



News Release

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For more information, contact
Charlotte Arbogast, policy analyst
charlotte.arbogast@dars.virginia.gov
(804) 662-7093

Commonwealth Council on Aging announces 2023 Best Practices Awards

(RICHMOND, Va.) — [METGo!](#), a free, same-day ridesharing service in Big Stone Gap, won the \$5,500 first place Best Practices Award from the Commonwealth Council on Aging. Launched in June 2021 by Mountain Empire Older Citizens, the program meets an unserved need for same-day ride options.

"MEOC is very excited that METGo! has been selected as first-place winner for this best practices award," said Mountain Empire Transit Director Mitch Elliott. "We are very proud of this cutting-edge service. METGo! makes it simple and easy for riders, including older adults and individuals with disabilities, to schedule safe, reliable, on-demand transportation at their convenience."

The CCOA advises the governor and general assembly on issues affecting the 1.9 million Virginians aged 60 and older and acknowledges organizations whose innovative programs can be replicated across the commonwealth. The council judges nominees on seven criteria, including community impact, potential for replication, innovation, outcomes and promotion of aging in the community.

[Joyful Voices Chorus](#) of Midlothian earned the second-place award of \$3,500. For the past five years, Joyful Voices has touched more than 40 singers with Alzheimer's and other dementias and their caregivers. The chorus regularly rehearses and performs concerts locally. "Music is powerful, and people with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia can enjoy and excel at singing even when unable to do other things," said Artistic Director Joanne Sherman.

The [Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired](#) in Richmond received \$2,500 for its Live Active, Live Healthy, Live Modern Senior Retreat or "LIVE" program. This one-week retreat for older adults experiencing vision loss helps them to cope and adjust to daily activities in order to continue to live independently. Held at the [Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired](#), the program has served over 90 older Virginians the past five years to learn about assistive technology, nutrition, recreation and wellness.

The following programs also received honorable mentions:

- [Fairfax Area Agency on Aging's](#) Caregiver Alert Notifications Program
- [Community Foundation of the New River Valley's](#) Aging in Community Leadership Team
- [Piedmont Senior Resources Area Agency on Aging's](#) Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program

“As we celebrate Older Americans Month, we recognize the innovative services tailored to promote self-determination, social engagement and education for older adults and/or caregivers, allowing them to stay vital and active members of the community,” said the council’s Best Practices Committee chair **Debbie Preston**. “Congratulations to all the 2023 Best Practice awardees and honorable mentions for a job well done.”

The CCOA will hold recognition ceremonies later this spring and summer to highlight the 2023 winners as well as a virtual webinar along with the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging. To learn more about this year’s Best Practices Award winners or the CCOA, please visit <https://vda.virginia.gov/boardsandcouncils.htm>.

The council thanks Dominion Energy and AARP Virginia for their financial support of the awards.

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The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, in collaboration with community partners, provides and advocates for resources and services to improve the employment, quality of life, security and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families. For more information, visit www.vadars.org or follow DARS on Facebook at www.facebook.com/vadars or Twitter at @vadars.