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eight innovative efforts
that advance active aging



Cutting-edge programs, products and environments support healthier, more vital living for people ages 50 and beyond—and send an important message

The International Council on Active Aging® (ICAA) began with an innovative idea: Create an industry dedicated to better health, wellness and quality of life for adults over 50 by uniting professionals across sectors who also share this goal. Launched in 2001, ICAA today leads, connects and defines this industry—the active-aging industry—made up of like-minded professionals and organizations that develop wellness facilities, programs and services for the older population. Active-aging devotees combine creativity, positive energy, and a passionate commitment to older-adult wellness to advance this movement. And by providing ongoing opportunities for clients to be more active and to learn, grow and participate in their communities, these professionals and organizations support the 50-plus population in living well.

To recognize creativity and excellence in active aging, and highlight cutting-edge efforts, ICAA established an awards program in 2003. Every year the ICAA Innovators Awards honor innovations that are leading the way, setting new standards and making a difference in the lives of older adults. Award-winners target any or all of the wellness dimensions promoted by the association—namely, social, emotional, vocational, spiritual, intellectual, physical and environmental wellness.

ICAA presents its annual awards in the following three categories:

- **ICAA Innovators Award**, for wellness programs, travel services, health promotion and marketing campaigns, and education programs that have improved wellness for older adults;
- **ICAA Innovative Solutions Award**, for North America’s most creative wellness products and services for active older adults; and

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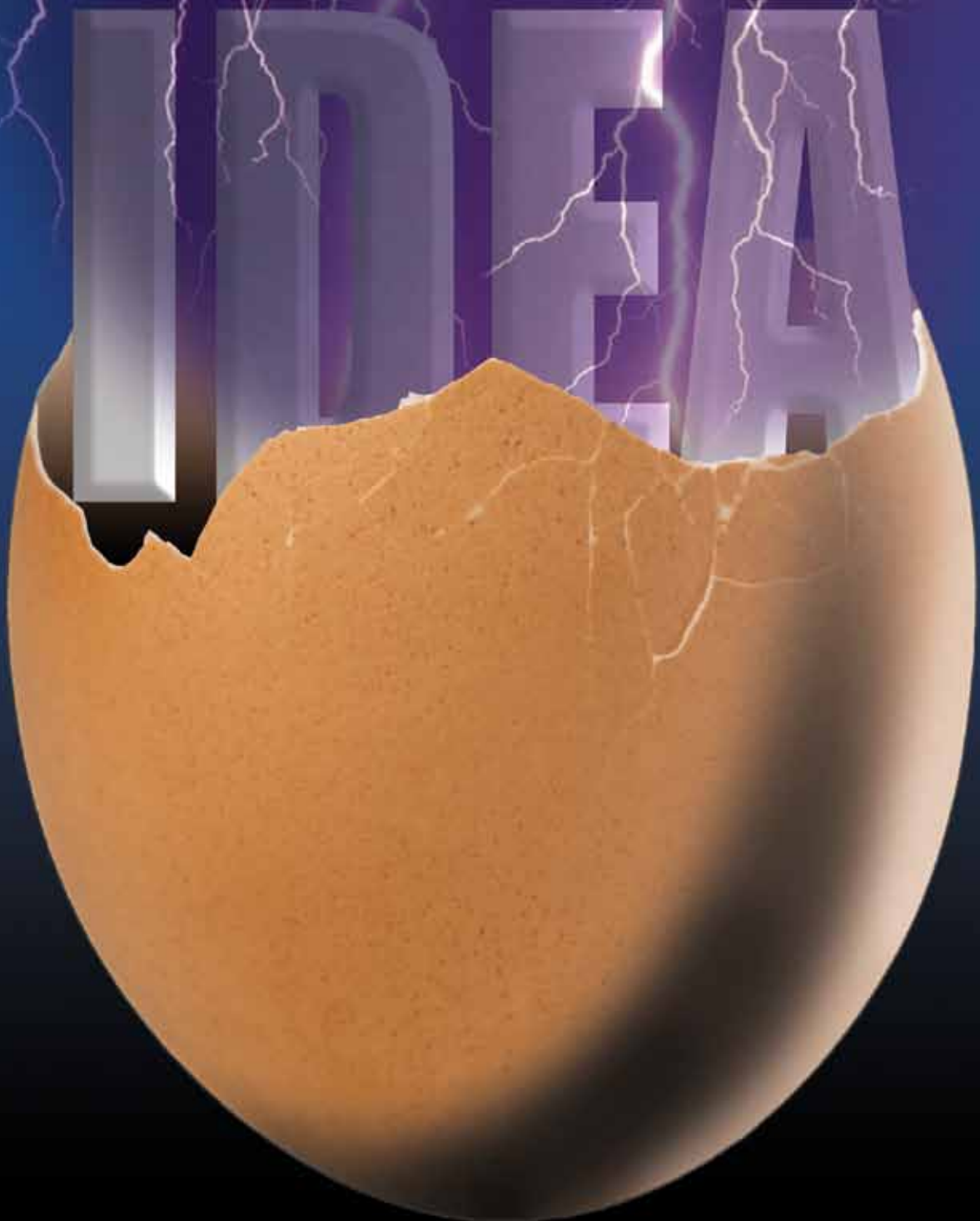


