CO-SPONSORED BY GRANTMAKERS IN AGING AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

“Innovation@Home” contest sought best programs worldwide to demonstrate how age-friendly housing can support aging in community

Washington, DC (October 29, 2018) – The desire to live safely and comfortably in our own homes and communities as we grow older is shared around the world, but making it happen is not always easy. To identify successful age-friendly housing innovations and encourage their dissemination, Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) and the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC) launched Innovation@Home -- a competition and call for international age-friendly housing practices.

The Innovation@Home winners were announced at the 2018 International Technical Meeting on Ageing at Home, in Québec City, Canada, where representatives from all three groups had the opportunity to make presentations about their programs. For the contest winners list, please see below.

“Finding and expanding age-friendly housing options is important because very few variables have as much power to support—or derail—healthy, productive aging and related quality of life,” says John Feather, PhD, CEO of Grantmakers In Aging, a Washington, DC-based membership association for funders and foundations dedicated to improving the experience of aging. “As the world’s population continues to get older, this need should be on everyone’s agenda, whether we are elected officials, health care leaders, social services or aging services providers, philanthropists, real estate developers, technologists, families, or individuals.”

Age-friendly housing initiatives can take many forms: expanding the amount and variety of housing options; making housing more affordable; removing barriers to innovation, in areas such as zoning, building codes, and planning; helping with home modifications; using assistive technology to improve safety and promote inclusion; involving multiple generations in co-housing; co-locating services, such as health care; and facilitating access to transportation, shopping, and health services, just to name a few.

“The physical and social environments in our cities and communities are powerful influences on the experience of aging and the opportunities that aging affords, and housing plays an important role,” says Alana Officer, who leads the WHO’s Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. “In the face of shrinking budgets, cities and communities are looking for innovative ways to respond to needs while increasing efficiency, reducing costs, and improving the quality of life for their residents.”

Good Ideas Have No Borders
The Innovation@Home contest is part of a larger GIA project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation seeking to identify global age-friendly models that could be adapted for use in the United States.
“Everyone should have the opportunity to live healthy, productive, and satisfying lives—no matter where you live, what you do, or how old you are,” says Susan Mende, senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “It’s important that we look around the world to see what age-friendly innovations are working and learn from them.”

A panel of distinguished judges selected three winners and one honorable mention. The judges were: Nathalie Röbbel, Technical Officer, Department of Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health, World Health Organization (WHO); Stephanie Firestone, Senior Strategic Policy Advisor for Health and Age-friendly Communities, AARP International; Vivian Vasallo, Partnerships and Innovation Director, Fannie Mae; Ian Spero, Founder and CEO, Creative Skills for Life; Founder, Agile Ageing Alliance; and Betty Lynch, Community Champion, Avondale, Arizona.

Innovation@Home received entries of many different types from 15 countries. In order to share this information as broadly as possible, entries will be added to the publicly-available WHO Global Database of Age-friendly Practices (see https://extranet.who.int_agefriendlyworld/afp/).

Innovation@Home Winners
The three programs selected as contest winners are:

- **Aconchego Program (Porto, Portugal)** The university town of Porto took on a double mission: to combat loneliness and isolation among older residents and help non-resident students find affordable living arrangements. The Aconchego Program (Programa Aconchego) matches older people (age 60 and older) who have extra room in their homes with students (ages 18 to 35) who need a place to live. Lead Organizations: Porto City Hall and the Academic Federation of Porto. Learn more at bit.ly/AF_Portugal.

- **No-Cost Building Permits (Sausalito, California, USA)** To help older residents avoid injuries caused by falls, Age Friendly Sausalito worked with the city’s Community Development department on their Age-Friendly Home Adaptation Grant Program to allow people to obtain free or reduced-cost building permits for projects that improve home safety and accessibility.

  Sausalito is now mentoring local age-friendly communities and advocated for a recently passed law that authorizes all California cities and counties to waive building permit fees for this purpose. Lead Organization: Age Friendly Sausalito. Learn more at bit.ly/AF_Sausalito.

- **Home Refurbishment Program (Barcelona, Spain)** Throughout the Barcelona region (except the city itself), the Home Refurbishment Program (Programa d’Arranjament d’Habitatges de la demarcació de Barcelona) provides non-structural home repairs in the homes of the most vulnerable older people. The project also improves home energy efficiency and provides technology such as assistive devices. Lead Organization: La Diputació de Barcelona. Learn more at bit.ly/AF_Barcelona.

The judges also awarded one Honorable Mention, to the CHORE Volunteer Handyman Service (Bergen County, New Jersey, USA), which helps older residents and people with disabilities live safely in their homes by performing minor home repairs. All CHORE volunteers are retirees. Lead Organization: Bergen Volunteers. For more information: bit.ly/AF_BergenNJ.
A forthcoming report from Grantmakers In Aging will examine promising age-friendly housing programs in more detail and provide insights from leading authorities and practitioners in the field. For more information on that report and the Innovation@Home contest, please visit bit.ly/GIA_AF_Housing.

The winners of the Innovation@Home age-friendly housing contest were acknowledged at the 2018 International Technical Meeting on Ageing at Home, in Québec City, Canada, on Monday, October 22, 2018. The contest was co-sponsored by Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) and the World Health Organization’s Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. (L. to R.: Diane Wu, WHO Department of Ageing and Life Course; Jenny Campbell, GIA consultant; Raquel Castelo Branco, Aconchego Program, Porto, Portugal; John Feather, CEO, Grantmakers In Aging (GIA); Sybil Boutilier, Chair, Age Friendly Sausalito; Yolanda Moragues Casabon and Joan Vidal, Home Refurbishment Program in the Barcelona Province, Spain.)

### About Grantmakers In Aging (GIA)
Grantmakers In Aging (GIA) is an inclusive and responsive membership organization comprised of all types of philanthropies with a common dedication to improving the experience of aging.
GIA members have a shared recognition that a society that is better for older adults is better for people of all ages. For more information about GIA, please visit GiAging.org. For more information on Innovation@Home, please visit bit.ly/GIA_AF_Housing.

About the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities
The WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities and organizations worldwide with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow old in. For more information: www.who.int/ageing/projects/age_friendly_cities_network/en.

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