

Commonwealth Council on Aging
2010 Best Practices Awards Winners

\$5,000 Award Winner

The At Home Program

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At Home (providing Rural Citizens the Choice to Age At Home) adds a new level to the Shenandoah Area Agency on Aging's core services for the homebound. The *At Home* program includes a part time case manager, a part-time rural health outreach nurse, and sixteen Shenandoah University Physician Assistant students each semester who bring information and support in chronic disease management to rural homebound elders. A compelling case is being made for cost savings resulting from reduced emergency room visits among this client population, improved access to basic medical services, and increased patient compliance with physician orders and medication management. In 28 months, more than 840 in-home visits have been provided to 124 older home bound clients and reduced or eliminated visits to the emergency room. This initiative enlists the following collaborative partners: Shenandoah University, Shenandoah Memorial Hospital, United Way of the Northern Shenandoah Valley, Our Health, and the Shenandoah County Free Medical Clinic.

\$2,500 Award Winner

Connections: Innovative Home-Based Activity Programming

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The Connections program promotes “student-delivered volunteering” by pairing University students with individuals with dementia and related diseases to provide home-based programming (wherever home may be). The goals of the program are: 1) to reduce caregiver burden and stress through caregiver education and enhanced caregiver confidence; 2) to provide opportunities for engagement in meaningful activities for persons diagnosed with dementia; and, 3) to sustain community-based collaborations and intergenerational relationships. A “tool kit” titled *Connections: Engagement in Life for Persons with Dementia* was a recently published Activities Guide and includes the “roadmap” for implementing the program in the home. The program is unique in addressing the needs of both the caregiver and the person with dementia.

\$1,000 Award Winner

Mountainside Senior Living

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Mountainside Senior Living (MSL) is a unique assisted living facility in Crozet, VA. It is a rare Area Agency on Aging in the assisted living business, but JABA (the Jefferson Area Board for Aging in Charlottesville) had no choice but to step up and prevent 143 frail seniors from being evicted from a bankrupt chain. In less than six months, JABA was able to stitch together local support from government, donations and lenders and became both the operator of the facility, and a part owner of the real estate. Furthermore, MSL balances a mixture of private-pay, and Auxiliary Grant (AG) or Medicaid-supported beds. The shortfall in revenue from Medicaid is compensated for by excess revenue from private-pay beds, which themselves are priced at approximately 80% of the prevailing local market. JABA's Mountainside Senior Living is indeed an exercise in doing right while doing well.

\$500 Award Winner (Honorable Mention)

Generations Crossing Intergenerational Day Care

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Generations Crossing has created an intergenerational day care program where 24 adults enjoy daily interaction with children in a single facility. Our 11,400 building was designed to meet the unique needs of this multi-age population so that scheduled activities planned by our Intergenerational Program Coordinator are easily supplemented by casual interactions. Older adults light up with excitement when the infant buggy rolls into their room for a visit, and preschoolers love having a ready audience when they want to perform a new song. The only adult day care service in our region, Generations Crossing was founded eight years ago through a collaboration of area agencies serving older adults. Funding from the Virginia Department for the Aging's Respite Care Grant, four local foundations, and many individuals made the new building possible in 2008. Ongoing support from the United Way and our community hospital provides scholarship dollars to assure that no participant, child or adult, is turned away for financial reasons. Established as an independent non-profit agency, operations and financial management are closely monitored by a volunteer board of directors.

\$500 Award Winner (Honorable Mention)

Project Mend-A-House

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Project Mend-A-House is a volunteer-based free home repair and modification program that helps the needy, seniors and disabled of Prince William County and greater Manassas to maintain their cherished independence and allow them to remain in their homes by assisting these residents with small, medium, and large home repair jobs and/or safety-enhancing projects. This program improves permanent residential structures that are occupied by low income persons. All of the clients' income limits fall within the extremely low-income to low-income categories per the Prince

William/Greater Washington area median income tables. This much needed service organization reduces the leading cause of injury in seniors by preventing falls from occurring, creates awareness of safety needs, and improves our clients' living conditions.

\$500 Award Winner (Honorable Mention)

Coalition of Preventing Elder Suicide (COPES)

Jennifer Pishioneri, Chairperson

COPES

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The Coalition of Preventing Elder Suicide (COPES) is comprised of a diverse group of community professionals and volunteers from organizations serving senior adults throughout the greater Hampton Roads area. The mission is to reduce the loss and suffering resulting from depression, suicide, and suicidal behavior among older adults. COPES works to achieve this mission by providing educational programs for professionals, volunteers, older persons, family members, and others. Presentations increase the awareness of depression and suicide and include information on the signs and symptoms of depression and suicidal behavior while offering referrals to community resources to address these behaviors.