Illustration: Jacob Benaroch

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- **ICAA Green Award**, for organizations that encourage environmental stewardship by creating and/or implementing eco-friendly products, services, processes, designs or programs in their communities.

The winners of the Ninth Annual ICAA Innovators Awards were announced this fall and crystal awards of recognition given to recipients at the ICAA Conference 2011 in early December. In-depth profiles of individual award-winners will appear in issues of the *Journal on Active Aging*® throughout 2012. Meanwhile, introductory snapshots are available on the following pages.

“The 2011 ICAA Innovators are excellent examples of the creative programs, products and environments generated in the active-aging industry to enhance health and well-being for age 50-plus adults,” comments Colin Milner, the association’s founder and CEO. “On behalf of ICAA, I congratulate everyone behind these efforts, and thank all those who entered this year’s awards competition.” ICAA learned about many excellent programs, facilities and outreach for older adults, he adds, encouraging those who did not receive an award this year to submit an entry in 2012.

Efforts to support healthier, more vital aging send an important message, stresses Milner. “With the right support and environments, people can live as fully as possible throughout the life span—that’s important to know in a world that overwhelmingly views population aging as a challenge. If people stop looking at older adults through a lens of decline and diminished value,” he says, “they will see the vast untapped potential of these individuals and realize that population aging is an opportunity as well.”

Online application forms for the 2012 ICAA Innovators Awards will be available on the association website in late May

for those interested in entering next year’s awards competition. To learn more about the Innovators awards program, call ICAA toll-free at 866-335-9777, or visit www.icaa.cc/awardsprogram.htm.

Snapshots of the 2011 ICAA Innovators

ICAA INNOVATORS AWARD WINNERS

Brain Health University Senior Lifestyle Corporation Chicago, Illinois



Founded in 1985, Senior Lifestyle Corporation (SLC) develops, owns and operates seniors housing to meet the needs of people at various economic and care levels in the United States. The Chicago, Illinois-based organization implements programs in its communities to help older adults enjoy healthier, more fulfilling lives. These offerings include the newly launched Brain Health University (BHU). This program is based upon a previous SLC program, “Cerebral Celebration—Kick-off a community based brain healthy lifestyle,” which raised awareness that individuals “can and do participate in their own brain health and functioning,” says Terry Fay, corporate director of resident programs. BHU is the organization’s next step. The program—a collaborative effort spread across 70 SLC communities in 19 states—“provides residents with op-

portunities to learn, experience brain health activities and socialize, resulting in enhanced lives and a strong sense of personal well-being,” Fay explains.

With its 60-day schedule and curriculum of 30 classes, BHU aims to immerse Senior Lifestyle residents in the brain-stimulating experience of novelty, variety and challenge. Courses parallel college credit classes, according to Fay. The program includes “class descriptions, registering to complete the certificate, collecting class handouts ..., overall participation, homework and, lastly, a formal graduation for all who attended their class loads, complete with a ceremony and diploma.” Noting that BHU “has been successful in all communities under the Senior Lifestyle umbrella,” Fay adds that “feedback from residents has been so positive that we are rolling out semester two in the spring of 2012.”

Taste of America Asbury~Solomons Island Solomons, Maryland



An affiliate of Asbury Communities in Germantown, Maryland, Asbury~Solomons Island is a nonprofit continuing care retirement community located in Solomons, a popular weekend getaway on the Patuxent River. Asbury~Solomons Island promises older adults “a lifestyle of choice and flexibility ...” on the 58-acre waterfront property. “Here at Asbury~Solomons Island, we believe it is important to introduce

Criteria for the ICAA Innovators Awards

The winners of the 2011 ICAA Innovators Awards were selected based on the following five criteria:

Innovative. Is the program/initiative/plan different than what is currently being done in the field? Or, does it take a standard procedure and add an interesting new angle?

Pervasive. Did the program/initiative/plan expand into a comprehensive approach that engaged an entire organization or community?

Ambitious. Does the program/initiative/plan break new ground, achieve a stretch goal or represent a paradigm shift?

Measurable. Are there specific actions, numbers or other measures that demonstrate success?

