



News Release

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For more information, contact
A.J. Hostetler, Public Relations Director
aj.hostetler@dars.virginia.gov
804-662-7372

F.R.E.E. FOUNDATION PROGRAM HONORED BY COMMONWEALTH COUNCIL ON AGING

(RICHMOND, Va.) — The F.R.E.E. Foundation Equipment Reuse/Recycling and Gifting Program of Roanoke won the Commonwealth Council on Aging’s top 2014 “Best Practices” award for its creative and effective approach to serving older Virginians.

The council, which advises the Governor on issues affecting the 1.5 million Virginians age 60 and older, acknowledges organizations whose innovative programs can be replicated across the Commonwealth. The awards are announced each year in May, which Gov. Terry McAuliffe has proclaimed as [Older Virginians Month](#).

The year’s first place award of \$5,000 honors the [F.R.E.E. Foundation](#)’s efforts to help Virginians achieve independence through mobility when they have no other way to attain their independence. The Council will present the award at 4 p.m., May 15, at the foundation’s headquarters, 1489 E. Main St., Salem.

“The Council recognized that F.R.E.E. provides an invaluable service to low-income adults across Virginia who lose their mobility because of injury or illness,” said awards committee chair Dr. Richard Lindsay. “We both recognize and applaud that the majority of those served by F.R.E.E. are older Virginians. F.R.E.E.’s program fosters community involvement through equipment contribution and clearly promotes aging in place.”

A second place award of \$3,000 was given to the “Supplies For Seniors” program conducted by the RSVPs of Montgomery County and Radford and Pulaski County. [The program](#) delivers donated household and personal care products in wintertime to some 250 older Virginians in the New River Valley who receive home-delivered meals. The award will be presented at 2 p.m., June 18, at the Pulaski Train Depot, 20 S. Washington St.

A \$2,000 award for third place was awarded to [“Arts Fusion” of the Alzheimer’s Association Central and Western Virginia Chapter](#). The program provides a creative environment

that promotes expression, interpersonal connections and enjoyment for individuals with dementia. The approach integrates, or “fuses,” a variety of art forms to serve participants at all stages of dementia. The council will present the award at 10:30 a.m., May 12, at BB&T Bank, 1425 Seminole Trail, Charlottesville.

The council gave honorable mentions to the following organizations for their efforts on behalf of older Virginians:

- [Greater Augusta Coalition Against Adult Abuse](#)
- Jefferson Area Board for Aging, for its [“Wills for Seniors”](#) educational program
- [Northern Virginia Aging Network](#)
- [Rappahannock-Rapidan Community Services](#), for its “The Nest Egg” program

“This year’s Best Practices Award winners exemplify differing ways to promote or support older Virginians and their caregivers and our hope is to see these best practices replicated statewide,” said Council chair Beth Barber.

Dominion Resources for the second year has supported the Council on Aging’s Best Practices Awards. The awards demonstrate the Council’s encouragement to organizations across the Commonwealth to develop and support programs and services that assist older adults to age in their community.

“The Commonwealth benefits from the Council on Aging’s leadership to acknowledge exemplary programs in support of seniors and Virginians with disabilities to live as independently as they wish and continue to be contributing members of their communities,” said Commissioner Jim Rothrock of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

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

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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.