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Fusing Generations Into Strong Communities

Art, Community Competition Highlight Age-Friendly Efforts at “Going Places” Conference

PHOENIX (May 4, 2015)—Bringing people of different generations together and fusing them into one strong community is the focus of the *Going Places* Conference May 6, 2015, sponsored by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). The conference will include 12 workshops, including a “virtual dementia tour” demonstrating the effects of dementia. Key sessions will focus on the importance of older adults to the economy and using transportation to drive age-friendly communities. Awards will be presented to artists and communities embracing ways to connect older adults with people of all ages.

The event will be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2015, during a month that is nationally-designated as “Older Americans Month.” The conference will be held at the Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus at 12701 North Scottsdale Road from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thanks to sponsorship from Grantmakers in Aging, the Pfizer Foundation, and Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, the event is free and open to the public.

In an intergenerational art competition, people of all ages and abilities were invited to use artistic expression to answer the question, “What does it feel like to be 70, 80, or 90?” Twenty-eight submissions were received from artists such as Sidney, age four, and Grandma Bea, age 82. The Arizona Commission on the Arts convened a panel of judges to select the five pieces of artwork that best answered the theme of the art show. Attendees of the conference will select one piece to receive the “People’s Choice Award.”

MAG Chair Michael LeVault, mayor of Youngtown, will congratulate the winners of the art show, as well as the winners of a separate 2015 Age-Friendly Community Competition. In that competition, communities were evaluated on how well they integrate the needs and talents of older adults and youth. A review panel of national and local leaders evaluated the nine submissions received. The panel included experts from Grantmakers in Aging, Generations United, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, AARP of Arizona, St. Luke’s Health Initiative, and the Arizona Arts Commission. The winner and the runner up of the competition will receive \$5,000 and \$2,500 grants, respectively, to support their age-friendly efforts.

“It is important to me that we fully explore how our ‘seasoned’ citizens can support youth,” said Mayor LeVault. “Older adults have so much to give, but we do not always invite them to share their wisdom. The community competition highlights the significant ways we all benefit when we all have a role in our community.”

Christina Corieri, policy advisor on health and human services for the Governor’s Office, will attend the event on behalf of Governor Doug Ducey. In a statement prior to the event, Governor Ducey said, “I’m committed to building stronger communities, and that’s why our administration is focused on policies and priorities that promote opportunity for all. That said, we know government can’t do it alone – it takes Arizonans of all ages working together and discovering how they can be better neighbors and citizens. That’s what this conference is about, and I commend and support its mission.”

The conference is co-hosted by the MAG Transportation Ambassador Program and the Arizona Age-Friendly Network, an effort funded by Grantmakers in Aging (GIA), the Pfizer Foundation, and Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust. John Feather, PhD, CEO of GIA, said, “We are supporting work in Arizona because we believe in the power of communities to chart a new course, one that leverages the best of people at every age. This is expressed creatively through art and by the choices we make as communities.”

For more information and to register for the event, please visit www.Connect60Plus.com.