Dazzling. Did the application contain information that is so unique or powerful that the judges respond with great appreciation?

topics/events that allow our residents to continually have new experiences and to be lifelong learners,” states Dennis Poremski, the community’s wellness director. “One of the ways we accomplished that this year was through our new series called ‘Taste of America.’”

According to Poremski, the Taste of America program involves picking a region of the United States and featuring that area through an experiential dining event. Participants experience a journey that includes “the tastes and smells of native cuisine, visual décor from the region, listening to the local music, and [immersing] themselves in facts and history

relating to the themed topic.” A New England clambake and a Southern barbecue are examples of past events.

Taste of America was “started as part of our community’s 15th Anniversary Celebration,” comments Poremski, who adds that residents have pleaded for the program to continue once the anniversary is over. “It has been wonderful because ... [w]e have reached into corners of our community and engaged residents who we haven’t seen before,” he says. The program has “also aided in our deliberate campaign to incorporate fun, meaningful, multidimensional, cultural events into our ... six dimensional wellness program.”

Live and Learn The Mayflower Winter Park, Florida



“The Mayflower Retirement Community in Winter Park, Florida, has always embraced ‘continuing education’ ...,” mentions Wellness Coordinator Elyse Baclar. Programs at the Central Florida continuing care retirement community have ranged from “a political ‘think tank’ to foreign language classes to an on-site chapter of Toastmasters,” Baclar says. Recently, however, The Mayflower formed a partnership with a nearby private liberal arts school, Rollins College, with the goal of taking lifelong learning to the next level. Focusing on interactive, intergenerational programming, the collaborators developed “a pilot ‘enrichment series’ that was first implemented in the spring of 2010 and con-

tinues to expand and thrive.” This series, called Live and Learn, “features relevant, hands-on learning experiences in small-group sessions with no more than 12 participants,” Baclar continues. Rollins faculty and staff teach these classes, which “cover subjects ranging from art, theater and writing, to history, physics and environmental sciences.”

The partners constantly assess the Live and Learn program, which has evolved over time based on what works, observes Mayflower Marketing Director (and Rollins alumna) Jana Ricci. The series, which launched with two four-hour workshops, now features 10 courses. And the curriculum is custom-tailored to meet the needs of both Mayflower residents and Rollins students.

Ricci believes that “the Rollins/ Mayflower partnership differs from other retirement community/university affiliations because of its focus on immersion in the subject matter, interactivity and a small teacher-to-student ratio.” She adds, “This is truly an inclusive partnership intended to engage older adults in learning and it has totally revitalized our brain fitness initiative.”

Man Cave Atria Woodbridge Irvine, California



Headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, Atria Senior Living owns and operates more than 125 communities in 27 US

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states. Atria Woodbridge in Irvine, California, offers independent and assisted living options for older adults, along with a commitment to providing residents with an environment that helps them thrive. Atria's Engage Life program supports that commitment with activities to help individuals continue to lead fulfilling lives. Interestingly, though, the most popular wellness program at Atria Woodbridge today began with a resident's secret hobby, according to Jessica Houck, the community's Engage Life director.

"When one thinks of a 'wellness program' at a senior living community, the idea of a space where gentlemen get together to think, plan and create everything from model planes to robots does not typically come to mind," says Houck. Yet, the Man Cave (as the program is called) grew out of a resident's efforts to enhance and overhaul the small, existing men's club. In a spare room, this individual started craft projects, "including model planes, a horse racing game ..., and motorized racing land yachts for everyone to enjoy." Eventually, he invited others to participate—"and that is how the Man Cave was born." Residents create blueprints and project plans to develop working machines and new creations, with "the finished projects enjoyed by residents, staff and family alike," Houck notes. Engage Life activities that include these completed projects become instant favorites, she adds, "drawing the community together and giving the residents hours of education and creativity in a fun, social atmosphere."

Somerby Tail-Wagger Treats Somerby Senior Living Birmingham, Alabama



A wholly owned subsidiary of Dominion Partners, headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, Somerby Senior Living seeks to inspire and nurture successful and active aging at all levels of care every day. In early summer 2011, Somerby launched an initiative initially intended to enhance wellness for its memory care residents. This program, called Somerby Tail-Wagger Treats, soon blossomed into something much bigger, attracting independent and assisted living residents who also wanted to participate. The Tail-Wagger Treats program brings together Somerby residents with local Boy Scouts of America troops and other local volunteer groups "to mix, mold and bake literally thousands of dog biscuits [which] they ... distribute to the animals in local area shelters," says Somerby's vice president, Stovall Kendrick. The initial goal—to "make and bake 5,000 dog biscuits" by year's end—was quickly surpassed, he notes, with 10,000 biscuits achieved by mid-August.

