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## **National Funding Supports Local Age-Friendly Initiatives**

**PHOENIX (November 18, 2013)** — Valley communities will be better able to fight social isolation and strengthen the connections that older adults have with people of all ages, thanks to two new grants to support the Greater Phoenix Age-Friendly Network. The funding will help three pilot communities (Phoenix, Tempe, and the Northwest Valley) launch new models to help older adults live independently. It will also support a conference in March 2014 that will include a competition to identify the most age-friendly communities in the region.

The grants represent investments from national and local foundations. Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust provided a grant of \$40,000 and technical assistance to support the region's participation in Community AGEnda, a national initiative aimed at helping American communities become more age-friendly. The Pfizer Foundation awarded \$140,000 through Grantmakers in Aging to the region as one of five Community AGEnda grant recipients nationwide.

"Through this project, we are inviting neighbors to help neighbors," said Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, a longtime champion of this project, "Each of the three communities working with us will be encouraging people to volunteer and help older adults get to the store, their appointments, and their activities in the neighborhood. We all benefit when people can be involved with their community, at every age."

Grantmakers in Aging is supporting this involvement with a grant and technical assistance. "We awarded this grant on the basis of the region's performance in the first year and our desire to see such progress continue," says John Feather, CEO of Grantmakers in Aging. "The age-friendly community competition is an extension of the good work already underway in the region's three pilot communities, and celebrates the additional communities that are becoming better places for people of all ages to live," he said.

Goodyear Councilmember Joanne Osborne, chair of the MAG Human Services Coordinating Committee that oversees the project, believes everyone wins through this project. "Our youth will benefit from having good mentors, our families will get the support they need, and our older adults will establish the connections that keep them from being isolated."

Carol Kratz, Program Director at Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust said the three pilot communities are taking the first bold steps to change the way they approach aging. "We know that there are other communities recognizing the value of all age groups to a community. We are supporting the age-friendly community competition to honor the unsung heroes who are redefining the years past 60. We invite everyone to celebrate the successes in their community to fully integrate people of all ages."

Anyone may visit the community section of [www.Connect60Plus.com](http://www.Connect60Plus.com) to nominate their community as being age-friendly by January 31, 2014. A panel of national experts will review the nominations and the winning community will be recognized at the conference in March 2014. The winner will receive additional promotion and technical assistance to advance their age-friendly work.

In addition to Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, Grantmakers in Aging and Pfizer Foundation, support was also received from the Arizona Community Foundation, Arizona Grantmakers Forum, Benevella Central Village, City of Tempe, and Duet. Councilmember Osborne said, "This vital work simply wouldn't be possible without the partnership of the foundations, faith-based organizations, and nonprofit agencies. Their outpouring of support will position this work to have a direct impact on people's lives."