

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **ICAA AWARD WINNERS MAY HOLD POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO \$76 BILLION DOLLAR PROBLEM**

VANCOUVER, B.C. (September 23, 2003) - Physical inactivity costs the United States 300,000 lives and \$76.5 billion annually. Yet most of this toll is preventable. Recent research from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta shows that participation levels in physical activity have increased only slightly in the past 40 years. With the nation at the crossroads of disease and prevention, the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA), the world's largest association for the senior fitness and wellness industry, says the bold initiatives developed by five industry innovators are shining examples of how the health and wellness field is making a difference. Through these programs, these organizations are achieving outstanding results in increasing physical activity levels, or they are conducting research that will help us win the battle against inactivity. All five programs influence a broad range of people and demonstrate the diversity within the industry.

The ICAA Industry Innovators Awards program honors excellence and creativity in the health and wellness field," says Colin Milner, the ICAA's chief executive officer. "By recognizing organizations that have created cutting-edge physical activity programs, the ICAA highlights these innovative solutions for industry leaders and governmental organizations."

"Our five inaugural recipients are working on inspiring, new directions in older adult wellness," says Milner. "These award winners not only give us a glimpse into the trends shaping the futures of older adult health and wellness, they also give us hope that it is possible to solve the inactivity problem."

This year's ICAA Industry Innovators Award winners come from across North America and include:

in motion, SASKATOON HEALTH REGION, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

The four key components of this "comprehensive community-wide strategy to improve health through active living" are building partnerships, targeted community strategies (including an older adult initiative), measuring success and building community awareness. Through its partnerships, in particular, in motion has managed to create "a critical mass of public opinion, money and other resources" for the program. Support for in motion includes funding for the next three years to implement the model in communities throughout the Canadian province of Saskatchewan.

Innovative results: the percentage of residents who were active enough to achieve optimal health benefits rose from 36% in 2000 to 49% in 2002.

FEELING FIT CLUB, AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES (AIS), COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

This wellness program is primarily intended for inactive, at-risk older adults who participate in senior nutrition programs. Through Feeling Fit Club programs at 24 sites, AIS makes fitness accessible to older adults in low-income, culturally diverse areas of San Diego. The program's main component is the free functional fitness class, which helps participants maintain and improve their independence. Each group in the community-based initiative plays an important role in the overall operation of the program, while the AIS Health Promotions division coordinates day-to-day logistics.

Innovative results: since its inception, the program has grown from 6 sites to 24 sites. Approximately 241 classes take place per month, with an average of 5,021 total participants. The real success of the Feeling Fit Club is that it has reached people who traditionally have little access or exposure to fitness programs and improved their health and wellness.

ACTIVE FOR LIFE, ACTIVE FOR LIFE NATIONAL PROGRAM OFFICE, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER, SCHOOL OF RURAL PUBLIC HEALTH, COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

Supported by the New-Jersey based Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, this national research-to-practice demonstration project is learning how to deliver and sustain physical activity programs for midlife and older adults. Marcia G. Ory, director of the Active for Life National Program Office, sums up the program this way: "Active for Life is taking research-based programs, introducing them in community settings, providing structured social marketing support and conducting independent evaluation to measure effectiveness." The project's findings could set the tone for marketing physical activity to and programming for older adults.

Innovative results: this group is providing the country with groundbreaking research through nine grantees, reaching 9,000 individuals. The \$8.7-million behavioral change research project should have a significant impact on how the fitness and wellness industry approaches programs and marketing to increase the level of physical activity among older adults.

FIT FOR LIFE, SENIOR LIFESTYLE CORPORATION (SLC), CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The SLC program is based on the MacArthur Foundation's Study of Aging in America, which showed that lifestyle choices largely influence how people age. Fit for Life includes all six dimensions of wellness: physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual and vocational. But SLC's wellness philosophy has evolved since the program began four years ago. The senior living company has established a wellness culture, in which all its departments support the program. For example, housekeeping staff leave wellness notes in residents' rooms and carry activity calendars on their carts.

Innovative results: the Fit for Life program is an outstanding example of the whole-person wellness model's importance in increasing participation levels. The SLC program has achieved a 300% increase in residents' activity levels in the past four years.

ERICKSON FOUNDATION INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH PROGRAM, ERICKSON FOUNDATION, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Established in 1998, the Erickson Foundation is arguably the first private operating foundation originated by the retirement housing industry. In addition, the institution allocates a high percentage of its research investments to initiatives it designs and manages. The foundation's interdisciplinary research program employs a core group of researchers and administrators, as well as consultants and vendors. This team works with independent investigators on research that demonstrates the value of active aging, particularly as characterized by healthy choices.

Innovative results: the Erickson Foundation's program is a leader in the industry. The institution's Viva! model is a fully integrated approach to wellness testing and programming. Viva! offers participants a comprehensive overview of their health and takes a progressive approach to stimulating a client's participation through goal setting.

These award-winning programs influence a broad range of people and demonstrate the diversity within the active aging field. The ICAA congratulates the organizations involved in creating these programs, which were selected from an impressive group of entries. The ICAA thanks all the organizations that participated in the award competition. "We believe the industry as a whole is moving forward," says Milner, "based on the number and excellence of the entries we received."

**ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ACTIVE AGING (ICAA):** The ICAA is the world's largest organization dedicated to changing the way we age by uniting and working with professionals in the retirement, assisted living, fitness, recreation, rehabilitation and wellness fields. It connects a community of like-minded professionals who share the goals of changing society's perceptions of aging and improving the quality of life for aging Baby Boomers and older adults within the six dimensions of wellness. The council supports these professionals with education, information, resources and tools, so they can achieve optimal success with this growing market.

The ICAA also takes an active role in helping to change the way society perceives aging. The council has joined 49 of the nation's most prominent health and aging organizations to work on the development and implementation of the National Blueprint on Aging. Contributors to the Blueprint's development include AARP, the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Geriatrics Society, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institute on Aging and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

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For more information about the ICAA Industry Innovator Award Winners, or aging-related issues, contact:

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