Somerby residents from all care levels "work their minds by preparing the biscuit recipe and by teaching the Scouts, volunteers, and each other elements of cooking," explains Kendrick. These individuals work their bodies, he adds, as they create, bake and package the dog biscuits. They also enjoy the love and attention shared with the animals—"both those they pet, play with, and feed at the Tail-Wagger Treats headquarters and those they can spend time with when

they deliver their biscuits to the recipient animal shelters." Participants in the Somerby Tail-Wagger Treats program also share a common purpose, according to Kendrick, "buoyed in the spirit of giving back to the community while having fun."

ICAA GREEN AWARD WINNERS

Grand Lake Gardens Oakland, California



Anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." In Oakland, California, the Grand Lake Gardens continuing care retirement community "is a shining example of a small group of committed older adults changing the world, and making it a little greener along the way," says Executive Director Adnan Hasan. Opened in the mid-1960s, the American Baptist Homes of the West campus is home to just 90 older adults. But a community garden created in Grand Lake's "Upper Acre" has provided more than 800 lbs. of fresh, local and organic produce since spring 2010, feeding 900 impoverished older adults weekly at the nearby St. Mary's Center.

Members of Grand Lake's Green Committee initiated this project when, bothered by the once-empty plot of land, they questioned how it could help feed Oakland's hungry. There were many barriers to the envisioned community gar-

den, Hasan observes, including “already stretched” employees and a lack of funds to facilitate the effort, plus “a small area of hard pan dirt, ... no way to haul soil, and nowhere to plant” the garden. Persevering, the community overcame these obstacles with its “can-do” spirit.

Through a grant from Rebuilding Together Oakland, a local affiliate of the national nonprofit that partners volunteers and donors with worthy projects, Grand Lake Gardens built its community garden with assistance from the Piedmont Community Service Group. Grand Lake gardeners have now sustained the project through its second summer—“a measure of success all on its own,” according to Hasan.

Timber Ridge at Talus Issaquah, Washington



Situated at the base of Cougar Mountain in the Issaquah Alps and surrounded by evergreen forests, Timber Ridge at Talus is a Life Care Services community in Issaquah, Washington, a fast-growing suburb of Seattle. In 2008 Timber Ridge opened its doors as “the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified senior living community in the United States,” notes the community’s executive director, Scott Doherty. “Timber Ridge achieved Silver Certification based on a comprehensive New Construction Rating System measuring sustainable site development, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere optimization, materials and resources,

indoor environmental quality, and innovation and design process,” he explains.

As part of its commitment to green initiatives, Timber Ridge has initiated a variety of green stewardship programs in the years since its opening. The community continues to research additional initiatives “to operate more efficiently, effectively and, most importantly, sustainably,” Doherty says. Current programs and projects include, among others, an eco-ware containers service that promotes greener practices, reduces waste and saves an estimated US\$30,000–40,000 per year; a newspaper recycling system that supports a local nonprofit that helps people with disabilities work in their communities; a cardboard baler to assist in the recycling of a projected 850–1,700 lbs. of cardboard weekly; and food waste and paper composting estimated to have diverted 55 tons of garbage from the local landfill. Doherty concludes, “The success of the programs can be measured environmentally, financially, through resident feedback, and improved operations.”

ICAA INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS AWARD WINNER

Step360 Pro SPRI Products, Inc. Libertyville, Illinois



SPRI Products, a GAIAM company, has distributed rubberized resistance exercise products, fitness accessories

and exercise education programs for the health and fitness industry for 28 years. Headquartered in Libertyville, Illinois, the company prides itself on what it calls “a tradition of innovative product designs that transform exercise.” The Step360 Pro is a recent addition to SPRI’s offerings.

The Step 360, by SPRI, provides a gentle, flat-platform training surface atop two circular, air-filled chambers, which allow the platform to move. This movement challenges balance during exercise to enhance functional stability. For safety, the independent, inflatable chambers also allow for modification of the platform height and degree of balance challenge. A generously sized platform enables individuals to adopt a wider, more stable stance on the Step360 Pro, says Adam Zwyer, SPRI’s director of marketing and operations. The durable, nonslip surface further encourages user confidence when performing more demanding movements. “The platform’s contrasting color, texture and outer rim provide safe and proper foot placement while getting on and off,” Zwyer points out.

Among adults ages 65 and older, falls are both the leading cause of injury deaths and the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Step360 Pro’s “flat-surface 360-degree balance challenge prepares the body for [the] off-center neuromuscular reactivity so important for fall prevention,” Zwyer explains. The product “provides a training experience performed on a surface similar to ... the ground-based surface upon which activities of daily living are performed, thus creating a high transference of training benefit to movement of daily life.”