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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Mather LifeWays PREPARE Program Wins 2007 American Society on Aging Award

Disaster Preparedness Workshops Focus on Needs of Older Adults

Evanston, Ill. (March 14, 2007) – Mather LifeWays, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating ways to age well, has received the 2007 Healthcare and Aging Award from the American Society on Aging (ASA) for PREPARE, the organization’s program designed to give health care providers in long-term care communities the tools and resources needed to effectively respond to crises. Funded by a federal grant from the Emergency Training Branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the PREPARE program was created in response to a notable lack of information on how vulnerable populations, and the health care providers that serve them, can be better equipped to deal with natural and manmade disasters.

The award, given by the Healthcare and Aging Network (HAN) of ASA, in collaboration with the Pfizer Medical Humanities Initiative, is awarded to organizations that have demonstrated high-quality, innovative programs that enhance the health-related quality of life of older adults. Programs are evaluated by five criteria: innovation, impact on older adults, potential for replication, attention to diverse populations and collaboration with other agencies or community groups. The award was presented to Mather LifeWays during the 2007 Joint Conference of the American Society on Aging and the National Council on Aging in Chicago.

“Disaster preparedness is something every citizen should think about. It’s even more important to equip the people who oversee the care of older adults with the skills to be ready and a sound plan of action,” said Mary Leary, president and CEO of Mather LifeWays. “Mather LifeWays is very proud to be recognized for the PREPARE program.”

A national survey by the Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging found that 9 out of 10 long-term care communities are ill-prepared to deal with public health emergencies. In fact, many of the organizations that had developed disaster plans didn’t realize they actually had one. The

confusion seen in the months after 2005's Hurricane Katrina magnifies the need to ensure the safety of older adults in long-term care.

The two-day PREPARE workshop is unique in that it focuses specifically on staff serving long-term care communities, skilled care nursing centers, retirement communities, assisted living centers and home health care agencies. The training focuses on:

- Developing an effective disaster plan and understanding it
- Understanding the effects of manmade and natural disasters on older adults
- Demonstrating leadership skills during and after emergencies
- Activating community partnerships and backup strategies in the aftermath of a disaster
- Maintaining order by practicing the plan through disaster exercises and drills
- Involving families in disaster planning so they understand what they should be doing as well

To register for an upcoming PREPARE workshop, call (847) 492-6803, toll-free (888) 722-6468, or e-mail cobrien@matherlifeways.com. Workshop dates are posted on www.matherlifeways.com/prepare.

About Mather LifeWays

Based in Evanston, Illinois, Mather LifeWays enhances the lives of older adults by creating Ways to Age Well.SM Founded in 1941 by entrepreneur and humanitarian Alonzo Mather, Mather LifeWays is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing a continuum of living and care; making neighborhoods better places for older adults to live, work, learn, contribute, and play; and identifying, implementing, and sharing best practices for wellness, workforce issues, memory care support, and empowering caregivers. To learn more about our senior residences, community initiatives, and Institute on Aging, please call (847) 492-7500 or find your Way to www.matherlifeways.com.

About PREPARE

PREPARE is a comprehensive educational program created by Mather LifeWays designed to prepare senior living and long-term care (LTC) health providers with the core competencies needed to respond to disasters and other public health emergencies. The program is made possible through funding from the Emergency Training Branch, Division of Healthcare Preparedness, Healthcare Systems Bureau, Health Resource and Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services.

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