



News Release

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COMMONWEALTH COUNCIL ON AGING HONORS PROGRAMS FOR BEST PRACTICES

(RICHMOND, Va.) — A collaboration that helps older residents in a rural community in southern Virginia Beach prepare themselves to cope with disasters and emergencies won the top 2012 “Best Practices” award from the Commonwealth Council on Aging.

The council, which advises the Governor on issues affecting the nearly 1 million Virginians age 65 and older, acknowledges those organizations whose model programs can be replicated across the Commonwealth. The awards are announced each year in May, which Gov. Bob McDonnell has proclaimed as [Older Virginians Month](#).

“These awards demonstrate that our network of services for ‘vintage Virginians’ is up to the task of meeting the evolving needs within our Commonwealth and offering options to those looking to us for support,” said Interim Commissioner Jim Rothrock of the Virginia Department for the Aging.

Rothrock presents the awards today at the [Innovations in Aging 2012](#) conference, which VDA is hosting in partnership with the Maryland Department of Aging and the District of Columbia Office on Aging. The conference, in suburban Maryland, showcases new directions for aging policy, programs, supports and services that promote healthy community living for a lifetime.

The year’s top award honored the [Senior Resource Center](#)’s Emergency Preparedness Plan for the rural area of southern Virginia Beach. The center is a joint effort among area residents, religious organizations, civic groups and the City of Virginia Beach.

The Senior Resource Center aims to provide area residents with educational seminars, physical activity and social interaction. Its Emergency Preparedness Plan identifies older residents in the community who will need special assistance or contact during an emergency situation and builds relationships with them so they will accept assistance when needed. The program will receive a \$3,000 donation as its award.

“In the past few years, Virginia has seen its share of natural disasters, including earthquakes, tornadoes, floods and hurricanes,” said awards committee chair Dr. Richard Lindsey. “Concern for the quality of life and safety for our most at-risk elderly must include careful planning and preparation for disasters that can jeopardize their safety.”

A second place award of \$2,000 was given to [Beyond Clinic Walls](#), a volunteer program based at The Glennan Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology that pairs interdisciplinary students at Eastern Virginia Medical School with older residents in the Norfolk area who face complex medical and social issues. Clients are recruited from Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia, the local Area Agency on Aging.

A \$1,000 award for third place was given to [Bedford Ride](#), a volunteer- and community-led transportation program that provides non-emergency medical transportation to all Bedford County and Bedford City seniors and others with no other means of transportation available to them. The program operates using a volunteer force of drivers and dispatchers.

“The Council was extremely pleased with the wide diversity of program submissions this year. Our goal is not only to recognize the winners, but to showcase all these wonderful programs that enhance the quality of life for older Virginians and see as many as possible replicated across the Commonwealth,” said Roberto Quinones, the council chairman.

The council gave honorable mentions to the following programs:

- **Roanoke Health Care Alliance**, a team of six local health care executives representing different medical fields who educate area employers and employees who either provide care for their loved ones or may need to provide care in the future to assist them to maneuver through our health care system. There is no cost to the employer.
- **All Things Digital**, an all-volunteer program offering computer and digital services to members of the Senior Center Inc. of Charlottesville. Services are consumer-driven and adjusted based on the daily needs of the clients.
- **Growing Younger Program**, a comprehensive health and wellness program of the YMCA of Greater Richmond designed to strengthen the body, mind and spirit of older adults through exercise classes, healthy lifestyle principles and artistic expression.

For more about the Commonwealth Council on Aging’s Best Practices Awards, visit www.vda.virginia.gov/council.asp.

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